



DEDICATION

of the

Charles and Margaret Hall Cushwa
Center for the Study of
American Catholicism

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana
May 7-8, 1981

The Center

In response to widespread scholarly interest in the role of American Catholics in forming the national culture, a center was established at the University of Notre Dame in 1976 under the direction of Dr. Jay P. Dolan, an historian specializing in the Catholic Church in the United States. Five years later, the Center for the Study of American Catholicism was endowed by the Cushwa family of Youngstown, Ohio, a family with a long association with the University.

A major resource for the Center is the University's Archives, generally recognized as the finest collection of materials in the country for American Catholic history. Center activities now embrace four areas: instruction, research, publication and collection of materials pertinent to the study of the Catholic Church in the United States. It publishes a semiannual newsletter, sponsors a Catholic studies seminar involving researchers from across the country, and awards travel grants to assist scholars wanting to use Notre Dame's extensive collection of Catholic Americana. It also has sponsored, together with the Notre Dame Press, the publication series, "Notre Dame Studies in American Catholicism."

Dedication Mass Homily

May 7, 1981
Monsignor John J. Egan

Msgr. John J. Egan, a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, is the founder of the Catholic urban ministry movement in the United States. At Notre Dame since 1970, he is a special assistant to the University's president, Father Theodore Hesburgh, and director of the Center for Pastoral and Social Ministry. He provides the leadership for those campus programs designed to put the academic resources of the University in the service of the Church.

"**H**earken to me, you who pursue deliverance, you that seek that Lord. Look to the rock whence you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug up" (Is. 51:1). These words of the prophet Isaiah properly set our reflection for today's celebration.

The Charles and Margaret Hall Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, which we formally dedicate today and tomorrow, will provide a continuing opportunity to look with clear and honest eyes at the rock and the quarry.

Theology, we are told, is the Church's self-understanding, history, its memory. History without theology is memory without meaning; theology without history is self-understanding risking self-deception. We stand in the midst of life, not on some mountaintop looking down on the comedies and tragedies of human affairs. Theology without history is theology up on that peak, the righteous possession of angels, with the rest of us down in the valley

wondering what's going on. Such a theology is not self-understanding but illusion, and dangerous illusion at that.

Yet, standing in the midst of life and at the heart of history, we claim as Christians a knowledge revealed from beyond the horizons of our world. In the person of Jesus Christ, God has broken into our history and endowed our lives with meaning and purpose. Our memory is a history shared with all men and women, but enriched by that sacred knowledge we call faith, alive in that people we call Church. Our memory as ordinary men and women is made astonishingly exciting by the presence of the Holy Spirit, a presence that does not change our awareness of time, but transforms it in the vision of eternity.

In the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, history and theology, memory and self-understanding merge to help us break out of the prison of the present, to recover for us the richness of our tradition, and to renew for us the promises of the Lord for our future. We gather today not simply to look back on our past, nor to reflect on our present, but to reawaken our hope for the future, a hope to share in the building of that glorious Kingdom, which lies ever ahead and is the object of all our striving.

The University, Father Hesburgh tells us, is the place where the Church does its thinking, and the Cushwa Center insures that there will be a place where people can gather to think about the American Church. Scholars will be assigned to the task, plans will be made, resources will be allocated for that specific purpose. The historical work of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism will insure that the experience of those who have gone before us will be a vital part of the effort. Their story will be told, their chronicle written.

I have never been a pessimist, but in my many years of working with men and women dedicated to the renewal of the Church all over the United States, I have seen many people reinvent the wheel, because they apparently were deprived of any solid knowledge of the

long historical experience of the American Church.

How many of us are aware of the vigorous encouragement of ecumenism fostered by John Carroll, the first American bishop? That the first three American bishops were elected by the clergy? That there were significant lay congresses in the Church here in the late 19th century? That Cardinal Gibbons was an ardent champion of the incipient national labor movement?

Perhaps it has always been the case that we Americans, beset by rapid change and ever hopeful about the future, have been peculiarly forgetful of our past.

We are a nation of immigrants. In the 1840s, over 700,000 Catholic immigrants arrived on these shores, making Catholics the largest religious denomination in the United States by 1850 — a status Catholics have held ever since.

The story of the American Catholic Church must be told — the building of parish churches, parochial schools, hospitals, welfare agencies to minister to the immigrants' needs. The Church and church-affiliated institutions served as a way station and buffer as well as an agency of assimilation to the wider American society.

We are a people of a story — the story of the People of God made incarnate in various conditions and cultures (we are now acutely sensitive to how much these conditions and cultures affect the life of the Church). We need to protect our memory of that story if we are going to be faithful to our forebearers and bring to fruition the dreams they kept alive at great cost and pain.

Recently I ran across a comment of a nineteenth-century businessman whose hobby was reading history. Reflecting on the state of his country, he noted the perils confronting those who know nothing of Isaiah's words, persons unaware "of the quarry from which they were dug up."

"To visit a people who have no history," he said, "is like going into the wilderness where there are no roads to direct the traveller. The

people have nothing to which they can look back; the wisdom and acts of their forefathers are forgotten; the experience of one generation is lost to the succeeding one; and the consequence is that people have little attachment to their state, their policy has no system and their legislature no decided character."

Is it too much to suggest that our people, loyal to their parishes, have little attachment to our national Church? That our policy as an American Church, varying so greatly from parish to parish, diocese to diocese, has no system, no clear goals and little shared commitment to common policies? That our American Catholic policymaking bodies have little character, a few resources and limited visibility, and even less sense of what, in fact, our national Church should become?

Surely, at some point, we must recover a sense of ourselves as *American Catholics*, with a character and mission distinctive to us as Catholics in the United States. Only such a vision and commitment can enable us to respond to the Holy Father and our sister churches around the world as they call us to action on behalf of justice and peace. Only some sense of national unity and purpose in the Church can overcome the contestation and division which plague us at every level. Only a sense of ourselves as American Catholics can make it possible for us to contribute to our nation's search for a new beginning in overcoming the problems of economic injustice and social inequality which still confront us. Not only social ministry, but also pastoral ministry requires such a sense of national character and mission.

Throughout our long history, American Catholics have sought a faith that would be distinctively American and distinctively Catholic. In the Cushwa Center we are about a quest for the distinctive contribution of Catholicism to American life and culture.

The history of a people becomes more important as we undergo change. We must be in touch with our roots — American and Catholic — and learn from our history how we must relate to those who are undergoing

similar struggles for development today.

The Church was an integral part of the social development of our country and its people. We need to keep alive the tradition of mutual care and concern for the stranger at a time when social concerns seem to have been relegated to the bureaucracies of institutionalized welfare. We need to keep alive a legacy of political involvement and of bringing to American society a profound theology of human life without which politics becomes the unseemly and unfair competition of private interests.

We Catholics are Americans, in the fullest sense of the word; our ability to respond to one another's religious needs without accommodation to the prevailing pressure of our culture to separate religion from life and from the world of work and family and politics, requires of us a clear and realistic understanding of *this* culture and *this* country, whose values and ways of life live in our people and are at the very heart of our identity.

We must and we can transform America from within in light of the Lord's promise of liberation and fulfillment. To do this work of evangelization properly, however, we must know about and be committed to this country and this people among whom we live.

Liturgists and pastoral planners, social action leaders and ministers to the needy, bishops, priests, sisters, brothers, deacons and lay people, all need to understand both our faith and our culture, to understand how the Catholic and the American have interacted in our history to make us the kind of people we are and to make us the kind of Church we are becoming.

For two centuries our people struggled to overcome poverty and discrimination. Here at Notre Dame we stand on their shoulders, able, because of their sacrifices, to have the leisure and the resources to look at ourselves and, freely and intelligently, to decide to accept the responsibility for the future of our Church and of our world.

The prophetic call of Vatican II's "Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the Modern

World" was that we would make "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men and women of this age" our own. The Council told us that the future belongs to those who can provide the men and women of this age with "reasons for living and hoping."

As Christians we have the message which alone answers the strivings of the human heart and the questions of the human intelligence. As Americans we are the heirs of a promise of liberty and justice for all. As American Catholics we are the products of two centuries of dedication and sacrifice to bring to fulfillment the promises of the Gospel in the *setting of freedom*.

Now the time has come to enter fully into the life of this country, and through our country, the life of the world. To do so, we must, like the Americans of the nineteenth century, find attachment, system and character by remembering the experience and the wisdom of those who have gone before us. And, like the people to whom Isaiah spoke, we must look without fear "at the rock from which we have been cut, the quarry from which we have been dug up."

The Charles and Margaret Hall Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism is a *place* and a *process* which will enable us to do that, to look backward in order to move forward, to ponder the past in order to dream of the future, to meld belief and scholarship in the hope of making our Church what it yearns to become. Our celebration today does not mark a moment when we stop to remember, but a moment when we begin anew, appropriating the experience of our people to strengthen our resolve and to improve our effectiveness in our never-ending struggle, like the people of the Old Testament, to pursue righteousness and seek the Lord.

Dedication Address

May 8, 1981

Professor John T. Noonan, Jr.

Prof. John T. Noonan, Jr., formerly of the Notre Dame Law School faculty, is one of the foremost research scholars working in the area of Church history, canon law and theological development. Currently a professor of law at the University of California at Berkeley, Noonan has written a succession of widely acclaimed books dealing with the history of Church thinking on usury, contraception, marriage and abortion. He holds an honorary doctorate from Notre Dame, awarded in 1976.

Recently I was reading two of the earliest biographies of an Irishman and an Englishman — Adomnan's *Life of St. Colum Cille* and Aedde's *Life of St. Wilfrid*. Abbot Adomnan, himself recognized as a saint, collected the stories of Colum Cille almost a century after his death. Aedde, a Kentish choirmaster, was his hero's companion for almost forty years. The *Life* of the Irish apostle of Scotland is full of miracles — among them, Colum Cille's routing of an aquatic River Ness monster — which are apt to strike us as implausible. Although written to portray the saint in a wholly favorable light, the *Life* includes several episodes where persons showing hostility to him, or even to his advice, drop dead or become violently ill — signs of God's approval of the saint in Adomnan's view, exhibitions of Colum Cille's angry temperament to a modern reader. Adomnan omits the story told of Colum Cille of greatest interest to scholars — his unauthorized transcribing of a

codex of the Gospels belonging to Finbar of Moville; his being compelled to surrender his copy by the High King, Diarmait MacCerbhall after a famous judgment: "To every cow belongs her calf, to every book his son-book" — and Colum Cille's subsequent calling the Clan Niall to revenge him by rebelling against the king.

Aedde writes an equally partisan account of Wilfrid. Against Wilfrid's will, his Archdiocese of York was subdivided into four dioceses, due, Aedde says, to bribes paid the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Greek Theodoros, by the king and queen of the Northumbrians. There are, however, fewer miracles in Aedde's story, and Wilfrid appears a bit gentler than Colum Cille. When the king casts him into a dungeon, his first move is to heal the dungeon-keeper's wife. Forty-six years a bishop, Wilfrid was in exile twenty-six of them, and Aedde, his companion, has a certain realism. He records Wilfrid's action near the end of his life when he divided his treasure — one quarter to be sent as a gift to Santa Maria's and San Paolo's in Rome, one quarter to be given the poor "for the repurchase" of his soul, one quarter to go to his companions in exile, and one quarter to be taken by his abbots so that by spending it they might win "the friendship of kings and bishops." No taxes, in those times, of course, but 25 per cent of capital needed to keep civil and churchly authorities content.

Neither of these lives of major political figures of their time draws on political science or economics. Neither of these accounts of the Christianization of whole peoples knows anything of sociology. Neither of these recitals of the legends of two heroes knows any anthropology. Neither of these accounts of the shapers of the Scottish and English churches dwells on the institutions being formed. None of the other academic disciplines — historical, literary, theological, archeological — was a subject in which Adomnan or Aedde had taken a degree. They lacked all the rich variety of necessary academic instruments which, thanks to the generous endowment of the Center, are at your disposal for the study of a people and the Church.

Partisan, incomplete, sometimes incredible, always unscientific, these two books provide insights of the greatest value. Colum Cille and Wilfrid live in them. In their lives we can see early Catholicism in the British Isles.

With the examples of the early scholars evoked, I should like to put before you certain antinomies that the Cushwa Center faces as it progresses in its study of American Catholicism.

The First Antinomy: Individual or Institution. Should you focus on the biographies of individuals or on the formation and development of institutions? The Church, one might say, is a great mother institution, full of the lesser institutions she has borne. The study of Catholicism is a study of the mother and her offspring. It is a study that particularly needs to be done. The history of the lesser institutions — universities, dioceses, hospitals, schools, religious orders, seminaries — has often been done badly by parochial and partisan chroniclers. First-class institutional analysis would capture the corporate life of Catholicism as it has taken root and structure in this country.

On the other hand, Catholic faith, hope, and charity do not exist in institutions but in men and women who are the institutions. The purpose of Catholicism is not to produce corporations but to save humankind, and its glory is not a gaggle of splendid structures but the sanctification of persons. There is a moral, it might be argued, to be drawn from the bad biographies of institutions. Institutions do not live; they are shadows of living men or women, as the case may be. Tell the stories of the men and women, and the institution's core will come to life.

A second problem with institutional focus is this: The institution dies, the name remains. So with institutions which once were Catholic and are so no more, the scholar may be addressing only a fictionally continuous tradition. But if the scholar looks at a human being, there is always the organic continuity of life.

Of course, in Catholicism especially, no individual stands or works alone. Not only do

we stand on the shoulders of our predecessors, as the old phrase has it; we also are stayed by communities of contemporaries who make accomplishments possible that individual effort alone could not achieve. In real life, in Catholic life, individual and institution are not antithetical. Every individual is set in that ancient and universal institution which is Christ's body and is exemplified in a series of concentric smaller institutions. Individual-institution is the name of a Catholic. Should not individual in the context of institution be the focus of the history of Catholicism? Should not my first antinomy be banished as unreal?

Yet the choice of focus — person or corporate organization — remains, however intertwined the two are in life. If we may take the works of Adomnan and Aedde as not too unlikely precedents, the scholar who attends to the person, radiant at the center of the institution, will be most apt to capture the institution's true thrust.

The Second Antinomy: Edifying or Presenting the Mottled Whole. The tradition of "building up" the community by celebrations of the virtues of our leaders is ancient, as the hagiographies mentioned show. The tradition is still strong in institutional history, less so as to the biography of individuals, though even here recent and awful instances of defensive biography could be cited. The arguments, normally implicit for such an approach, are that the whole truth will shock, that we need the examples of saints, that institutions cannot afford mixed public images.

No serious scholar today accepts such arguments as reasons for coloring or diluting a presentation of as much of the real story as can be found. Yet even the most uncompromising delineator of the past faces this problem: Perceptions have changed. What looked good to an earlier generation looks bad to the present. Colum Cille's temper tantrums are an example. More generally, eminently respectable Christians of the past thought it entirely right to hang or burn fellow Christians who differed on points of doctrine; to own slaves; to mistreat Jews; and to conduct crusades. Can one recount what our ancestors believed and

did and have any saints or heroes left? Will not a large amount of history necessarily disedify, tear down rather than build up the community, as we contemplate the horrible excesses in which, in the name of Christ, Christians sometimes engaged? If we cannot follow Adomnan in omitting the most damaging episodes like the war over Finbar's codex, perhaps, the timid will say we should avoid my second antinomy by giving up history, with its mottled image of the Church, altogether.

My answer, and yours, would be different. We cannot hope to make progress as a Christian people unless we understand what defaced the image of Christ in the past, unless we understand what were the defects of certain Christian virtues, unless we are willing to learn how quickly doctrinal assurance passes to intolerance, hatred, and active violence. The negative side of the history of Catholicism is essential if we are to have even a chance of avoiding analogous errors, evils, and tragedies.

Let us not suppose American Catholicism does not have a negative side. Take, for one example, the first Catholic justice of the United States Supreme Court, the only Catholic justice for a century, Roger Brooke Taney. A devout and educated Catholic, instructed by American Catholic moral theologians like Bishop Francis Kenrick that slavery was moral, Chief Justice Taney delivered in *Dred Scott* an incurably racist disenfranchisement of all black Americans. I am informed that Catholic schoolbooks in Maryland, Taney's home state, never mention his part in *Dred Scott*; they dwell on his defense as a lawyer of an abolitionist minister. The whole truth about Taney, and the accommodationist Catholic moral theologians, has sometimes seemed too much to bear.

The Church of Christ is a perfect community. Its institutional history is far from perfect. If we look at the mistakes institutionalized in the past we might suspect that there is much to be corrected now. If we see that no one in the past — not our glorified public men, not our lesser saints, not our greater saints — was free of blinders that led to errors, we might suppose

we have a few blind spots of our own to correct.

To return to the antinomy of individual and institution, we may be compelled with our modern insights to disavow some institutions of the past. Who will stand up for the Inquisition? Who will stand with Taney in defending slavery? But we need not disavow those persons, part of our past, who sincerely and wrongly formed these institutions. By their own values as Christians, by their own best insights, we know now, the institutions were unworthy of them. We still respond to our predecessors as persons; we still maintain fidelity to these dead participants in our Catholic present, when we acknowledge how grievous were their mistakes measured by the Gospel they, too, believed in.

The Third Antinomy: Catholic or non-Catholic. This antinomy may seem a strange one. Should not a Center for American Catholicism study only Catholics? Yet one aspect of this antinomy is built into the name of your Center and needs little elaboration: can Catholicism be defined as American? Catholicism is a worldwide religion. It is, by self-definition, the opposite of the local, native, or parochial. But you propose to study it in local, native, parochial manifestations. Can Catholicism be understood detached from Palestine, from the Mediterranean world, from Europe? Even Aedde, describing an era far less linked by swift transportation and communication, could not make his story of Northumbria intelligible without frequent reference to the role of Rome. The student of American Catholicism does not deal with an abstractly cosmopolitan institution. The student must face ways of thought and organization rooted in a history that took place before Columbus, ways which are perpetuated by linkages that necessarily extend beyond the Atlantic. If you are to study Catholicism it cannot be wholly American.

A further aspect of this antinomy is the tension between what is self-proclaimed as religious and what is spiritual in fact. By this cumbersome contrast I attempt to avoid a glib dichotomy of "clerical"

and "lay" — a dichotomy I find in my experience misleading — and yet to suggest the difference between taking as one's subject those persons or institutions who, as it were, fly as banners their allegiance to Catholicism, or taking as one's topic persons or institutions whose lives less publicly, less explicitly, less professionally bear witness to Catholic values and orientation. Saints Colum Cille and Wilfrid are clearly examples of the first kind of subject. If a biographer had been interested, might not the sagacious High King who defended Finbar's copyright or the Northumbrian queen, eventually penitent, who egged on Theodorus, have been examples of the second?

You can study both sorts of subjects, I mean to say. Putting the matter as an antinomy, I suggest only that, often, concentration on the avowedly religious will lead to neglect of secular activities where the Spirit is present; and yet attention to the secular, simply because a man or woman acting there bears the appellation of Catholic, may lead to a diffusion of energy better concentrated on the higher and purer and fuller embodiments of Catholic conviction.

This aspect of the antinomy leads to the consideration that who or what is Catholic is not easy of definition. The newspapers are apt to marvel that Italy, "a 99 percent Catholic country" can have the largest Communist party in the free world. What American traveler to Italy believes it to be 99 percent Catholic? The media are inclined to describe the gunmen of Belfast as "Protestant" and "Roman Catholic." Who believes that these killers, defiant of Pope and Scripture, are activated by the love of Jesus? Apologists for the medieval Church occasionally refer to its day as "the Age of Faith." Who, familiar with its history, can think there were many more persons then than now moved by a living belief in the Lord and His teaching? Then, too, men and women as indifferent to the Church as those who may be sometimes encountered in modern Italy, and killers as quick to shed blood as those in Belfast, could be found in quantity. What is Catholic to the most superficial observers

often turns out to be un-Catholic in reality. Will you study what is popularly labelled Catholic or what is so in fact?

A further difficulty under this heading: There are those who have formally left the Church who yet were formed by her teaching and embody many, though not all, Catholic virtues and values. To use the example of authors familiar to all, there are the Scott Fitzgeralds, the James Farrells, the Eugene O'Neills. Are such as these — their number might be quite large — to be excluded from consideration because they ceased to practice? Are they to be included because they were formed by Catholic parents or communities and, to a degree perhaps not more distorted than most, kept alive what they had imbibed in youth? If we treat Catholicism as Judaism is customarily treated in our society, the answer is evident. A "Jewish writer" is anyone born of a Jewish parent, whether the writer is now orthodox or agnostic, a scholar of rabbinic literature or the promoter of ethical humanism. For purposes of cultural investigation, should we not define Catholicism to include the ex-Catholics formed in its milieu?

A last aspect of this last antinomy is this: there are those whose beliefs and values and purposes are in many ways identical with our own, while they differ from us on a point or two of doctrine. On some matters, in some ways, they have expressed our position and our faith better than Catholics who were their contemporaries. I think, for example, of John Winthrop's vision of the Church as he sailed on the *Arbella*. I think of the eighteenth-century Quakers' gentle leading of men to give up slaveholding. I think of Francis Scott Key, devout Episcopalian, dedicating himself to the service of Christ and to the legal cause of the two hundred and eighty-one helpless Africans of the ship *Antelope*.

"That is impossible or impracticable," it may be said. "We cannot concern ourselves here with Puritans and Quakers and Episcopalians. We would lose all focus and be left studying the Christian religions of America." Perhaps. But all Protestants are descendants of

Catholics, if the line is taken back far enough. Protestants and Catholics were separate when they came to America. Then they began to flow together again. The Cushwa family itself is witness. Would it not be possible to select and study those aspects of non-Catholic Christianity where Catholics and Christians are not separated?

For one more example, with which here at the University of Notre Dame du Lac it may not be inappropriate to close, is not the following part of our American Catholic heritage? Its American author went to live in England and became an Anglo-Catholic. He never formally acknowledged the successor of Peter, yet on his desk at Faber and Faber he kept a copy of the pontiff's picture and the Virgin Mary's. Is not his petition unmistakably American in its respect for commerce and profoundly Catholic as it addresses Mary:

*Lady, whose shrine stands on the promontory,
Pray for all those who are in ships, those
Whose business has to do with fish, and
Those concerned with every lawful traffic
And those who conduct them.*

*Repeat a prayer also on behalf of
Women who have seen their sons or husbands
Setting forth, and not returning:
Figlia del tuo figlio,
Queen of Heaven.*

*Also pray for those who were in ships,
Ended their voyage on the sand in the sea's lips
Or in the dark throat which will not reject them
Or wherever cannot reach them the sound of
the sea bell's
Perpetual angelus.**

*T. S. Eliot, *The Dry Salvages*, Part IV, Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950) 135.

The Cushwa Family

The late Charles B. Cushwa, Jr., was graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1931 and started in the sales department of Commercial Shearing and Stamping Company, a Youngstown, Ohio, manufacturer of engineered metal components. He later became president and chairman of the board of the company, now known as Commercial Shearing, Inc., and under his leadership the firm expanded throughout the United States and began extensive overseas operations. He was active in alumni affairs in the Youngstown community, serving as president of the Notre Dame club there and receiving its Man of the Year Award in 1949. He was appointed to the University's Advisory Council for Science and Engineering in 1953 and served for more than two decades before his death in April of 1975.

Margaret Hall Cushwa, a graduate of Saint Mary's College, a member of its board of regents and a recipient of an honorary degree from the College, has been, with her husband, an active supporter of Notre Dame. Over the years, the couple were frequent benefactors of Notre Dame, most recently to Fitzpatrick Hall of Engineering, dedicated in 1979.

The Notre Dame-Saint Mary's tradition has continued with the children of Charles and Margaret. Charles B. Cushwa III, a 1956 graduate, is secretary and director of Commercial Shearing, Inc. William W. Cushwa, Class of 1959, is also a director of the firm and manager of corporate planning. Mary Ellen Wolsonovich, a daughter, is a 1971 graduate of Saint Mary's.