Catholic Spirituality and Religious Identity in Interwar New Zealand

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Abstract: Four broad but overlapping areas of spirituality can be identified in Catholic life in New Zealand in the period between the two world wars: affective devotion to Christ and the saints; active social engagement, whether in the form of charity or the promotion of Christian values; Eucharistic piety, including the extra-liturgical cult of the Eucharist alongside increased reception of the Blessed Sacrament and greater participation in the liturgy; and the intensification of lay spirituality by imitating the religious life through third orders and retreats. Catholic spirituality was dominated by the clergy and based on international models, thereby promoting a distinct religious identity. Protestant antagonism towards Catholic spirituality was limited, however, and the Church's leaders sought to avoid religious conflict, seeing secular indifference, rather than aggressive Protestantism, as the real threat to Catholic religious commitment and as the primary justification for introducing new forms of spirituality.

DURING MOST OF THEIR HISTORY, New Zealand Catholics have constituted about one seventh of a predominantly Protestant population far from the main centres of Catholic life. For lay Catholics in particular, the distinctive character of their religion has usually been expressed not in theological reflection but in a range of uniquely Catholic religious practices and organisations. In the years between the two world wars, New Zealand Catholic spirituality underwent important changes as typically nineteenth-century patterns of piety continued to develop while newer expressions were introduced. This article identifies the most noteworthy currents in the spirituality of non-Maori lay Catholics and then assesses the implications of this spirituality for the place of such Catholics within the wider society of interwar New Zealand.[1] It

1. For standard overviews of Catholic spirituality during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see R. Aubert et al., *The Church in a Secularised Society* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1978), chapters 6 and 21; H. Jedin et al., (eds.), *History of the Church* (London: Burns & Oates, 1981), vol. 8, *The Church in the Age of Liberalism,* by R. Aubert et al.,

argues that in consciously aligning themselves with current trends in the international Church, New Zealand Catholics cultivated a religious identity that distinguished them from Protestant New Zealanders but which was primarily a response to the threat of irreligion.

The first section of the article will consider four broad areas of lay Catholic spirituality: devotion (focussing on Christ and the saints); active social engagement (charity and the promotion of Christian social values); sacramentalism or Eucharistic piety (the cult and reception of the Blessed Sacrament as well as the liturgical movement); and the intensification of lay spirituality by imitating the religious life through third orders and retreats. While these categories can be distinguished for the purposes of analysis, they overlapped in practice, and some developments in Catholic spirituality were intermediate or transitional between two or more of them. The second half of the article begins with a discussion of how the adoption of international patterns of spirituality reinforced the distinct identity of New Zealand Catholics. I shall then ask whether their distinctive spirituality was compatible with or an obstacle to acceptance by the wider society. Next, I shall consider the rationale for adopting new forms of spirituality, before assessing, finally, the character of clerical leadership and the extent of lay participation.

The discussion will introduce a representative selection of Catholic religious activities and organisations, mostly drawn from reports in the Catholic press.[2] Catholic newspapers provide a particularly rich resource on the spirituality of the period since they published both general articles and frequent reports on events at parish, diocesan, and national levels.[3]

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chapter 15; vol. 9, *The Church in the Industrial Age*, by R. Aubert et al., chapters 17, 27 and 28; vol. 10, *The Church in the Modern Age*, by G. Adriànyi et al., chapter 9. Much of the analysis in Katherine Massam's *Sacred Threads: Catholic Spirituality in Australia, 1922-1962* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1996) applies to New Zealand. There is no comparable work on the history of New Zealand Catholic spirituality, but Hugh Laracy's chapter in Helen Bergin and Susan Smith (eds.) *He Kupu Whakawairua, Spirituality in Aotearoa New Zealand: Catholic Voices* (Auckland: Accent Publications, 2002) offers some background, and many of the illustrations in Michael King's *God's Farthest Outpost: a History of Catholics in New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1997) reflect the spirituality of the interwar period.

2. During the interwar period, the main Catholic periodicals were the *New Zealand Tablet* (published weekly in Dunedin since 1873), the *Month* (founded in Auckland in 1918), and the *Zealandia*, which replaced the *Month* in 1934 (originally as a fortnightly and later as a weekly newspaper). The *Marist Messenger* was published by the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers) from 1930.

3. This article is based on chapter two of the author's Ph.D. thesis ("More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society, 1918-1940", Massey University, 1994). In the course of that project, Church archives were consulted, oral history interviews were undertaken, and some literature reflecting the period (especially fiction

DEVOTION TO CHRIST AND THE SAINTS

Throughout the interwar period, the devotional practices that had characterised nineteenth-century Catholic piety continued to flourish. The cult of saints, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, was one of the most important elements of this devotional piety. In 1830 a French nun, St Catherine Laboré, experienced an apparition in which Mary instructed her to have a sodality for girls established. The Children of Mary were introduced to New Zealand during the 1870s and there were branches in most parishes during the interwar years.[4] Primarily concerned with the inculcation of piety and virtue, the sodality included only unmarried girls and women; at liturgical ceremonies and other religious functions they wore blue cloaks and white veils in imitation of St Catherine's vision. A later apparition of the Blessed Virgin, to St Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes in 1858, was even better known because of the miraculous cures associated with the spring there. In imitation of the site, grottos were constructed in the grounds of Catholic institutions throughout New Zealand. The grotto at Nazareth House in Christchurch was blessed on the day of Bernadette's canonisation in 1933.[5] Some parishes had shrines featuring the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and maintained branches of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour for women.

After the Virgin, the most popular saint of the interwar period was Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-97, canonised in 1925), whose "little way" epitomised the devotional spirituality of the period. As a Carmelite nun, Thérèse had withdrawn from the world to live a humble life of self-sacrifice and dedication to God in submission to ecclesiastical authority. A number of churches were dedicated to her, and in St Joseph's parish church, Lyttelton, a shrine to the "Little Flower" became the focus for an annual triduum consisting of early morning Mass and evening devotions with a sermon for three days culminating in her feast day.[6]

In keeping with the emotional tone of devotional piety, Jesus Christ was most commonly depicted revealing his Sacred Heart aflame with love for sinners. Modern devotion to the Sacred Heart was based on Christ's revelations to St Margaret Mary Alacoque who lived from 1647

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and autobiography) was read, but none of these sources proved as useful as the Catholic periodicals.

4. *NZ Tablet*, 8 October 1924, 17 (Dunedin sodality established in 1873); E. R. Simmons, *In Cruce Salus: a History of the Diocese of Auckland, 1848-1980* (Auckland: Catholic Communications Centre, 1982) 138 (establishment of the sodality in Auckland given as 1978, presumably a misprint for 1878, cf. 194 for a reference to the movement in the 1890s).
5. *NZ Tablet*, 17 January 1934, 38.
6. *NZ Tablet*, 30 October 1929, 23; 18 October 1933, 21; 20 October 1937, 31.

to 1690 but was only canonised in 1920. Just as the Church and its teachings were being rejected and despised, especially by European anti-clericalists, so also had the Saviour suffered unjustly. Catholics were therefore encouraged to offer reparation to the Sacred Heart, for example by receiving Holy Communion on the First Fridays of nine consecutive months – a practice that was encouraged by the promise of "the grace of final perseverance".[7] Throughout New Zealand, schools and parishes were placed under the patronage of the Sacred Heart, while men's and women's confraternities of the Sacred Heart had been established since the late nineteenth century.[8] Presumably these were affiliated to the Roman Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart founded in 1797 and raised to the status of an archconfraternity in 1803.[9] Australasia was dedicated to the Sacred Heart in June 1919 when the Act of Consecration was read in parish churches at the behest of the bishops.[10]

ACTIVE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Alongside this affective and "feminine" devotional piety, there were developing more active and even assertive – more "masculine" – forms of spirituality that were nevertheless still essentially devotional. In 1925, Pope Pius XI (1922-39) established the feast of Christ the King, whose cult indicated that the Church itself was demanding greater recognition by governments and individuals. Despite its observance on the last Sunday of October (Reformation Sunday for Protestants but for Catholics the end of the liturgical year), Pius's explicit concern was to assert the rule of Christ, the founder of the Church, over contemporary anti-clerical and secularising governments that threatened the liberty of the Church.[11] Catholics in many New Zealand towns declared their allegiance to Christ the King by holding large outdoor processions. The procession in the grounds of the Cathedral in Christchurch in 1929 apparently involved some 8,000 participants.[12] While the Kingship of Christ had quite different implications from those of his Sacred Heart,

7. *NZ Tablet*, 14 June 1923, 29.
8. Simmons, *In Cruce Salus*, 194; Lyndon Fraser, *To Tara via Holyhead: Irish Catholic Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Christchurch* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997) 97.
9. See Louis Verheylezoon, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart* (London: Sands & Co., 1955) 258.
10. *NZ Tablet*, 26 June 1919, 17-19, 25-26; for examples, see 3 July 1919, 22, 27.
11. Pius XI, *Quas Primas* (the 1925 encyclical establishing the feast), in Claudia Carlen (ed.), *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939* (Wilmington, North Carolina: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), especially paragraphs 18, 19, 24, 25, 29, 31, and 32. The text is available on a number of websites.
12. *NZ Tablet*, 6 November 1929, 48-49.

the two religious metaphors had long co-existed and were often mixed, as in the "enthronement of the Sacred Heart", a ceremony by which homes and families were dedicated to Christ by placing an image of the Sacred Heart in a prominent place.[13]

Unlike the Sacred Heart, there were no sodalities dedicated to Christ the King, but the Holy Name Society, in essence a devotional sodality, offered a more "masculine" spirituality than the men's confraternities of the Sacred Heart, which it displaced. By holding public rallies and occasionally lobbying against immoral literature and films, the society combined piety with social concern. Based on the Holy Name Society in the United States, but claiming a pedigree as old as the Second Council of Lyons (1274), the society was first introduced to the Auckland diocese in 1926 by Bishop James Liston.[14] Its members pledged themselves to refrain from "perjury, blasphemy, profanity and obscene speech" and to "support all lawful authority both civil and religious".[15]

There had long existed lay charitable organisations, of which the most important was the St Vincent de Paul Society, which was founded in Paris by Frederick Ozanam in 1833 and became firmly established in New Zealand early in the twentieth century.[16] Although there were conferences in most urban parishes, however, they attracted only small numbers and it was not until 1932, with the establishment of the New Zealand Superior Council, that the society attained independence from the Superior Council of Australasia.[17] It remained responsible to the Council General in Paris, to which it had to report annually on its activities.[18] With their emphasis on personal sanctification and the priority given to visiting the poor in their own homes, the Vincentians were less concerned with influencing the wider society than were the newer lay organisations. Nevertheless, their essentially devotional orientation provided the impetus for various forms of action, including the distribution of Catholic literature and sponsoring Catholic scouting in Wellington during the Depression. The Apostleship of the Sea

13. *NZ Tablet,* 20 June 1918, 18-19 (pastoral letter by Archbishop Redwood).
14. According to the *Month* (19 October 1926, 15), "His Lordship Dr. Cleary has decided to establish the Holy Name Society throughout the Diocese", but the initiative evidently lay with his Coadjutor Liston, who had recently encountered the society while attending the 1926 Eucharistic Congress in Chicago; see David J. Griffin, *The Australian Holy Name Society Handbook* (Goulburn: Goulburn Holy Name Society, revised edition, 1938), 8-9. Simmons, *In Cruce Salus,* 247, confuses the formation of the diocesan union in 1928 with the original introduction of the society (see *Month*, 19 June 1928, 7); Griffin wrongly attributed both developments to 1926.
15. *A Simple Holy Name Manual* (Wellington: T. J. Tiller, new edition, 1932) 94.
16. Only in Christchurch could the society claim a continuous existence back to the late nineteenth century (*NZ Tablet,* 24 September 1930, 15; 12 August 1931, 14); cf. Fraser, 97.
17. *Month,* 1 March 1932, 20-21; *NZ Tablet,* 2 March 1932, 42-44.
18. *NZ Tablet,* 7 September 1932, 35; 15 August 1934, 9.

(*Apostolatus Maris*), originally founded by Peter Anson in Glasgow in 1920 to promote the spiritual and material welfare of seafarers, developed in interwar New Zealand under the auspices of the St Vincent de Paul Society.[19] While the Vincentians were essentially a men's organisation, women could belong to auxiliary conferences and they contributed substantially to the society's benevolent works.

New organisations introduced to New Zealand during the 1930s offered a more varied and essentially active spirituality, especially for Catholic women, than had hitherto been available. The Depression stimulated the introduction of the Catholic Women's League, based on a similar movement founded in England by Margaret Fletcher in 1906. Before World War II, branches were founded by Liston in Auckland (1931) and Bishop Matthew Brodie in Christchurch (1936).[20] The League's purpose was "to unite the Catholic women to work along charitable, intellectual and social lines".[21] Another important movement, with branches for men and women, was the Legion of Mary, founded in Dublin by Frank Duff in 1921 and introduced to Dunedin in 1933 by the Rev. Dr M. J. Klimeck, who had learnt about it and met the founder on a recent stay in Ireland.[22] Although the Legion drew much of its inspiration from the St Vincent de Paul Society, notably in giving priority to personal sanctification, it was not directly concerned with charity towards the poor, and its organisation was modelled on that of the Roman armies. In imitation of their Irish counterparts, legionaries sought to involve indifferent Catholics (whom they contacted by means of a census) in church activities.[23] The patronage of the Blessed Virgin was being invoked in a very different spirit from that of the Children of Mary, and the legion was open to married women and to men.

Visits by the "Grail Ladies", who had come to Australia in 1936, and attendance by New Zealanders at their training courses, further contributed to the promotion of an active spirituality among Catholic girls and women. Founded in the Netherlands by Jacques van Ginneken S.J. in 1921 precisely to promote more active roles for Catholic women, the Grail Ladies (more formally, the Women of Nazareth) had been organising groups for young women since 1929. Early in 1939, Judith Bouwman toured New Zealand, selecting leaders and founding groups

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19. *NZ Tablet*, 5 May 1926, 27-31, 33; 11 January 1933, 15.
20. For these two branches, see Josephine van Montford, *Let Your Light Shine: Catholic Women's League, Diocese of Christchurch, New Zealand, 1936-1986* (Christchurch: Catholic Women's League, 1986) and Noeline De Courcy, *A History of the Catholic Women's League of New Zealand, 1931-1990* (Dunedin: NZ Tablet Co., 1990).
21. *Month*, 1 September 1931, 10; *NZ Tablet*, 9 September 1931, 53-54.
22. *NZ Tablet*, 13 December 1933, 23.
23. *NZ Tablet*, 5 August 1936, 13.

in the larger cities. Among others, there were youth groups (responsible for maintaining contact with school leavers), country groups (to liaise between urban and rural girls), home makers' groups (to train prospective wives and mothers), culture groups (for singing and drama), social groups (for charitable work, including visiting institutions), and congress groups (to prepare for the forthcoming Eucharistic Congress).[24] Since the Grail Ladies, celibate laywomen who lived in community, were not established in New Zealand, the Wellington Grail groups took the name "Ramahi" ("Torch of Dawn").[25]

Increasingly during the interwar period, the catch-phrase of lay spirituality was "Catholic Action", a rather vague term that lent itself to some confusion and controversy. All sorts of Catholic activities and organisations were described as "Catholic Action" – a *New Zealand Tablet* article even applied the term to the Catholic basketball associations in Auckland.[26] When Father Francis Bennett, one of the principal New Zealand exponents of Catholic Action, argued that even the Legion of Mary was not a Catholic Action movement properly so-called, he drew a sharp response from a Christchurch priest, Patrick Timoney, and another, pseudonymous, critic.[27] As defined by Pius XI in his voluminous writings on the subject, Catholic Action meant "the participation of the laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy".[28] According to Bennett, therefore, "Catholic Action...is not an independent apostolate but only a participation in the apostolate of the clergy, and hence it must be exercised in complete obedience and submission to the hierarchy."[29] Lay men and women were called upon to share in an apostolate that was not theirs by right because, in modern societies, they could exercise a Catholic influence where priests had no access. The principal task of Catholic Action was to re-Christianise society, notably by promoting Catholic values in all areas from the economy to entertainment. Knowledge of Catholic social teaching was therefore a prerequisite of Catholic Action. In Wellington, the Catholic social study groups established by Father John A. Higgins S.M. in 1932 became the nucleus of the archdiocese's Catholic Action movement,

24. *NZ Tablet,* 22 February 1939, 43 (Wellington); 1 March 1939, 45-46 (Christchurch and Dunedin); Zealandia, 9 February 1939, 11 (Auckland); 2 March 1939, 4 (Wellington); 9 March 1939, 4 (Christchurch and Dunedin); 23 March 1939, 4 (Invercargill).

25. *NZ Tablet,* 29 November 1939, 34.

26. *NZ Tablet*, 8 April 1936, 29.

27. *NZ Tablet,* 7 April 1937, 9 (Bennett); 14 April 1937, 6 (Timoney); 21 April 1937, 6 (Bennett); 28 April 1937, 6 (Timoney); 9 June 1937, 26-27, 33 ("M. M. Miles"); 16 June 1937, 8 (Bennett); 7 July 1937, 9, 37 ("M. M. Miles"); *Zealandia*, 22 April 1937, 3 (Bennett); cf. *Zealandia*, 27 October 1938, 10 for Timoney's connection with the Legion.

28. *NZ Tablet,* 14 December 1938, 32. For slightly variant renderings, see 4 October 1933, 2; 27 May 1936, 20; 11 November 1936, 9.

29. *NZ Tablet,* 25 October 1933, 20.

formally organised as such in 1938.[30] By December 1940, over eighty groups in the archdiocese were designated as Catholic Action organisations; they included the Ramahi circles, study clubs, and even a debating society that entered the Wellington Union Public Speaking Societies' competition.[31] Following his more rigid conception of Catholic Action, Bennett organised the Catholic Action movement in Dunedin along the lines developed during the 1920s by the Belgian priest Joseph Cardijn, even adopting the French acronyms for his groups. He began in 1937 by quietly forming a Catholic League of Young Men and a Catholic League of Young Women.[32] After two years, vocational groups were established: *JIC* ("Young Christian Independents" – professional and clerical workers), *JEC* ("Young Christian Students" – school pupils), and *JOC* ("Young Christian Workers" – predominantly manual workers).[33] According to the maxim "See, Judge, Act", members were to help each other in promoting Christian principles within their respective environments, a programme described as "penetration of the milieu".

EUCHARISTIC PIETY

During the interwar years, the extra-liturgical cult of the Eucharist, which had been a prominent feature of nineteenth-century piety, continued to flourish. The practice of "making a visit" was encouraged by associations like the People's Eucharistic League, founded in 1859 and established in Auckland in 1938. Members promised to spend an hour in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament at least once a month.[34] Devotion could even be directed to the consecrated host without actually being near a church. Another French association, the League of Night Adoration, founded in 1846 and introduced to New Zealand by the Society of Mary in 1933, encouraged women, rural Catholics, and others unable to visit churches regularly, to spend a specified hour (between 8 pm and 8 am) once a month in prayer directed to Christ in the tabernacle.[35]

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30. *Month,* 1 September 1932, 37; *NZ Tablet,* 7 September 1932, 43; 18 January 1933, 25; 31 August 1938, 43; *Zealandia,* 25 August 1938, 5.
31. *NZ Tablet,* 23 October 1940, 6; 11 December 1940, 7.
32. *NZ Tablet,* 14 December 1938, 24-26, 32; cf. 5 July 1939, 5 ("Two years ago last March...").
33. *NZ Tablet,* 5 July 1939, 5. The acronyms, not explained in the *Tablet,* stood for *Jeunesse indépendente chrétienne, Jeunesse étudiante chrétienne,* and *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne.* For yet other Dunedin groups on the Franco-Belgian model using French acronyms, see *NZ Tablet,* 11 December 1940, 7; 18 December 1940, 3-4, 6, 29.
34. *Zealandia,* 18 August 1938, 6; 15 December 1938, 6; 7 December 1939, 2.
35. *Marist Messenger,* 1 March 1933, 9, 11; *NZ Tablet,* 25 October 1933, 1-2.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, with its elaborate vestments, clouds of incense, and rows of burning candles, was the most popular form of extra-liturgical devotion to the Eucharist. The focus of this brief ceremony was the large host placed in a monstrance on the altar and then used by the priest to bless the congregation. Benediction was held in parish churches at the end of Sunday evening devotions and on important ceremonial occasions. Celebrating his episcopal diamond jubilee in 1934, after a huge procession from Molesworth Street to the Basin Reserve in Wellington, Archbishop Francis Redwood gave Benediction to a crowd said to number about 25,000 people.[36] Sometimes the host was exposed on the altar amidst flowers and lighted candles between the late morning Mass and evening devotions or even for several days during the "Forty Hours' Adoration" (*Quarant' Ore*). Parishioners came to pray and were often rostered to ensure there was always someone present. In 1939, the Nocturnal Adoration Society for Men, originally founded in Rome in 1810, was established in Auckland. For one hour each month, members prayed at night before the exposed Sacrament.[37] Eucharistic processions, in which the monstrance was carried outdoors, formed an important part of the Forty Hours and other celebrations, such as those held to mark the feast of Christ the King. At the climax of the 1938 Catholic centennial celebrations in Auckland, some 11,000 Catholics participated in a two-hour Eucharistic procession from St Benedict's to the Domain.[38] Similar processions were held at the end of Eucharistic congresses, which, since the first Congress at Lille in 1881, had grown into huge spectacles. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and other appropriate observances were held in New Zealand churches to coincide with the international congresses, especially those held in Sydney (1928) and Dublin (1932). In February 1940, a National Eucharistic Congress was held in Wellington to coincide with the country's centennial celebrations.[39]

While the sacred host continued to be an object of devotion dissociated from the Mass, there had also been, since the time of Pius X (1903-1914), a renewed emphasis on frequent Communion from about the age of seven years. First Communion, often taken in large groups made up of one or more primary school classes, was an essential rite of passage for Catholic children, one for which they were prepared by

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36. *NZ Tablet,* 28 February 1934, 7; 7 March 1934, 19, 22; *Month,* 1 March 1934, ii-iii, 17-18.

37. *Zealandia,* 22 June 1939, 4; 29 June 1939, 4; 27 July 1939, 2.

38. *NZ Herald,* 7 March 1938, 13; *NZ Tablet,* 9 March 1938, 43-44; 16 March 1938, 7-8; *Zealandia,* 12 March 1938, 2-4.

39. *NZ Tablet,* 7 February 1940, 14 February 1940 and *Zealandia,* 8 February 1940, 15 February 1940 (passim); N. H. Gascoigne, *The Book of the Congress, 1940* (Wellington: Chancellery of the Archdiocese, 1941).

sustained instruction and sacramental Confession. Girls dressed as "brides of Christ" in white dresses and veils, while boys wore white shirts with sashes. Having fasted since midnight, they were usually given a celebratory breakfast in the parish hall afterwards. "General Communions" of a whole parish or of particular groups within it used peer pressure to promote more frequent reception of Communion among the laity. The larger sodalities attended an early Mass and received Communion together once a month, both for their own edification and to set an example to the parish. Holy Name Men were told that "Attendance at meetings may be good, but the one thing necessary is the question of Holy Communion."[40] Some associations, such as the Knights, Handmaids, and Pages of the Blessed Sacrament founded among soldiers serving in the First World War by an English Jesuit, Edmund Lester, and introduced to Wellington in 1920, combined an emphasis on Eucharistic devotions with a personal commitment to receive Communion at least weekly.[41]

In itself, renewed emphasis on receiving Communion at Mass, as distinct from worshipping the consecrated host outside the liturgy, was quite compatible with the predominantly individualistic way in which Catholics tended to "hear Mass" rather than participate directly in it. By the interwar period, however, the influence of the liturgical movement, which had begun in European monasteries but from the beginning of the century began spreading to the parishes, was being felt in New Zealand. Although Pius X had called for the restoration of Gregorian Chant and other traditional liturgical music, the New Zealand response was limited. Shortly before Pius XI reaffirmed Pius X's policy (in 1929), however, Archbishop Thomas O'Shea had engaged Lilian Honiss, a graduate of the Pius X School of Sacred Music in New York, to teach plainsong in the schools of the Wellington archdiocese.[42] In 1936, he appointed a Church Music Commission that produced detailed regulations and a list of approved liturgical music for the archdiocese.[43]

Throughout the interwar period, efforts were made to promote the use of the missal, which enabled the faithful to follow the Mass in detail. Until the late nineteenth century, vernacular translations of the missal had been prohibited, but now the text was available in English and bilingual editions. Many Catholics, however, continued to pray the Rosary or to use prayer books whose texts bore little relation to the

40. *Month,* 19 June 1928, 40.
41. *NZ Tablet,* 28 October 1920, 22-23; 4 February 1925, 35; *Zealandia,* 6 December 1934, 3, 8; 7 November 1935, 7.
42. *Month,* 15 January 1929, 19.
43. *NZ Tablet,* 28 October 1936, 6; 25 November 1936, 21, 27; 21 April 1937, 23-27; *Zealandia,* 16 July 1936, 3.

words of the liturgy. Indeed, as late as 1937, the Fourth Plenary Council of Australasia decreed that the Rosary was to be recited daily in all parishes throughout October either in the evening before the Blessed Sacrament or during morning Mass.[44] *The Key of Heaven* and *The Garden of the Soul* – the most popular prayer books – did at least contain the invariable "ordinary" text of the Mass but none of the "propers" that varied according to the liturgical season. In 1930, Liston began to publish *The Leaflet Missal*, which contained translations of both the ordinary and the propers in continuous sequence. While the missal enabled the congregation to read the prayers of the Mass (usually in English), only the altar servers actually recited them aloud (in Latin). In 1939, however, the first Dialogue Masses – in which at least a part of the congregation prayed aloud in Latin – were offered in New Zealand. The Catholic Youth Movement in Auckland was officially inaugurated with a Dialogue Mass celebrated by Liston and attended by 100 young people.[45] It was among such Catholic Action groups, including the Grail organisations, that Dialogue Masses were most popular, not only because of the training required, but because their more active spirituality, with its zeal for transforming society, was to be grounded in the Church's official, corporate worship.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AS A MODEL

Encouraging the laity to take Holy Communion more often and to participate more fully in the liturgy reflected another important trend in Catholic spirituality, namely the modelling of lay piety on that of the religious life. The other two principal manifestations of this tendency were the retreat movement and the growth of third orders. Annual retreats for lay women were well established by the interwar period, but retreats for lay men were not held regularly until the early 1920s.[46] Retreats had traditionally been restricted to the clergy and religious, but now the laity were being encouraged to imitate the religious life, spending several days in a single-sex community, participating in religious devotions, listening to spiritual talks, observing periods of silence, praying, and meditating – all according to a strict timetable. Accounts of retreats noted both the religious and temporal dimensions of withdrawal from the world. Catholic journalist Pat Lawlor, in an

44. *Concilium Plenarum IV Australiae et Novae Zelandiae, Habitum Apud Sydney, Anno Domini 1937, Editio Officialis* (Manly: printed by the Manly Daily Pty Ltd, circa 1939) 98, rule 541.
45. *Zealandia*, 20 April 1939, 3; cf. 30 March 1939, 2 and 6 April 1939, 2 for the preparations.
46. *NZ Tablet*, 11 August 1921, 28; 1 November 1923, 29.

article entitled "A Spiritual Holiday", advised that "picnic clothes" – tennis shoes and a blazer – "make the ideal 'habit' for the temporary monastic life".[47]

Third orders provided another means of promoting sanctity among lay people, whether married or single, who adopted something of the ethos of the religious life. The original third order was founded by St Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century and was later imitated by the Third Order of St Dominic. (The first orders were those of the friars and the second orders were for nuns.) In 1832, not long after its foundation, the Society of Mary also sponsored a third order. Having passed through a postulancy and novitiate, tertiaries were professed and invested with their "habit" – usually a cord or scapular worn under their ordinary clothes. At a retreat for Dominican tertiaries in 1925, Prior Hogan explained that "A Tertiary living in the world is a true member of the Order of St Dominic, and in consequence participates in all the merits of the Order accumulated through the seven centuries."[48] Tertiaries were expected to offer certain prayers each day, to live simply, and to avoid immoral fashions and entertainments.[49] Although there were no Dominican Friars in New Zealand and no Franciscans until they returned to Auckland in 1939, Australian representatives of both orders visited this country to promote their respective third orders. There were Dominican tertiaries (all women) in the Dunedin diocese, where Dominican nuns ran a number of schools, and later in Auckland when two convents were founded there.[50] First established in Palmerston North in 1921, the Franciscan tertiaries spread to a number of other centres when Father J. Celsus Kelly O.F.M. toured New Zealand in 1932 and 1933.[51] The Third Order of Mary was inaugurated in Wellington in 1923 and thereafter extended to other centres where the Marists had parishes.[52]

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47. *NZ Tablet*, 7 December 1938, 7. Lawlor sometimes wrote under the pseudonym "Christopher Penn".

48. *NZ Tablet*, 4 February 1925, 27.

49. *NZ Tablet*, 16 March 1932, 13 (Franciscans); 31 January 1934, 39 (Dominicans); Peter Regnault S.M., *The Third Order of Mary: its Origins, Rules, Membership* (Melbourne: Australian Catholic Truth Society, 1925) 15-16. The author of this pamphlet founded the Third Order of Mary in New Zealand.

50. *NZ Tablet*, 4 February 1925, 27; 31 January 1934, 39; 11 March 1936, 8; *Zealandia*, 26 March 1936, 7.

51. *NZ Tablet*, 11 May 1932, 45; 6 July 1932, 46; 30 August 1933, 5; 25 October 1933, 7; 1 November 1933, 7.

52. Peter Ewart S.M. (ed.), *The Society of Mary in New Zealand, 1838, 1889-1989* (Wellington: Society of Mary, 1989) 84.

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS AND CATHOLIC DISTINCTIVENESS

In conforming to international – mostly European – developments in Catholic spirituality, New Zealand Catholics affirmed their membership of the universal Church and, at least implicitly, dissociated themselves from local Protestantism. Solidarity with international Catholicism was reflected in a high level of support for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and other missionary organisations.[53] In addition to festivals like Easter and Christmas celebrated by the major Protestant churches, New Zealand Catholics held appropriate observances at times recognised only by their Church, such as the months of May (dedicated to Mary), June (the Sacred Heart), October (the Rosary), and November (the Holy Souls in Purgatory). An annual procession was held in Timaru at the beginning of the month of the Holy Rosary, and reference has already been made to the recitation of the Rosary during October.[54] If some Catholics found abstinence from meat on Fridays burdensome, others welcomed the substitution of fish in their menu:[55] the custom served more as a symbol of Catholic identity than as a penance.

There were no indigenous forms of spirituality among European Catholics in New Zealand, and local initiatives derived their legitimation from international models. The popularity of distant Lourdes was increased rather than rivalled by the building of grottos in New Zealand.[56] Only Catholics from around Dunedin seem to have attended the annual pilgrimage to the "national shrine" honouring Our Lady of Perpetual Succour at Seacliff.[57] Opened in 1936, the church had been paid for by Catholics around the country. A suggestion that the site of Blessed Peter Chanel's martyrdom at Futuna be adopted as a pilgrimage destination does not seem to have aroused much interest.[58] Local conditions did not give rise to distinctive observances or movements but could influence the selection of religious practices imported from the Old World. In June 1927, an annual outdoor Corpus Christi procession was inaugurated at the new Christian Brothers'

53. *Zealandia*, 26 March 1936, 4; 5 March 1938, 12; *NZ Tablet,* 18 October 1939, 5.
54. *NZ Tablet,* 10 October 1918, 23; 12 October 1938, 26.
55. Pauline O'Regan, *Aunts and Windmills* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1991) 164.
56. See *Marist Messenger,* 2 January 1933, 17-23 for a New Zealander's impressions of Lourdes.
57. *NZ Tablet,* 6 March 1940, 34.
58. J. F. Donovan to the editor, *Month*, 15 March 1927, 21; cf. *Month* 19 April 1927, 8-9 for an article on Futuna and its martyr. The idea of pilgrimage to Futuna was not new even then but was slow to attract support; see Hugh Laracy, "Saint-Making: the Case of Pierre Channel of Futuna", *New Zealand Journal of History,* 34/1 (2000) 145-61, especially 159, 161.

School in Oamaru, but it was decided in 1934 that an October procession to celebrate the feast of Christ the King was more in keeping with the southern hemisphere's seasons.[59] It was originally suggested that the feast of the Rosary (at the beginning of October) should replace Corpus Christi as the occasion for an annual procession.[60] However, the feast of Christ the King (at the end of the month) was both more popular and more in keeping with the increasing assertiveness of Catholic spirituality.

More importantly, there was less lay initiative and correspondingly more clerical direction in the New Zealand Church than in countries with older, larger, more educated, or wealthier Catholic populations. There was no counterpart in New Zealand to the Catholic Evidence Guild, an English organisation whose lay members publicly expounded the faith. By contrast, two priests were sent to England to train with the Catholic Missionary Society in preparation for imitating its work in New Zealand.[61] The Catholic Women's League, founded by an English laywoman, was introduced to New Zealand by the bishops and remained firmly under their direction. Members of the St Vincent de Paul Society were admonished to obey their parish priest even if he seemed to be wrong.[62] Even in regard to Catholic Action, it was observed that "Everything depends on the ecclesiastical assistants, the chaplains appointed by the Bishops to guide the movement."[63] Both in religious ceremonies and in the voluntary organisations that channelled lay spirituality, clerical leadership was unquestioned. While the Vatican orchestrated the overall development of international spirituality, the local clergy, especially the bishops, decided which new lay organisations and practices would be introduced. Parish missions provided the ideal opportunity to stimulate religious enthusiasm and direct it into associations where it would continue to be encouraged. After a fortnight of sermons and devotions conducted by visiting priests, congregations were often urged to join existing sodalities or recruited into new ones. At a mission in Timaru in December 1928, the Holy Name Society was established while membership of the Children of Mary, the Sacred Heart Society for women, and other parish organisations was substantially increased.[64]

Catholics asserted their distinct religious identity not only by adopting overseas practices under clerical leadership but also, in

59. *NZ Tablet*, 29 June 1927, 27; 31 October 1934, 7.
60. *Zealandia*, 5 July 1934, 7.
61. *Zealandia*, 14 March 1940, 3.
62. *NZ Tablet*, 29 March 1933, 41.
63. *Zealandia*, 16 February 1939, 5.
64. *NZ Tablet*, 12 December 1928, 31, 43-44.

keeping with Catholic practice ever since the Council of Trent (1545-63), by emphasising precisely those elements of their faith that differed from Protestantism. Catholic piety was, to a marked extent, based on external observances – by works, not just faith. This was particularly apparent in the practice of compiling "spiritual bouquets": lists tallying the Benedictions and Masses attended, Holy Communions received, visits made to the Blessed Sacrament, Rosaries recited, and other pious acts performed by the contributors. A spiritual bouquet, in the form of three large bound volumes recording the spiritual efforts of the nation's Catholic schoolchildren, was presented at the Eucharistic Congress held in Wellington in 1940.[65] The Eucharist assumed extraordinary significance, in part because the doctrine of transubstantiation was so distinctively Catholic that it served as a symbol for Catholicism as a whole. When everyone attending early Mass at St Joseph's Church in New Plymouth received Communion on the Sunday of the International Eucharistic Congress at Sydney in 1928, they were congratulated by Father Peter Breen "on their demonstration of faith".[66] Catholic spirituality reflected the triumphalist conviction that "Catholicism and Protestantism are separated as widely as truth is from error".[67] Without directly attacking specific practices of Protestants in New Zealand, the Catholic press sometimes reminded its readers that the Protestant churches lacked the divinely appointed "aids to holiness": "They claim to have retained two out of the seven Sacraments, but in plain fact these have been jettisoned with the other[s]".[68]

PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC RELATIONS

While some Protestants publicly criticised Catholic spirituality, most of them viewed it quietly from a more eirenic perspective. The most outspoken critic of Catholic spirituality was the Rev Dr J. J. North, a Baptist. In a 1922 polemic, for example, he condemned the Church for a variety of practices including neglect of the Bible, granting indulgences, and worshipping Mary.[69] A serious outbreak of sectarian conflict beginning shortly before World War One extended into the early interwar period and centred on allegations that a disloyal Catholic Church exercised undue political influence in New Zealand – a concern

65. Gascoigne, *The Book of the Congress,* 1940 47. The three volumes are held in the Wellington Catholic Archdiocesan Archive.
66. *Month*, 16 October 1928, 40.
67. *NZ Tablet,* 3 June 1925, 33.
68. *NZ Tablet,* 6 January 1926, 51 (Monsignor Power).
69. J. J. North, *Roman Catholicism: Roots and Fruits* (Napier: printed by G. W. Venables & Co., 1922) 50-62, 85-86, 110-123.

also reflected by North.[70] After the early 1920s, however, Protestant-Catholic relations greatly improved, and, during the 1930s, Catholic Masses, Rosaries, and other devotions were broadcast on radio just as Protestant services were. When the Orange Lodge's *Nation* denounced the Protestant clergy of Wellington for failing to remonstrate against the forthcoming Eucharistic procession associated with the 1940 Eucharistic Congress, it revealed both the general tolerance of Catholicism and the marginality of extreme Protestantism.[71] Protestant forbearance on this occasion, however, is at least partially attributable to most citizens' anxiety to avoid renewing the sectarian tensions of the previous World War.

Only two years earlier, a substantial number of Protestants had indeed remonstrated against a similar procession in Auckland to celebrate the centenary of the arrival of the missionary Bishop Jean Baptiste Pompallier in 1838. Despite its "superstitions and errors", the *New Zealand Methodist Times* felt it could congratulate the Catholic Church for its witness to Christian faith and ideals during the previous century. It was concerned, however, that in a "still nominally predominantly Protestant" country, the Auckland City Council had given permission for a Eucharistic procession on 6 March that represented "only one eighth of the people".

> To permit the carrying of the Monstrance through the public streets is to subject the Protestant passer-by to an unnecessary dilemma. No sincere Protestant can bow before a piece of bread and to refuse to do so is to run the risk of offending Catholic sentiment. It is a dilemma that should never have been occasioned. We candidly regret it.[72]

While the editor did not himself wish to give offence, he obviously felt offended by such triumphalist defiance of Protestant sensibilities. A week after the procession, a 3,000-strong "meeting of Protestant witness" was told by the Methodist Rev E. T. Olds that "To carry the Host in procession is adoration, and any act of adoration is idolatry."[73] North also addressed the meeting, declaring that "to carry the host in a city overwhelmingly Protestant is to flaunt that which has torn the world in twain".[74] The secular press, by contrast, revelled in the

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70. For an overview, see P. S. O'Connor, "Sectarian Conflict in New Zealand, 1911-1920", *Political Science,* 19 (1967) 3-16. Rory Sweetman, *Bishop in the Dock: the Sedition Trial of James Liston* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997) focuses on the final act of the sectarian drama.
71. *Nation*, 10 January 1940, 11.
72. *NZ Methodist Times,* 15 January 1938, 293.
73. *NZ Herald,* 14 March 1938, 15.
74. *NZ Baptist,* April 1938, 101.

pageantry of the Catholic celebrations, and Liston was particularly grateful to the Auckland newspapers for their extensive coverage.[75] Not surprisingly, North condemned the "reptile press" of Auckland, which "consistently and presumably under pressure spoke of the 'Catholic centenary'" even though "In British law there is no Catholic Church distinguished from other Churches. The title belongs to them all."[76] However, the lack of a comparable reaction against the 1940 Eucharistic procession suggests that North's warning – that the "audacity of the action" would "not be forgotten" – was less representative of Protestant views than the position taken by the Rev P. G. Hughes. In a contribution to the Presbyterian *Outlook,* he acknowledged the significance of the celebrations for Catholics and argued that "dignified silence" on the part of Protestants would have been better than the "mild panic" which led to the organisation of a "counter demonstration".[77]

Aware that their distinctive spirituality created something of a barrier between them and non-Catholics, Catholics often sought to minimise differences and misunderstandings. They were particularly sensitive to claims that their Church discouraged the reading of Scripture. *Tablet* editor the Rev Dr James Kelly asserted that there was "a Bible in every normal Catholic home", but Father Thomas Heffernan S.M. felt constrained to acknowledge that the Bible was better known and appreciated among non-Catholics than Catholics.[78] In a society that did not encourage conversation about personal and contentious matters such as religion, Catholic isolation was reinforced by a distinctive language. Specifically Catholic activities and devotions required their own names, like "triduum", "novena", "sodality", "spiritual bouquet", "scapular", "monstrance", the "Little Flower", the "Sacred Heart", the "Children of Mary", the "Miraculous Medal", "Nocturnal Adoration", "Benediction", and "Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament". There was also a tendency to favour expressions derived from Latin and the Romance languages against more commonplace English equivalents, for example *Quarant' Ore,* the "Seven Dolours of Our Lady", "Our Lady of Perpetual Succour", or the quite misleading "Invention of the True Cross". Alan Carter, a later *Tablet* editor, deprecated the use of such

75, *NZ Herald*, 7 March 1938, 13; *NZ Tablet*, 14 September 1938, 41.
76. *NZ Baptist*, April 1938, 101.
77. *Outlook,* 13 April 1938, 16-17; but cf. 3 – the editor was less tolerant of Catholic devotions.
78. *NZ Tablet,* 19 August 1920, 14; *Holy Name Annual,* December 1931, 33.

terms because they raised unnecessary obstacles to interdenominational understanding.[79]

In his 1928 encyclical *Mortalium Animos,* Pius XI reminded Catholics that they could not participate in the religious observances of other Christians. Catholics were not usually allowed to attend even the weddings or funerals of non-Catholics, and lay people often felt embarrassed by the consequent strain on their relationships with friends and relatives outside the Church. Parish priests, however, had some discretionary authority to permit attendance, and many Catholics seem to have disregarded the rules.[80] Catholics were not permitted to attend Anzac Day ceremonies that included elements of Protestant worship, but they were just as anxious as other citizens to honour the war dead and to demonstrate their patriotism.[81] Requiem Masses were offered in Catholic churches on Anzac Day, and when a new, secular ceremony was instituted by the Returned Soldiers' Association at the Auckland Cenotaph in 1930, Liston and other Catholics were able to attend, laying wreaths on behalf of the Catholic community.[82] In Wellington, St Joseph's parish newspaper was still complaining in 1939 that although the city's War Memorial had been built by members of different denominations in honour of both Catholic and non-Catholic soldiers, the refusal of the civic authorities to hold a purely civil function effectively excluded Catholics from participating. They therefore arranged their own parade but were embarrassed by the unnecessary tension between their religious and patriotic loyalties.[83]

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79. *NZ Tablet,* 31 August 1938, 5; 16 June 1943, 7; but cf. *Marist Messenger,* 1 October 1938, 16, for an alternative view.

80. O'Regan, *Aunts and Windmills,* 163-64.

81. Anzac Day is observed on the anniversary of the landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps on the Gallipoli peninsula – 25 April 1915.

82. *NZ Herald,* 26 April 1930, 15; *Month*, 15 April 1930, 21; 20 May 1930, 38; *Zealandia*, 9 May 1935, 5. Maureen Sharpe ("Anzac Day in New Zealand 1916 to 1939", *New Zealand Journal of History,* 15/2, October 1981, 97-114, 105) inaccurately portrays this development as a change in policy on the part of the Church, tentatively attributing it to Bishop Cleary's close relations with the RSA. Cleary, however, had died in December 1929. Eighteen months earlier an editorial in his diocesan newspaper explained why Catholics could not attend united religious services on Anzac Day (*Month*, 15 May 1928, 21). Scott Worthy ("A Debt of Honour: New Zealanders' First Anzac Days", *NZJH,* 36/2, 2002, 185-200, 191-93) has recently argued that while (Protestant) religion initially provided many of the resources from which to construct suitable observances at short notice, Anzac Day quickly became more secular: it was precisely as this occurred that Catholics increasingly participated in public ceremonies.

83. *Catholic News,* April 1939, 1-2; May 1939, 9.

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY AS A DEFENCE AGAINST IRRELIGION

While reinforcing the distinctive identity of Catholics, their religious practices were not intended to isolate them as an end in itself but to fortify them in the struggle against irreligion. Even the 1940 Eucharistic Congress was explicitly offered as a Catholic contribution to the nation's centennial celebrations.[84] A *Zealandia* article explained that Catholics were not permitted to attend non-Catholic services because the Church was "extraordinarily jealous of her people's integrity of faith". Nevertheless, Catholics could still "mix or mingle with others on a purely civil or social basis".[85] Indeed, Catholic sporting and cultural clubs eagerly participated in public competitions, while charitable organisations such as the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Women's League collaborated with non-Catholic groups that shared some of their concerns.[86] Triumphalist manifestations of Catholicism, like Eucharistic processions and Holy Name rallies, were not intended to antagonise Protestants but to reinforce the faith of Catholics themselves. In a society where Christianity tended to be defined in terms of the beliefs and practices of the Protestant majority, promoting its own spirituality inevitably gave a distinctive character to the Catholic community. This outcome was not necessarily unwelcome, but it was not the primary aim, for the perceived threat to the religious commitment of Catholics was not aggressive Protestantism but secular opposition to religious, and particularly ethical, values. At the same time, though, the Protestant churches were usually blamed for the contemporary decline of moral standards, which could only be halted by a return to Catholic principles.[87]

In 1938, Father Anthony Loughnan argued in a sermon broadcast from St Joseph's Cathedral, Dunedin, that Christianity was threatened by "the paganism of the civilised intelligent apostate". This "New Paganism", more evident overseas but still a looming menace in New Zealand, was not limited to "the obvious things" like divorce legislation, artificial birth control, and therapeutic abortion. Rather, it was

> a new departure, a new philosophy, a new outlook upon everything, a new way of understanding, of explaining, of organising life, society, morality, justice, the nation, the national authority, work[,]

84. Joint pastoral letter of the bishops of New Zealand, *NZ Tablet*, 20 September 1939, 3-4; *Zealandia*, 28 September 1939, 4.
85. *Zealandia*, 27 September 1934, 10.
86. C. J. van der Krogt, "Catholic religious identity and social integration in interwar New Zealand", *Catholic Historical Review*, 86 (2000), 47-65, see pp. 55-58.
87. For examples, see van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart", 288-61.

health, free time, love, pleasure: everything. A way which excludes all idea of God, all idea of a spiritual world, all idea of a future life.

The problem stemmed from the Protestant Reformers' insistence on the direct relationship between the individual soul and God, thereby setting aside the Church and its sacraments as well as undermining the social character of Christianity and reducing religion to a "purely personal and private matter". Despite the historic role of Protestantism, however, Loughnan identified the contemporary problem as secularisation, "the division of the life of men...into two watertight compartments", religion ("a private, almost secret affair") and the rest of life, which is shared with one's fellows. The new pagans were motivated only by the pursuit of pleasure, notably through bodily fitness, health, beauty, comfort, and leisure. Modern civilisation therefore needed to be Christianised.[88] The editor of the *Tablet*, which published the sermon, made explicit the link with contemporary trends in Catholic spirituality, specifically Catholic Action and the liturgical movement. The Jocists (the *JOC* or Young Christian Workers), with their slogan "penetration of the milieu" provided a model, "And like the Jocists, we too must find our inspiration, our starting point, in the Liturgy".[89]

That the principal trends in New Zealand Catholic spirituality were intended primarily as a response to worldwide irreligion rather than to local Protestantism is further suggested by their European and North American origins. Devotional piety, the extra-liturgical cult of the Eucharist, and the revival of third orders were deliberately fostered by the Church from the time of Pope Pius IX (1846-78) as a means of insulating Catholics from the corrosive effects of liberalism, anti-clericalism, socialism, and scientific unbelief.[90] These forms of spirituality, closely associated with ultramontanism, developed above all in "Catholic" France, in opposition not to Protestantism but to secularism (*laïcité*). The Holy Name Society offered a less affective form of devotional piety suited to men living in a society (originally the United States) that was predominantly Protestant and Anglo-Saxon, rather than Catholic and Latin. Far from being anti-Protestant, however, its preoccupation with clean speech, as epitomised in the biblical notion of the name of the Lord, was entirely compatible with Protestant spirituality. The more recent developments in Catholic spirituality, such as the feast of Christ the King, the Catholic Women's League, and

88 *NZ Tablet*, 5 October 1938, 3-4, 41-42.

89. *NZ Tablet*, 5 October 1938, 5.

90. Bill McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: the Search for Relevance* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980) 32-52.

Catholic Action, reflected a newer strategy, a more assertive response to the decay of traditional Christian beliefs and values. In certain respects, notably in involving the laity more fully in the life of the Church (especially in the liturgical movement), Catholic spirituality was actually becoming more like that of Protestants.

CLERICAL LEADERSHIP AND LAY PARTICIPATION

As in Catholicism more generally, there was a strong tendency among the New Zealand laity to rely upon the clergy and religious – celibate professionals – to live the ideal Christian vocation on their behalf.[91] Lay people (or, more precisely, those who remained in a lay state) were thus relegated to a supporting role – though one whose demands should not be underestimated in view of the efforts required to establish and maintain Catholic schools and other institutions in a new land. Such a perspective was easy to maintain as long as there was a ready supply of priests and nuns, richly supplemented by the Irish Church. Modelling lay spirituality on that of the religious life reflects not only the assumed superiority and normative character of the religious life but also an increasing recognition of the vocation of the laity – though it would take some time yet to redefine the lay vocation in its own right.

From the time of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) onwards, the ecclesiastical authorities, while continuing to promote devotional piety, increasingly encouraged the laity to advance the Church's interests by participating, as Catholics, in contemporary secular society where overtly clerical influence was no longer accepted.[92] If the laity were to assume a role hitherto reserved to the clergy and religious orders, they needed to be prepared for their mission in a similar manner. The introduction of active spirituality was therefore accompanied by efforts to promote the sanctification of lay Catholics on the model of the clergy and religious: a new emphasis on the reception of Holy Communion, greater participation in the liturgy, and annual retreats. According to Carter, "Catholic Action depends upon Christian formation, and Christian formation upon active participation in the Liturgy".[93] Urging laymen to attend retreats, Liston repeatedly declared, "This is the century of the

91. For a discussion of the relative merits of religious and family life, see C. J. van der Krogt "Imitating the Holy Family: Catholic ideals and the cult of domesticity in interwar New Zealand", *History Now/Te Pae Tawhito o te Wa*, 4/1 (May 1998) 13-19.

92. McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: the Search for Relevance,* ignores the developments in active spirituality outlined here (although Catholic Action as encouraged by Leo XIII is discussed on pp. 74-80) and gives only a brief discussion of the liturgical movement (pp. 109-112).

93. *NZ Tablet,* 3 May 1939, 5.

laity, the age of the lay apostolate".[94] As in the religious life, contemplation was seen as a preliminary to religious action. Membership of the Third Order of St Francis was recommended by Fr. Francis Bennett as a means of attaining the personal holiness that was "a prerequisite for participation in Catholic Action".[95] Like devotional piety, active spirituality had developed primarily in Catholic societies: France, Belgium and, in the case of the Legion of Mary, southern Ireland. The Catholic Women's League and the Grail, despite their origins in the predominantly Protestant societies of England and the Netherlands, were not anti-Protestant. Both the Auckland and Christchurch branches of the League, for example, established warm relations with non-Catholic organisations and were represented in the National Council of Women.[96]

Clerical concern to enliven lay piety was quite justified: only a bare majority of New Zealand Catholics attended Sunday Mass, and many of them evidently regarded this as sufficient to fulfil their public religious obligations. The 1921 and 1926 national censuses give figures for the numbers of Catholics usually attending Mass in each parish as well as the ages of the Catholic population in five yearly cohorts.[97] Since Catholics were expected to attend Mass from about seven years ("the age of reason"), it is appropriate to exclude from consideration those under five years old. In 1921, nearly 64 per cent of Catholics aged five and over attended Mass, and by 1926 the percentage had declined to 59. On 4 March 1934, the 8,341 Mass attenders at Wellington's fourteen city churches were counted on behalf of the Wellington Catholic Education Board.[98] Of the 18,281 Catholics in Wellington at the time of the 1936 national census, about 16,691 would have been aged five years or over.[99] These figures give an attendance rate of about 50 per cent, which is reasonably consistent with the declining proportions derived from the 1921 and 1926 censuses. While church attendance was higher among Catholics than among the other large denominations, as many as half of those who identified themselves as Catholics did not attend regularly during the interwar period. Attendance at Sunday evening devotions (and, a fortiori, week-day devotions, apart from special occasions like

94. *Month*, 15 June 1922, 4; 15 June 1923, 4; *Marist Messenger*, 1 December 1932, 41.
95. *NZ Tablet*, 25 October 1933, 20.
96. *Zealandia*, 7 June 1934, 3; 12 March 1936, 7; 13 August 1936, 7; 31 December 1936, 7; 12 August 1937, 10; 28 October 1937, 10; 5 March 1938, 22; *NZ Tablet*, 27 October 1937, 27; *NZ Herald*, 28 September 1937, 3; van Montfort, *Let Your Light Shine*, 21.
97. *Results of a Census of the Dominion of New Zealand...1921*, Appendix E, vii and part VII, 35; *Dominion of New Zealand. Population Census*, 1926, vol. VIII, 32-33; vol. XV, 8.
98. *Catholic News*, May 1934, 3.
99. 91.3 per cent of the national Catholic population was aged five or older (*Dominion of New Zealand. Population Census*, 1936, vol. VI, 13, 15, 20-23).

parish missions) must have been even less. A Wellington correspondent to the *Tablet*, writing in 1933, lamented that on Sunday evenings many churches were only a quarter full.[100]

Women and girls were more easily persuaded than men to participate in religious activities, and it was the less demanding forms of devotional piety that attracted the most support, rather than the more demanding forms of active spirituality. There were over 1,200 Children of Mary at the women's Mass during the 1938 Catholic centennial celebrations in Auckland and 1,600 at an address in the Cathedral.[101] Nearly three years after its establishment in Dunedin, the Legion of Mary had 79 active members (of whom 35 were women, 30 were schoolgirls and 14 were men), as well as 249 auxiliaries who were "unable or unwilling to assume the duties of active membership".[102] The Holy Name Society rapidly became the largest religious organisation for Catholic men in part because, while naturally expected to lead virtuous lives, members were seldom asked to do more than attend the monthly sodality Mass and meeting. By March 1939, there were 1,295 members in the city and suburban branches of Auckland – an area with about 9,000 male Catholics aged sixteen and over in 1936.[103] Nearly 2,000 men from Wellington and other centres formed a Holy Name Society procession from St Mary of the Angels to St Patrick's College, near the Basin Reserve, on Sunday 26 February 1939.[104] Eileen Duggan, a regular contributor to the Catholic press, was moved precisely because the participants were all men: "the piety of women is assumed as normal".[105] Catholic men – or at least a prominent minority of them – were willing to make such a public display of their faith precisely because at the same time they were able to assert their loyalty to New Zealand (at a time of escalating international tension). Banners carried in the procession bore phrases from the society's oath, including the pledge to support civil and religious authority.[106]

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100. *NZ Tablet*, 13 December 1933, 2.
101. *NZ Tablet*, 16 March 1938, 33; *Zealandia*, 12 March 1938, 10.
102. *NZ Tablet*, 5 August 1936, 13.
103. *NZ Tablet*, 29 March 1939, 46. According to the 1936 census there were 12,981 Catholic males in Auckland (op. cit., vol. VI, 7); nearly 70 per cent of the country's Catholic males were aged over 16 (ibid., 20-21).
104. *Dominion*, 27 February 1939, 10.
105. *NZ Tablet*, 8 March 1939, 42. Duggan wrote under the pseudonym "Pippa". Actually, a number of participants were schoolboys; see the photos in the *Dominion*, 28 February 1939, 7.
106. *Catholic News*, April 1939, 5.

CONCLUSION

The Catholic Church in interwar New Zealand adopted religious movements that would promote greater lay commitment to the Church and its teachings and would empower the laity to work for the re-Christianisation of society. Following international patterns, the promotion both of affective and, more and more, of active spirituality was seen as an antidote to the increasingly secular worldview of western societies generally. Inevitably, the movements fostered by the Church – notably the maintenance of devotional piety, the development of more active forms of spirituality, the cult of the Eucharist and the liturgical movement, and the modelling of lay spirituality on that of the religious life – linked Catholics to international Catholicism rather than to New Zealand society. As a self-conscious and defensive minority in a culture that identified itself at least nominally with Protestantism, New Zealand Catholics had little choice. Ultramontanist triumphalism and the cultivation of approved forms of spirituality from older and larger Catholic populations overseas gave the security of participating in the universal Church. Nor were new movements drawn exclusively from any one country, such as Ireland; truth lay in catholicity, not particularism.

With few religiously articulate lay Catholics in the country, moreover, it was the clergy, and especially the bishops, who linked the local Church with international Catholicism. Lay spirituality, both old and new, was dominated by the clergy and supported by nuns (especially through the Catholic schools); there was little expectation of lay initiative. Even movements that were founded by lay Catholics overseas (such as the Catholic Women's League and the Legion of Mary) were introduced to New Zealand by clerics. It was they who decided which movements would be transplanted to New Zealand. In keeping with overseas developments, there was a clear trend towards greater participation by the laity in the life of the Church and even some foreshadowing of the greater lay autonomy that would develop later in the twentieth century. Meanwhile, though, clerical dominance was maintained and seems to have been unquestioned.

By reproducing typically Catholic forms of spirituality developed overseas, and officially avoiding non-Catholic religious services, New Zealand Catholics cultivated a distinct religious identity. However, emphasising distinctively Catholic doctrines and practices was not so much a local response to Protestantism as a continuation of the Counter-Reformation strategy, maintained since the sixteenth century, of distinguishing Catholicism sharply from Protestantism. It was thus

inevitably a part of the pattern of international Catholic spirituality that was adopted in New Zealand. There was naturally some Protestant antagonism towards Catholic piety, especially in its more public and triumphalist manifestations (notably public Eucharistic processions), but Catholic religious practices were usually regarded with respect by non-Catholics.

Seeing widespread denial of religious values rather than aggressive Protestantism as the real threat to the religious commitment of Catholics, the Church's leadership sought to avoid religious conflict insofar as this was compatible with upholding the integrity of its own beliefs and practices. While the New Zealand Church was not subject to the anti-clericalism that provoked many of the developments in European Catholic spirituality, the clergy's analysis was essentially correct: for the majority of lay Catholics, the tension between social conformity and religiosity was lessened by their limited commitment to Catholic religious practices. At the same time, Catholic educational, sporting, cultural, and charitable organisations were by no means isolated from the wider society, and the extent of intermarriage with non-Catholics (a third to a half of all marriages solemnised in Catholic churches) testified to a high degree of social integration.[107]

107. van der Krogt, "Catholic religious identity and social integration in interwar New Zealand", 47-65 (for mixed marriage, see pp. 59-60).