

## **Bishop Chatard: Secret Societies, Irish Nationalists, Americanists, and Modernists, 1878-1918**

This chapter deals with a set of movements that Bishop Chatard, a religious, social, and political conservative, had to deal with. Born into comfort, rector of the American College in Rome, Chatard, so far as he was able, operated as a brakeman to some of and the salient developments of Gilded Age America, in particular, trade unionism, Irish nationalism, and the efforts of the Modernists to bring the Church up to date and escape from medieval scholasticism. Nor did he share the confidence of the Americanist bishops who reveled in the freedom found in the United States and believed that here the Church had nothing to fear from the state. In resisting such efforts in his lifetime Chatard was on the winning side, with the exception of trade unionism, whose legitimacy was accepted by the Church in the encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*.

In dealing with the laity Chatard's habit was to lay down the law. Nothing unusual in that for a bishop of that era or later. As for the city's Irish nationalists, however, with Ireland's independence as their goal and by force, if need be, the clergy would get respect but not docility. The outstanding Irish revolutionary movement of the era in the United States was the *Clan na Gael*, chiefly, but not solely a money raising operation. In Indianapolis, the Clan included among its active members the leaders of the Irish community.

In 1899 Chatard suffered a stroke which affected his vision. Given an auxiliary bishop in 1900, Denis O'Donaghue, a decade of limited activity followed. In 1910, O'Donaghue named bishop of Louisville, Kentucky, Joseph Chartrand was named Chatard's co-adjutor with the right of succession. Chatard's health continued to worsen and he died in 1918. The chapter ends with a discussion of Chatard's standing among his episcopal contemporaries.

## Bishop Chatard: Secret Societies, Irish Nationalists, Americanists and Modernists, 1878-1918

“Centuries of oppression and misgovernment have generated a deep-rooted and cordial hatred of the English name and nation in the minds of the vast majority of the Irish.”<sup>1</sup>

A Catholic cannot be an “anarchist, socialist or that sort of revolutionary. He is forbidden to take part in mob rule, in riots, in lynchings . . . . He is bound to be patriotic.”<sup>2</sup>

A salient feature of American society in the last third of the nineteenth century was the disproportionate number of Catholic immigrants who worked as laborers. Added to the many Germans and Irish already settled, came the rising tide in the 1880s of the “new immigrants” from southern and eastern Europe, many of them Catholic, mostly poor, young, and male with little or no English. Whether “old” or “new,” immigrant Catholics in the main attended Mass, knew their priest, and identified with their parish. As a way of bridging the old country with the new, it promised that the clergy and bishops would wield considerable influence over them. (It was quite otherwise for Protestants; as one minister admitted, in 1887, “the Protestant churches, as a rule, have no following among the workingmen. Everybody knows it.”)<sup>3</sup> Rome, never a friend of Enlightenment secularity, had long established its *bona fides* as an enemy of social and political radicalism of any sort. It was natural then that the American bishops, especially the conservatives among them, saw the path to acceptance through presenting the Church not as an alien element in a Protestant nation, but as a bulwark of the existing social order. Confidence that they could do so rested in the well-nigh unquestioned status of their own hierarchical authority and the “series of miniature hierarchies, including the pastor within the parish, the father within the family, and the employer within the firm, [that] remained cornerstones of the Catholic vision.”<sup>4</sup>

It was as a conservative bulwark that Bishop Francis Silas Chatard’s first pastoral, sent to Indianapolis from Rome, May 1878, dealt with Church authority and the importance of education: Good citizens, he wrote, were “a most desirable thing in this republic of ours, inasmuch as this form of government allows the greatest liberty--license, in fact, where there arises danger to the safety of the country . . . . Religion . . . is therefore the

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<sup>1</sup> Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans* (Bloomsbury Press: New York, 2008), 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Catholic Columbian Record*, 14 May 1909, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Lane Loomis, *Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems*, 1887, quoted in McGreevey, *Catholics and American Freedom*, 128.

<sup>4</sup> McGreevey, *Catholics and American Freedom*, 137.

more necessary, the freer is the form of government.”<sup>5</sup> Such warnings that American liberty might lurch into license became the boilerplate of the hierarchy.<sup>6</sup> Thirty years later, the Catholic Columbian Record was just as blunt about the Church’s role as defender of the existing order: Noting the increase of its laity in recent decades, it argued that “its power over its members are occasions for thanksgiving on the part of the government” for the Church “steadfastly” teaches respect for law and order, obedience to authorities, and enjoins its communicants to be law-abiding and industrious. A Catholic cannot be an “anarchist, socialist or that sort of revolutionary. He is forbidden to take part in mob rule, in riots, in lynchings . . . . He is bound to be patriotic.”<sup>7</sup>

Beyond its unhappy experience with secularism and revolution over the last century and a half, was that in the Gilded Age and later, socially and economically, the American bishops were themselves successful men. They lived well, crossing the Atlantic almost with the frequency of the rich, and were accepted generally by influential non-Catholics as standing with them on the top rungs of the social ladder.<sup>8</sup> Even their clothes--frock coat, cravat, silk hat--made them indistinguishable from the merchant banker or captain of industry of the day. The diocesan clergy, with room, board, and the services of a cook-housemaid provided, with no family to support or children to educate, were likewise generally seen as respectable, educated men who lived comparatively well on their salaries. Msgr. August Bessonies, 44 years an influential and beloved Indianapolis resident who enjoyed great prestige, made seven voyages to Europe in his first four decades as a priest; his last, in 1900, the year before his death, was to visit the Paris World Exposition.<sup>9</sup> In 1879 the yearly salary of Fr. Denis O’Donaghue, parish priest of St. Patrick, was \$400, while common laborers on the city payroll made but a \$1.00 a day and policemen and firemen \$1.25.<sup>10</sup> Nor were clergy subject to the vicissitudes of slack times, layoffs, and factory closings. In 1894, while most parishioners “were of the manual labor class and worked for meager wages,” the pastor and his assistant at St. John’s Church earned \$400 and \$300 a year,

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<sup>5</sup> Blanchard, Catholic Church in Indiana, 112.

<sup>6</sup> After the failure of the New Record in 1910 the Columbian Record [Columbus, Ohio] served as the Indianapolis diocesan paper. The bishop of Peoria in 1877, John Lancaster Spalding, in an 1876 article in The Catholic World, likewise claimed that only the Catholic Church could hold the line against social upheaval. O’Brien, Public Catholicism, 82, 83.

<sup>7</sup> Catholic Columbian Record, 14 May 1909, 4.

<sup>8</sup> O’Brien, Public Catholicism, 82, 83.

<sup>9</sup> Western Citizen, 20 November 1880; Indianapolis Star Magazine, 20 September 1959, 45. Bessonies long residence, character, and popularity explain the Board of Health’s permission to bury him in St. John’s at the foot of its Sacred Heart chapel. A bronze plaque marks the grave. Indianapolis News, 23 February 1901, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Council Proceedings, 1870-1878, passim.

respectively.”<sup>11</sup> Despite low salaries, their education, professional rank, and social standing placed priests in the respectable middle class.

Lacking any sympathy with socialism and kindred novelties, some bishops, Chatard not least, bore considerable animosity toward any organization which mixed Catholics and non-Catholics or Catholic groups not under the chaplaincy of a priest and therefore not under the control of the hierarchy.<sup>12</sup> Such promiscuous association of the faithful with non-Catholics the Church denominated “perverse” and a danger to the Catholic. In addition, the quasi-religious rituals common to trade unions of the period—influenced by or borrowed from freemasonry—also constituted a challenge to church authority: By driving a wedge between the bishop and the union member it threatened schism or heresy and rendered the sacrament of confession problematic. As the priest-author of A Thousand and One Objections to Secret Societies, 1893, argued, because the Church has charge of souls, through the confessional it had the right to know what Catholics did and how they did it; otherwise, “how could it judge and keep the conscience of the faithful?”<sup>13</sup>

Beyond the problem posed by the quasi-religious rituals of trade unions, their resort to strikes not only challenged property, but to protect members from reprisals from their employers, unions were usually secret, oath-bound societies. In much of Europe such organizations targeted the Catholic Church and attacked the papacy. The most important of these was Freemasonry: first condemned by Clement VII’s, encyclical, *In Eminenti* (1738), seven subsequent popes forbade membership on penalty of automatic excommunication. Accounts differ on whether continental freemasonry was anti-Catholic as such or because the Catholic Church was hostile to it: Did the freemasons of Italy, France, and Spain set out to destroy Catholicism or was this a fanciful picture that the popes adopted that became tradition? The truth, according to one scholar of the question, “is at present beyond the reach of accurate historical inquiry.” And if continental freemasonry was as hostile as the popes believed, was it also true of masonry in England, Canada, and the United States?<sup>14</sup> It was

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<sup>11</sup> Western Citizen, 15 February 1879, 1; Horan, Old St. John’s, 183. By contrast, in 1878 the mayor received \$1,800 a year, the city attorney, \$1500, the police chief \$1000, and the fire chief \$1200. Mainline Protestant ministers in Indianapolis did very well, with salaries running to \$2000 and \$3000 a year

<sup>12</sup> David Montgomery, Beyond Equality (New York, 1972), 124-128; Catholics made up at least half of the A.F. of L. in 1900-1910, yet the Church did little to support unions. O’Brien, Public Catholicism, has a good discussion of these matters 137-151.

<sup>13</sup> Cited in Mecklin, Ku Klux Klan, 213-215.

<sup>14</sup> Chadwick, History of the Popes, 304, was convinced that Canadian and American masonry were as mild as England’s. In Ireland, too, masonry existed, not as some Orange Order to suppress Catholicism, but as a convivial club. Daniel O’Connell (1775-1847), the “Irish Liberator,” was an active freemason, master of his Dublin lodge, and founder of a lodge in Tralee. T. Desmond Williams, “The Freemasons,” in Williams, ed., Secret Societies in Ireland (Harper & Row: New

enough that Leo XIII (1878-1905), believing that masonry represented the kingdom of Satan, excommunicated Catholics who joined.

Still, there are secret societies and secret societies: since neither the Odd Fellows nor the Sons of Temperance appeared to be conspiratorial, banning them did not seem fair. That was why the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, 1866, declared that no one “in any ecclesiastical dignity should condemn by name any society [unless it was a] certainty and beyond all doubt” that it was “clearly one of those” intended by the Holy See. The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, 1884, agreed that any condemnation be reserved to a committee of all the American archbishops. If unanimity was lacking, Rome would decide the matter (as happened in a vote in 1886 not to ban Knights of Labor, and in 1892 regarding the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and the Sons of Temperance). The Holy Office wanted the faithful kept from them, but Pope Leo XIII left execution of the decree to each U.S. archbishop. Ultimately, it was decided that rather than have Catholics lose their insurance benefits, they could be passive members. What is not in doubt is the popularity of secret fraternal societies in Gilded Age America: between 1880 and 1900 nearly 500 new ones were founded and by the latter date enrolled over six million.<sup>15</sup>

The irony of the Church’s reservations about trade unions was that its immigrant, working class laity provided a majority of the leadership and much of the backbone of the American labor movement. In the Knights of Labor’s heyday, the 1870s to the mid-1880s, Catholics were at least two-thirds of the membership; by 1900, with Catholics about sixteen percent of the population, they were fully half of the American Federation of Labor (AF of L) which had replaced the Knights. That the rank and file and the officers were overwhelmingly Irish (as was the hierarchy and most of the clergy) mattered, too, for secret societies were no novelty to Irish Catholics immigrants: As a colonized people, centuries of English rule had tutored them in clandestine resistance. Responding to the confiscation of Irish property by the Tudors in the seventeenth century and the penal laws<sup>16</sup> of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, secret radical societies--outlaw “Tories” and “Rapparees” flourished. Rural grievances in the 1740s--absentee landlords, rack rents, ditching the commons for pasturage rather than tillage, tithes for the Protestant Church of Ireland, and hearth

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York, 1973), 50. Terrence V. Powderly, Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, joined the Masons in 1900. The 1917 revision of the Canon Law, however, repeated the 1738 ban that Catholic masons “and others of the same sort which plot against the Church or legal civil authority incur excommunication.” Since then, Church authorities have oscillated between quiet acceptance and condemnation of freemasonry.

<sup>15</sup> Ellis, ed., Documents in Catholic History, f.n., 434.

<sup>16</sup> Parliamentary legislation in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century sought to exclude Catholics from public life and politics; for example, Catholic education was illegal, priests had to leave the country, nor could Catholics buy land or obtain a mortgage on it. Catholic estates were subject to partible inheritance, meaning that at the owner’s death each son received an equal portion (except if one turned Protestant he would inherit the lot). This insured that over time the size and percentage of Catholic landholdings would diminish, and with it Catholic economic well-being and influence. Robert Kee, The Green Flag: The Turbulent History of the Irish National Movement (Delacourte Press: New York, 1972), 19, 20.

money—created the “Whiteboys.” Hard put peasants set hayricks and manor houses ablaze, maimed cattle, and assaulted landlords, their agents, and even clergymen. (Not all landlords were Protestant and since the Catholic clergy levied relatively high fees for marriages, baptisms, etc., the lay and clerical leaders of the Catholic community might also come under attack). The particular contribution of the Whiteboys to Ireland’s secret societies that followed was “the oath--total observance of secrecy and also absolute obedience to the organization and those in charge of it.”<sup>17</sup> The Whiteboys were succeeded by the Rightboys (1780s), United Irishmen (1790s), and Ribbonmen (early 1800s). In 1825, a contributor to the Edinburgh Review admitted, “Centuries of oppression and misgovernment have generated a deep-rooted and cordial hatred of the English name and nation in the minds of the vast majority of the Irish.”<sup>18</sup> Cognizant of Irish hatred and the desire of many for revenge, in 1860 the London Times observed “We must gird our loins to encounter the Nemesis of seven centuries’ misgovernment.”<sup>19</sup>

It is not a compliment, but it is a fact that the Irish are reputed to be “good haters.” “Don’t get mad, get even,” is part of the lore. In any case, Irish nationalism among its ex-patriots flourished wherever they ended up: “No other immigrant groups in nineteenth century America developed so passionate a devotion to the land of their birth as did the sons and daughters of Erin.” Other immigrants maintained an interest, but only among the Irish “was this interest so deeply rooted that it was transmitted to the second, third and even fourth generations, . . . It was a savage hatred of England which animated the great body of Irish emigrants and their descendents.”<sup>20</sup> As Yeats put it: “Out of Ireland we come, great hatred, little room, maimed us at the start. I carry from my mother’s womb a fanatic heart.”<sup>21</sup>

A new group, the Fenian Brotherhood, by combining the rebel Irish at home and in America, would have long-lasting consequences. Its name derived from “Fianna,” the warrior caste of Irish legend led by Fionn MacCuchail (Finn MacCool), it was co-founded in 1858 by two veterans of the 1848 Young Ireland uprising, John O’Mahony in New York City and James Stephens in Dublin. The first mass nationalist organization in Irish-American history, physical force was its means toward achieving an independent Irish republic. In true “Whiteboy” fashion, members swore “in the presence of God” to renounce allegiance to the Queen, “to take arms . . . at a moment’s warning and to make Ireland an Independent Democratic Republic, and to yield implicit obedience to the commanders and superiors” of

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<sup>17</sup> T. Desmond Williams, ed., Secret Societies in Ireland (Harper&Row: New York, 1973), 8.

<sup>18</sup> Dolan, Irish Americans, 50.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in Arnold Schrier, Ireland and American Emigration, 1850-1900 (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis 1958), 123, 124.

produced eager subscribers to the dynamite funds.” O’Connor, Parnell Movement, 117.

<sup>21</sup> Lecky attributed it to the great clearances and the unaided emigration following the famine. As another put it, it was those events “that sowed in Irish breasts the feeling that in due time produced eager subscribers to the dynamite funds.” O’Connor, Parnell Movement, 117.

the society.<sup>22</sup> By 1865 the Fenians claimed 25,000 members in America alone. Working in tandem with Stephens' organization, the American Fenians raised almost \$500,000 between 1858 and 1866, much of it used for raids on British customhouses, posts, and forts in Canada; the idea was to seize territory to pressure England to withdraw from Ireland. Five such raids, mustering anywhere from a few dozen men to a thousand or more, were launched from American soil between 1866 and 1871. None had any great success, although the threat of additional raids on Canada continued into the 1880s.

Among the difficulties the Fenians faced was that Ireland's Catholic bishops were adamantly opposed to the nationalist movement (having proscribed the United Irishmen decades before the Fenians appeared). The great majority of the hierarchy continued to favor the Irish Parliamentary party and the British connection. Popes Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII all condemned secret societies--Pius IX the Fenians by name in 1870, a decree promulgated in every United States diocese. In many parishes Fenianism was denounced from the pulpit and absolution withheld in the confessional if the penitent refused to abjure it. Yet denunciations and threats of excommunication were often ineffective: Holding that the clergy, having little experience of the world, were bad guides, Fenians wanted "No priest in politics." Moreover, the clergy, being under episcopal discipline were therefore not free agents.<sup>23</sup> For these and other reasons, as a revolutionary political movement the Brotherhood did not scruple to oppose the hierarchy.

When it came to the Fenian Brotherhood, Indiana was in on the ground floor in the person of Fr. Edward O'Flaherty: Born at Dingle, County Kerry, ca. 1818, ordained in Ireland, ca. 1844, O'Flaherty arrived in Buffalo, New York in the late 1840s and came to Indiana in 1854. Appointed the first resident priest at Crawfordsville, in 1859, he built St Bernard's, the first church and rectory there. Thanks to the railroad constructed between Lafayette and New Albany in the late 1840s, the area had attracted a good many Irish immigrants: St. Bernard's marriage records of the 1850s and 1860s are replete with Seans and Brigids, Patricks and Kates uniting Meehan and Murphy, Brennan and Bresnahan, O'Connell and O'Sullivan. (Of the fourteen marriages in 1860, at least twelve both bride and groom had Irish surnames.) Given this shared ethnicity, priest and parishioners celebrated St. Patrick's Day with parades and encouraged "the Irish in their fight for independence." It was O'Flaherty who organized the "Indianapolis Circle of the Fenian Brotherhood" in 1859 and traveled the state recruiting members.<sup>24</sup> When the priest went home in 1861 for five months to see family and friends, no doubt Fenian business was done as well. When O'Flaherty died of consumption, 8 August 1863, age 46, the whole Crawfordsville parish accompanied his remains to Lafayette for the funeral.<sup>25</sup> The Fenians provided the gravestone, which reads, in part: "In memory of Rev. Fr. Edward O'Flaherty, elected

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Kee, The Green Flag, 300-302.

<sup>23</sup> Williams, ed., Secret Societies in Ireland, ch. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Jack W. Porter and William F. Stineman, "The Catholic Church in Greencastle, Indiana, 1848-1978" (Greencastle, Indiana, 1978), 21.

State Couter [?] of the Fenian Brotherhood of Indiana . . . . “[A]lways popular with the people,” he was praised for “his service to the church, his eloquence as a defender of liberty, and his personal sacrifices in the cause of Irish emancipation.” “The Poor Man’s Friend/The Oppressors Foe/In silence moulders here below.”<sup>26</sup>

His parishioners may have loved him, but not his bishop. On 13 November 1859, Ft. Wayne Bishop John Luers wrote to Cincinnati Archbishop John B. Purcell that he had temporarily withdrawn all faculties from O’Flaherty--for having excommunicated two Irishmen and refusing to say Mass the following Sunday until they left the church; for cursing and driving away another man who lacked the “dollar” demanded in addition to the pew rent at Christmas and Easter; and for buying two lots in his own name with proceeds from money from the railroads and not deeding them to the parish. In sum, O’Flaherty had rendered himself “odious and given scandal.” Again, in January 1863, Bishop Leurs, noting that the Fenian movement was popular with three-fourths of the Irish, was determined to forbid O’Flaherty from joining the Phoenix Society, another group agitating for Ireland’s independence. Even after O’Flaherty’s death, Luers counted the priest’s influence on his congregation as having “done much harm there.”<sup>27</sup> That influence could be seen in 1866, three years after his death: at one of the largest meetings ever held in Indianapolis to that time, the Fenians raised funds to strike at England by invading Canada. Led by Captain James Hagerty, 130 men of the city (part of a breakaway faction) joined an invasion of Canada at Buffalo, New York, the first of two cross border raids that year; although they defeated a raw Canadian militia upon their return to Buffalo the men were arrested by federal authorities. Its failure and ensuing discord led to the disbanding of the local organization about 1869.<sup>28</sup>

Fr. O’Flaherty was but one of many Fenians to draw the worried attention of the American bishops. The decade from 1864 to 1873 saw a lively correspondence among them and with Rome regarding the order. Cincinnati Archbishop Purcell, under whom the Vincennes Diocese fell, received more than a dozen letters on the subject. Bishop Luers, for one, judged Fenianism strongest in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, especially in congregations whose pastors lack influence due to their own “improper conduct.”<sup>29</sup> Most bishops were convinced of the movement’s “evil spirit,” but some were also certain that clerical attacks against the Fenians would boomerang,<sup>30</sup> for it was known that not a few priests were secret members and many others

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<sup>26</sup> Buried in St. Patrick’s addition, St. Mary’s Cemetery, Lafayette, Indiana; Porter and Stineman, The Catholic Church in Greencastle, 21; Giffin, The Irish, 72. Letter to Fr. Stineman from Patricia J. Fitzsimons, sexton, St. Mary’s Cemetery, 2122 Old Romney Road, Lafayette, Indiana, 47905. Copy in author’s possession.

<sup>28</sup> Peopling Indiana, 266. The Fenians held a state convention in Indianapolis in 1868; When further dissension caused the organization to disband, ca. 1869, Indianapolis nationalists joined the Emmet Guards. Giffin, The Irish, 72; See also Holloway, 280.

<sup>29</sup> Luers to Purcell, 23 March 1864, Notre Dame Archives.

<sup>30</sup> Denver Bishop Joseph Machebouef (26 March 1868) complained that because of his opposition to Fenianism, members “refuse to contribute to his support” and it has hurt finances. Buffalo Bishop John Timon (8 December 1865) wrote that though the Fenians gave much trouble he hasn’t denounced them, but rather instructed his priests to discourage “adhesion” to them as much as they can.



were sympathizers.<sup>31</sup> Being of different minds as how to proceed, the bishops were unable to unite against it: Archbishop James Woods of Philadelphia wrote Purcell of his conviction that hard blows was what were needed (6 April 1865), while Baltimore's Martin Spalding (11 August 1865) thought if left alone it would die out. Purcell himself was reluctant to denounce the society, believing that the greater part of the Fenians were simply good Catholics animated by hatred of England for its centuries-long persecution of Ireland. He explained to Rome (16 September 1870) that he wished to hold off executing the decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition denouncing the society (12 January 1870), citing a New York priest who, having attacked the Fenians in a sermon at Mass, saw his congregation abandon the service. When Rome insisted that the Inquisition's decree be enforced in America (January 1871), Bishop William McCloskey of Louisville, like Purcell, saw great trouble ahead unless Rome freed them from the obligation (letter to Purcell, 25 April 1871).

Those bishops who believed that time worked against the Fenians had reason on their side: Ireland's Catholic bishops were opposed to the nationalist movement, the peasantry was "apathetic," and the English "well informed."<sup>32</sup> The Fenians held their last congress, in 1876, and the organization collapsed with John O'Mahony's death in 1877. The name "Fenianism" lives on as generic for those Irishmen devoted to uniting the whole of the Island under a republic by any means possible.

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Secret societies would take up much of Bishop Chatard's time, beginning with his first synod in December 1878, a pastoral issued on the Feast of the Epiphany, 1879, and in a published essay, "Catholic Societies, April 1879."<sup>33</sup> In the latter Chatard warned the faithful against joining any oath-bound society which excluded "directly or indirectly the supervision of the Church . . . ." Any who did so would be "excommunicated."<sup>34</sup> He, and others like him, saw secret societies in the United States through a European lens--selfish, lawless, violent, in their spirit Protestant--meaning of "private judgment and self-assertion, which leads men to condemn authority" which is ultimately from God.<sup>35</sup> Chatard saved his darkest fears for his commonplace book--his belief that "secret societies assassinate their opponents" and that Joseph Mazzini (the liberal Italian nationalist) had given "a passport and a dagger to an assassin."<sup>36</sup> That was the sort of people the Church believed it was dealing with.

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<sup>31</sup> Bishop Amadeus Rappe of Cleveland wrote Purcell (13 September 1865) that many St. Louis priests secretly encouraged the Fenians, "that bad cause." Leurs also believed that "not a few" clergy were "secretly in the movement." (23 March 1864 to Purcell)

<sup>32</sup> Schrier, Ireland and American Emigration, 125.

<sup>33</sup> Published in the American Quarterly Review and later collected in Occasional Essays (New York, 1894), 166-181.

<sup>34</sup> Browne, Knights of Labor, 27.

<sup>35</sup> Occasional Essays, 1894, 173-175.

<sup>36</sup> Chatard papers, commonplace book, Box A-10. *D'Unita Cattolica* was his source.

Beyond freemasonry and other secret societies, the bishops consistently condemned socialism, partly on moral grounds (socialists regarded divorce as a root reform), but also as a source of class conflict and for representing the “leveling tendency of the day.”<sup>37</sup> Chatard, not blind to labor’s hardships, blamed the “wealthy class, whose grasping at wealth has brought about this uprising against them.” But like the *laissez-faire* theorists of that day (and ours), he attributed the differences between rich and poor to talent or its lack.<sup>38</sup> Though he understood that capitalists were often unjust and the “poor hardworking man” were only seeking support in “combinations and in his numbers,” but that introduced its own evils, for bound by oath woe to those who will not strike when ordered: “The man who continues to work [during a strike] is made to understand that he must desist on pain of risk to life or limb, and the threat is very often carried out.” What then was the worker to do in the face of the greed of the rich? Chatard’s advice to labor was simply “stifle their envy of capitalists by looking to heaven, . . .”<sup>39</sup> But shouldn’t the Church champion the poor? And how far “should [the Church] wield its influence” in temporal matters? That, Chatard admitted, was “a delicate question.”<sup>40</sup>

The earthly alternative to a secular trade union was a Catholic one. Realizing that “unless a man belong to some secret trade union, he will hardly be able to find employment,” Chatard wanted Catholic workmen to band together in “self-defense” in Catholic insurance, burial, and employment societies.<sup>41</sup> There the chaplain would keep the Catholic workingman from “false notions.” To set an example, in March 1879, Chatard joined the recently founded Society of Catholic Knights of America. Waiving all claims for insurance benefits, his purpose was to draw attention to an approved Catholic benefit society and away from non-Catholic ones.<sup>42</sup> But a Catholic trade union suffered under severe limitations: In “labor question” disputes--taken to mean “strikes and conflict over wages,” a Catholic trade union could withdraw its labor if dissatisfied with the wages offered, but even then only in moderation because of the danger of civil strife: For Chatard, “in reality, the laborer has no right to a cent more than he has contracted for. He is at liberty not to enter into the contract; once he has done so he must keep his word [or you have the doctrine of the] community of goods.”<sup>43</sup> Chatard’s formulation did not differ greatly, if at all, from that of the leading “Social Darwinists” of the day, the Englishman, Herbert Spencer and the American, William Graham Sumner. On the one hand, workers were to

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<sup>37</sup> O'Brien, Public Catholicism, 70.

<sup>38</sup> Occasional Essays, 175, 176.

<sup>39</sup> American Quarterly Review, IV (April 1879), 220, quoted in Browne, Knights of Labor, 27, 28.

<sup>40</sup> Occasional Essays, 178, 179.

<sup>41</sup> Occasional Essays, 172.

<sup>42</sup> Indiana Central Catholic, 22 March 1879, 4; Chatard papers, Box-9, file 12. Founded in July 1877 in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1879 it claimed 2,000 members in 80 branches.

<sup>43</sup> Occasional Essays, 177-180. Chatard was quoting Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, #12, “. . . that the main tenet of Socialism, the community of goods, must be utterly rejected; . . .” [Ital. orig.].

be submissive to authority in the hope of eventual eternal bliss and on the other, forbidden to break a “contract” (which they had never signed) for small pay. In holding both with Marx on the function of religion (“Religion is the sigh of the creature overwhelmed by misfortune, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people”), and with the *laissez-faire* school on the inviolability of the market, the bishop of Vincennes might be said to have compassed the political economy of the day.

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The practice of establishing Catholic institutions in parallel with secular or Protestant ones resulted in what was later labeled the “Catholic ghetto.” Unfortunately for the Catholic Knights of America, a trade union ghetto was one not many Catholic workers were prepared to enter. They were attracted instead to the Knights of Labor (K of L). Founded in Philadelphia, December 1869, the Knights was a secret society whose name was uttered by members only in a whisper, seldom aloud, except at the initiation of new members, and never published. Such secrecy had become the rule because “open and public associations, . . . after a struggle of centuries to protect or advance the interests of labor” had failed.<sup>44</sup> An idiosyncratic union eschewing the strike, the Knights advanced the idea of cooperatives and admitted all “producers” to membership, excluding only lawyers, bankers, rum sellers, professional gamblers, and the Chinese. (Its bar against rum sellers was a nod to the weakness for liquor of many workmen, a concern also commonly expressed in the by-laws of Irish societies. Lawyers, bankers, and gamblers were not “producers,” and the Chinese worked for wages so trifling that non-Chinese could not compete.)<sup>45</sup> Its ranks were open to women, blacks, the new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe—even employers and shopkeepers if they had once been wage earners and if they provided union standards of wages and working conditions to their employees.

The Knights aimed at “making knowledge and industrial and moral worth, not wealth,” the true standard, while securing for labor its proper share of wealth and leisure. Its demands included weekly wage payments, mechanics lien laws, abolition of child, contract, and convict labor, the eight-hour day, equal pay for equal work for women, public lands for actual settlers, arbitration rather than the strike, and consumer and producer cooperatives. In 1878, the year Bishop Chatard arrived in Indianapolis, membership in the Knights

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<sup>44</sup> Zwierlein, II, 437.

<sup>45</sup> Terence V. Powderly’s The Path I Trod: Thirty Years of Labor (Columbia University Press: New York, 1940) devoted a chapter (A Visit to Hell) to the temperance issue. Having seen what drink did to workingmen (Powderly blamed the Mollie Maquire depredations on drink), he was a total abstainer until age 45, when his doctor prescribed an occasional drink. Even beer was prohibited at K of L sponsored picnics.

was under 10,000, but it grew rapidly, doubling and tripling annually, reaching its high point of 700,000 in 1886. Its first leader, Uriah Stevens, had an extensive background in fraternal societies—Masons, Odd Fellows, and the Knights of Pythias. Consequently, the Knights were steeped in ritualism--sworn oaths, Bible readings of a strong Protestant bent, and its “secret work”--not murder or bombings--but signs, handshake, passwords, and symbols committed to memory and peculiar to it. Members took a “solemn vow” obligating the initiate to “secrecy, obedience, and mutual assistance.”<sup>46</sup>

Vatican policy toward secret societies was based on an 1846 decree of the Sacred and Universal Inquisition. A circular letter to Canada’s bishops, 1 July 1870 (a copy is found in Chatard’s papers), mentioned freemasons, socialists, the Odd Fellows, and secret oaths directed at church or government or which promote strikes that give rise to the “danger of riot or bloodshed” and are dangerous to souls.<sup>47</sup> Some priests denied the sacraments and even Christian burial to members. After 1879, when Terence V. Powderly succeeded Stevens as Grand Master Workman, the Church’s opposition was a tremendous problem for him. Practicing Catholic and first generation Irish-American, under Powderly, “the first American working-class hero of national stature,”<sup>48</sup> the Knights became a kind of fusion of labor, Irish nationalism, and social reform.<sup>49</sup>

If the “Irish as a group” and much of the Catholic press “stood firmly behind the labor movement,”<sup>50</sup> the bishop of Vincennes did not: In response to a priest’s inquiry about the coopers’ union (barrel makers), Chatard informed him that it was an oath-bound society and therefore “I declare them included in the condemnation of the pastoral of Epiphany, 1879.”<sup>51</sup> It was probably this that sparked the rumor reaching Powderly that the Knights of Labor had been “condemned by name” in the Indianapolis diocese that December.<sup>52</sup> Chatard’s support of Catholic societies and his condemnation of secret ones won praise from the Vatican Office of Propaganda.<sup>53</sup> He also discovered that in certain cases the Church’s opposition to secret societies could be to the laity’s advantage: In December 1881 he was told by a locomotive engineer, a Catholic who had balked at being blindfolded and required to swear the oath of secrecy, that the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was like the freemasons. Since the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, the man informed

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<sup>46</sup> The Path I Trod: The Autobiography of Terence V. Powderly (Columbia University Press: New York, 1940), 49-54.

<sup>47</sup> Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 17.

<sup>48</sup> Craig Phelan, Grand Master Workman: Terence Powderly and the Knights of Labor (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Powderly was up to his neck in Irish revolutionary politics; he was an officer in the Clan na Gael and the Land League, the latter an expression of the “New Departure,” a policy combining revolutionary force and constitutionalism into one.

<sup>50</sup> Dolan, American Catholic Experience, 330, 331; Of the 503 men and women listed from the colonial era to the 1990s in Gary Fink, Biographical Dictionary of American Labor, (1990s), one-quarter are Irish or Irish descent; the Irish were also the most eminent leaders.

<sup>51</sup> Chatard papers, Box A-11, File 26.

<sup>52</sup> Browne, Knights of Labor, 75.

<sup>53</sup> Undated document from the Office of Propaganda, Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 15.

Chatard, railroad management preferred to hire Catholics like himself who were “at a premium. Belonging to the Brotherhood was a reason for not getting a place.”<sup>54</sup>

Beyond secrecy and its attendant problems, part of the difficulties between Powderly and the clergy had a personal dimension: Accused of atheism, of attacking the Church, and of associating with socialists, in the longest chapter of his autobiography Powderly complained that “The attitude of many influential priests of the church was decidedly unfriendly [and] “in many places” subjected the Knights “to scathing criticisms and condemnation.” Powderly’s disputes with priests and bishops occasionally assumed shocking proportions: In 1871, his Knights of Labor badge mistaken for a Freemasons’, he was denied entry to Mass; once, in the confessional, a priest recognized his voice and, in the belief that he was a Mason, told him to kneel and threatened to horsewhip him. Enraged, Powderly called him out intending to thrash him in the street, but the priest demurred; Scranton’s bishop, William O’Hara, thinking Powderly had slandered him, named him at Mass a “busybody and a slanderer,” a “fraud,” an “imposter,” a person to be avoided by the congregation, all insults carried in the press. Meeting with O’Hara, the bishop insisted Powderly had lied about him, demanded he kneel, and began to curse him with the cross. Refusing either to kneel or leave, Powderly retorted that O’Hara was a mere tenant in the house the laity had paid for and if he attacked him again at Mass, he would sue; Bishop James A. Healy of Maine once summoned Powderly to complain of his speaking in his diocese without his permission. Said Healy, Powderly was “duty bound to consult your superiors in such matters.” The labor leader again lost his temper. Such episodes would have been common gossip among the bishops. The problem was clericalism: his bishop-critics, persuaded that they had sufficient authority, believed they could dictate to the labor leader, who, they thought, as Grand Master Workman similarly reigned over the Knights.<sup>55</sup> Chafing at clerical opposition, over time Powderly became decidedly anticlerical himself: Many a priest, he wrote, “a tyrant by nature,” was by holy orders given “the opportunity to exercise, in a limited way, his tyrannous will.” The clergy, he believed, were neither better nor worse than other men, and their lives “in some instances, not so good as that of the ordinary workingman’s.”<sup>56</sup>

But not every bishop regarded the Knights with disfavor: In 1873 Louisville’s William McCloskey sought guidance from Archbishop Purcell on the secret oath problem. McCloskey saw no problem if the object was to keep secret their proceedings, the secrets being “harmless,” and that if anything objectionable were introduced (such as an attempt to ally with forbidden societies), Catholics, he was sure, would abandon the

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<sup>54</sup> Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 15.

<sup>55</sup> The Path I Trod, 320-328. A further discordance with the Church his run-ins with clerics may have led to was Powderly’s support of the public schools: “I am in favor” of them, “God bless them.” As the “bulwark” of the nation’s safety and protector of “our republican institutions,” Powderly would give his “right arm” for them. Naturally, this gave still more ammunition to his Catholic critics. Path I Trod, 362.

<sup>56</sup> Having never found a good reason for the Church’s criticism of masonry, preferring it to the Knights of Columbus, in 1901 Powderly joined the York and Scottish Rite in Washington D. C., rising to the 32nd degree, the highest rank but one. His belief in God never shaken, Powderly looked forward with confidence at the last when he would stand alone before God. Path I Trod, 371; 378, 379; 381.

Knights. He reported the view of one of his priests that, given the popularity of the K of L, if the Church did not accommodate the men in this “we might as well close our churches.” Because the workers had so little protection, McCloskey wanted to give them all that can be “yield[ed] and they claim.” But to insist that the oath must be taken without the workman first seeing it, he instructed his clergy, was not acceptable. [But an oath that could be reneged after hearing it would not remain secret, which was the whole point.] McCloskey thought the conditions set out by the Council of Baltimore “go pretty far” but were not always clear; could Purcell advise him before he made his position public?<sup>57</sup>

The question of what to do about the Knights of Labor came to a head in 1884 when, at the request of archbishop of Quebec, Rome condemned the Canadian Knights of Labor. James Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore and dean of the American hierarchy chosen by the pope to preside over the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore scheduled for 1884, held that the ban was not binding in the United States. New York’s Archbishop Michael Corrigan was sure that it was.<sup>58</sup> Chatard, in Rome the previous year as one of the ten American bishops preparing for the council, wanted specific rules regarding secret societies adopted, but he found himself in the minority. When he continued to campaign against secret societies and trade unions at the Plenary Council itself, Chatard aroused violent disagreement in proposing that the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) be condemned, a step he had already taken in the Indianapolis diocese in 1882.<sup>59</sup> In the end, the bishops’ Baltimore pastoral was an unequal compromise reflecting their division: It supported Catholic trade unions, warned against Masonic and “kindred societies,” and noted that “care must be taken” lest workingmen’s societies induce members “to break the laws of justice, by withholding labor . . . or by otherwise unlawfully violating the rights of their employers.”<sup>60</sup> While it did not condemn unions, Gibbons admitted that had a vote been taken at Baltimore “a majority of the archbishops would have favored banning the Knights.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Notre Dame Archives.

<sup>58</sup> William V. Shannon, The American Irish (MacMillan Comp.: New York, 1963), 126-130.

<sup>59</sup> Browne, Knights of Labor, 99, 100, 115-117; Curran, Corrigan, 104.

<sup>60</sup> Bishops’ Pastorals, Vol. 1, 233-236.

<sup>61</sup> O’Brien, Public Catholicism, 88. Reher, Catholic Intellectuals in America, 68. In other actions taken at the 1884 Baltimore Council, on the question how much philosophy and theology was needed at major seminaries, Chatard argued that Latin be encouraged in teaching Biblical exegesis. Out of some seventy votes cast, Chatard’s position only garnered eleven. He had better luck in carrying the day in arguing that a Catholic school was one held to be such by the bishop; that nuns be examined for competence by their orders, that no mention of attendance at Mass of non-Catholics in Catholic schools be made (as a practical matter, if non-Catholics were kept out of Catholic schools, the schools would not be viable). Almost all of the bishops accepted this view even though public schools were seen as Protestant and propaganda for religious indifferentism—the bishops were worried that friendships developed across denominational lines would lead to “mixed marriages.” Cassidy, Catholic Historical Review, 414, 415, 418, 420, 421; 301, 302.

The Vatican, having twice condemned the Canadian Knights of Labor by 1886, seemed to have shifted decisively against the American Knights as well. That year, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, at a crowded gathering of labor demonstrating for the eight-hour day at Chicago's Haymarket, seven policemen and four bystanders were killed by an unknown bomb thrower. Scores more were injured, adding guilt by association to the weight of opinion against trade unions. The reaction was so intense in the city and the nation that eight labor leaders, "some not even present at the rally," were found guilty of conspiring to commit murder and condemned to death. In all, four were executed, one committed suicide, and the remaining three pardoned by Illinois governor Peter Altgeld in 1893, a courageous act that ended Altgeld's political career. Dubbed a "riot" or a "massacre," the Haymarket Affair added to the fears of those bishops who supported the Knights that its enemies among the hierarchy would pressure Rome to ban it.<sup>62</sup>

Chatard needed no convincing that the Knights of Labor was condemnatory on the grounds of socialism and anarchism, the latter for Powderly's opposition to capitalism's "wage system." In October 1886, in a letter to Cincinnati Archbishop William H. Elder, Chatard held that it was undeniable that the Knights used strikes, boycotts, and persecuted non-union men and scabs. Still, while convinced that such organizations could not be trusted to be truthful to the bishops, still, even he counseled that the prudent path was to avoid giving the Knights any countenance. Catholic workers were to be enticed away not by denying them the sacraments, but arguments calculated to show that they were making themselves the "servants of men".<sup>63</sup> In November he privately congratulated his friend, New York's Michael Corrigan, for his pastoral condemning assaults against the rights of property as "most opportune and will do more for the Church in America, than the liberal Priests can do harm."<sup>64</sup> In his own December pastoral, Chatard, the "perennial foe" of the Knights, was more circumspect regarding "mutual advancement" societies, "as long as they do not take up false principles of action hurtful to society, there is no harm in them."<sup>65</sup> To the Indianapolis bishop, however, all strikes and boycotts were hurtful to society.

Testifying to the division that existed among the American bishops, Corrigan and Chatard won a scathing rebuke, albeit private, from San Francisco Archbishop Patrick Riordan in a January 1887 letter to the liberal bishop of Richmond, John Keane: "I would wish that this constant interference with societies and labor unions should cease, and if some of the Bishops have leisure time for pastorals let them attack, if they must

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<sup>62</sup> Morris, American Catholics, 86, 87.

<sup>63</sup> Browne, Knights of Labor, 202, 203.

<sup>64</sup> Chatard to Corrigan, 23 November 1886, Browne, Knights of Labor, 224, 225. Corrigan returned the compliment, writing, "the more we strengthen each other's hands the better for discipline, and better for the faithful." Curran, Corrigan, 206.

<sup>65</sup> Browne, Knights of Labor, 224, 225, f.n. 143. Riordan to Keane, 22 January 1887.

attack somebody, the gigantic corporations and monopolies of the land and say a kind and tender word for the great army of the laboring classes, that in our large cities are being reduced to the condition of slaves.”<sup>66</sup>

In the center of the dispute between the Knights of Labor and the bishops stood Baltimore’s Archbishop James Gibbons. To satisfy himself about the Knights, Gibbons had been meeting with the labor leader since 1880. Powderly had succeeded in persuading the union’s general assembly to substitute one’s “word of honor” for the secret oath, to make the name public, and to drop the words “nobly and holy” from the ritual--all steps designed to remove the Church’s opposition. However, since secrecy remained an important part of its activities, opposition continued.<sup>67</sup> In October 1886, Gibbons told Powderly of his intention to go to Rome where he would place the Knights in a favorable light; in turn, Powderly reassured Gibbons that as a practicing Catholic who regularly received the sacraments, he was neither a Mason nor a member of any other society that the Church condemned. He did point out the difficulties that the Church’s condemnation of the Masons, the Odd Fellows, and the Knights of Pythias presented to his members. Protestant Knights were understandably upset, and in opposing the Knights of Labor, non-Catholic and Catholic members alike felt that the Catholic Church was targeting “their material well-being.”<sup>68</sup>

When the prefect of the *Propaganda Fide* requested that the American archbishops meet to consider whether to condemn the Union’s Civil War veterans’ organization, the Grand Army of the Republic, Gibbons widened the agenda to include the Knights of Labor and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOL). Persuaded that the secrecy of the K of L was for job protection and did not prevent members from making good confessions, at Gibbons’ invitation, Powderly met with nine of the twelve American archbishops and repeated assurances that the Knights’ obligation of secrecy was not an oath, but a pledge to protect the worker and union business from enemies or strangers. It left the Catholic Knight free to reveal everything at confession and did not prevent the leaders from giving information to ecclesiastical authorities outside the confessional.<sup>69</sup> Gibbons’ own argument to his fellow bishops was always the same: there were 500,000 Catholic Knights of Labor and to alienate them would be a grave matter. Variations on the theme appeared in letters to fellow bishops: He warned Archbishop Elder that the bishops should be careful not to be too hard on Knights, “otherwise they would suspect us of siding with the moneyed corporations and employers.” Elder wrote Archbishop Gilmour of Cleveland that if the Knights were used harshly or condemned “we lose them” and they will hate and suspect America’s bishops as workers in France do their hierarchy. “I would regard the condemnation of the Knights of Labor, as a signal calamity to the Catholic Church of America.”<sup>70</sup> The minutes

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<sup>66</sup> Browne, *Knights of Labor*, 225.

<sup>67</sup> *Path I Trod*, 328, 329; Browne, *Knights of Labor*, 35.

<sup>68</sup> Powderly, *Path I Trod*, 348, 349.

<sup>69</sup> *The Path I Trod*, 316, n. 2.

<sup>70</sup> William V. Shannon, *The American Irish* (MacMillan Comp.: New York, 1963), 126-130.



of the archbishops' meeting with Powderly made the same point: "Labor has rights as well as capital. We should not condemn labor and let capital go free--would regard condemnation of K. of L. as disastrous to the Church." Further, "if objectionable features are eliminated K. of L. should be tolerated, should not be condemned." The archbishops were unanimous that the Grand Army and the Hibernians should not be condemned, but two of the nine archbishops voted to condemn the Knights and New York's Michael Corrigan expressed reservations as well. Under the rules of the Roman Propaganda which governed the United States as a "mission church," the question of condemning the Knights of Labor had to be carried to Rome.<sup>71</sup>

Scheduled to receive his Cardinal's hat in Rome on St. Patrick's Day, 1887, in late January Gibbons joined Minnesota's Archbishop John Ireland, John Keane, rector designate of the new Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and Denis O'Connell, rector of the North American College. Ireland and Keane had prepared a comprehensive memo for his use--a long-rehearsed battery of reasons against condemning the Knights of Labor, in line with those Gibbons had employed with the bishops: Such a proscription would be "dangerous" for the reputation of the American church and "possibly even arouse persecution"; "ineffectual" with Catholic workers who "would regard it as false and unjust"; "destructive" because workers would be impelled to disobey and "even to join condemned societies" heretofore shunned; "ruinous" for the finances of the American church; and a "cruel" blow to the authority of the American bishops who were known to oppose "such a condemnation." Nativist anti-Catholics would be aroused against Vatican interference, and church revenues, including "Peter's pence," would be hurt. In any case, the Knights were declining in numbers and influence<sup>72</sup> and to "lose the heart of the people would be a misfortune for which the friendship of the few rich and powerful would be no compensation."<sup>73</sup> Gibbons' exertions on behalf of his brief included buttonholing every member of the Congregation of the Holy Office. During a heated argument with its head, he threatened to hold the man responsible for the loss of souls if the Knights were proscribed. On such prudential and expedient grounds, in 1888 the Propaganda concluded that the Knights "may be allowed for the time being," conditional on amendments to its constitution omitting references "which seem to savor of socialism and communism."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Morris, American Catholics, 87-93; Allen Sinclair Will, Life of Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore (E. P. Dutton: New York, 1922), 327-329.

<sup>72</sup> In 1886 "business unionism" appeared with the founding of the American Federation of Labor, 1886; by fall 1887 the Knights began to lose strikes and declined.

<sup>73</sup> Will, Life of Gibbons, 332. Browne, Knights of Labor, 374. Browne has the full text of Gibbons' submission to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, "The Question of the 'Knights of Labor'," 365-378. Reher, Catholic Intellectuals, 68. The similarity with the arguments used in the case of the Fenians are obvious.

<sup>74</sup> Dolan, American Catholic Experience, 332,333. Copies of the letter from the prefect of the Propaganda to Gibbons in Latin and two translations can be found in Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 26.

Gibbons' successful defense of the Knights of Labor (and through it, trade unions in general) had enormous consequences. Having prevented the Vatican from publicly denouncing the economic reformer Henry George or his 1879 book, Progress and Poverty),<sup>75</sup> Gibbons argued for an encyclical on social problems. This would become *Rerum Novarum*, 1891 ("Of new things"). A mixture of the medieval with the modern, Leo XIII accepted the need for state intervention to secure justice and fair wages and "spoke against the excesses of capitalism and individualism."<sup>76</sup> Workers were to be treated with dignity, never as objects, and had the right to form unions (on a guild model, for the strikingly pre-modern purpose of encouraging piety). Because they hurt both sides and usually ended in violence, strikes were not acceptable and the state had the duty of preventing such strife."<sup>77</sup>

Whatever its limitations, in getting beyond condemnations of socialism *Rerum Novarum* is the most important encyclical of the nineteenth century.<sup>78</sup> Gibbons' arguments for prudence and expediency proved sound: in the United States the working class was saved for the American Church, and with the labor movement open wide to a faithful Catholic laity, the trade union movement was more moderate than it would otherwise have been. Unlike Europe, in the United States labor would not be divided between "secular" unions and inconsequential Catholic ones. With the Knights of Labor issue settled and *Rerum Novarum*, "for the first time the bishops stood behind the people in their commitment to the cause of labor," marking "the first step in the formation of a Catholic social-gospel tradition."<sup>79</sup> To that end, Chatard made no contribution.

*Rerum Novarum* was not Rome's last word on secret societies; In August 1894, Cardinal Francesco Satolli, recently appointed as Rome's first apostolic delegate to the United States, instructed the American bishops to condemn by name the Sons of Temperance, Odd Fellows, and Knights of Pythias. No Catholic could be a member of them on pain of denial of the sacraments. Gibbons and Ireland resisted the order; Chatard and other conservatives argued that it was already in effect. In November Satolli insisted it was the

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<sup>75</sup> The Roman Congregation did condemn the views of Henry George, but it was not made public. McAvoy, Americanist Heresy, 14. When George stood for New York mayor in 1886, five years before *Rerum Novarum*, his issue was social justice: economic inequality, poverty-level wages, crowded, unhealthy tenements, lack of playgrounds for the poor, and high infant mortality in immigrant neighborhoods. He supported equal pay for equal work and heavier taxes for absentee landlords. Ironically, at the time Archbishop Corrigan was embroiled in a dispute with K of L cemetery workers threatening to strike for better wages.

<sup>76</sup> Jay P. Dolan, The Irish Americans (Bloomsbury Press: New York, 2008), 272.

<sup>77</sup> Gibbons also opposed boycotts and strikes except for "desperate causes" and he often failed to support labor in its disputes with capital, for example, the use of non-union labor on church construction. Thomas W. Spalding, The Premier See: A History of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1789-1989 (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1989), 287. He also disdained feminists and had little confidence in the talents of blacks.

<sup>78</sup> Chadwick, Popes, 1830-1914, 315.

<sup>79</sup> Dolan, American Catholic Experience, 333; see also Morris, American Catholics, 92, and Encyclopedia of American Catholic History, 75.

pope's wish that the decree be published. Ireland and Gibbons continued to protest and did not publish it, Chatard did.<sup>80</sup> In the [Indianapolis] Catholic Record's version, the diocesan paper has Chatard availing himself of a two-month delay in promulgating it in an effort to win some modification for those Catholics "who . . . had joined them in good faith" and had found nothing in them "against the Church." The Catholic Record praised Chatard for his pastoral approach so different from those bishops who had simply "laid down the law" by promulgating it immediately. Still, "Rome has spoken" and thus all the Church's loyal and reverent "children" must submit. Catholic societies exist: join them.<sup>81</sup>

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The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH)<sup>82</sup> posed many of the same problems for Chatard as did trade unions. Its origins go back to Ulster secret societies, such as the "Defenders," which became allied with the Society of United Irishmen. Such societies were called forth by the penal laws--vengeful congeries of draconian Parliamentary enactments designed to keep Irish Catholics "in a position of social, economic, and political inferiority."<sup>83</sup> Catholics could not buy or inherit land, join the army, vote, or hold any office of state. Religious order priests and bishops were exiled, Catholic education forbidden, and the Gaelic language outlawed. According to tradition, the Hibernians took root in Ireland in the seventeenth century, guarding the priests who said Mass in the fields in secret. Present in America in 1793, as a public organization in the United States the Hibernians date to 1825 as the St. Patrick Fraternal Society, which, in 1836, issued a charter to a group of New York City Irishmen. The AOH held its first national convention in the city that year, the date usually given for its founding in the U.S. Requirements for membership included male, age 18 to 45, good health (membership conferred sickness and death benefits), a parent of Irish descent, and by being a "practical Catholic" (receiving communion at Easter). In the eastern U.S. in the 1840s and 1850s, a time and place of virulent anti-Catholicism, it was the Hibernians whom Bishop "Dagger" John Hughes mobilized to protect the Catholic churches in New York City from arsonists.<sup>84</sup> The Hibernians grew rapidly after the Civil War, the bulk of its membership urban laborers, and until World War I, heavily Irish-born. Although subject to church authority and approbation (bishops appointed priest-chaplains to guide each "division" (parish),<sup>85</sup> most of the AOH leaders were Fenians who gave support and money to the cause of an independent republican Ireland.

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<sup>80</sup> McAvoy, Americanist Heresy, 77.

<sup>81</sup> Catholic Record, 10 January; 7 March 1895.

<sup>82</sup> Timothy Meagher, The Columbia Guide to Irish American History (Columbia University Press: New York, 2005). Until 1851 the AOH was known as the "Friendly Sons of Erin."

<sup>83</sup> J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923 (Faber and Faber: London, 1966), 159.

<sup>84</sup> Kauffman, Faith and Fraternity, 7, 8.

<sup>85</sup> Constitution of AOH, Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 17. William W. Giffin, The Irish, 58, 59, has it that you had to be Irish-born to be a member; this was dropped in 1884, and Irish descent qualified.

Brought to Indiana by Pennsylvania coal miners just after the Civil War, tradition gives St. Patrick's Day, 1870, as the Hibernians' founding date in Indianapolis,<sup>86</sup> with Fr. Denis O'Donoghue its spiritual advisor. Hibernian fortunes in the capital city waxed and waned: its two lodges in 1874 met weekly and the benevolent side of the order was organized in 1878. A year later, there were six lodges in the city, each with a president and secretary. In the 1880s the number of lodges fell to two (partly due to the founding of other Irish organizations and partly to Chatard's expressed displeasure with the Hibernians), then rose to three in 1889 and to six again in 1900.<sup>87</sup> The AOH came to Terre Haute in 1879, Lafayette and Logansport, 1883, and South Bend, in 1885. By 1892 it counted some 1,100 members in Indiana; by 1910 Indianapolis alone had a thousand members in eight divisions and nine female auxiliaries of 1,100 (the first female auxiliary organized in Indianapolis, 9 May 1899). In 1894 the Ancient Order of Hibernians claimed 93,000 members nationwide.<sup>88</sup>

As a benevolent society, the AOH was uncontroversial--ethnic mutual benefit societies had long been common in America. Advancing the principles of Irish nationality was also acceptable, and its motto "Fidelity to Faith and Fatherland" promised acceptance of clerical leadership. But a secret society of "Fenians" devoted to securing Ireland's independence by force with ties to other banned societies, was another matter entirely. In February 1880 three AOH members complained to Chatard that P. H. McNelis, state delegate and a director to the national Hibernians, had told them that there were laws binding members beyond the constitution and the by-laws known only to state and national officers like himself. In a letter hand-delivered by Fr. Bessonies, Chatard summoned McNelis to the bishop's residence to answer the charges. McNelis denied that the AOH was a secret society deserving to be banned. The "secrets," he explained, were only coded marks on correspondence--in AOH parlance, the "merchandise,"<sup>89</sup> perfectly mundane, known only to its high officials and of interest only to them. There was nothing to worry about. It's unlikely that Chatard believed him.

Chatard's other problem with the Hibernians now seems trivial--their habit of holding dancing balls and like entertainments to raise funds. Not dancing as such, but a Catholic society under Church authority holding dancing parties provided, in Chatard's view, the scandal.<sup>90</sup> His pastoral in 1879 on the feast of the Epiphany

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<sup>86</sup> Phillips, Indiana in Transition, 465; Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, 622, Encyclopedia of American Catholic History, 104; Blanchard (Indiana Catholic Church, 616-628), however, gives its organization in Indiana at Knightsville, Clay Co., 1871 and 1872 for Marion county. Peopling Indiana, 261, also credits Knightsville, Clay County, 1871, as the first, organized by a Thomas McGovern, the first Indiana AOH delegate; then Indianapolis, 1873, Terre Haute, 1879, Lafayette and Logansport, 1883, and South Bend, 1885. The publication marking the 25th Year celebration of the Indiana Catholic and Record publication followed Blanchard.

<sup>87</sup> Giffin, The Irish, 59.

<sup>88</sup> Peopling Indiana, 829; Twenty-Fifth Year Anniversary issue, Indiana Catholic and Record, 58.

<sup>89</sup> Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 17.

<sup>90</sup> Chatard's draft letter to John Bryne, AOH state delegate, 16 June 1880. Chatard papers.

had expressly forbidden such dances, but he soon discovered that the AOH continued to hold them under assumed names or as “private” entertainments. Angered over the “indocile spirit” shown, Chatard admonished the Hibernians for their “disobedience and disrespect to the authority of the Church, and of the consequent scandal given to all.” Such subterfuge would not work; he would hold the societies responsible.<sup>91</sup>

Notwithstanding the warning, eighteen months later, August 1880, perhaps in the hope that time had faded memory sufficiently, the Indiana Hibernians held a picnic-excursion. Learning of the event, Chatard wrote the state commander ordering the suspension of the contumacious Hibernians for two months and banning the wearing of regalia and badges at church services (only the Daviess County Lodge was exempt). The Western Citizen supported the bishop: Dancing was fine at home where parents could watch, but public balls, in commingling good and bad elements were not respectable.<sup>92</sup> If picnics and dances had been unprofitable the ban might have fared better, but the August picnic raised \$400. Consequently, reports from parish priests of dancing balls continued to filter in, along with comments that some AOH members did not attend Mass or take communion.<sup>93</sup>

Deeply suspicious of the Hibernians, his patience exhausted by the continuing excursions, dancing parties, and grand balls, in February 1882 Chatard withdrew the chaplains, ending any connection between the organization and the diocese and prohibiting the wearing of AOH regalia at Mass. While it was not unlawful for a Catholic to belong, the Ancient Organization of Hibernians was “reduced to the condition of any other association of laymen with which the Catholic Church has nothing to do; . . .”<sup>94</sup>

Confirmation that distancing the diocese from the Hibernians had been wise came two months later, 6 May 1882. A group of Dublin Fenians, “The Invincibles,” its leaders formed and funded by London Fenians, stabbed to death two high British officials in Dublin’s Phoenix Park. The murders sparked universal outrage: The Indianapolis Western Citizen called the deed “diabolical” and the perpetrators “dastardly cowards.” Indianapolis Irishmen met a week later to condemn the act, although Fr. Denis Donaghue, revealing his own Fenian sympathies, found it suspicious that no arrests had been made, and was quoted as saying it was likely that enemies of Ireland were responsible, not Irishmen at all.<sup>95</sup> For Chatard, the murders strengthened his animus against the AOH, and at Rome in 1883 and at the 1884 Baltimore Council itself, he tried but failed to get the Hibernians banned.

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<sup>91</sup> Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 17; 8 February 1879.

<sup>92</sup> Western Citizen, 4 Sept 1880, 4. As for picnics, Finley Peter Dunne once observed “If Ireland could be freed by a picnic, she’d be an empire by now.” Jay P. Dolan, The Irish Americans: A History (New York, 2008), 189.

<sup>93</sup> For examples, see Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 17.

<sup>94</sup> Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 17

<sup>95</sup> Western Citizen, 13 May 1882, 1.

There were worse things than Hibernian dancing balls and Chatard knew it: By 1878, the year he was named bishop, the Ancient Order of Hibernians had been conflated in the public mind, the courts, and the Catholic Church with the “Mollie Maguires,”<sup>96</sup> an organization judged responsible for beatings, arson, and murder in the anthracite coal mining district of Pennsylvania. More than fifty men--all of them Catholic and Irish, most of them Hibernians, stood accused of belonging to the Mollies and of the deaths of mine owners, foremen, and public officials immediately after the Civil War--and of a second group in 1875 after the failure of a year and a half long strike. In all, the Mollies were blamed for sixteen murders. The Pennsylvania AOH was implicated in having provided institutional cover (Hibernian meeting halls had been used by the Mollies).<sup>97</sup> So great did hostility to the Mollies grow that the at its March 1877 convention in New York the Hibernians repudiated them (“that terrible band of misguided men”) and revised its constitution “so as to make our rules in harmony with the teachings of our Holy Church.”<sup>98</sup>

The war between the Pennsylvania establishment and the Mollies proved to be a one-sided affair: Arrested by the coal owners’ private police, on the testimony of Pinkerton detectives and informers, at trials in which the company’s lawyers themselves served as the prosecution, conviction was inevitable. Ten were hanged, June 1877, ten more by December 1879, and another twenty imprisoned. Though the trials were not fair, and while some scholars doubt that the “Mollie Maguires” ever existed as an organization (Powderly and others denied it and a priest who heard the confessions of two of the executed men stated his belief in their innocence), a secret group of Irish workmen who did not blanch at murderous violence doubtless existed. But that only the guilty suffered execution is unlikely and the hangings, by inspiring sympathy for the condemned, had something of the effect of the British executions of the Irish rebels in the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. But not everyone sympathized: The bishops of Scranton and Philadelphia excommunicated AOH members and the Mollies and some parish priests refused burial to those suspected of belonging. Philadelphia Archbishop James Wood even congratulated the mine owners on the verdicts. And when the Hibernians met in Philadelphia in 1880, Wood denounced the order and refused permission to have Mass said at the convention. Not everyone abjured the Mollies (the Indianapolis Western Citizen, for one, lamented the hostility shown them),<sup>99</sup> but Chatard, McQuaid of Rochester, Gilmour of Cleveland, and other bishops “pursued the

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<sup>96</sup> The name of a secret violent society active in Ireland in the 1840s which exacted revenge for tenants against the depredations of landlords. The mythic “Molly Maguire” symbolized the struggle against injustice.

<sup>97</sup> Browne, Knights of Labor, 22, 23.

<sup>98</sup> Western Citizen, 5 May 1877, 7. M. J. Ward of Indiana was one of eight on the AOH national board.

<sup>99</sup> Western Citizen, 15 May 1880, 4; 19 June 1880, 4. Zwierlein, McQuaid, Vol II, ch. 24.

AOH as the real society of the Molly Maquires, and they were intolerant of all secret societies as breeders of anarchy, socialism, and irreligion.”<sup>100</sup>

Stung by the bishops' opposition, riven by factions, the national Hibernians worked to get its 53,000 members back in the hierarchy's good graces. In 1886 the New York Hibernians, desirous of having Bishop Michael Corrigan reappoint chaplains, stipulated that it was not oath-bound to withhold information from Church authorities or its membership, had no connection with Mollie Maquires or Ribbonmen or any other revolutionary society and, as an independent benevolent society, had nothing to do with politics, foreign or domestic.<sup>101</sup> (It had severed its ties with the Board of Erin--under an 1887 “treaty” the AOH was in control of the movement for Irish independence in America and the Board of Erin in control in Europe.)<sup>102</sup> Archbishop Gibbons strongly supported the Hibernians to his colleagues and in 1894 the bishops were prepared to state that the AOH was a “most admirable society,”<sup>103</sup> though it's unlikely the Bishop of Vincennes thought so. In 1900 Chatard suffered a serious stroke and rendered incapacitated; the pastor of St. Patrick's, Denis O'Donoghue, was appointed auxiliary bishop. It was O'Donoghue, a former chaplain of the AOH, who lifted the ban on regalia in church during the 1908 Hibernian national convention in Indianapolis.<sup>104</sup>

Indianapolis Hibernians did bestir themselves in 1903 to defend James Lynchehaun, an escaped Irish convict-rebel arrested in the city and facing extradition to Great Britain. Mass meetings were held at Tomlinson Hall, at which Indiana's two senators and the mayor spoke, a sign of the political importance of the Irish community. The “top lawyer” hired by the national AOH to defend Lynchehaun succeeded: extradition was denied on the grounds that the defendant had been convicted of a political crime.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> McAvoy, Americanist Heresy, 11, 12, 89. In 1979 the executed men were posthumously pardoned and praised for their efforts on behalf of labor. Coogan, Irish Diaspora, 321, 322.

<sup>101</sup> AOH letter to Corrigan, 23 March 1886, Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 17. Also see Zwierlein, vol. II, chapter 28.

<sup>102</sup> Printed circular, Chatard papers, Box A-11, file 17.

<sup>103</sup> Blanchard, Catholicism in Indiana, 620. Its membership, 94,000 in 1894, rose to 132,000 in 1908; counting the ladies auxiliaries, youths, and **rifles, WHAT?** 195,000. Glazier, Irish Encyclopedia.

<sup>104</sup> Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, 672. See Indiana Catholic Columbian, 23 July 1908, 1. **Is this right? Peopling Indiana**, 261. Chatard recovered well enough by June 1903 to celebrate his 25 years as priest, but the deterioration of his eyesight and general health led Joseph Chartrand (Cathedral rector and vicar) to be named co-adjutor with the right of succession, July 1910, the same time O'Donoghue became bishop of Louisville. Sr. Frances Assisi Kennedy, OSF, The Archdiocese of Indianapolis, 1834-2009: Like a Mustard Seed Growing (Editions du Sign: Strausbourg, France, 2009).

<sup>105</sup> Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, 831; Indianapolis News, 28 August 1903.

Complicating relations between the Catholic Church, Irish secret societies, and the movement for Ireland's independence were two organizations whose natures were far more worrisome than the Hibernians--the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), (founded in Dublin and New York in 1858 and the successor to the Fenians), and the Clan na Gael (the "tribe" or "family" of the Irish). "Secret and extremist, a society of elaborate rites and communications, the Clan was founded in New York in 1867 on the birthday of the patriot Wolfe Tone, the father of Irish republicanism."<sup>106</sup> Nationally, the AOH was closely associated with the IRB, as it had been with the Fenians, and there was also much dual membership of Hibernians and the Clan.

The head of the Clan, the Irish-born journalist John Devoy (1842-1928), became the leading Irish revolutionary in America. His rebel roots went deep: a grandfather took part in Ireland's 1898 "Rising" and his father was an active nationalist. He himself, educated by the Christian Brothers, at age ten was beaten by a teacher for refusing to sing "God Save the Queen." A member of the IRB, at nineteen he enlisted in the French Foreign Legion to get military training (the reason many Irish-Americans fought on both sides in the American Civil War). After serving a year in Algeria, he returned to Ireland to join the British Army. As a Fenian organizer, he was tasked by IRB head James Stephens with persuading Irishmen serving as British soldiers to swear an oath to overthrow English rule in Ireland. Over nearly five years, Devoy administered the oath to thousands; orchestrated the prison escape of one of the Fenian founders, James Stephens, in 1865; and took part in the 1866 Fenian uprising in Ireland. Imprisoned five years, he was released on condition that he leave the country; he arrived in New York, January 1871, to a fervid welcome from huge numbers of the city's Irish. In 1876, he established a formal alliance of the Clan in the U.S. and the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in Ireland under a common directorate (three from the Clan, three from the IRB). In 1877 the Clan counted 10,000 American members.<sup>107</sup> With the poet and newspaper editor, John Boyle O'Reilly,<sup>108</sup> Devoy organized the famous escape of six Irish prisoners from Australia in 1879. Supporting himself in America as a journalist, first on the New York Herald and after 1903 in his own weekly newspaper, the influential Gaelic American (circulation 30,000), he spread "the Gospel according to the Clan na Gael."<sup>109</sup>

"The most important revolutionary . . . nationalist organization in Irish American history," for more than fifty years "the Clan kept the cause of violent overthrow of British rule in Ireland and the establishment of an

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<sup>106</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone, Protestant, was a founder and leader of the Society of United Irishmen, 1791; Catholics and Presbyterians in a common cause to bring self-government to Ireland by breaking the British connection. Allying with France, the Rising of 1898 failed. Captured, his request to be shot rather than hung like a thief denied, Tone committed suicide. "He established, and later came almost to personify, a tradition of revolutionary violence" in Ireland's politics. J.C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1922 (Faber and Faber: London, 1969), 267.

<sup>107</sup> F. S. L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (Fontana/Collins: Glasgow, Scotland, 1973), 160, 161, 166.

<sup>108</sup> O'Reilly (1844-1890), like Devoy, joined the British Army to enlist Irish recruits to the cause of the IRB. Unlike Devoy, he was convinced by the failure of the 1870 invasion of Canada that force would not free Ireland, but that raising the status and esteem of the people would.

<sup>109</sup> Golway, Irish Rebel, 183.



independent Irish Republic alive.”<sup>110</sup> It was the main support of the IRB and contributed greatly to the success of the Land League (f. 1879)--the agitation for reform of Irish tenant rights uniting the peaceful methods of the Irish parliamentary party with the Fenian threat of violence.<sup>111</sup> It also funded John P. Holland’s successful submarine experiments, with the result that “In the 1890s the world’s most advanced submarines were being built in America” by an immigrant Irish nationalist devoted to “designing and building weapons to sink British warships.” To Holland belongs “the credit for bringing the submarine to a state of practical value.” By World War I most of the 400 submarines in the inventory of the sixteen navies who had them “were evolutionary progressions from Holland’s original designs.”<sup>112</sup>

The Clan na Gael existed in Indianapolis in numbers: In 1883 the diocesan newspaper, the Catholic New Record, noted that fifty-five members of the Irish National Land League meeting at the Emerald Hall had accepted a \$200 check from the Clan to forward to League headquarters. That Chatard was aware of the presence of the Clan and the “Irish Brotherhood” is evidenced by two notes, ominous in tone and in his own hand: the first, March 1884, read, “The Clan-na-Gael exists in this city, and has a large membership--It is not allowed to take the oath of obligation to the society out of the rooms—to shew it to any one. It is a secret oath-bound political society.” The second note, December 1886, read, “ ‘Irish Brotherhood’ exists in this city. It is secret; obedience is blind; the members are known by numbers [emph. orig.]. It is to help Ireland, and the members must be ready to do anything ordered.”<sup>113</sup> Even the most unrelenting and radical of Ireland’s nationalist rebels, Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa, had a foothold in Indianapolis: In November 1882 an item in

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<sup>110</sup> Meagher, The Columbia Guide to Irish American History (Columbia University Press: New York, 2005), 240.

<sup>111</sup> J.C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923 (Faber and Faber: London, 1966), 385, 386, 390. The 1881 Land Act won the “three F’s”; fair rent (assessed by arbitration), fixity of tenure (while the rent was paid), and the tenant’s freedom to sell right of tenancy at market value.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Massie, Castles of Steel, 122; Golway, Irish Rebel, 205. John Philip Holland, born County Clare (1841-1914); when his father died the mother moved the family to Limerick. Educated at the national schools and the Christian Brothers, he joined the Brothers in 1858 and taught until he resigned in 1873 due to ill health, whereupon he joined his mother and brothers in Boston. A school teacher in Paterson, New Jersey, Holland entered a U.S. Navy contest to design a “submersible.” Two brothers being Fenians, they introduced him to the revolutionary group which used “skirmishing funds” to finance his efforts. The Clan’s \$60,000 freed Holland from teaching and in 1881 he produced the “Fenian Ram,” a successful design launched in the Hudson River. A number of improved models followed, winning design contests along the way. Having lost Fenian money in 1883 over disagreements, in 1897 he went on to produce the Holland VI for his own company. The first submarine bought by the U.S. Navy, it was renamed the USS Holland. Japan, Great Britain, and the Netherlands bought Holland’s designs. He died a poor man during the “Guns of August” of 1914, a war in which the submarine would bring the participation of the United States. His company was the forerunner of the Electric Boat Company. As the USS Holland is the prototype for virtually all submarines, Holland is the father of the modern submarine.

<sup>113</sup> Chatard papers, Box A-11, folder 17.

the Western Citizen headlined “The Irish Skirmishing Fund,” referred to “the weekly meeting of its subscribers . . . .”<sup>114</sup> This was Rossa’s organization for the “liberation of Ireland through force of arms”--a “liberation” that took the form of terror “dynamite campaigns” against targets in Great Britain and Canada throughout the 1880s.”<sup>115</sup>

As with any oath-bound secret society, the Church’s chief worry was where did the member’s ultimate loyalty lay, with the Church, or in this case, the Clan na Gael? Would he be guided by the bishops or was his allegiance to the organization? On this point an April 1877 letter to Devoy from one of his Clan colleagues, Dr. William Carroll, was explicit: the Chicago physician wrote that it was “a man’s duty to be an Irishman first whether that prevented his being a Catholic or not.” Some priests were supportive of the cause, while others are “sending people to h-ll for belonging to it, . . . the fact is no people appreciate manliness better than ours and the more they see of it among revolutionists the better they will like us.”<sup>116</sup> It was this attitude that if the patriot had to choose between the Church and the revolutionary movement, the movement took precedence, that so worried the bishops. Devoy himself was called both “an infidel not a Catholic” and “a pillar of the faith.”<sup>117</sup>

The Clan na Gael would come to have a particularly close connection to the Indianapolis diocese in the person of Joseph Patrick O’Mahony, in 1910, a founder and the editor of the diocesan paper, the Indiana Catholic. Arriving in the United States from Tralee in 1890, he carried a coded letter of introduction to Devoy, proof that he was trusted, and evidence, too, that he was an active member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. (At Devoy’s death in 1928, O’Mahony attested that he had known the revolutionary intimately for thirty years and claimed association with him “in every phase of the movement for Irish independence.”)<sup>118</sup> As the Indianapolis Star noted at the Indiana Catholic’s birth, O’Mahony was not only an experienced

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<sup>114</sup> Western Citizen, 18 November 1882, 4.

<sup>115</sup> Rossa (10 September 1831-29 June 1915), was, by turns, a Fenian, Clan na Gael, and IRB member. Rossa, Devoy, and three others were the five released from British prisons in 1870 on condition they went into exile.

<sup>116</sup> Devoy, Post Bag, vol. 1, 249.

<sup>117</sup> Post Bag, vol. 2, 195, 196.

<sup>118</sup> Indiana Catholic and Record, 12 October 1928, 4. Devoy’s published correspondence, Devoy’s Post Bag, does not contain any correspondence of O’Mahony’s, and in the absence of any papers of the latter it is impossible to gauge what O’Mahony did for Ireland’s independence. His claim of intimate association with Devoy is likely to be true since there would be plenty of other Irishmen around in 1928 to deny it if false; Peter Costello, The Irish 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Irish Men and Women of All Time (Citadel Press: New York, 2001) placed St. Patrick at number one and Gerry Adams at 100); Devoy is 43rd, just behind James Cardinal Gibbons and ahead of Eugene O’Neill; John F. Kennedy was 4th.

newspaperman but also “well known in fraternal circles . . . .”<sup>119</sup> Most of his memberships were Irish-related: besides the Knights of Columbus, he was an active member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a founder of the Indianapolis Emmett Club (after Robert Emmett, the Irish patriot and martyr of the early nineteenth century),<sup>120</sup> and in 1893 founded the first John Barry Club (b. County Wexford, 1745), to promote the commodore’s recognition as “Father of the American Navy.” O’Mahony’s campaign succeeded: Congress voted \$50,000 to erect a monument to Barry in Washington, D.C., which was dedicated by President Woodrow Wilson and the secretary of the Navy, 16 May 1914.<sup>121</sup>

Given O’Mahony’s memberships and the coded letter he carried to Devoy,<sup>122</sup> there can be little doubt they included the Clan na Gael. Such multiple memberships in Irish nationalist societies in America was common; nor would he have been unusual in supporting insurrection as the way to win Ireland’s independence. As Humbert Pagani, the newspaper’s business manager, who worked with him for nearly twenty years testified at O’Mahony’s death: His “personal interest in the freedom of his native land was hardly equaled by any man in the country. He was in the thick of every local and national movement that stood for free Ireland.”<sup>123</sup> And O’Mahony wasn’t the only Indianapolis Irishman in close touch with the insurrectionists: In December 1914, John T. Keating of Chicago wrote to Devoy: “Did you note in Indiana Catholic letter from

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<sup>119</sup> Indianapolis Star, 4 February 1910, 3. O’Mahony was in on the founding of the Catholic Press Association the next June 1911.

<sup>120</sup> Another in a long line of Protestant-Irish patriots, in 1803 Emmett intended an attack on Dublin Castle, the center of English government in Ireland, to spark an uprising. His efforts was a fiasco, a mere affray on a Dublin street. His words in the dock, however, proved lasting: “Let no man write my epitaph; . . . . When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written.” He was hanged, decapitated, his head displayed to the crowd.

<sup>121</sup> Indiana Catholic and Record, 16 October 1925, 4. The title of “father of the American navy” is contentious. As late as 1959 the AOH complained of a movie depicting John Paul Jones as holding the title. IC&R, 15 May 1959, 7. Wilson’s dedication of the Barry monument did him little good among the Irish when he failed to support Irish independence after the war. Devoy, Post Bag, vol. 2, 402.

<sup>122</sup> In 1803 Robert Emmett, a Protestant and Irish republican, hoped to spark an uprising against England’s rule by seizing the center of English rule, Dublin Castle. The attempt was an abject failure, but his speech at his trial (“Let no man write my epitaph . . . . until other times and other men can do justice to my character, when my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then let my epitaph be written,” made him one of the best remembered of Ireland’s martyrs. He was hung, drawn, and quartered. O’Mahony was the founder of the Indianapolis club, but there had been an Emmet Guards in the city earlier, a military drilling organization. The Western Citizen, 1 March 1879, 1, carried a portrait engraving of Emmett, as well as quoting his peroration on the scaffold.

<sup>123</sup> Humbert Pagani, The Indianapolis Star, 5 March 1935, 1, 3.

Rory [i.e., Roger Casement] to Maurice Donnelly of Indianapolis?”<sup>124</sup> The significance of this is that the “Great War,” 1914-1918 has broken out, and Casement, a famous journalist, took part in the 1916 Easter Rising, was captured and executed by the British. Donnelly had been president of the AOH and clearly an Irish nationalist working for Irish independence from England.

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Besides secret societies and trade unions, Bishop Chatard found himself at odds with his liberal confreres in the quarrel over “Americanism,” the name given to a supposedly liberal movement intended to render Catholicism more agreeable to American non-Catholics. The two main charges American Protestants leveled against the Catholic Church was that the faithful owed primary allegiance to a foreign ruler and were as sheep voting as the clergy directed. In a sweeping pastoral letter of 1837 the hierarchy had countered the first criticism by declaring the freedom of the Church from any religious allegiance to any government, state or federal, and freedom, too, from claims of governments of “any supremacy or any dominion over us in our spiritual or ecclesiastical concerns.” “Nor do we acknowledge any civil or political supremacy or power over us in any foreign potentate, though that potentate might be the chief pastor of our church.” Three years later the bishops addressed the second charge by disclaiming any “right to interfere” with the laity’s judgments in “political affairs.”<sup>125</sup> As Catholic immigrants flooded in, Protestant suspicions were not allayed, and a half-century later, during the Gilded Age, the Church was caught between contending critics outside and within: Protestants continued to see Catholics as not American enough, while conservative Catholics, at home and at Rome, considered the Church in the United States as all too American.<sup>126</sup>

There were real differences among the hierarchy between liberal “Americanists” and their conservative opponents, the “Ultramontanes” (tellingly, the latter term of European origin). Chatard and like-minded conservatives saw the modern world in harsh, negative terms and as a threat to the laity’s faith. The remedy was forceful reiteration of traditional teaching, loyalty to the pope, tightened ecclesiastical discipline, and to bolster the morale of the faithful, vigorous polemic against infidelity. Liberals also saw modernity as a danger, but not an unalloyed one for it also nurtured human freedom and an understanding of nature and society. Discrimination was called for. Accept the good, integrate it with the Church’s teaching, employ its insights as a resource for evangelization and the Church’s salvific mission. This, liberals believed, was in line with *Rerum novarum*.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Devoy, *Post Bag*, vol. 2, 471.

<sup>125</sup> Brynes, *Bishops and American Politics*, 15.

<sup>126</sup> See O’Brien, *Public Catholicism*, 124-128, for a nuanced discussion of this dualism.

<sup>127</sup> A paraphrase of Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 7, 8.

The leading Americanists were archbishops John Ireland and James Gibbons. Given to patriotic utterance, neither saw any conflict in principle between the Church and the United States: At the time of the 1884 Baltimore Plenary Council, in a lecture on "The Catholic Church and Civil Society," Ireland held that far from being in conflict, "the principles of the Church are in thorough harmony with the interests of the Republic." In his 1888 sermon at Fr. Edward Sorin's 50th priest jubilee, the founder of Notre Dame, Ireland asserted that in America the Church is as free as a bird, flying

withersoever it will; free to put forth all her powers and tempt the realization of her most ambitious projects for the welfare, natural and supernatural, of men. . . . Bound to no enervating conservatism, no old-time traditions repressing her movements, she can encounter with the liberty of action which insures success . . . ."

In Rome in 1887 to receive his red hat,<sup>128</sup> Gibbons delivered his own heartfelt encomium:

For myself, as a citizen of the United state, without closing my eyes to our defects as a nation, I proclaim, with a deep sense of pride and gratitude, . . . that I belong to a country where the civil government holds over us the aegis of its protection without interference in the legitimate exercise of our sublime mission as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But while we are acknowledged to have a free government, we do not perhaps receive due credit for possessing also a strong government. Yes, our nation is strong, and her strength lies under Providence, in the majesty and supremacy of the law in the loyalty of its citizens to that law, and in the affection of our people for their free institutions.

It was "with a deep sense of pride and gratitude," that he belonged to a country that protected religion while leaving it free to fulfill its mission. Thanks to the First Amendment, the United States "has liberty without license, authority without despotism. Hers is no spirit of exclusiveness." "[A]t peace with all the world," she welcomed "the honest immigrant who comes to advance his temporal interest and to find a peaceful home."<sup>129</sup>

Gibbons and Ireland and like-minded others, wanted the Church to embrace an American ethos, which meant separating church and state and embracing its corollaries--religious liberty, cooperation with Protestants, and the use of English in worship to speed the assimilation of immigrants. Conservatives wanted no truck with Protestants, regarded the public schools as both Protestant and godless, and wanted to build a

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<sup>128</sup> In another of the many signs of the esteem with which Gibbons was held, immediately before his departure for Rome he was received in the White House by President Grover Cleveland.

<sup>129</sup> Michael Glazier and Thomas J. Shelly, eds., *The Encyclopedia of American Catholic History* (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, Minnesota, 1997), 588. Gibbons' statement is a point-by-point refutation of Chatard's position that the U.S. Government was too weak for safety.

parallel Catholic world—its own schools, hospitals, fraternal societies, and other institutions--a self-imposed ghetto. Regarding the modern age, liberals said “understand it”; conservatives said, “it’s evil, avoid it.”<sup>130</sup>

It is impossible to imagine Chatard speaking of America in the manner of Gibbons and Ireland. As an ultramontane, Chatard was personally and ideologically the close ally of the leader of the conservative bishops in America, New York Archbishop Michael Corrigan, a long-time friend and member of the first class of the American College in Rome in 1859. He supported Corrigan in his nearly two-decade battle with Fr. Edward McGlynn, an outspoken champion of the ideas of Henry George, who Chatard and Corrigan also condemned. Returning the sentiment, McGlynn recognized in Chatard an enemy, charging him and other bishops with not accepting the Declaration of Independence and interfering in politics “to promote the pecuniary and temporal objects of the ecclesiastical machine.”<sup>131</sup>

In the struggle between Americanists and Ultramontanes the intervention of Rome on the side of the latter proved decisive. The Vatican was already wary of the liberals for a number of reasons, among them their participation in interfaith activities: Archbishop John J. Keane, rector of Catholic University, spoke twice at Harvard University, 1891 and 1893, and, with other leading Catholic clergy and laity, addressed the World’s Parliament of Religions (held in conjunction with Chicago’s 1892 Columbian Exposition). Cardinal Gibbons also represented the Church at the Exposition, mixed with Protestants, Buddhists, and Muslims, and closed the proceedings by leading the Lord’s Prayer and giving the Apostolic Blessing.<sup>132</sup> This was ecumenism *avante de lettre!* threatening *communicatio in sacris*, religious indifferentism, and other evils. Rome reflected a strain of European and Canadian opinion that believed the American clergy to be “Protestant priests” and lacking confidence in God. The Americanists’ church was active, pragmatic, materialist--just like the nation, and these were held to be weaknesses.<sup>133</sup>

The discordance, as the Holy See saw it, between itself and liberal American Catholics showed itself in a series of papal encyclicals beginning with *Immortale Dei*, 1885: While accepting that governments “might rightly, to avoid worse evils, tolerate religions that were not Catholic,” Leo XIII also held that it was “absurd” that men were free to think what they want on any subject; liberty of thought and a free press caused much social harm. One year later the encyclical *Libertas* blamed toleration for producing all sorts of evils.

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<sup>130</sup> Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 312-314. O’Connell, *Sorin*, 705.

<sup>131</sup> See McGlynn’s article in *North American Review* (August 1887), 182-205, and McGreevey, *Catholics and American Freedom*, 133 ff, for discussion of the three men.

<sup>132</sup> Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 241, 290. This shocked the newly named papal delegate to the U.S., the first such, and Leo XIII in a public letter opposed further participation in such, “promiscuous religious meetings.” In 1896 Keane was removed as rector of Catholic University by the pope, according to the apostolic delegate because his speeches contradicted the Syllabus of Errors. *Encyclopedia of American Catholic History*, 740.

<sup>133</sup> White, *US Seminaries*, 234.

Consequently, the state had the right to limit freedom of opinion;<sup>134</sup> *Longinqua oceani* (wide expanse of the ocean), 1895, addressed specifically to the American bishops, marked the first step in the undermining the foundational ideas of the Americanists. While strongly endorsing the new Catholic University of America (whose founding was largely the work of the Americanists), Leo XIII insisted on submission to papal authority and warned against the view that separation of church and state and religious liberty were good in themselves and applicable to other countries: "It would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced." In praising the American church for growing under circumstances of religious liberty, the pope asserted that it would develop even more if "she enjoyed the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority." As Ireland observed to Gibbons, "That unfortunate allusion to Church and State cannot be explained to Americans."<sup>135</sup>

The publication in 1897 of an abridged French translation of an admiring 1891 biography of Fr. Isaac Hecker (1819-1888), the founder of the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle—the Paulists,<sup>136</sup> marked the second step: With the Church under attack in France by the anticlerical Third Republic, some French churchmen sought to more closely imitate the American Church, seeing in it a confidence, activity, and openness absent elsewhere. For example, the religious diversity of the United States meant that faith and conversion would have to be "a matter of personal conviction," neither pressure nor fiat. Hecker had "thought this a good thing."<sup>137</sup> Characteristically, he would say he was a better Catholic because he was an American, and a better American because he was a Catholic. European liberals praised Hecker's approach as an effective response to the modern age, while conservatives there found laxness, even heresy, in such a view. With conservative churchmen in France violently attacking what they took to be Hecker's ideas, a polemical war in Europe erupted. Conservatives argued that even a limited accommodation with modern ideals, such as freedom and democracy, would wound the Church.

The uproar was such that Leo XIII stepped in a personal letter to Gibbons, 22 January 1899, with the ironic title *Testem benevolentiae* ("testament" or "witness of benevolence"). In it the pope condemned "certain opinions" "which some comprise under the head of Americanism," which Pope Leo reduced to the proposition "that, in order the more easily to bring over to Catholic doctrine those who dissent from it, the Church ought to

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<sup>134</sup> Chadwick, *The Popes, 1830-1914*, 293, 294.

<sup>135</sup> John Tracy Ellis, ed., *Documents of American Catholic History* (Bruce Publishing Company: Milwaukee, 1956), 517, 518; O'Connell, *Ireland*, 404.

<sup>136</sup> A convert to Catholicism in 1844, Hecker, a warm and effective preacher, intended the order as an evangelizing effort to bring non-Catholics into the Church. He was disappointed with the defensive tone of Vatican I, which he attended, and the continued nay saying of the Church subsequently. *Encyclopedia of American Catholic History*, 98.

<sup>137</sup> *Encyclopedia of American Catholic History*, 625.

adapt herself somewhat to our advanced civilization, and relaxing her ancient rigor, show some indulgence to modern popular theories and methods.” Pope Leo saw this as “reprehensible.” The Church admitted no such modification as to time or place for it “has constantly adhered *to the same doctrine, in the same sense and in the same mind*” [ital. orig.]. Specifically condemned were supposed efforts to make the American Catholic Church different from the rest of the Church; the conviction that the Church should show more indulgence to modern theories and methods; and the belief that individuals can act confidently and independently based on their natural capacities in such a way that the Church’s power to demand obedience would be limited, and by implication that Americanists, following Hecker, denied the need for grace.<sup>138</sup> The Church had nothing to learn from anyone, while the world needed the pope “in order to safeguard the minds of the Church’s children from the dangers of these present Times.”<sup>139</sup> Ireland, Gibbons, and their supporters denied that heresy was involved while the Corrigan of the hierarchy thanked the pope for eradicating the heresy.<sup>140</sup> Intending to demonstrate the emptiness of the charge of heresy, at their annual meeting Ireland proposed that the bishops be polled on the existence of any Americanist “heresy in [their] diocese, and if so, where and who taught it.” The vote on Ireland’s proposal was a tie that Gibbons, presiding, broke by voting against it. Ireland wanted to continue the battle; Gibbons, preferring peace—wanted to end the matter.<sup>141</sup>

Amid the controversy Chatard seems to have stood on the sidelines: He did not sign a letter of submission to Archbishop Elder regarding *Testem benevolentiae*, as did the bishops of Louisville, Grand Rapids, Covington, Detroit, and Cleveland.<sup>142</sup> His failure to publicly align with his ultramontane friends may have been personal—the memory of the friendship Hecker had shown him in the winter of 1857, 1858: Chatard had gone sightseeing in Rome with Hecker and others to the place where St. Peter and St. Paul were imprisoned; in his diary he wrote of “several very instructive, interesting and encouraging conversations with [Hecker].”<sup>143</sup> And five years before *Testem*, in the preface to his 1894 essay collection, Chatard had credited “the kind words of Very Rev. Father Hecker” for first inspiring him to “put pen to paper to write for the public.”

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<sup>138</sup> [Encyclopedia of American Catholic History](#), “Americanism,” 98, 97-103.

<sup>139</sup> Reher, [Catholic Intellectual in America](#), 85. By “children” the pope meant the laity.

<sup>140</sup> McCarthy, [20th Century Church](#), 44, 45. Some have seen *Testem benevolentiae* as a reproach for the U.S. victory over Spain; others that ever since the 1854 definition of the Immaculate Conception put European conservatives and Americanists on a collision course for if only Mary sinless, then what of democracy? If with original sin the result is “a weakened intellect and disordered will,” then democracy is a “positively dangerous illusion.” What is needed, therefore, is an “authoritarian, repressive, and preventive government,” a Leviathon for a Hobbesian world. As for separating church and state, it is irreligious and leads to atheism. Reher, [Catholic Intellectuals in America](#), 82-84.

<sup>141</sup> Article on Catholic bishops as patriots, [Criterion](#), 3 Nov 1989, 2.

<sup>142</sup> McAvoy, [American Heresy](#), 247.

<sup>143</sup> Chatard Papers, Box A-10, page 52 of diary, 1857, 1858.



Moreover, Chatard's articles first appeared in the Catholic World, a monthly review of literature, religion, and the arts founded by Hecker's Paulists, and his collected essays were published by the Catholic Publication Society, also founded by Hecker. Of course, there was never any question of Chatard's orthodoxy, his loyalty to the papacy, or his willing obedience to authority. He went out of his way to be explicit: In his 1881 essay collection he submitted all he had written to the pope, "ready to correct any error into which I may have fallen; . . ." In the 1894 preface he repeated his willingness to submit "to the judgment and correction, if need be, of Holy Mother Church."<sup>144</sup>

For one so devoted to the Holy See, Chatard received a sharp reprimand from Rome during the Americanist imbroglio. It happened this way: Chatard allied with the Corrigan-McQuaid faction against the Americanist Gibbons-Ireland bloc. As evidence of a supposed papal delegation's cabal against Corrigan, in an 1893 letter to a high Vatican official, Chatard enclosed an article from a Minnesota paper purporting that Corrigan would be removed as New York's archbishop--the implication being that Ireland, the Minnesota archbishop, was behind the rumor. The official scolded Chatard, noting that the delegation was established to end debate on the school question, that Satolli, the newly appointed papal delegate's friendship with Ireland had begun in Rome, and that if Chatard could cite one newspaper which took against Corrigan, there were others claiming Corrigan's support who criticized Satolli. Corrigan denied any association with such articles.<sup>145</sup>

Whether "Americanism" was a "phantom heresy" or not, historians of Catholicism in the U.S. have viewed the consequences as extremely serious: Beyond the indecent damage done to Hecker's reputation, perhaps the most significant was that even liberal American bishops became "alertly submissive to Vatican decisions." Gibbons and Ireland hastened to declare their support for Rome: the former, while denying the evils charged to the American church, affirmed that the papacy had not "in the whole world" bishops, clergy, and laity "more fundamentally Catholic, firmer in their faith, and more devoted to the Holy See" than America's. In a letter to the Vatican secretary of state, Ireland declared that he and all the other bishops "have only one system--that of the Holy See; have only one kind of ideas--that of the Holy See." The American bishops "obey the least word that comes from Rome."<sup>146</sup> Some bishops denied the reality of the heresy, some, while not admitting that the heresy existed, thanked the pope. Conservatives, following Corrigan, profusely congratulated the pope for having identified "the multiplicity of fallacies and errors."<sup>147</sup> In concrete terms, debate on parochial schools ended and the hierarchy became more secretive and more Roman as Vatican-oriented clergy were named to American sees; dialogue with non-Catholics became more suspect; and

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<sup>144</sup> Christian Truths: Lectures (The Catholic Publication Society Co.: New York, 1881). Occasional Essays, (Catholic Publication Society: New York, 1894).

<sup>145</sup> Fogarty, title???, 130, suggests Corrigan might have lied in this.

<sup>146</sup> Fogarty, Vatican and the American Hierarchy, 180, 181; John F. Fink, "When a pope condemned Americanism (II), Criterion, 5 March 2004, 12.

<sup>147</sup> Fogarty, Vatican and American Hierarchy, 181, 182

“intellectual reflection on American experience circumscribed. Not for another sixty years would there be an opportunity to reexamine the Catholic position on religious liberty.”<sup>148</sup> As a sign of the times, the year previous to *Testem benevolentiae*, Fr. John A. Zahm of Notre Dame, professor of physics and chemistry and an evolutionist, was silenced and his 1896 book, *Evolution and Dogma* withdrawn from circulation and placed on the Index (although that was not made public).<sup>149</sup> Zahm, the “most able Catholic scientist of his day,” gave his last scientific paper, “Evolution and Teleology,” Fribourg, Switzerland, August 1897. He turned from scientific treatises to writing travel books the last 24 years of his life.<sup>150</sup> Privately, he predicted that nine of ten thinkers would be evolutionists as opposed to the special creationists.

The capstone of the Church’s liberal-conservative conflict was an ensuing controversy over “modernism.” While having something of a family resemblance with Americanism, modernism was primarily a European matter, and constituted a more serious crisis by reinforcing the chilling effect of *Immortale, Libertas, Lonquiqua, and Testem*. An “equivocal” term that “defies precise definition,”<sup>151</sup> a modernist was “any Christian . . . who is convinced that the essential truths of his religion and the essential truths of modern society can enter into a synthesis,”<sup>152</sup> an effort to accommodate Catholic teaching to a “collective change in mentality” of the nineteenth century. Modernists raised a great many questions; the nature of revelation, biblical inspiration, religious knowledge, the personality of Christ and his role in establishing the Church, the limits of the evolution of dogma, authority of the *magisterium*, the status of scholasticism. As a movement

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<sup>148</sup> *Encyclopedia of American Catholic History*, 98. Another has written that with *Testem benevolentiae* and *Pascendi Dominici*, 1907, “the lights went out for American Catholic intellectuals.” “American Catholicism,” in *World Catholicism in Transition*, 235. Still another in the mid-1950s wrote that the 1899 letter “did not condemn anything in America, but by killing off the dialogue which Hecker, Archbishop Ireland, Orestes Brownson, and others had initiated, it did deal a blow to American Catholic self-confidence from which the American Catholic mind has never effectively recovered.” Walter J. Ong, S.J., “The Intellectual Frontier,” in Louis J. Putz, ed., *The Catholic Church, U.S.A.* (Chicago, 1956), 415.

<sup>149</sup> Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 317. Zahm, convinced of the truth of evolution, had lectured widely in the U.S. on the topic and in his book had called Lamarck, Darwin, and Mivart “pioneers.” St. George Jackson Mivart (d. 1 April 1900), FRS, English scientist and modernist whose writings on evolution were condemned and he himself excommunicated. His views on hell and eternal punishment were also found heretical and his writings on the subject placed on the Index, ca. 1893.)

<sup>150</sup> Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 317; Reher, *Catholic Intellectuals in America*, 79, 80. Zahm was later ousted as provincial of Holy Cross; his distinction as a scientist and shared interest in nature and exploration led to friendship with Theodore Roosevelt and together they planned their 1914 expedition to explore Amazonia.

<sup>151</sup> O’Connell, *Critics on Trial*, xi.

<sup>152</sup> O’Connell, *Critics on Trial*, xi.

dealing with esoteric matters--philosophy, theology, and biblical exegesis—it was a matter for experts and of little interest to the laity at-large.<sup>153</sup>

The English modernist George Tyrrell saw the task as seeking “to help the Church reconcile itself with what they felt was best of intellectual culture as it had evolved into the present.”<sup>154</sup> Not an organized movement, but theologians who, in attempting to develop a synthesis between Catholicism and modern scientific, political, and social ideas, rejected neo-scholastic metaphysics in favor of nineteenth century historical methodology.<sup>155</sup> Some deemed “modernists” disliked the enthronement of Aquinas, or thought Darwin right, or wanted an end to compulsory celibacy, desired Mass in the vernacular, or were hostile to Curial control, papal infallibility, the Index of Prohibited Books, and so on. No one could doubt that the ultramontane Church stood in conflict with the modern world; “modernists” thought the conflict unnecessary. One should be free to enquire, especially to read Protestant scholars.<sup>156</sup>

Completing the project of centralizing power in the Vatican and the rout of whatever vestiges of liberalism remained in the Church was the work of Pius X (1903-1914).<sup>157</sup> Dedicating his papacy to “restore all things in Christ,” he branded modernism a “synthesis of all heresies.” He especially disliked modern scholarship and historical studies that showed that doctrine had developed and that the scriptures could not be taken literally.<sup>158</sup> In July 1907 the Holy Office issued *Lamentabili sane exitu* (“a lamentable departure indeed”). In the spirit of the 1864 Syllabus of Errors, *Lamentabili* condemned 65 propositions as modernist, including those having to do with the nature of the church, biblical exegesis, revelation, the sacraments, and the divinity

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<sup>153</sup> Gleason, *Catholic Higher Education*, 6, 13, 16.

<sup>154</sup> O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 68.

<sup>155</sup> Rehrer, *Catholic Intellectual Life in America*, 94; Evidence that in the Church nothing is ever completely lost, in 2002 the Curia's understanding of modernism was revealed in a letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) condemning two books by Fr. Thomas P. Aldworth, an American Franciscan priest. Interestingly, the CDF found the circumstances in the U.S. of a muchness “with those prevalent during the modernist crisis in Western Europe,” in the late 1800s. Then, the “theological misdirections” of some English and Continental authors “threatened to unsettle the faith” of the laity. Like the “small group of authors in England and on the continent” a century ago, Fr. Aldworth's books spread “half-truths . . . and promote[s] skeptical attitudes toward the pastors of the church, as well as toward the magisterium.” *National Catholic Reporter*, 16 August 2002, 22.

<sup>156</sup> The first use of “modernism” in the sense of a dangerous theological movement was December 1905. Chadwick, *History of the Popes*, 347-349, 354.

<sup>157</sup> Canonized in 1954, only forty years after his death, Pius X was the first pope made a saint since the 1500s.

<sup>158</sup> Pius X's condemnation of modernism was 47th on John F. Fink's list of the 50 most important events in Catholic history. As the former *Criterion* editor observed, scholars were forbidden to question: Moses' authorship of the first five books of the Old Testament; that Isaiah had only one author; that Matthew was the first Gospel written; or that Paul wrote the Letter to the Hebrews--all now known to be wrong. *Criterion*, 19 September 2003, 12.

of Christ. This was followed in September by the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis*, (“feeding the Lord’s flock”). Far from pastoral, in violent language Pius X called on bishops to root out modernists in their seminaries. Specifically condemned were agnosticism, evolutionism, symbolism, and the claim of academics for freedom of inquiry. Finally, in September 1910 came *Sacrorum antistitum*, an oath against modernism required of all clergy: “I firmly embrace and accept anything and everything defined, asserted, and declared by the inerrant magisterium of the church, especially those articles of doctrine that are directly opposed to the errors of the present time.” (Worldwide, less than fifty clergy refused to take the oath.)<sup>159</sup> Bishops were to report triennially to Rome on the “thought and action current among their clergy . . . .”<sup>160</sup> Excommunications, dismissal from office, and an “epidemic” of book banning followed. Given *Pascendi*, the lesson for scholars was “Keep your mouth shut, your pen idle, and your mind at rest.”<sup>161</sup>

To enforce the oath Pius X established diocesan councils of vigilance, “a kind of ecclesiastical secret police” to spy on “modernists.” (Presumably, one was set up in the Indianapolis Archdiocese.)<sup>162</sup> By 1907 “Rome thereby defined itself by what it was--authoritarian, hierarchical, monarchical, traditional--and by what it was not--democratic, progressive, pragmatic, open to autonomous science.”<sup>163</sup> As Pius X put it in *Vehementer nos* (on the French law of separation, 1906), the Church was an unequal society with but two classes, “the pastors and their flocks.” All authority “lies with the former” as “the people have no other duty than to let themselves be governed by their pastors and to follow obediently.”<sup>164</sup>

A key enforcer of the pope’s program, Msgr. Umberto Benigni, a minor official of the Curia credited with coining the term “modernism,” was an ardent monarchist and confidant of Pius X. An enemy of anything liberal, Benigni created the “League of Pius V,” a society of informers whose reports on what the seminaries and universities were teaching, what the bishops were saying and writing produced lists of suspect clergy and laity that flowed to Rome.<sup>165</sup> *Benigni fa tutto*—“Benigni does everything,” became a saying. He developed his

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<sup>159</sup> Required until 1967, the oath was dropped by Pope Paul VI. Chadwick, [History of Popes](#), 355.

<sup>160</sup> Coppa, [The Modern Papacy Since 1789](#), 147.

<sup>161</sup> O’Malley, [What Happened at Vatican II](#), 271.

<sup>162</sup> John Fink, [Criterion](#), 22 October 1999, 10, refers to the requirement that every diocese set up a “vigilance committee.” This writer has not found anything about a vigilance committee in the Indianapolis archdiocesan archives, but that proves nothing. Such committees were still on the books until 1967. Chadwick, [History of Popes](#), 355.

<sup>163</sup> R. Scott Appleby, [“Church and Age Unite!” The Modernist Impulse in American Catholicism](#) (University of Notre Dame: Notre Dame, Indiana, 1992), 53.

<sup>164</sup> Chadwick, [Popes, 1830-1914](#), 395.

<sup>165</sup> Benigni knew his man: Pius V (1566-1572), Grand Inquisitor under his predecessor as pope, was known for his savage use of the Inquisition and harsh treatment of Jews. He sought with “inexhaustible zeal to extirpate every trace of

own news service, a series of journals, and the *Sodalitium Pianum* (Fellowship of Pius V), a way for conservatives to attack their modernist enemies. For Benigni (who ended a Fascist), “history is nothing but a continual desperate effort to vomit. For this sort of human being there is only one remedy: The Inquisition.”<sup>166</sup> Angelo Roncalli, the future John XXIII, was denounced for encouraging his church history students to read a suspect book. No one was safe. “Real” Catholics were intransigent integralists. Pius X declared that some wanted modernists “treated with oil, soap, and caresses: but they should be beaten with fists.”<sup>167</sup> Upon his death, his successor, Benedict XV, discovering his own name on a list of suspect modernists, stopped the practice. At Vatican II the archbishop of Turin said that this must never happen in the Church again.<sup>168</sup>

The effect of the oath on Catholic scholarship was devastating. Across the country “intellectual curiosity was discouraged” and “a climate of fear gripped the academy.” Some scholars turned away from theology. Fr. Francis P. Duffy’s work at the New York Review, a Catholic theological journal, made his orthodoxy suspect. In 1909 when his archbishop, Michael Corrigan, dismissed the rector of Dunwoodie Seminary, he almost fired Duffy as well. Four years later Corrigan told the apostolic delegate that while Duffy was a good, intelligent priest, he had a “strong leaning toward the liberal tendency” called modernism.<sup>169</sup> Witch hunts took place: “Security, safety, conservatism became imperative, as the fear of heresy settled over episcopal residences, chanceries, seminaries, and Catholic colleges and universities. Free intellectual inquiry in ecclesiastical circles came to a virtual standstill.” “A half-century later American Catholics wondered why the church produced so few intellectuals.”<sup>170</sup>

It is doubtful that Bishop Chatard found anything in *Pascendi* objectionable. In any case, *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*--Rome had spoken, the matter is closed. Under his rectorship at the American College

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dissent” and encouraged French Catholics to “take no Huguenot prisoner, but instantly” kill any that fell into their hands. Convinced always of his rightness, he never mitigated punishment, believing that if only a few in a town were punished it was because the authorities were lax. He “bore the very bitterest hatred to all who would not accept his tenets.” Leopold von Ranke, History of the Popes: Their Church and State, vol. 1 (New York, 1901, 1966), 258. Duffy, Saints and Sinners, 170.

<sup>166</sup> Chadwick, History of Popes, 357. Benigni is described by O’Connell, Critics on Trial, 361-364, as “sinister,” “grossly fat,” with “small, cunning eyes . . . the spy-master of a ragtag crew of informers and fanatics.” An internet search for “Benigni, “Eponymous flower” paints a very different picture.

<sup>167</sup> Duffy, Saints and Sinners, 250, 251.

<sup>168</sup> Bosler, New Wine, 75.

<sup>169</sup> Sheeley, “What the Hell,” 93.

<sup>170</sup> Dolan, American Catholic Experience, 319. For example, until the 1943 encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (Inspired by the Holy Spirit) gave permission to embrace modern methods, Catholic biblical scholarship lagged.

seminary life had been “one of discipline and strict attention to clerical propriety.” Even then, forty years before Pascendi, one studied philosophy not by way of reason but authority; professors of scripture ignored biblical criticism just then coming to the fore and theology was dogmatic, *a priori*. As applied to seminaries, *Pascendi* was taken to mean “don’t pursue wide learning.”<sup>171</sup> In short, the intellectual atmosphere of the North American College in Rome in the 1860s and 1870s was that of St. Meinrad and most other seminaries until after World War II. Seminarians were to avoid the laity, especially women. To set them off as a class apart, Pius X wanted them in cassocks in public and discouraged home visits at vacation times.<sup>172</sup> Mail was censored. Newspapers, journals, and magazines were forbidden to seminarians and their superiors were to see to the ban. Significantly, it made seminaries a matter for Rome not the local ordinary.<sup>173</sup> In the 1920s and ‘30s, St. Meinrad’s library offered “carefully screened novels” and only those books of theology, philosophy, and church history that presented the Catholic point of view. While the students could read National Geographic, photographs of naked “savages” were expunged. Devotional reading and theological works were available, although even Catholic books were subject to proscription by the Roman Congregation of Seminaries and Studies. (Some seminarians got around the censors when their parents lined the boxes from home with newspapers, comics, and magazines.) “Kneeling out” in the aisle was the punishment for miscreants discovered with contraband radios or secular magazines; more severe was “campusing” (confinement to campus for days, weeks, or months), and paddling [!] for smoking or drinking beer. (Bosler, prior to his graduate schooling, found a conservative St. Meinrad wonderful, providing a great education and full of great spirit.)<sup>174</sup> As Chartrand put it in his 1922 Lenten pastoral, priests were “Men, specially chosen, duly prepared, divinely commissioned in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, . . . set apart to act as God’s ambassadors in the performance of duties most exalted.”<sup>175</sup> The goal was to build an abstemious, clerical man, independent of social contacts, whose main job was sacramental.<sup>176</sup> Ideally, a “manly, affable, obedient, anti-intellectual” priest.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> White, United States Seminaries, 96, 97.

<sup>172</sup> Chadwick, Popes, 1830-1914, 366. Wearing the cassock in public has become a sign of a priest’s rejection of Vatican II reforms since the 1990s.

<sup>173</sup> White, U.S. Seminaries, 157, 263. As late as 1950, the Library at Notre Dame refused to carry Time magazine.

<sup>174</sup> Bosler, New Wine, 1, 10.

<sup>175</sup> IC&R, 7 April 1922, 5.

<sup>176</sup> White, U.S. Seminaries, 127-135.

<sup>177</sup> Kennedy, Bernardin, 32.

As it happened, a fortnight after the promulgation of the oath against modernism Vicar- General Joseph Chartrand was consecrated coadjutor-bishop of Indianapolis at Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral.<sup>178</sup> The installation of a bishop is an occasion for the Catholic community to impress themselves and outsiders with numbers and ritual, and Chartrand's installation was no exception. The largest gathering of clergy and religious in the city to that time overflowed the hotels, requiring the laity to open their homes to accommodate the numbers.<sup>179</sup> A great throng gathered an hour before the doors of the cathedral were opened at 9:00 A.M. and, with the church crowded beyond its capacity, Meridian Street rendered nearly impassible. Three hundred secular and regular clergy, followed by abbots, monsignors, eighteen bishops and the apostolic delegate processed into the church between the ranks of a hundred Knights of Columbus. (With a self-effacement typical of the period, 125 nuns had quietly made their way to their places in the church a half-hour before.)

The local press provided a step-by-step narrative of the three-and-a-half-hour Mass, including a full listing of the major participants and their function--cross bearer, book bearer, mitre bearer, thurifer--as well as parts of the ritual verbatim and explanations of the symbols: the mitre, "the helmet of protection and salvation, so that . . . [the bishop] may seem terrible to the opponents of truth . . . ."; the reading of the Papal Bull of appointment--six parchments in manuscript ("each had the great seal of St. Peter attached").<sup>180</sup> The secular press emphasized the magnificence and variety of the vestments--the "sweet smell of incense," "the music of organ, cornet and a chorus of male voices,"<sup>181</sup> and gushed over the "magnificence, solemnly impressive and imposing as the great event it clothed, characterized the consecration . . . . In all, a picture of beauty, set gorgeously in a frame of rich liturgy, inspiring music and color, . . . the greatest Catholic ceremony that can transpire in the United States," "a spectacle that has not been equaled in Indianapolis for many years."<sup>182</sup> Many non-Catholics attended, among them former vice-president Charles Warren Fairbanks, a friend of both Chatard and Chartrand. Completing the day was a banquet for 350 clergy at the Denison Hotel (the religious sisters lunched less sumptuously--and out of public view--at St. Mary's Academy).

The occasion was also notable for the sermon by the Jesuit provincial of the St. Louis province, Very Rev. Rudolph J. Meyers. A full-throated ultramontane,<sup>183</sup> Fr. Meyers scored the "modernists" for secretly

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<sup>178</sup> It was the lead story in both the evening Indianapolis News, with large photographs of Chartrand (News), and the sanctuary-filled celebrants (the morning Indianapolis Star, with additional photographs on the inside). The News spent some 2,400 words to describe the ceremonies, the Star some 3,200 words.

<sup>179</sup> Catholic Columbian Record, 16 September 1910, 1.

<sup>180</sup> Indianapolis News, 15 September 1910.

<sup>181</sup> News, 15 Sept 1910.

<sup>182</sup> Indianapolis Star, 16 Sept 1910.

<sup>183</sup> The Society of Jesus was the vanguard of the ultramontanes at this time. The order had been expelled in 1847 from Switzerland, and from Italy, Spain, Germany, and France between 1859-1880, many European Jesuits going to St. Louis.

spreading "a most insidious heresy" of impugning the authority of the hierarchy, of asserting that the truths of the church are not immutable, of holding that some truths of revelation may become obsolete and be supplanted by higher truths "in accordance with some real or fancied progress of natural science" or having a meaning different from that given them by the hierarchy. Others, said the homilist, wished to limit the teaching authority of the Church to definitions of faith and claimed the right to set aside her decisions and "make light of her censures," thus belittling her authority, "especially that of the 'Roman congregations'." He accused them of arguing that the laity, by right, should share in the government of the church as in civil affairs, as if the Church were a democracy. Such people feel no attraction to religious worship unless it appeals to their "esthetic sense" as if they were attending a "theatrical performance,"<sup>184</sup> and look with distrust at popular piety and the devotions approved by the Church. Reform is always a great need, the priest concluded, but not in "the divine element the Church, in her dogmas, her moral laws, her means of sanctification and organization, but in her human element. Shallow rationalism in the Catholic Church must come to an end. . . . The love of a paganized civilization and culture must not taint the childlike simplicity of Catholic devotion."<sup>185</sup> Chartrand's own views were of a piece with Fr. Meyers, as shown in the title of his 1913 Easter pastoral, addressed to "Venerable Brethren of the Clergy, Beloved Children of the Laity."<sup>186</sup>

Indianapolis Catholics were no doubt gratified by the respectful tone, expansive coverage, and unstinting praise in the press coverage of Chartrand's investiture; the most devoted diocesan newspaper could not have bettered it. But what did Protestants really think of it all? Non-Catholics tended to be both fascinated and repelled by the elaborate rituals of Roman Catholicism. Witnessing a Mass in Philadelphia in 1774, John Adams found it "most awful and affecting: the poor wretches fingering their beads, chanting Latin, not a word of which they understood, their Paternosters and Ave Marias, their holy water; their crossing themselves perpetually; their bowing and kneeling and genuflecting before the altar."<sup>187</sup> Similarly, press accounts of Chartrand's consecration enlarged on the exotic, costly vestments, the incense, candles in abundance, arcane rituals, Gregorian chant, and not least, the conferral of episcopal powers by Rome must have awakened and confirmed long-held fears of "popery" (wasn't this proof of allegiance to a "foreign potentate?").

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Jesuits taught the degeneracy of the world and the loss of the virtue of true obedience. After the 1848 revolutions the Jesuits founded and edited *Civiltà Cattolica*. McGreevey, *Catholics and American Freedom*, 24. The papacy suppressed the order in 1773, lifting the ban in 1814.

<sup>184</sup> The irony here is that from the press reports that for sheer theatricality few if any theatres in the city could have put on a show to match Chartrand's consecration rites.

<sup>185</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 16 September 1910.

<sup>186</sup> *Indiana Catholic*, 21 March 1913, 1.

<sup>187</sup> Cogley, *Catholic America*, 5.



Fr. Meyer's attack on modernism would be similarly disturbing--and confirming--of what even some Catholics would identify as the Church's monarchic disposition--Notre Dame's Fr. Zahm, for one: in a letter to Archbishop Ireland following the banning of his book on evolution Zahm characterized his conflict with Rome as "a fight for progress, for true Americanism, . . . a fight against Jesuitical tyranny, against obscurantism and medievalism," language and sentiment identical with that of educated non-Catholic critics of the Church.<sup>188</sup> In his belief that "society is sick . . ." and "the one hope, the one remedy, is the Pope," Pius X took a very different view: the Church was an unequal society comprised of "two categories of persons, the pastors and the flocks. . . . The duty of the multitudes [the laity] is to suffer itself to be governed and to carry out in a submissive spirit the orders of those in control [the hierarchy]."<sup>189</sup>

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From the beginning of his years in Indiana, Chatard's health gave warning of not being of the best. His 1877 trip to the United States had been made on the advice of his physician and upon arrival he spent the first weeks among his Baltimore friends and relatives recovering from the "arduous journey" which had "somewhat impaired" his health.<sup>190</sup> Never robust, in January 1899 he suffered a stroke from which he never completely recovered, ending any further consideration for other sees.<sup>191</sup> His eyesight being impaired, Fr. Denis O'Donoghue was named his auxiliary, April 1900. Ten more years of limited activity followed. When O'Donoghue was named bishop of Louisville, in 1910, Joseph Chartrand became co-adjutor with the right of succession. As a seminarian during Chatard's last years, many years later Msgr. John J. Doyle remembered him as being "completely hidden. His health was poor," and Doyle was not sure he had ever even seen him; "He did not enter into diocesan matters at all,"<sup>192</sup> that being left to Chartrand. Confined to his room by ill health the last eight months of his life, Francis Silas Chatard died 7 September 1918.

Chatard's obituary in the Indianapolis Star strongly suggests an ascetic, standoffish man, very conscious of his superiority: "Though he has numerous friends and admirers among Protestants, it was through acquaintance sought by them rather than by himself, for he never mingled generally in society and was commonly regarded as rather coldly intellectual and exclusive." Always in touch with the highest officials of the Church, "not excepting the Pope, he might have felt something of an alien in the Indiana diocese, where men of his scholarship and attainments are few, and have felt the limitations of congenial companionship."

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<sup>188</sup> Appleby, Church and Age Unite, 49, 50.

<sup>189</sup> Duffy, Saints and Sinners, 246, 249.

<sup>190</sup> Western Citizen, 17 August 1878, 1.

<sup>191</sup> Catholic Columbian, 30 December 1899. The trip combined an *ad limina* visit and doctor's orders for reasons of health. Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, 407. The steamship in the nineteenth century made it possible for *ad limina* visits to be every three years. After 1909 Pius set them every five years for Europeans and ten years for bishops outside Europe. Once air travel became common, it was made five years for all. Chadwick, Popes, 1830-1914, 374.

<sup>192</sup> Msgr. John J. Doyle, Criterion, 11 January 1980, 29.

The writer, feeling he might have offended against the adage to say nothing ill of the dead (*nihil bonum de mortuis*), explained that the bishop's seeming aloofness might have been due to ill health and his retirement of many years or the burden of duty, and noted that those who knew him found him "companionable."<sup>193</sup> Blanchard's 1898 history of the diocese used "Firmness, force of character, great executive ability, rare culture, refinement and charm of manner" to limn Chatard's character; yet even Blanchard felt constrained to add that he was "serious almost to the point of severity" and the admission, "While all may not love Bishop Chatard . . . ." <sup>194</sup>

Severity and humorlessness had been his hallmark as rector of the American College. On the other hand, he promoted music and singing at the college, introduced new devotions such as forty hours (in America it would become a tradition as an occasion for priests to socialize together), and he insisted that the students be given a pint of wine at the noon and evening meals, for health, it was said, but perhaps also for sophistication, training the future clerics to hold their drink in company.<sup>195</sup>

All in all, Chatard's standing with his confreres and impact on the American Church does not seem to have been overly influential: He is given partial credit for the proposal for irremovable status for pastors as a defense against tyrannous bishops, which practice Chatard believed formed the basis of the eventual Instruction on the matter after 1878.<sup>196</sup> But for one so well connected in Rome, he was unable to persuade his fellow bishops to ban either the Knights of Labor or the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Even his desire to see biblical studies in the seminaries conducted in Latin got short shrift at the Baltimore Council--for a former rector of the American College, this seems a sharp rebuff.<sup>197</sup> He is never listed with his contemporaries--Gibbons, Ireland, Keane, John Lancaster Spalding, Corrigan, McQuaid--as a leader of the American hierarchy.<sup>198</sup> Between 1877 and 1883 his name was put forward as one of the three names (*ternas*) submitted for other, more important sees--Richmond, Cincinnati, San Francisco, and Philadelphia. He was one of the three listed for Cincinnati, but when the other two withdrew and Rome asked for a new list, it was seen as a rejection of Chatard. Later, when it was a question of succeeding Alemany in San Francisco, Rochester's Bernard McQuaid, who thought highly of Chatard, recommended him as having all the necessary qualities for

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<sup>193</sup> Cited in the Indiana Catholic and Record, 13 Sept 1918, 2.

<sup>194</sup> Blanchard, History of Catholic Church in Indiana, 106-109; In his welcome of Chatard to the city Fr. Bessonies was also hagiographical--"a very elegant and courtly gentlemen, a man of consummate administrative abilities"—but also that the new bishop was a strict but considerate disciplinarian [emphasis added]. Alerding, History of . . . Diocese of Vincennes, 219.

<sup>195</sup> McNamara, American College, ch. 7.

<sup>196</sup> Curran, Corrigan, 13n., 15.

<sup>197</sup> White, U.S. Seminaries, 157.

<sup>198</sup> Cassady's list of "outstanding churchmen" of the period, includes Gibbons, Ireland, Gilmour, Ryan, Spalding, Keane, Corrigan, McQuaid, and Kenrick; Catholic Historical Review, 435.

that See,<sup>199</sup> but Gibbons and Archbishop John J. Williams of Boston preferred John Lancaster Spalding to Chatard. As for Philadelphia, in 1884, Louisville Bishop William George McCloskey believed neither Spalding nor Chatard should get it, preferred Patrick J. Ryan, the eventual nominee.<sup>200</sup>

Chiefly known for his opposition to secret societies, although he kept in touch with Corrigan and other bishops, Chatard is absent or inconspicuous in the biographies of notable contemporaries, Corrigan's being the exception. The same is true of general histories of the Church, as well as monographs on such subjects as the Knights of Columbus or the National War Council; he has not found a biographer. He is mentioned on thirteen pages of Fogarty, The Vatican and the American Hierarchy, but has no entry in Encyclopedia of American Catholic History.

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<sup>199</sup> McGoin, Alemany, 307.

<sup>200</sup> Fogarty, Vatican and the American Hierarchy, 21, 32. In a letter to Corrigan, Williams (having been asked by the Propaganda for his views) admitted to knowing Chatard well, but did not "think him scarcely large enough for [Philadelphia]." Spalding he knew less well, "but he seems to me a strong man--you must know him well." Sweeney, Life of J. L. Spalding, 155, f.n. 42.

### A note on the ground rules for papal audiences

Use with anti-Catholicism, protestant-Catholic tensions, manners, protocol.

One product of Italian unification in 1870 was the Vatican's embroilment in controversy over its ground rules for papal audiences. It was, and remains, common for prominent Catholics and non-Catholics alike, when in Rome, to seek an audience with the pope. After Italy's unification in 1870, Vatican etiquette required that visiting heads of Catholic countries should call on the pope, but it was deemed offensive to also call on the King of Italy. In April 1904, the French president visited the king (in hope of detaching Italy from its alliance with Germany and Austria and cement it to France). But when the Italians put on an anti-papal show, the pope refused to see him and there were insults all round. France then broke relations with the Holy See (not restored until 1921). Kaiser Wilhelm also visited King Humbert in 1904, and though he was not supposed to go straight from the pope to the king, he did so. This was "forgiven" as the Kaiser was a Protestant and therefore taken to be ignorant of Catholic protocol. A few years later the Catholic king, Carlos of Portugal, was threatened that if he visited King Humbert, the pope would withdraw his representative to Portugal and refuse to receive him. In the circumstances, the king decided not to visit Italy at all.<sup>201</sup>

A second bone in the Vatican's throat was the proselytizing efforts of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission in Rome, beginning shortly after the Italian government captured the city, 20 September 1870. As if to nail its colors to the mast, the Methodist Mission chose to locate its headquarters on the *Via Venti Settembre* itself! Supported by funds from the United States, in sermons, pamphlets, and lectures the Methodists vilified the Church and on Christmas Day, 1875, opened the first Protestant church "inside the walls." In the 1880s, the Methodists continued to aggressively pursue converts in the Holy City, especially among poor Italian youths, using what struck Catholics as deplorable methods--"bribes" of food, clothing, and shoes, sponsoring soccer clubs and distributing books filled with "slander and misrepresentation" of the Church and the pope.<sup>202</sup> In response, the Vatican established a policy that no visitor who countenanced Rome's Methodists by meeting with them could meet with the pope.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Chadwick, [History of the Popes](#).

<sup>202</sup> Kauffman, [Faith and Fraternity](#), 235, 236; Robert F. McNamara, [The American College in Rome, 1855-1955](#) (Rochester, New York, 1956), 428.

<sup>203</sup> In 1909 the American political and social reformer Seth Low, an Episcopalian, (mayor of Brooklyn, 1881-1885, president of Columbia University, 1890-1901, mayor of New York, 1902-03), visited the pope and then went on to the Methodist Association to deliver a eulogy to Garibaldi! Thus, the protocol was established that the pope would not receive Catholics or non-Catholics who "manifest[ed] public sympathy with one or another of the notoriously anti-papal groups," which included the Methodists. Catholics who visited the "King of Sardinia" would not be received, nor Protestants who visited the king first. Protestant sovereigns who visited the king had to wait a day before being received by the pope).<sup>203</sup>

In February 1910, Charles W. Fairbanks, U.S. senator (1897-1905), vice-president (1905-1909), future vice-presidential nominee (1916), and good friend of Bishop Chatard, sought such an audience. That Fairbanks, a Methodist, met with the King of Italy was bad enough, but by also meeting with the Methodists was unforgivable. As the diocesan Catholic Columbian Record put it: "A Protestant who requests a Papal audience and yet consorts with the Church's enemies cannot be surprised if the Vatican withdraws its hospitality."<sup>204</sup>

Three days after the story appeared in the Indianapolis Star,<sup>205</sup> Fairbanks wrote "My dear Bishop Chatard" to explain: He had been granted a papal audience, but when the Italian newspapers carried the information that he was also to speak to the Methodists later in the day the Vatican stipulated that either his address to the Methodists be cancelled or have the papal meeting abandoned. Fairbanks noted that his luncheon remarks "along patristic and Christian lines" to 140 Catholic seminarians at the North American College had gone over well. He'd spoken "of the good work the Catholic Church was doing and with the utmost pleasure," and had decried intolerance and denominational strife. "I said that some of the best friends I had in the world were in the Catholic Church and that I never withheld from them or their Church my hearty commendation for what they were accomplishing for the betterment of mankind." As the Star reported, Fairbanks told the seminarians that the Catholic Church "had accomplished great things for God and humanity, for [Catholics] were ever at the front when the integrity of the country had to be defended or its dignity to be upheld." Apprised after the lunch that the papal audience might still be on if he cancelled his address to the Methodists, Fairbanks refused: When he did speak to them he catechized his co-religionists that he held all Christian churches worthy of support and that narrow jealousies toward each other were "unseemly."<sup>206</sup> The Indianapolis Star praised Fairbanks believing that "Even Catholics will hardly hold him open to criticism" and would understand why he acted as he did.<sup>207</sup>

Unfortunately for good relations, the Methodists of Washington, D.C. exploited the episode, praising Fairbanks for not canceling his talk with them and asserting that the affair showed Roman Catholicism in its true colors of intolerance: "Wherever papal power is dominant it is a distinct menace to religious liberty . . .

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390, 480. See also O'Connell, Critics on Trial, 32, 308. Pope Benedict in 1919 removed the ban on Rome visits of Catholic heads of state, Coppa, Modern Papacy, 167.

<sup>204</sup> Catholic Columbian Record, 25 February 1910, 3.

<sup>205</sup> Star, 7 February 1910, 2.

<sup>206</sup> Fairbanks to Chatard, 10 February 1910, Chatard papers, Box 9, file 12; Star, 7 February 1910, 2.

<sup>207</sup> Star, 8 February 1910, 2, 6.

.<sup>208</sup> Chatard declined to comment publicly, and in a brief reply to Fairbanks was cordial, but gave no quarter: "It gives me great pleasure to hear from you, but I deeply regret the instances that made you forego the audience with the Sovereign Pontiff who was personally well disposed towards you, but compelled by the necessities of the case to ask as he did."<sup>209</sup> Joseph Patrick O'Mahony, founding editor of the new Indiana Catholic and Record, was not assuaged either. Dismissing congratulations for Fairbanks' tolerance as so much "hot air," he singled out the Rome Methodists for their hatred of the papacy: "They stand for antagonism of the Catholic Church by fair means or foul. And Mr. Fairbanks preferred their company to that of the Pope."<sup>210</sup> Using the occasion to demand full disclosure of their "deceitful" methods, O'Mahony went on to criticize the YMCA's influence on the U.S. military, Protestant missionary efforts in Latin America, and drew a contrast between the Paulists who, according to him, never condemned other churches with the nefariousness of Protestants.<sup>211</sup>

Before the Fairbanks episode had faded, two months later a rerun featured the "most conspicuous and probably the most popular person in the world," former president Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>212</sup> The world's press, including the Indianapolis Star, closely followed the former president's doings from February through April, with datelines from Cairo, Berlin, Naples, and other places. Fresh from a year's slaughter of East African fauna, Roosevelt arranged his extensive itinerary on the way home to include a stop in Rome and an audience with Pius X. The Vatican expressed its delight at the prospect and the hope "that nothing will arise to prevent it," mentioning the "much regretted incident" which had made "the reception of Mr. Fairbanks impossible." Roosevelt, however, declined to "submit to conditions" which would "limit my freedom of conduct."<sup>213</sup> In March, the Catholic Columbian Record carried the notice that the Methodist Association in Rome, working through Mrs. Roosevelt, was trying to get her husband to address them. O'Mahony was sure, however, that Roosevelt

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<sup>208</sup> Star, 8 February 1910, 2.

<sup>209</sup> Chatard papers, Box 9, file 12. This is a draft; it is likely that a version of it was sent. No real breach occurred: Fairbanks attended Chartrand's consecration as bishop-adjutor later that September; was on the stage at the 1913 Tomlinson Hall celebration of St. Patrick's Day; the featured speaker at the Knights of Columbus banquet at the Claypool Hotel on "Discovery Day" that October; and one of the main speakers at the banquet honoring Msgr. Gavisk that year for his election as head of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections. Indiana Catholic, 10, 17 October 1913, 1; White, mss. 2 of 3, 5.

<sup>210</sup> Catholic Columbian Record, 11 February 1910, 4. As a Republican himself, O'Mahony had to have been unhappy that the quarrel with the Vatican involved such distinguished members of his party.

<sup>211</sup> Catholic Columbian Record, 11 February 1910, 2; 25 February 1910, 3; 4, 11 March 1910, 1.

<sup>212</sup> Dalton, T.R.: A Strenuous Life, 348.

<sup>213</sup> McNamara, The American College, 430-437, has a full account.

would “not go to that city to insult the Pope.”<sup>214</sup> As with Fairbanks, the Vatican stipulated that Roosevelt not meet with the Methodists, one having recently called Pius X the “whore of Babylon.”<sup>215</sup> Roosevelt visited the king and his refusal of the Vatican’s condition set off what he termed “an elegant row.” In a letter to Massachusetts’s Senator Henry Cabot Lodge he confessed to experiencing “a very great satisfaction” in administering “a needed lesson to the Vatican,” while making it clear that he “feared the most powerful Protestant Church” as little as he did the Roman Catholic. (Roosevelt admitted that, given the power of both churches. it was a good thing his candidate days [he thought] were over.) As it happened, when the Rome Methodists celebrated Roosevelt’s decision by issuing a “scurrilous” note exulting in the rebuff to the pope, contrary to their promise to Roosevelt, he refused to see them as well.<sup>216</sup>

The enormous interest in Europe and America in Roosevelt was further inflamed when he released the telegrams concerning the papal audience to the press.<sup>217</sup> Roosevelt believed that he could not have acted other than he had and while he wanted no “rancor or bitterness”<sup>218</sup> “no man is a good American who fails heartily to support me for it.”<sup>219</sup> Actually, his attitude toward the Catholic Church and its adherents was, at best, ambivalent: In 1904 he had publicly expressed the view that a Catholic would one day be president and, like many another public man, was impressed with the Church’s influence with immigrants (for instance, in the temperance movement). In private, however, he had no sympathy with the doctrine of papal infallibility or the Church’s authoritarian structure,<sup>220</sup> expressing the then standard Protestant view that “the Catholic Church is in no way suited to this country . . . for its thought is Latin and entirely at variance with the democratic thought

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<sup>214</sup> McNamara, The American College, 431; Catholic Columbian Record, 11 March 1910, 4.

<sup>215</sup> Harbaugh, Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt, 357.

<sup>216</sup> Harbaugh, Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt, 357, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 7, 66. Of course, he ran again on the Progressive “Bull Moose” ticket in 1912.

<sup>217</sup> “It dwarfed all other news,” Catholic Columbian Record, 15 April 1910, 1. Roosevelt’s cancellation of the audience was the lead story in the Star, 4 April 1910, 1, 5. The Star, 6 April 1910, 2, carried the story that even Catholic laity and members of the Vatican hierarchy, including some cardinals, believed that the Vatican had blundered. Sharing that view, Peoria Bishop John Lancaster Spalding later invited Roosevelt, at the time the Bull Moose candidate for president, to his Columbus Day banquet and endorsed him as the next president of the U.S. and the country’s “most remarkable man.” At the banquet Roosevelt repeated his prediction of an eventual Catholic president. XXXX Sweeney, Life of John Lancaster Spalding, 362-365. YEAR??

<sup>218</sup> Star, 4 April 1910, 1, 5.

<sup>219</sup> Brands, Theodore Roosevelt: Last Romantic, 661.

<sup>220</sup> William H. Harbaugh, Writings of Theodore Roosevelt, 228; Harbaugh, The Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt, new rev. ed. (Collier Books: New York, 1966), 216.

of our country and institutions.”<sup>221</sup> (By “Latin” he meant the supposed difference between the putatively backward Spanish and Italians versus the progressive and virile “Anglo-Saxons”—the English, Germans, and northern Europeans generally.) As a result of the quarrels with Fairbanks and Roosevelt, Pius X’s “popularity in the United States plummeted.”<sup>222</sup>

O’Mahony, having first declared both the Vatican and Roosevelt within their rights on April 8th,<sup>223</sup> the next week found him excoriating Roosevelt for “his exaggerated ego [which] imagined that the chief representative of God on Earth would yield to his imperious megalomania, and sacrifice his dignity to do it.” Worse, Roosevelt proceeded to meet with a deputation of local Free Masons, made a speech in praise of freemasonry, and accepted a decoration from them: “This was an insult deliberately flung in the face of the Holy Father. The time, the place, the circumstances, all intensified its malice.”<sup>224</sup> Had O’Mahony known Roosevelt’s opinion of Pius X (a “worthy, narrowly limited parish priest; completely under the control of . . . [Secretary of State] Merry del Val,”)<sup>225</sup> he would have been angrier still.

An exchange between Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Methodist bishop of Southern Minnesota, Robert McIntyre, perhaps struck the lowest note: Ireland had led the way in condemning the Rome Methodists as “vile,” “dishonest,” and “calumnious.” In return, McIntyre branded Ireland a “double tongued falsifier of God’s people, a cowardly accuser of men better than himself, . . . .”<sup>226</sup> When McIntyre challenged him to debate, Ireland responded by saying that McIntyre’s language had proved his point. By 1910 anti-Catholicism might have receded from the heyday of the American Protective Association, but mutual respect between Catholic and non-Catholic as exhibited by a Charles W. Fairbanks remained uncommon. As

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<sup>221</sup> Veverka, God and Country, 57.

<sup>222</sup> McBrien, Lives of the Popes, 353. The Vatican placed only the Methodist Association beyond the pale; Episcopalians and Presbyterians were acceptable. Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Maryland, Dr. William Paret and wife, with a letter of introduction from Cardinal Gibbons, was received by the pope in May 1910. At first O’Mahony carried the report that Paret had been refused an audience, and published what was purported to be Merry del Val’s statement that the Pope was “neither a picture nor a statue to be inspected and criticized,” nor “one of the ‘sights’ of Rome.” Paret himself denied that he had been refused an audience in a cable to the Baltimore Sun. Catholic Columbian Record, 6 May 1910, 4; 20 May 1910, 4.

<sup>223</sup> Catholic Columbian Record, 8 April 1910, 4.

<sup>224</sup> Catholic Columbian Record, 15 April 1910, 4. Archbishop W. H. O’Connell of Boston weighed in with an attack on Roosevelt, “Why did you insult the Pope?” and criticized the Catholic American Ambassador to Italy, John Callan O’Laughlin for incompetence, as did the Catholic Columbian Record, 6 May 1910, 1.

<sup>225</sup> Harbaugh, Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt, 357.

<sup>226</sup> Star, 6 April 1910, 2.



a postscript, in 1921 Pope Benedict XV called on the Knights of Columbus to fight the Protestant evangelists in Rome; the Knights responded by endowing an Italian Welfare Fund with a million dollars. With permission from Pius XI, between 1924 and 1927 the Knights established five recreation centers in the Holy City.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Knights of Columbus, [Irish Encyclopedia](#).