

## Lecture 4

### Catholic Enclaves

#### Question: What was religious life like for Roman Catholics before World War II?

- I) Introduction
  - A) Renewal in mid-1960s changing style of Catholicism
- II) Catholicism in America called “the immigrant church”
  - A) continuity with Europe
    - 1) Missionary territory until 1912
    - 2) Main ethnic groups immigration waves
      - (a) British and French (18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup>)
      - (b) Germans (mid 19<sup>th</sup> to late 19<sup>th</sup>)
      - (c) Irish (mid 19<sup>th</sup> to late 19<sup>th</sup>)
      - (d) Italians (late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup>)
      - (e) Eastern Europeans (Poles, Slaves, Czech) (late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup>)
      - (f) Mexico, Central and South America (after 1965)
      - (g) Vietnamese (after Vietnam war, 1960s 1970s)
    - 3) immigrant groups forming own neighborhoods
  - B) From 1880s to 1940s—ethnic diversity with Irish style as “American”
    - 1) From small numbers to largest “denomination” (currently 25% population)
    - 2) Tensions within cities between ethnic groups
      - (a) **National parishes**
  - C) Catholicism is a personal and communal orientation—as well as spiritual
    - 1) A way of feeling, the traditions, foods, saints
      - (a) At times cynicism towards organized religion and its rules not, however, the emotions and spirit of religion
    - 2) Religion supports commitments to family and loyalty to neighborhood it
    - 3) Does not draw people away or conflict with family
  - D) Church State
    - 1) Catholic model is medieval model of unification of church and state
      - (a) “error has no rights”
      - (b) Vatican leaders skeptical about American “experiment” with religion
      - (c) All religious groups free to be religious (within “reason”)
- III) **Parish** and the neighborhood
  - A) the church
    - 1) importance of community
    - 2) Local, walking distance
      - (a) geographic and national parishes
    - 3) Visually impressive, elaborate buildings with European art
      - (a) heaven on earth
      - (b) statement of prominence in US
    - 4) rituals in church: sacraments
      - (a) importance of religious practices, works produce faith

- (b) seven sacraments: baptism, penance, holy Eucharist (holy communion), confirmation, matrimony, holy orders, Last Rites (extreme unction)
- (c) Central ritual of the Mass
  - (a) re-enactment of Last Supper—sacrifice and a meal
  - (b) in Latin, important symbolism—several priests, daily many times on Sunday
- 5) Paraliturgical devotions--prayers that are not a part of the sacraments church
  - (a) rosary
  - (b) Sacred Heart
  - (c) Benedictions
  - (d) devotions to Mary, novenas, Stations of the Cross
- 6) “Practicing” Catholic
  - (a) Behaviors defining Catholic identity
  - (b) Laws but less understanding of why they do them
  - (c) Fasting from meat on Friday, Sunday mass
  - (d) Marriage laws: intermarriage exception, not in church
  - (e) Do not participate in non-Catholic services
- B) Schools
  - 1) 1880s all Catholics must send children to Catholic schools
    - (a) Public schools used Protestant bible, anti-Catholic in European history
    - (b) parallel institutions (also hospitals, orphanages, universities)
    - (c) Alternative to anti-Catholic Protestant culture
    - (d) Look to religion not to state
  - 2) American assimilation at own pace
    - (a) separate ethnic schools at national parishes declining after WWI
- C) Clubs, social organization, charity and social services
  - 1) isolation from Protestants, even work in ethnic dominated groups
  - 2) often not even ethnic mixing—Irish Catholics not marrying Italian Catholics
- D) Home
  - (a) Private devotions of the **laity**
  - (b) Devotions to saints done in families
  - (c) Women oriented
  - (d) Real problems: healing, child birth
- E) the streets
  - (a) Italian “festas”
    - (a) streets out door festivals controlled by lay men and run by women
    - (b) Seasonal, not weekly like mass
    - (c) Connecting with towns in Italy

#### IV) Importance of Authority—the **clergy**

- A) Centralized, organized, international authority structure—pope downward
  - 1) Non-questioning, authority-oriented outlook
  - 2) Importance of doing not thinking; following the laws
  - 3) Anti-democratic—tensions
  - 4) However: domestic rituals, ethnic customs, interpretations, jokes, ignoring
- B) Importance of priest and nuns
  - 1) Celibate, authority of bishop or head of order, living in community

- 2) A religious leader, employment counselor, community, mediator
  - (a) leader in Ireland against British
  - (b) 50% of bishops are of Irish ancestry and most of the cardinals
  - (c) anti-clerical Italians
- 3) Nuns: vows of poverty, chastity, obedience
  - (a) Simplicity, modesty
  - (b) Highly regulated life based on medieval cloister
    - (a) Up at 5 bed by 10, everything determined
    - (b) No watches, 2 habits, no popular literature
  - (c) But high level demands: teachers, nurses, missionaries
  - (d) highly regard position among people
  - (e) acceptance of figure of authority, reverence to nuns

### Conclusions

Catholics with distinct life style from Protestants

Importance of ethnicity within American Catholicism up until World War II

Richness can cause tensions—between ethnic groups, leaders, generations

Different rates of assimilation

Isolation from Protestants, even other ethnic groups