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**North Atlantic Catholic Communities in Rome in the 19th Century:
Appointment and Ecclesiastical Policies of the First Irish-, American-
and Canadian-Born Cardinals ***

SUMMARY: 1. Introduction - 2. Cardinals and the Internationalization of the Sacred College - 3. The Internationalization of the Catholic Church, the Irish Diaspora and the Transnational Network of North Atlantic Catholic Communities - 4. Appointment and Ecclesiastical Policy of Paul Cullen, the First Irish-Born Cardinal - 5. Appointment and Ecclesiastical Policy of John McCloskey, the First American-Born Cardinal - 6. The First Vatican Council - 7. The 1878 Conclave - 8. Appointment and Ecclesiastical Policy of Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau, the First Canadian-Born Cardinal - 9. Final Remarks.

1 - Introduction

In the second half of the 19th century, when the Roman Curia was still a monopoly held by Italians and few other European nationalities, the first Irish-, American- and Canadian-born cardinals were appointed within the time span of twenty years. Pius IX raised to the purple Paul Cullen in 1866 and John McCloskey in 1875. In 1886, it was Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau's turn, created a cardinal by Leo XIII. In the subsequent decades, other Irish-, American- and Canadian-born cardinals were appointed. This development - in a crucial time characterized by the end of the pope's temporal power - raises important questions: to what extent did the concerned cardinals become 'Romanized' and to what extent did they rather contribute to the development of a new vision of their role in the Catholic Church? To what extent did they pursue the interests of their respective national Catholic community, and to what extent did they rather share the same preoccupations and put forward the same demands? In order to answer these questions, I will focus on Cullen, McCloskey, Taschereau, by looking at their appointment and ecclesiastical policies.

This essay will first offer some preliminary remarks on the institution

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and role of cardinals and the internationalization of the Sacred College, which should be understood as the entrance of the rest of the world into Rome and as an instrument to promote the ideal of the universal Church¹, especially after the end of the pope's temporal power. This process will be further related to the Irish diaspora and placed in the context of the transnational network of North Atlantic Catholic communities².

The subsequent sections will address the set of questions mentioned above by focusing on Cullen, McCloskey and Taschereau. For the purposes of this paper I will not only focus on their ecclesiastical policies *after* the rise to the purple, because the ideas supported, the actions carried out, and the government style implemented *before* the cardinalate are a fundamental factor to explain how they related to Rome, and *viceversa*.

2 - Cardinals and the Internationalization of the Sacred College

The institution of cardinals is currently regulated by Canons 349-359 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law³, but both the meaning of the title 'cardinal' (which derives from the Latin *cardo*)⁴ and the related functions, rights and duties have undergone transformations over the course of time. Since the 11th century the College of cardinals has provided for the election of the Roman pontiff, and cardinals - either collegially or individually - have assisted him in the government of the universal Church. Distinctive features of the Sacred College have been the prominent political role played by

¹ See **F. JANKOWIAK**, *La curie romaine de Pie IX à Pie X. Le gouvernement central de l'Église et la fin des états pontificaux (1846-1914)*, École française de Rome, Rome, 2007, p. 467.

² On the opportunity of an approach treating the history of the Catholic Church in North America in the context of the North Atlantic world, see inter alia **L. CODIGNOLA**, *Roman Catholic Conservatism in a New North Atlantic World, 1760-1829*, in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 2007, LXIV/4, pp. 719-720: "[t]he larger North Atlantic picture [...] shows that these church developments in different regions were part of a common attitude, which allowed the Catholic Church not just to survive but indeed to prosper in countries that did not officially acknowledge church members and often legally discriminated against them". For an assessment of this historiographical perspective, see **M. BINASCO**, *Introduction. Constructing an Atlantic World*, in *Little Do We Know. History and Historians of the North Atlantic 1492-2010*, ed. by L. Codignola, M. Binasco, ISEM-CNR, Cagliari, 2011, pp. 13-26.

³ The English text is available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P19.HTM. For the regulation of the 1917 Code of Canon Law (Canons 230-241), see **J. F. BRODERICK**, *The Sacred College of Cardinals: Size and Geographical Composition (1099-1986)*, in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 1987, XXV, p. 63.

⁴ For an in-depth analysis, see **M. ANDRIEU**, *L'origine du titre de cardinal dans l'Église romaine*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano, 1964.



cardinals in the respective country of origin and the exercise of a representative function of the respective 'national' Church in the 16th-19th centuries, and the decrease in the number of European cardinals in the 20th century⁵.

At this purpose, Broderick wrote in 1987 that "[n]owadays, whenever a pope announces a creation of Roman cardinals, worldwide attention focuses on the resultant size and geographical makeup of the Sacred College"⁶. Today, the international character of the College of cardinals is given for granted and regarded as truly embodying the Catholic, that is, international character of the Church. However, in the past, the cardinalate was a monopoly of just a few nationalities. In the Middle Age cardinals were selected from a very limited area, and from the modern age till the 19th century approximately 90% of newly-created cardinals were Italians, French and Spaniards⁷.

A change towards a greater geographical composition occurred at the time of the pope's loss of the temporal power following the extinction of the Papal States, which used to supply a high percentage of candidates. Pius IX and Leo XIII created respectively 123 and 147 cardinals. Although the majority of them were still Italians, French and Spaniards, the College of cardinals started becoming more international. In this essay I will deal with the first Irish-born, American-born and Canadian-born cardinals, but the process of internationalization of the Sacred College concerned other nationalities and countries, as well. For example, in 1875 Archbishop Juan Moreno y Maisonave of Valladolid, born in Guatemala, was created cardinal, and in 1885 the Irish-born Archbishop Patrick Francis Moran of Sydney, and Cullen's nephew, was also raised to the purple⁸.

This process was the result of a number of factors: the Catholic Church's expansion in the mission lands, the search for international support in the Roman Question, the pastoral re-orienting of the Church, and the change in the Holy See's ecclesiastical policy, aimed at stressing its moral authority⁹. The first factor is especially relevant for the purposes of this essay. At the beginning of the examined period, Ireland (still part of

⁵ C. CARDIA, *Il governo della Chiesa*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2002, pp. 100-101. See also S.E. VAN LIERDE, A. GIRAUD, *Le Sénat de l'Eglise. Le Sacré Collège*, Fayard, Paris, 1963.

⁶ J.F. BRODERICK, *The Sacred College of Cardinals*, cit., p. 7.

⁷ J.F. BRODERICK, *The Sacred College of Cardinals*, cit., pp. 15 and 44.

⁸ J.F. BRODERICK, *The Sacred College of Cardinals*, cit., p. 62; R. REGOLI, *L'élite cardinalizia dopo la fine dello Stato pontificio*, in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 2009, XLVII, pp. 64-66.

⁹ R. REGOLI, *L'élite cardinalizia*, cit., p. 66.



Britain), the United States and Canada were territories dependent on the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, erected on 22 June 1622 by Gregory XV's Bull *Inscrutabili Divinae* to promote the spread of Catholicism and regulate ecclesiastical affairs in non-Catholic countries¹⁰. While the *Provinciae Apostolicae* were subject directly to the Holy See, the *Terrae Missionum* depended on the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*¹¹. As noted by Codignola, the Congregation cardinals did not seem to act differently in the different regions of the world within their own jurisdiction, and started showing signs of change only in the mid-19th century¹².

For present purposes, it should be noted that the Catholic Church's expansion in the mission lands was especially remarkable in the British Empire, where the Church's growing importance was epitomized not only by the creation of the first Canadian-born cardinal, but also by the appointment of the first Australian cardinal, as mentioned above¹³. At the end of the 19th century, the Irish, American and Canadian Churches became more and more structured and organized, and bore less and less resemblance to mission Churches¹⁴. In 1908 Pius X withdrew a number of ecclesiastical provinces - including those of Ireland, Canada, and the United States - from the Congregation *de Propaganda's* regime¹⁵: thus, he changed

¹⁰ U. BENIGNI, *Propaganda, Sacred Congregation of*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1911, XII, pp. 456-457. See also G. PIZZORUSSO, M. SANFILIPPO, *Dagli indiani agli emigranti. L'attenzione della Chiesa romana al Nuovo Mondo, 1492-1908*, Sette Città, Viterbo, 2005, pp. 29-30. According to Guilday, its creation completed "the formative stage of the Counter-Reformation. It was the last of the greater Congregations to be established by the Holy See, and it soon outshone all the others by the extraordinary extent of its powers and its jurisdiction. It resembled the other Congregations in its organization, but it differed entirely from them in the range its authority [...]: it was to regain the faithful in all those parts of the world where Protestantism had been established, and to bring the light of the true faith to heathen lands" (P. GUILDAY, *The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide (1622-1922)*, in *The Catholic Historical Review*, 1921, VI/ 4, pp. 479-480).

¹¹ See P. GUILDAY, *The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide*, cit., pp. 493-494.

¹² L. CODIGNOLA, *Les frontières de la mission: efficacité missionnaire, acculturation réciproque et centralisation romaine*, in *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 1997, CIX/ 2, p. 786.

¹³ R. REGOLI, *L'élite cardinalizia*, cit., p. 65. See also C. DOWD, *Rome in Australia: the Papacy and Conflict in the Australian Catholic Missions*, Brill, Leiden, 2008, p. 62.

¹⁴ N. VOISINE, *Rome et le Canada: la mission de Mgr Conroy*, in *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 1980, XXXIII/4, p. 499; K. WALSH, *The First Vatican Council, the Papal State and the Irish Hierarchy. Recent Research on the Pontificate of Pope Pius IX*, in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 1982, LXXI/ 28, p. 70.

¹⁵ By virtue of the Apostolic Constitution *Sapienti Consilio* of 29 June 1908, whose text in Latin is available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/la/apost_constitutions/documents/hf



their respective Churches “from the status of a missionary church and plac[ed them] under the direct guidance of the Holy See”¹⁶.

Before that date, requests to and orders from Rome continued to pass through this Congregation, which played a very important role. Being charged with the care of so many different regions in the world, it had to deal often with the European colonial powers’ political requests. In fact, the Congregation’s decisions did not have an influence only within the Catholic Church, but also upon the ruling élites of the concerned countries, which consequently tried to intervene in the Roman Curia’s decision-making process¹⁷, including the creation of cardinals. Taschereau was sponsored by Canada’s Protestant Prime Minister Macdonald¹⁸, whereas the President of the United States Lincoln urged the pontiff to appoint an American-born cardinal¹⁹.

Since the modern age, the rise to the rank of cardinal

“has been the ultimate mark of favor. Although by the end of the nineteenth century the cardinalate carried with it relatively few substantial privileges (especially if the recipient of the honor was already a bishop), the distinction was nonetheless highly valued”²⁰.

The creation of cardinals - as it is decided by the pope - should be seen in the perspective of supporting the pontiff’s orientations and policies²¹. The pope “may elevate whom he pleases; and of course he will tend to honor those whose theological or administrative positions are close to his”²². In the examined period, the wide movement of devotion towards the Holy See - which, according to Jankowiak, is too easily defined as ultramontanism -

_p-x_apc_19080629_sapienti-consilio.html: “Itaque a iurisdictione Congregationis de Propaganda Fide exempta et ad ius commune deductas decernimus - in Europa - ecclesiasticas provincias Angliae, Scotiae, Hiberniae, et Hollandiae, ac dioecesim Luxemburgensem; - in America - provincias ecclesiasticas domini Canadensis, Terrae Novae et Foederatarum Civitatum seu Statuum Unitorum”.

¹⁶ P. GUILDAY, *The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide*, cit., p. 482. According to this author, “[n]o country in the world owes so much to Propaganda’s influence and guidance as the United States” (p. 494).

¹⁷ R. REGOLI, *L’élite cardinalizia*, cit., pp. 80-81.

¹⁸ D.C. LYNE, *Sir John A. Macdonald and the Appointment of Canada’s First Cardinal*, in *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 1967, II/4, pp. 58-60.

¹⁹ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick: A History of the Archbishops of New York, from Dagger John to Timmytown*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2017, p. 109.

²⁰ P.H. VITON, ‘Obligatory’ Cardinalat Appointments, in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 1983, XXI, p. 275.

²¹ R. REGOLI, *L’élite cardinalizia*, cit., p. 70.

²² P.H. VITON, ‘Obligatory’ Cardinalat Appointments, cit., p. 276.



makes the enlargement of the pontiff's entourage beyond the Italian peninsula especially feasible. At the same time, this scholar has warned that internationalization should not be confused with universalization. In fact, the increasing geographical diversity, in the short term, had limited practical effects, because Roman education remained an important factor. The supranational cardinalate had to exhibit an intellectual and emotional relationship with the Holy See, defined by the notion of *spirito romano*²³. The 'Roman spirit', according to Pernot, was a certain way to judge everything from an international or supranational point of view, which was the one peculiar to the Catholic Church²⁴. The Holy See is not a federation of national entities, and the Roman Curia is not a representative organization, but the instrument of government of the universal Church²⁵. The creation of new cardinals does not necessarily aim to restore a balance among the different geographical areas or national Churches within the Sacred College: in the examined period, consistories served the purpose of supporting the general orientations devised by the pope for the universal Church²⁶.

This is an important remark to bear in mind when assessing cardinals' ecclesiastical policy, whose scope should be correctly delimited. Although they are part of an élite able to take decisions truly having an international impact, these decisions should be regarded as the product not of single cardinals' choices, but rather of their contribution in the collective dimension of the decision-making process and, in particular, in the cardinals' meetings. A single cardinal may be influential, either because he is a close adviser to the pope or because he plays an important role in the public opinion of his country; but his most significant actions are carried out within the Curia's collegial structures²⁷. However, the actual collaboration to the government of the universal Church of non-residential cardinals is generally limited - and this has certainly been the case with the cardinals this paper focuses upon, with the remarkable exception of Paul Cullen.

3 - The Internationalization of the Catholic Church, the Irish Diaspora

²³ F. JANKOWIAK, *La curie romaine*, cit., -pp. 463 and 463.

²⁴ Quoted in F. JANKOWIAK, *La curie romaine*, cit., -p. 463.

²⁵ A. RICCARDI, *Le politiche della Chiesa*, Ed. San Paolo, Milano, 1997, pp. 149-150.

²⁶ F. JANKOWIAK, *La curie romaine*, cit., -p. 467.

²⁷ R. REGOLI, *L'élite cardinalizia*, cit., p. 75.



and the Transnational Network of North Atlantic Catholic Communities

The section above has examined the process of internationalization of the Catholic Church, from the angle of the internationalization of the Sacred College. The fact that the first new nationalities to be included in the government of the universal Church were the Irish, American and Canadian ones is telling of the important role played by North Atlantic Catholic Churches in this process.

In January 1870, during the First Vatican Council, Cullen - who had been created cardinal just four years earlier - pointed out that

“[a]t the time of the Council of Trent there were no bishops from North or South America, Australia or Tasmania, or the islands of the Pacific; indeed those distant regions were scarcely known at the time, and there must have been very few Christians in them. But now from those same regions there are probably 200 bishops present at the Council, a circumstance which serves to show how the Catholic Faith is spreading over the whole world. Ireland has a share in this great work”²⁸.

A few years later, on 21 September 1875, Cullen wrote a letter on behalf of the whole Irish hierarchy to McCloskey to congratulate on his rise to the purple. A passage read as follows:

“Your Eminence is one of our race and the honor conferred on the Church of America by your elevation to the Purple is largely shared by the Church of Ireland, which feels a Mother’s pride in the glory of her distant Children.

The people over whom Your Eminence presides are in large number the children of our own loved land. Many more who are as yet at the Mother’s breast, will be placed under your fostering care. Though we part with them with sorrow, we rejoice that they shall be transferred to the jurisdiction of a Prince of the Church whose love will be not less than our own, and under whose strong guardianship their souls will be in safe and holy keeping”²⁹.

These remarks should be placed within the context of the importance of the Irish Catholics in the growth of the Catholic Church overseas. This may be explained in the first place by the well-known phenomenon of the Irish diaspora. Ireland’s sufferance under British colonial rule, lack of natural resources, overreliance on the potato crop, and resulting famines

²⁸ Quoted in P. Mac SUIBHNE, *Ireland at the Vatican Council - I*, in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 1960, XCIII/4, pp. 209-210.

²⁹ Quoted in J.M. FARLEY, *The Life of John Cardinal McCloskey. First Prince of the Church in America: 1880-1885*, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1918, p. 327.



prompted several emigration waves in the 19th century³⁰. The “river” of Irish emigrants “which became a flood during the Great Famine of 1846-9”³¹ was a great international phenomenon. Irish Catholics spread to all corners of the British empire. “The non-British Atlantic world also attracted émigrés and exiles”³², and many emigrated to the United States (about 4 million Irish between 1845 and 1900)³³. However, it was within the British Empire that the most interesting dynamics of the Church’s expansion took place. The Catholic Church’s expansion should be directly related to the British colonial enlargement, not merely because of the large numbers of Irish emigrants, but also because - as surprising as this may seem - Catholic missionary activity was financially supported by the British government³⁴.

The Act of Union of 1800, which incorporated Ireland into the United Kingdom, transformed “the Catholics from a majority in Ireland into a minority in the United Kingdom”, but, at the same time, it “dilute[d] British national identity” and, thus, altered “the constitution of the Protestant British state”³⁵. The Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829, which admitted Irish and English Roman Catholics to Parliament and to most public offices³⁶, and Pius IX’s apostolic letter *Universalis Ecclesiae* of 29 September 1850, which restored the episcopal hierarchy in England and Wales³⁷, paved the way for the recognition to the Catholics of a greater role in public life. Intolerance - at a societal level - did not disappear, but these legal changes allowed Catholics (including the Irish ones) to occupy important positions in the Empire and to contribute to the shaping of the colonial identity. Irish

³⁰ **W. CROTTY**, *The Catholic Church in Ireland and Northern Ireland: Nationalism, Identity, and Opposition*, in *The Catholic Church and the Nation-State. Comparative Perspectives*, ed. by P.C. Manuel, L.C. Reardon, C. Wilcox, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C., 2006, p. 119.

³¹ **S. GILLEY**, *Catholicism, Ireland and the Irish Diaspora*, in *The Cambridge History of Christianity. World Christianities c.1815-c. 1914*, vol. VIII, ed. By S. Gilley, B. Stanley, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 250.

³² **D.T. GLEESON**, *The Irish Atlantic?*, in *The Irish in the Atlantic world*, ed. by D.T. Gleeson, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 2010, p. 3.

³³ **E. LARKIN**, *The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-75*, in *The American Historical Review*, 1972, LXXVII /3, p. 651.

³⁴ **O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church, Ireland and the British Empire, 1800-1921*, in *Historical Research*, 2011, LXXXIV /224, pp. 288 and 309.

³⁵ **O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church*, cit., p. 292.

³⁶ See <https://www.britannica.com/event/Catholic-Emancipation>.

³⁷ The original text in Latin and its translation into English may be found in **T. TWISS**, *The Letters Apostolic of Pope Pius IX Considered, with Reference to the Law of England and the Law of Europe*, Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, London, 1851, *Appendix*, document no. 1.



Catholics represented a third of all white settlers in the British Empire, with the exclusion of missionaries and soldiers³⁸. As Alvin Jackson has put it,

“Irish people who might be constrained at home also had access to the Empire and to the social and economic opportunities it provided. For Ireland, therefore, the Empire was simultaneously a chain and a key: it was a source both of constraint and of liberation”³⁹.

The most significant opportunity offered to the Irish was probably the army, regarded by Rafferty as the most important “[o]f all the forces shaping the reality of the expansion of Catholicism” in the British Empire⁴⁰. Approximately 25,000 Irish Catholics fought in the Boer War, and about 20,000 joined the British army between the end of the First World War until 1921, that is, more than those who fought in the independence war against Britain⁴¹.

Other reasons made the creation of a Protestant empire impossible or unpractical: in some instances, Britain extended its rule over former Spanish or French colonies, like Canada, having a large Catholic population; in others, it colonized territories like Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India, where large numbers of Irish Catholics had settled⁴². This led to the creation of what Gilley has called an “Irish empire

³⁸ **O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church*, cit., pp. 290-293.

³⁹ **A. JACKSON**, *Ireland, the Union, and the Empire, 1800-1960*, in *Ireland and the British Empire*, ed. by K. Kenny, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 136.

⁴⁰ **O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church*, cit., p. 297.

⁴¹ **O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church*, cit., pp. 305 and 309.

⁴² **O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church*, cit., p. 291. For the Irish global networks in Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, see **AA. VV.**, *Religion and Greater Ireland. Christianity and Irish Global Networks 1750-1950*, ed. by H.M. Carey, C. Barr, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 2015, pp. 207-382. Although this goes beyond present purposes, India offers an interesting example of the relational dynamics among Irish Catholics, the Holy See, and Britain. Portugal's King had been recognised the right of patronage by the Holy See, and thus he had the right to present to the pope candidates for the episcopal sees in the Portuguese colonial empire. As it is known, a key feature of the relationship between the Holy See and civil authorities in Catholic countries was the problem of the control over episcopal appointments. In the course of time, popes struggled to reassert their right to appoint bishops independently and freely, without external interferences. In India, Rome “preferred the formal and distant oversight of a Protestant government to the hands-on and overweening supervision of the Portuguese crown” (**O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church*, cit., p. 295). On 14 April 1883 Sir George Errington, an Irish Catholic politician, wrote to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Granville, asking that the government expressed “its objection to an irregular authority of this sort being exercised by a foreign power over the dominions of Her Majesty” (quoted in **O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church*, cit., pp. 295-296).



of the spirit, compared by Catholics to the British Empire of the flesh, [and] rooted in the nineteenth-century Catholic Revival in Ireland"⁴³.

The Irish played an important role in the growth specifically of North Atlantic Catholic communities not only quantitatively (due to the high number of Irish immigrants), but also qualitatively. Gaetano Bedini, envoy extraordinary of the Holy See to the United States in 1853-1854⁴⁴, suggested to favour the advancement of the Irish in the country, who seemed to him historically and psychologically better equipped to fight the Protestants⁴⁵. In more recent times, a book on the 10 ecclesiastics who have presided the Archdiocese of New York has revealed that two of them were born in Ireland, one was half-Irish and the others were either first- or second-generation Irish⁴⁶.

4 - Appointment and Ecclesiastical Policy of Paul Cullen, the First Irish-Born Cardinal

Paul Cullen is regarded as "the most important figure in Irish history between the death of Daniel O'Connell and the rise of Charles Stewart Parnell"⁴⁷. His influence not only over the Irish Church but on the entire country was so deep that scholars have talked about 'Cullenisation' of Ireland⁴⁸. His ecclesiastical policy was characterised by two main features. One was the axiomatic identification of the terms 'Irish' and 'Catholic': he found "no distinction between Irish and Catholic identities - faith and fatherland were inseparable. What was good for the Church was good for

⁴³ S. GILLEY, *Catholicism*, cit., p. 250.

⁴⁴ See M. FRANCO, *Imperi paralleli. Vaticano e Stati Uniti: due secoli di alleanze e conflitto 1788-2005*, Mondadori, Milano, 2005, pp. 7-19.

⁴⁵ G. PIZZORUSSO, M. SANFILIPPO, *Dagli indiani agli emigranti*, cit., p. 42.

⁴⁶ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit. For a commented bibliography on Irish America, see D.N. DOYLE, *The Regional Bibliography of Irish America, 1800-1930: a Review and Addendum*, in *Irish Historical Studies*, 1983, XXIII/91, pp. 254-267.

⁴⁷ C. BARR, 'An Ambiguous Awe': *Paul Cullen and the Historians*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, ed. by D. Keogh, A. McDonnell, Fourt Court Press, Dublin, 2011, p. 414. O'Connell's death occurred in 1847. Known as the Liberator, he was the first great Irish nationalist leader in the 19th century. Parnell was a nationalist, member of the British Parliament from 1875 to 1891, and leader of the struggle for Irish Home Rule. See respectively <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Daniel-OConnell.Irish> and <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Stewart-Parnell>.

⁴⁸ See e.g. D. BOWEN, *Paul Cardinal Cullen and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 2006; C. O'CARROLL, *Paul Cardinal Cullen. Profile of a Practical Nationalist*, Veritas, Dublin, 2009.



the country”⁴⁹. The other one was the Romanization of the Irish Church. He fully “reflected the values and ideas of the age of Pius IX. No other cleric in the nineteenth century did more to reform and Romanise the Irish church”⁵⁰. At this regard, Barr has well illustrated the way Cullen was perceived of by his contemporaries: “virtually the Pope of the Western Church” (*New York Herald*, 1870); “an Italian monk” sent by Rome to “Italianize Ireland”» (Lord Clarendon); “in all but his patrimonial name was an Italian monk” (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1850); «a “Roman of the Romans”» (*Dublin Evening Mail*, 1878); and so on⁵¹.

Cullen’s influence extended well beyond Ireland. In fact, he played a fundamental role in what Barr has aptly defined as an *Imperium in Imperio*, that is, the “Irish episcopal imperialism” within the British Empire. This phenomenon was characterized by two stages: first, “the ethnic Irish take-over or attempted take-over of the Church in the English-speaking world”, and then the “Hiberno-Roman orientation of many of those appointed, especially after 1850”⁵².

Cullen was born on 29 April 1803. In 1820 he arrived in Rome, where he remained thirty years. In those decades, “he became a Roman, and Rome and its way of life permeated his consciousness and his being until it became not only the focus of his faith but the love of his life”⁵³. When he arrived in Rome, at the age of 17, he entered the Urban College of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*. The Irish, unlike the English and the Scots, had no national college where to reside. The Irish College, which had been founded in 1628, was closed in 1798 by Napoleon and would only reopen in 1826. In any event, no Roman seminary “was so integrated into a major congregation, nor offered such access to the papal bureaucracy” like the Urban College, which also “offered a daily lesson in the universality and global reach of the Roman Catholic Church”⁵⁴. There Cullen was profoundly influenced not only by its cultural climate, but also by its

⁴⁹ T.E. HACKEY, L.J. MCCAFFREY, *The Irish Experience Since 1800. A Concise History*, M.E. Sharpe, London, 2010, p. 70.

⁵⁰ D. KEOGH, *Ireland and the Vatican. The Politics and Diplomacy of Church-State Relations, 1922-1960*, Cork University Press, Cork, 1995, p. 3.

⁵¹ C. BARR, “An Italian of the Vatican Type”: *The Roman Formation of Cardinal Paul Cullen Archbishop of Dublin*, in *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies*, 2016, 6, p. 28.

⁵² C. BARR, ‘*Imperium in Imperio*’: *Irish Episcopal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, in *The English Historical Review*, 2008, CXXIII/502, p. 614.

⁵³ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen: the great ultramontane*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, ed. by D. Keogh, A. McDonnell, Fourt Court Press, Dublin, 2011, p. 18.

⁵⁴ C. BARR, “An Italian of the Vatican Type”, cit., p. 31.



multilingual environment⁵⁵. It has been argued that, during his first ten years in Rome, he “took more than politics and theology”, and “his experience of the national, cultural and linguistic diversity of the Propaganda taught him to think on a global scale”⁵⁶. In a letter to his brother Thomas, Cullen wrote that hearing so many languages spoken in Rome by men professing the same creed was a “fine proof of our Church”⁵⁷.

In 1826, cardinal Cappellari was appointed Prefect of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* - a position he held until 1831, when he was elected as Gregory XVI - and became Cullen’s protector and mentor⁵⁸. As a student, Cullen distinguished himself for his academic excellence and, in particular, linguistic giftedness⁵⁹. He was proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean, as well as Italian and French⁶⁰.

As argued by Anne O’Connor, Cullen’s talent for languages “gave an early jump-start to his career and subsequently expanded his sphere of influence from the confines of the Vatican to the vast expanses of the Catholic English-speaking world”⁶¹. Latin was the language of the Church and Italian was the working language in Rome, but the growing importance of Catholicism in the English-speaking world increased the importance of English. The relative lack of English speakers and, in particular, of English speakers mastering Italian made Cullen secure “a near-monopoly on the explication of English-language conflicts”⁶².

“While Cappellari had been drawn to men gifted intellectually, it was those with linguistic inclinations who were particularly sought out. His time at Propaganda heightened an awareness of the role that languages played in the Church’s worldwide mission”⁶³.

Without Cappellari’s patronage, Cullen would probably have returned to Ireland. Instead, in 1832, Gregory XVI had the Irish bishops

⁵⁵ A. O’CONNOR, *Translating the Vatican: Paul Cullen, Power and Language in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, in *Irish Studies Review*, 2014, XXII/4, p. 451.

⁵⁶ C. BARR, “An Italian of the Vatican Type”, cit., p. 45.

⁵⁷ C. BARR, “An Italian of the Vatican Type”, cit., p. 35.

⁵⁸ C. KORTEN, *Converging Worlds: Paul Cullen in the World of Mauro Cappellari*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit. pp. 34-46. See also O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Ultramontane Spirituality of Paul Cullen*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., p. 63.

⁵⁹ C. BARR, “An Italian of the Vatican Type”, cit., p. 36.

⁶⁰ C. KORTEN, *Converging Worlds*, cit., pp. 40-41; C. BARR, “An Italian of the Vatican Type”, cit., pp. 34-45.

⁶¹ A. O’CONNOR, *Translating the Vatican*, cit., pp. 460-461.

⁶² C. BARR, *Imperium in Imperio*, cit., p. 615. See also A. O’CONNOR, *Translating the Vatican*, cit., p. 453.

⁶³ C. KORTEN, *Converging Worlds*, cit., p. 40.



appoint him as rector of the Irish College⁶⁴, an office which he held until 1849. Cullen became a favourite of the papal court, adviser on Irish affairs and intermediary between the Irish clergy and the Roman hierarchy - just like the rectors of the English and Scots Colleges who had become the unofficial agents in Rome for English and Scottish affairs⁶⁵. According to cardinal Moran, who authored Cullen's biography in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, he

"profited by the influence which he thus enjoyed to safeguard the interests of the Irish Church, and to unmask the intrigues of the British agents who at this period were untiring in their attempts to force their political views upon the Vatican, and to forge fetters for Catholic Ireland"⁶⁶.

In his capacity, Cullen collaborated with Irish-born Bishop John England of Charleston and Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick of Philadelphia⁶⁷ "in securing the appointment of Irish candidates to episcopal sees in the United States"⁶⁸. The achievement of Irish dominance was pursued through a pattern, which was later repeated in other places, like Scotland and Australia. First, Irish-born priests started complaining loudly about their non-Irish bishops; such "complaints - however unlikely - were taken seriously at the Propaganda, which began to turn on the existing (non-Irish) hierarchy". The "Irish take-over of the episcopate"⁶⁹ was carried out not only by filling a vacancy with an Irish candidate, but also by appointing an Irish coadjutor with right of succession, as well as by creating a new diocese and appointing an Irish bishop. "Once a majority was achieved, regular national synods imposed the policies of the majority on any remaining minority. Even when the strategy failed, the pattern was clear"⁷⁰.

Cullen further collaborated with Archbishop Murray of Dublin to

⁶⁴ C. BARR, "An Italian of the Vatican Type", cit., pp. 38-39.

⁶⁵ T.E. HACKEY, L.J. MCCAFFREY, *The Irish Experience*, cit., p. 68; A. O'CONNOR, *Translating the Vatican*, cit., p. 453.

⁶⁶ P.F. MORAN, *Cullen, Paul*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, cit., 1908, IV, p. 564.

⁶⁷ Whose brother, Peter Richard, was one of the most strenuous anti-infallibilists at the First Vatican Council. See P.K. HENNESSY, *Infallibility in the Ecclesiology of Peter Richard Kenrick*, in *Theological Studies*, 1984, XLV, pp. 702-714; J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican. The American Experience*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1963, *passim*; F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude of the American Hierarchy Toward the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility at the Vatican Council*, in CCHA. *Report*, 1960, XXVII, *passim*.

⁶⁸ G. MORAN, *Faith, Famine and Fenianism: Paul Cullen and the Irish Emigrant World*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., p. 172.

⁶⁹ C. BARR, 'Imperium in Imperio', cit., p. 620.

⁷⁰ C. BARR, 'Imperium in Imperio', cit., p. 620.



secure the appointment of Irish candidates to the Indian sees of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay⁷¹. Also prelates from Canada and the broader English-speaking world (with the exception of England and Scotland) turn to him to have secular and religious clergy⁷², although it should be specified that the Irish predominance was episcopal⁷³. This was the first phase of what Barr has called 'Irish episcopal imperialism', characterized - as mentioned above - by the appointment of Irish bishops throughout the Catholic English-speaking world. At this regard, Barr has reiterated the point that the

"conquest of the English speaking Churches was not at all accidental, but rather a systematic, well planned and centrally directed operation; contingency no doubt dictated timing and tactics, but the pattern continued over too long a time and in too many places to be coincidental"⁷⁴.

During the 1848 revolution Cullen remained in Rome, assuming the presidency of the Urban College of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* and providing proscribed ecclesiastics with a safe haven at the Irish College⁷⁵. Patrick Francis Moran has further reported that the revolutionary government attempted to dissolve the College and confiscate its properties, but Cullen appealed to the American Minister in Rome, Lewis Cass.

"Within an hour the American flag was floating over the Propaganda College. The mandate of the Triumvirs was withdrawn, and a decree was issued to the effect that the Propaganda should be maintained as an institution of world-wide fame of which Rome was justly proud. Thus through the Irish rector and the American flag the venerable college was saved from confiscation"⁷⁶.

Cullen was ordained bishop on 24 February 1850 and returned to Ireland as apostolic delegate on 4 May⁷⁷. He was first appointed Archbishop of Armagh (1849-1852), and then Archbishop of Dublin (1852-1878). He was created a cardinal on 22 June 1866⁷⁸, and appointed to the Congregation of

⁷¹ C. BARR, *Imperium in Imperio*, cit., p. 619.

⁷² G. MORAN, *Faith, Famine and Fenianism*, cit., pp. 173-174.

⁷³ C. BARR, *Imperium in Imperio*, cit., p. 613.

⁷⁴ C. BARR, *Imperium in Imperio*, cit., p. 645.

⁷⁵ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 21.

⁷⁶ P.F. MORAN, *Cullen*, *Paul*, cit., p. 565.

⁷⁷ A. MACAULAY, *'Strong Views ... in Very Strong Forms': Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Armagh (1849-52)*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., p. 78.

⁷⁸ In the same consistory other four cardinals were created (three from Italy and one from Germany).



Regular Discipline⁷⁹.

According to Larkin, Cullen has epitomized the ultramontane model in a three-fold perspective: ideological, pastoral, and political. Ideologically, he shared with Pius IX the view that the modern, liberal and secular State was the great danger to the 19th-century Church⁸⁰. Cullen was hostile to any lay or clerical nationalism, insofar as it was associated to the liberal ideology, which also inspired the movements threatening the pope's temporal power⁸¹. He followed anxiously the development of the events that led to the extinction of the Papal States, and defended the pontiff's temporal power in different ways. He issued pastoral letters⁸², delivered speeches and organized meetings to rally the clergy and the general public⁸³; he repeatedly called for collections of money to send to Rome (the 'Peter's Pence'), but he was much more cautious towards the recruitment of volunteers for the Irish Papal Brigade, for financial reasons, for logistical difficulties and for the worry that these men could hardly be controlled once they left Ireland and may indeed create trouble instead of serving the cause⁸⁵.

Equally linked to the ideological dimension of Cullen's ultramontanism was his opposition to the Fenian Brotherhood, a secret society founded in the United States with the purpose to put an end to British colonial rule and to establish an Irish Republic. In the 1860's he repeatedly denounced it⁸⁶ and, during the First Vatican Council (which will

⁷⁹ **F. JANKOWIAK**, *La curie romaine*, cit., -pp. 320-321.

⁸⁰ **E. LARKIN**, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 16.

⁸¹ **M. KELLY**, *Providence, Revolution and the Conditional Defence of the Union: Paul Cullen and Fenians*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., p. 313; **T.E. HACKEY, L.J. MCCAFFREY**, *The Irish Experience*, cit., p. 69.

⁸² See for instance the letter published in **E. LARKIN**, *The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860-1870*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1987, pp. 4-7.

⁸³ **A. O'CONNOR**, *The Pope, the Prelate, the Soldiers and the Controversy: Paul Cullen and the Irish Papal Brigade*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., p. 329.

⁸⁴ "During the winter of 1859-60, the Irish people became involved in Italian affairs to an extent that had never prevailed before and never would again" (**E. LARKIN**, *The Consolidation*, cit., p. 3).

⁸⁵ **A. O'CONNOR**, *The Pope*, cit., pp. 329-330 and 333-342; **E. LARKIN**, *The Consolidation*, cit., pp. 10-38 and 432.

⁸⁶ **E. LARKIN**, *The Consolidation*, cit., pp. 394-438. Cullen was also wary of the exploitation of the Irish Catholics' sentiments, which could take place on the occasion of funerals and commemorations, as it was the case with the funeral of MacManus (**M. KELLY**, *Providence*, cit., p. 326). MacManus fought in the Young Ireland Revolt of 1848 and emigrated to the United States. When he died, Fenians took his body back to Ireland to organize a solemn funeral, which Cullen opposed by prohibiting the celebration of a



be dealt with below), he managed to persuade the Irish episcopate to petition the Holy See⁸⁷. On 12 January 1870 the Congregation of the Holy Office issued a decree, stating that “*the American or Irish society called Fenian is comprised among the societies forbidden and condemned and banned in the Constitutions of the Supreme Pontiff*”⁸⁸.

The Fenianism issue sheds light on a peculiar aspect of the transnational network of North Atlantic Catholic communities. According to Gerard Moran, Cullen did not fail to see the advantages of mass emigration, because - as mentioned above - the Irish diaspora could serve the purpose to favour the expansion of the Catholic Church in the new world and ensure that those Catholic communities would be loyal to the pontiff. However, the reverse side of the coin was the threat posed by such communities: militant nationalism became a part of the Irish emigrant world and prompted dynamics beyond Cullen’s power of control. Despite his repeated urges, the American hierarchy was not ready to condemn Fenians so firmly as Cullen desired, and some prelates, like Archbishop John Hughes of New York, were also alleged to support them⁸⁹.

Cullen’s position originated from his horror of revolution and revolutionary movements, which he had experienced during the 1848 revolt in Rome - and even earlier with the 1831 insurrections. According to Barr, Cullen’s

«most enduring political beliefs can be found in Mirari Vos and several

religious ceremony (E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., pp. 64-78). On the other hand, on one occasion Cullen interceded for two men condemned to death after a Fenian rising and he contributed to have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment (E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., pp. 428; P.F. MORAN, *Cullen, Paul*, cit., p. 565).

⁸⁷ See O.P. RAFFERTY, *Catholicism in Ulster 1603-1983. An Interpretative History*, Hurst & Company, London, 1994, p. 164.

⁸⁸ The text is available at <http://www.dippam.ac.uk/ied/records/48995>. A role may as well have been played by Odo Russell (E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., p. 437), the most famous of the English agents residing in Rome and treating with the Holy See (1858-1870). London never maintained formal diplomatic relations with Rome, but in 1850 it started the practice of sending an envoy formally accredited in Tuscany and, from 1860 to 1861, in Naples. When the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy, the United Kingdom ceased to accredit formally its agent, because the pope would not relate to an envoy accredited with Italy (C.J. WOODS, *Ireland and Anglo-papal relations, 1880-85*, in *Irish Historical Studies*, 1972, XVIII/69, p. 29). Odo Russell was probably echoing Cullen’s opinion, when he reported to London «that the pope had told him that the Fenians were simply “the Garibaldinians of England”» (E. DUFFY, *The Age of Pio Nono: The Age of Paul Cullen*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., p. 58).

⁸⁹ G. MORAN, *Faith, Famine and Fenianism*, cit., pp. 176-178. See also C. BARR, ‘*Imperium in Imperio*’, cit., p. 649.



other of Gregory's early encyclicals: an understanding of nationalism as essentially irreligious, the product of secret societies bent on the destruction of the church; a concomitant belief that violent resistance to legitimate authority was illicit, no matter the pretext; a horror of the human consequences of war, which he believed no cause could justify; and a distrust of secular education and its consequences, which both he and Gregory labelled "indifferentism" and which they thought was the root cause of irreligion, treason, and rebellion»⁹⁰.

However, according to Steele, this should not mislead to the conclusion that Cullen opposed Irish nationalism as such⁹¹. As specified by Rafferty, if all Cullen "desired for Ireland could be obtained within the context of the Union, then Cullen was prepared to be a unionist"⁹². In fact, British colonialism allowed the Catholic Church to build a 'spiritual empire', where the Irish played an important role:

"at any given time in the nineteenth century between a third and 40 per cent of soldiers in the British army were Irish Catholics. Their deployment helped to ensure the building of Catholic churches everywhere in the empire from Brisbane to Barbados"⁹³.

At the end of the second Irish national synod, held in Maynooth in 1875, the bishops stressed the strengthening of the Catholic Church in Ireland and its expansion in North America, Africa, India and Australia⁹⁴.

In this context, Cullen was "the most important of all Irish missionary organizers"⁹⁵. A large number of priests and religious left Ireland for the new territories where the Irish were settling and the Catholic Church was developing⁹⁶. Cullen had an immense influence in all the countries involved in the Irish diaspora. Rome consulted him on all

⁹⁰ C. BARR, "An Italian of the Vatican Type", cit., p. 43. The same author has pointed out that this link "has not often been remarked on. This is for a good reason: Gregory's hysterical denunciations of 'liberals' and 'liberalism', which the young Cullen echoed, sit uneasily with Cullen's mature support for the British Liberal party and his habitually positive use of the term 'liberal' to describe government concessions and 'illiberal' to denounce government intransigence" (C. BARR, "An Italian of the Vatican Type", cit., p. 44).

⁹¹ E.D. STEELE, *Cardinal Cullen and Irish Nationality*, in *Irish Historical Studies*, 1975, XIX/75, pp. 239-240.

⁹² O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Catholic Church and Fenianism*, 2008, at <http://www.historyireland.com/18th-19th-century-history/the-catholic-church-and-fenianism>.

⁹³ O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Catholic Church*, cit.

⁹⁴ O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Catholic Church*, cit., p. 290.

⁹⁵ AA. VV., *Religion and Greater Ireland*, cit., p. 15.

⁹⁶ S. GILLEY, *Catholicism*, cit., p. 250.



important related decisions⁹⁷, and he asserted “[t]he Irish ecclesiastical control of most of this emigration, outside Britain itself” by coming “to recommend the appointment of most of the bishops of the Irish diaspora”⁹⁸. This pattern emerged in the United States from the 1830s and then spread to Canada⁹⁹, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Scotland¹⁰⁰.

“Perhaps never again would the Irish as a body have such a direct

⁹⁷ M. RYLLIS-CLARK, *Loreto in Australia*, UNSWP, Sydney, 2009, p. 60.

⁹⁸ S. GILLEY, *Catholicism*, cit., p. 250.

⁹⁹ “The lessons of America and to a lesser extent India were confirmed for Cullen when he became involved in the affairs of the Maritime provinces of British North America” (C. BARR, *Imperium in Imperio*, cit., p. 621). In 1842, Irish-born priest William Walsh was appointed coadjutor to William, the Scottish-born vicar apostolic of Nova Scotia, which had been created the diocese of Halifax. A conflict arose and led to petitions to Rome, to a report written by an investigator sent by the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, and to a visit by Walsh in Rome to plead one’s cause (supported by Cullen). In 1844, the diocese was divided in two, with Fraser Bishop of Arichat, and Walsh Bishop of Halifax (Archbishop from 1851). The rise of Halifax to an Archdiocese “marked a new stage in the development of the Catholic Church in British North America. Previously, the centre of power was in francophone Quebec. Now a new province with an Irishman at its head contested that dominance. To ensure the continuation of Irish influence, however, it needed to be extended beyond Halifax. Cullen and his Rome-based allies were closely involved in the process” (C. BARR, *Imperium in Imperio*, cit., p. 623). When Walsh died in 1858, Irish-born Archbishop John Hughes of New York wrote to Cullen to ensure the appointment of a suitable Irish (and of no other nationality) candidate. By 1860, there were three Irish bishops (Halifax, Saint John and Chatham) and two Scottish ones (Prince Edward Island and Arichat). Cullen then turned his attention to Newfoundland. In 1869, he contributed to the appointment of Thomas Power to the episcopal see of St John’s, whereas, in 1871, he unsuccessfully tried to prevent Enrico Carfagnini from being appointed Bishop of Harbour Grace (C. BARR, *Imperium in Imperio*, cit., pp. 624-625).

¹⁰⁰ C. BARR, *Imperium in Imperio*, cit., pp. 612 and 621-643. In fact, Paul Cullen’s influence extended well beyond the North Atlantic World. His nephew, Francis Patrick Moran, became the first Australian cardinal (see L. PROUDFOOT, D. HALL, *Imperial Spaces. Placing the Irish and Scots in Colonial Australia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2011, p. 209). More broadly, in this continent, Cullen “helped to weigh the balance in favour of Irish Catholicism and sabotage attempts to establish a form of Catholicism with a monastic English flavor” (M. RYLLIS-CLARK, *Loreto in Australia*, cit., p. 60. See also K. WALSH, *The First Vatican Council*, cit., p. 69; C. DOWD, *Rome in Australia*, cit., pp. 66-67; P. Mac SUIBHNE, *Ireland*, cit., p. 213; P. Mac SUIBHNE, *Ireland*, in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 1960, XCIII/5, p. 300; G. MORAN, *Faith, Famine and Fenianism*, cit., pp. 172-174; M. CAMPBELL, *A ‘Successful Experiment’ No More. The Intensification of Religious Bigotry in Eastern Australia, 1865-1885*, in *Humanities Research*, 2005, XII/1, p. 68; R. SWEETMAN, *Paul Cullen and the Remaking of Catholicism in the Antipodes*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., pp. 377-400). In another area of the world, Giovanni Timoleone Raimondi, appointed vicar apostolic of Hong Kong in 1874, asked Alessandro Barnabò, cardinal prefect of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide to intercede with Paul Cullen (as



influence in the government of the universal church. For Catholicism as a whole, by the end of the century there were about 130 bishops working throughout the empire, supervising the spiritual needs of some sixteen million of her majesty's subjects"¹⁰¹.

It should also be reiterated that this process did not merely have a quantitative dimension, but also a qualitative one. Paul Cullen's ecclesiastical policy led to the improvement of the quality of the Irish clergy recruited for the missions in America¹⁰² and elsewhere. "An important aspect of Irish Episcopal Imperialism was its ability to perdure. For that, the foundation of Hiberno-Roman seminaries was crucial"¹⁰³. Their model was the Irish College in Rome, and their mission, as pointed out by Cullen in 1833 in a letter to Tobias Kirby (rector of the Irish College from 1850 to 1891) «was to produce students who "will be the means of introducing Roman maxims into Ireland and uniting that Church more closely with the Holy See"»¹⁰⁴.

The above remarks should not mislead to conclude that Paul Cullen controlled every single appointment to an episcopal see - and he did not do so even in Ireland¹⁰⁵, as proved by his failed attempt, in 1869, to have his 36-year-old secretary George Conroy appointed Archbishop of Armagh¹⁰⁶. At this regard, Barr has stressed the point that

"[a]lthough there is a risk that too close a focus on the papers of Cullen and his allies can distort by making their network appear too important, it is nevertheless the case that outsiders both identified that

well as with Archbishop Manning of Westminster). Protestants in the Hong Kong government were threatening Raimondi's school and orphanage, and Cullen (along with Manning) was asked to take action, as prudence suggested, with the British government (R.M. WILTGEN, *The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Melanesia and Micronesia, 1850-1875*, Pickwick Publications, Eugene, 2008, p. 497).

¹⁰¹ O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Catholic Church*, cit., p. 292.

¹⁰² B. ASPINWALL, *Irish Americans and American Nationality, 1848-66*, in *Contemporary Irish Studies*, ed. by T. Gallagher, J. O'Connell, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1983, p. 114.

¹⁰³ C. BARR, 'Imperium in Imperio', cit., p. 643.

¹⁰⁴ C. BARR, 'Imperium in Imperio', cit., p. 644. On the importance of this correspondence, see V. ORSCHEL, *The Catholic Church's Irishmen in Rome: The Correspondence of Paul Cullen and Tobias Kirby*, 2008, at <http://www.historyireland.com/18th-19th-century-history/the-catholic-churchs-irishmen-in-rome-the-correspondence-of-paul-cullen-and-tobias-kirby>.

¹⁰⁵ C. BARR, 'Imperium in Imperio', cit., p. 650.

¹⁰⁶ E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., p. XIX.



network and saw Cullen as its leader and their primary antagonist"¹⁰⁷.

Cullen's importance should be related to his unique influence within the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* from about 1830 until a few years before his death. The impression he made on cardinal prefect Mauro Cappellari has been mentioned. When the latter became Gregory XVI, Cullen formed close links with the successive cardinals prefects but, in particular, with Alessandro Barnabò (secretary from 1848 and prefect from 1856). "Barnabò's death in early 1874 marked the end of Cullen's personal dominance at the Propaganda. Although he had a reasonable relationship with Barnabò's successor, Cullen always lamented the death of his 'staunch friend'"¹⁰⁸. According to Carey, Cullen's influence

"was limited to the period of the very rapid expansion of the colonial episcopate. Once the colonial churches secured their own metropolitan, Cullen's capacity to continue influencing the internal affairs of the national churches declined"¹⁰⁹.

In any event, by the beginning of the 20th century, the episcopate in the English-speaking world (with the exception of Scotland and India) was not only largely Irish, but it was also for a great part of

"a particular sort of Irish, moulded by a Hiberno-Roman fusion of devotional and administrative practice. Hiberno-Romanism was itself a subset of a wider neo-ultramontanism that swept the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century. The Catholic communities, and to a certain extent the wider culture of each of the affected countries, are still marked by this particular form of Irish 'colonisation'"¹¹⁰.

The appointment of a great number of bishops having a Hiberno-Roman orientation was the second of the abovementioned phases of 'Irish episcopal imperialism'. Being Irish was no longer sufficient; now it was also necessary to share a specific orientation, like insistence on clerical and lay obedience, spread of Roman devotional forms (which will be dealt with below), imposition of disciplinary uniformity, pursue of a Catholic, separate education and, last but not least, papal devotion. Although ethnic conflicts - as will be seen below when dealing with Canada - were a major source of division within each national Church, the process described by

¹⁰⁷ C. BARR, *'Imperium in Imperio'*, cit., p. 645.

¹⁰⁸ C. BARR, *'Imperium in Imperio'*, cit., p. 614-615.

¹⁰⁹ H.M. CAREY, *God's Empire. Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c.1801-1908*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011, p. 143.

¹¹⁰ C. BARR, *'Imperium in Imperio'*, cit., p. 612.



Barr was founded on ideology as much as on ethnicity¹¹¹.

In the light of the above remarks, it may be understood that Cullen opposed Fenianism because, by challenging the British Empire, it threatened the Catholic Church's expansion in those lands¹¹². At the same time, Cullen's opposition does not mean that he was pro-British¹¹³. He disliked the English - Protestants and Catholics alike¹¹⁴, and he disliked British rule, although for different reasons from Irish nationalists. The latter complained about English oppression of the Irish, whereas Cullen was concerned about the threat posed by a Protestant government to the Catholic faith¹¹⁵. He believed that the British government fostered Protestant interests at every opportunity, and the same *raison-d'être* of the vastest colonial empire was British mission to spread Protestantism¹¹⁶.

From the pastoral point of view, Cullen's ecclesiastical policy was characterised by what Larkin has defined as 'devotional revolution'¹¹⁷, which made the Irish "the most pious, generous, and dedicated Catholics

¹¹¹ C. BARR, *'Imperium in Imperio'*, cit., p. 645-649.

¹¹² O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Catholic Church*, cit.

¹¹³ E.D. STEELE, *Cardinal Cullen*, cit., p. 240. Scholars have pointed out that Cullen was aware of the distress, poverty and sufferance spread in the country, that he regarded the authorities' action insufficient and irresponsible, and that he tried to alleviate the population's plight through the establishment of social, educational and medical facilities. He realized that this situation would favor secret societies, and - while he tried to promote changes through constitutional means - he repeatedly urged Irish Catholics not to incite revolution, and to exercise instead patience and resignation. It goes without saying that this message could not be effective or adequate in the context of the Irish peasants' desperate situation (C. O'CARROLL, *The pastoral vision of Paul Cullen*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., pp. 120-122; V. CROSSMAN, *'Attending to the Wants of Poverty': Paul Cullen, the Relief of Poverty and the Development of Social Welfare in Ireland*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit.; M. KELLY, *Providence*, cit., pp. 322-323). Larkin has provided many examples of statements made by Cullen where he complained about the way the British treated the Irish. For instance, in a letter of 20 May 1864 to Cardinal Barnabò, he wrote: "people are fleeing in great numbers. [...]. Our government [...] does not give the least protection to these poor people. [...]. If the King of Naples and the Pope had treated their subjects as the poor Irish are treated, England would have been full of indignation, and the English newspapers would have been hurling insults against the sovereigns who did not protect their people. They do not say a word however in favour of the Irish people, but so great is their hatred of the Catholic religion, that they appear to exult in the destruction of the poor people" (quoted in E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., p. 285).

¹¹⁴ T.E. HACKEY, L.J. MCCAFFREY, *The Irish Experience*, cit., p. 68.

¹¹⁵ E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., passim.

¹¹⁶ O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Ultramontane Spirituality*, cit., p. 71. See also C. O'CARROLL, *The pastoral vision*, cit., p. 123.

¹¹⁷ E. LARKIN, *The Devotional Revolution*, cit. For criticism of this thesis, see O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Ultramontane Spirituality*, cit., p. 64, fn. 27.



in western World”¹¹⁸. Religion had to be practiced regularly, and in solemn places. Sunday Mass attendance was urged, and so was the administration of sacraments in the churches and not in private houses¹¹⁹. During his years in Rome, Cullen raved about “the magnificence and splendor of the liturgical ceremonies and the general pomp and circumstance of the papal court and of the ways of doing things in Rome”¹²⁰. He could not have found a more striking contrast between “the sumptuous churches which adorn almost every town on this side of the Alps” and “the poor miserable buildings destined to the purposes of Catholic worship in Ireland”¹²¹. Soon after his arrival, he wrote to Kirby that the old Cathedral of Armagh “is awfully bad - the priests use only *one* tallow candle on the altars at mass in the Cathedral. Imagine what it must be elsewhere”¹²². Thus, Cullen embarked on an intense program of church building, to ensure that every parish had a place of worship with a sacred space appropriate for religious ceremonies, and he encouraged churchmen to adopt Roman vestments and dress. He had altars, shrines and statues introduced in churches and chapels, not only as a reminiscence of the splendid interiors of Roman churches, but also as way to propagate devotion to the saints¹²³. Roman liturgy became the norm. Marian devotions were promoted - and a great impetus was given by Pius IX’s declaration of the dogma of Immaculate Conception in 1854 and the Lourdes apparitions in 1858. The encouragement of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus had its apex in 1873, when the Irish bishops consecrated Ireland to it¹²⁴. Other devotions and practices, which had deeply impressed Cullen during his years in Rome, were introduced, like the rosary, the Forty Hours of Eucharistic adoration, novenas, *Via Crucis*, and so on¹²⁵. Religious practices “were also reinforced by the use of devotional tools and aids: beads, scapulars, medals,

¹¹⁸ T.E. HACKEY, L.J. MCCAFFREY, *The Irish Experience*, cit., p. 68.

¹¹⁹ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 27. See also E. LARKIN, *The Devotional Revolution*, cit., pp. 635-636.

¹²⁰ O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Ultramontane Spirituality*, cit., p. 63.

¹²¹ C. BARR, “An Italian of the Vatican Type”, cit., p. 33.

¹²² Quoted in E. LARKIN, *The Devotional Revolution, 1850-75*, cit. p. 645. Before returning to Ireland, Cullen had only had minimal contact with the Archdiocese of Armagh, and he was bitterly disappointed with its condition. He found Armagh a “desolate place” and he was happy when he moved to Dublin, “not so abandoned a place” (quoted in A. MACAULAY, ‘*Strong Views...in Very Strong Forms*’, cit., p. 98).

¹²³ C. O’CARROLL, *The pastoral vision*, cit., pp. 116-117 and 122.

¹²⁴ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., pp. 16-17.

¹²⁵ C. O’CARROLL, *The pastoral vision*, cit., pp. 115-116; E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 31.



missals, prayer books, catechisms, holy pictures, and *Agnus Dei*, all blessed by priests who had recently acquired that privilege from Rome through the intercession of their bishops¹²⁶. Celtic traditions, like the attachment to holy wells and wakes, were discouraged, although not completely eradicated¹²⁷.

Finally, as regards the political dimension of the ultramontane model epitomized by Cullen, Larkin has referred to his responsibility,

“as apostolic delegate and formal head of the Irish hierarchy [...] for the very considerable increase in the bureaucratic and administrative centralization in the Irish Church that was the hallmark of the concentration of Roman power and influence in the universal Church during the pontificate of Pius IX”¹²⁸.

Critics of the gradual Romanization of the Irish episcopate see the beginning of this process in the very appointment of Cullen to Armagh. Until 1829, a terna of candidates was elected by the parish priests of a diocese, whose names were listed according to the order *dignissimus* (most worthy), *dignior* (very worthy) and *dignus* (worthy), examined by the province’s bishops and submitted to Rome, which then chose one of the three candidates. However, Rome disregarded the terna for the first time when choosing Cullen, whose name was not one of the three indicated by the Irish clergy¹²⁹.

Cullen took the lead of the Catholic Church in Ireland, selecting bishops and imposing his will on the hierarchy; in this capacity he engineered an ultramontane transformation of the Irish Church against competing Gallican strategies, in particular the cooperation with the government carried out by his predecessor Archbishop Murray of Dublin, and the support for Irish nationalist movement promoted by Archbishop MacHale of Tuam¹³⁰.

The emphasis placed by a large part of literature on aspects like

¹²⁶ E. LARKIN, *The Devotional Revolution*, cit., p. 645.

¹²⁷ N. COLL, *After the Wake: An Alternative to Cullen’s Church*, in *The Furrow*, 1999, L/2, p. 98.

¹²⁸ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 16.

¹²⁹ B. HOBAN, *A Time for Courage*, in *The Furrow*, 2009, LX/6, p. 344. It has been pointed out that Cullen’s appointment ended an 8-month struggle for succession after Archbishop Crolley’s death (A. MACAULAY, ‘*Strong Views ... in Very Strong Forms*’, cit., p. 78).

¹³⁰ T.E.HACKEY, L.J. MCCAFFREY, *The Irish Experience*, cit., p. 68. Murray died on 1851, and Cullen succeeded him to the episcopal see of Dublin. MacHale was allied to Cullen when he was rector of the Irish College in the attempt to reduce British interference in the Irish Church. However, when Cullen returned to Ireland, the two ecclesiastics came to disagree on virtually any matter (M. MOFFITT, *The Conversion of Connemara and Conflict*



Cullen's influence over the appointment of bishops or devotional revolution should not lead to neglect the primary objective that Cullen aimed to achieve, that is, the fostering of unity within the episcopate of Ireland¹³¹. It is all too natural that cardinal Moran, in listing Cullen's aims, placed at the first place the union of "all in the promotion of the good cause"¹³².

For 30 years until 1850, the Irish episcopate had met once a year. After 1850, Cullen broke with this tradition: the general annual meetings (parliamentary in form) were substituted by synods, convened and presided by Cullen, as apostolic delegate, with an agenda also decided by Cullen and approved by Rome, which would also approve the related decisions¹³³. After three months he had arrived in Ireland, as apostolic delegate, he convened in Thurles the first national synod (22 August - 9 September 1850) in two centuries, in order to put the dissensions among the bishops to an end¹³⁴. Four issues were dealt with: the containment of British influence over the Irish Catholics' education¹³⁵; the reorganization of the Irish Church's structure and government; the regular administration of sacraments; the reform of the clergy's conduct¹³⁶. The episcopate was very divided over the first issue: Archbishop MacHale of Tuam opposed mixed education of Catholics and Protestants, as well as interdenominational Queen's colleges, which the government had established to provide religious minorities, like Catholics or Presbyterians (who would not attend Protestant-oriented Trinity College) with the opportunity to pursue higher education; by contrast, Archbishop Murray of Dublin was "much more inclined to be tolerant and even ecumenical in educational matters"¹³⁷. As

Between Paul Cullen and John MacHale, in Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world, cit., p. 231. See also E. LARKIN, The Consolidation, cit., passim).

¹³¹ See E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., pp. 62, 137, 181-233 and 486; E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 24-26.

¹³² Quoted in C. BARR, 'An Ambiguous Awe', cit., p. 434. The other listed aims were: 2) constitutional means to be used; 3) piety; 4) solid education of the clergy; 5) religious education of the people; 6) promotion of works of charity; 7) longanimity (a disposition to bear patiently injuries); 8) reverence for the Holy See; 9) independence from government; 10) promotion of higher studies (C. BARR, 'An Ambiguous Awe', cit, p. 434).

¹³³ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 26.

¹³⁴ P. Mac SUIBHNE, *Ireland*, cit., p. 304.

¹³⁵ For a detailed treatment, see J. DOYLE, *Cardinal Cullen and the System of National Education in Ireland*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., pp. 190-204; E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., passim.

¹³⁶ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 21.

¹³⁷ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 21. See also A. MACAULAY, 'Strong Views...in Very Strong Forms', cit., p. 86.



to Cullen, his prime objective was the implementation of the pope's condemnation of the Queen's colleges¹³⁸. At Thurles - by 15 votes to 13 - rules were introduced to prohibit any clergymen from holding an office in the colleges, and the laity was as well exhorted to avoid them¹³⁹. The episcopate's division led to appeals and petitions to Rome, which nonetheless confirmed Cullen's position. Within one decade, Cullen brought bishops, priests and laity to support unanimously denominational education against mixed one¹⁴⁰. It should further be noted that any sort of 'external' influence was rejected: Cullen aimed to keep education under the Church's strict control, not only opposing British (Protestant) interference, but also denying the (Catholic) laity any significant role¹⁴¹.

The clergy's involvement in political affairs had divided the episcopate, too, and Cullen had to undertake the formidable task of ensuring that ecclesiastics abstained from any political participation or interference¹⁴².

In order to ensure the implementation of the synodal decrees, Cullen carried out an effective strategy, with Rome's aid. Because an ecclesiastic who opposed him on one issue may as well share his position on a different one, Cullen dealt with one question at a time, by isolating his opponent and mobilizing those who, on a specific problem, supported him. Thus, he

¹³⁸ **A. MACAULAY**, *'Strong Views ... in Very Strong Forms'*, cit., p. 85. See also **E. LARKIN**, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 23.

¹³⁹ It was also decided to establish a Catholic university. The person Cullen asked to establish a university was John Henry Newman (also created a cardinal in 1879), an Anglican and academic at Oxford University, who converted to Catholicism and for this reason had to leave Oxford. See **C. BARR**, *Paul Cullen, John Henry Newman, and the Catholic University of Ireland, 1845-1865*, Gracewing, Leominster, 2003, pp. 63-72. For subsequent developments see **E. LARKIN**, *The Consolidation*, cit., pp. 441-532. Irish-born Archbishop John Hughes of New York praised the foundation of a Catholic university, which "would provide highly educated and cultured administrators, civil servants and soldiers for the British empire" (**O.P. RAFFERTY**, *The Catholic Church*, cit., p. 302). The whole of these measures was inspired by the view, prevailing in Rome, that "saw the Church battling against the darkness of infidelity and skepticism and a full Catholic education as an essential weapon in the armoury of the apostles of light" (**A. MACAULAY**, *'Strong Views ... in Very Strong Forms'*, cit., p. 89). On the issue of whether the Catholic Church in Ireland has discouraged scientific learning, see **J.H. MURPHY**, *The Irish-Catholics-in-science debate: John Tyndall, Cardinal Cullen and the uses of science at Castleknock College in the nineteenth century*, in *Science and Technology in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. by J. Adelman, E. Agnew, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2011, pp. 127-135.

¹⁴⁰ **E. LARKIN**, *Paul Cullen*, cit., pp. 22- 23. See also **E. LARKIN**, *The Consolidation*, cit., pp. 113-180.

¹⁴¹ **E. LARKIN**, *The Consolidation*, cit., pp. 164-179.

¹⁴² **C. O'CARROLL**, *The pastoral vision*, cit., p. 118.



mobilized Archbishops MacHale of Tuam and Slattery of Cashel to isolate Archbishop Murray of Dublin on the educational policy. Then he turned to MacHale who supported the clergy's involvement in political affairs, and managed to contain him thanks to the support of the Archbishops of Armagh and Cashel. Finally, he addressed the problem of pastoral reform, which had been particularly difficult in the province of Cashel, where the practice of 'station houses' was especially widespread¹⁴³; by 1875, the devotional revolution was zealously promoted. In the same year, the second national synod held in Maynooth reiterated what had been decreed in Thurles and strengthened bishops' control over their own respective diocese. In the two decades following Cullen's arrival in Ireland, the quantity and quality of churchmen had improved¹⁴⁴, and the "amount of dirty clerical linen washed in Rome appears to have decreased, as did the volume of litigation between the bishops and their priest"¹⁴⁵.

5 - Appointment and Ecclesiastical Policy of John McCloskey, the First American-Born Cardinal

Unlike Cullen, the first American-born cardinal has not attracted the attention of a great number of scholars. Secondary sources on John McCloskey are relatively scarce¹⁴⁶, although he was a man of many firsts:

"the first native New Yorker to be ordained a priest, the first native

¹⁴³ Priests used to designate the houses of some (generally wealthy) parishioners as the places where, for one week, they would celebrate the mass, hear confessions and celebrate other sacraments, like baptisms and weddings, for all the people living in the area. This practice created problems not only because of "the undignified if not unholy celebration of sacred rites in profane places" (E. LARKIN, *The Devotional Revolution, 1850-75*, cit., p. 636), but also because of the inconvenience caused to the parishioners, obliged to offer hospitality.

¹⁴⁴ E. LARKIN, *The Devotional Revolution, 1850-75*, cit., pp. 640 and 644.

¹⁴⁵ E. LARKIN, *The Devotional Revolution, 1850-75*, cit., p. 644.

¹⁴⁶ For example, Ellis, in his book on American Catholicism, has never mentioned McCloskey. By contrast, he has often referred to Gibbons, the second American-born cardinal, defined as "probably the greatest single figure the Church in the United States has produced" (J.T. ELLIS, *American Catholicism*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1969, p. 106). Although this judgment is not surprising, as Ellis has written a biography book of Gibbons, the lack of any mention of McCloskey is noteworthy. As noted by Marlin and Miner, he seems sometimes to be just «an obscure footnote - or even a bungled reference» (G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 83), due to the confusion between him and Bishop William McCloskey of Louisville. One reason for this paucity of sources may be, as his biographer Farley noted, that the search for documents illustrating



American to become archbishop of New York, the first American archbishop to be elevated to the cardinalate, and, therefore, the first American eligible to participate in the election of a new pope¹⁴⁷.

He was born in 1810 in Brooklyn, New York. After being ordained priest in 1834, he went to Rome, where he entered into personal relations with ecclesiastics who would become lifelong friends and who would also be raised to the rank of cardinal, like Paul Cullen and Karl-August von Reisach, the rector of the college of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*. "McCloskey's connections to people in high places [...] served him well in Rome, securing for him the friendship and patronage of eminent men"¹⁴⁸. The North American College had not been created yet, and he resided in the Pontifical Irish College. Farley - who was McCloskey's secretary, authored his biography¹⁴⁹ and later was created cardinal, too - wrote that

"one sees that no influence of that "city of the soul" failed to leave its impression on him; its Christian monuments and pagan ruins, its city and country life, the influence of foreigners on the people of Italy—not always for good —he has left judiciously noted in letters and diaries [...].

In Rome his love for and devotion to the Holy See was deepened and became a cult of his after years. As an American he was naturally broad and capable of taking a wide view of peoples and institutions. This was balanced by the events of the time and made him the conservative force he proved to be later on"¹⁵⁰.

According to Marlin and Miner, too,

"Rome was a revelation for John McCloskey: it was thoroughly Catholic. Growing up in New York, he had lived with a sense of being in a minority in the midst of a hostile majority - sometimes very hostile. In Rome, he was in the cradle of Catholicism, walking daily not simply through the city's beautifully exotic streets and among ruins of an ancient culture, but in the living, breathing epicenter of the one, true faith. [...]. There were no apologies to be made, either in the sense of making excuses to antagonistic Protestant America or in the sense of

the cardinal's life was disappointing, because McCloskey himself «preserved very few of his own personal papers» (J.M. FARLEY, *The Life*, cit., pp. v-vi).

¹⁴⁷ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 83.

¹⁴⁸ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 97.

¹⁴⁹ On the issue of who actually wrote it, see G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 83.

¹⁵⁰ J.M. FARLEY, *McCloskey, John*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, cit., IX, p. 486.



evangelizing for the faith”¹⁵¹.

McCloskey was consecrated bishop in 1844 and appointed second Archbishop of New York in 1864.

He received Pius IX’s encyclical *Quanta Cura* and its attached *Syllabus Errorum* of 8 December 1864¹⁵² - condemning errors such as the principle of separation of the church from the state and of the state from the church (no. LV), and the assertion of the inexpediency that the Catholic religion should be the State’s only religion with the exclusion of other religious denominations (no. LXXVII) - in quite a different way from Cullen. In a letter to Archbishop Spalding of Baltimore of 17 February 1865, McCloskey wrote:

“[i]t can hardly be doubted [...] that the syllabus places us in a state of apparent antagonism, as far at least as our principles are concerned, to the institutions under which we live - and affords a grand pretext to the fanatics who are eager to get up a crusade against us. God knows best what is for the good of His Church”¹⁵³.

Whereas “the tension between Christian discipleship and democratic citizenship” has been a “relatively constant feature of American Catholicism”¹⁵⁴, it may not be doubted that McCloskey’s Roman connections, many of whom were close advisors to cardinals or even to the pope, regarded him as an ecclesiastic whose loyalty to the Church was unquestionable, and who promised to be a great leader in the American Church. McCloskey was frequently compared with his predecessor, Irish-born and first Archbishop of New York, John Hughes: the latter was regarded “the right man for that time”, but the former “was a cleric who

¹⁵¹ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 99.

¹⁵² The original text in Latin is available at <https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-ix/la/documents/encyclica-quanta-cura-8-decembri-1864.html>.

¹⁵³ Quoted in G.P. FOGARTY, *The Holy See, Apostolic Delegates, and the Question of Church-State Relations in the United States*, in *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 1994, XII/2, p. 71. McCloskey is also reported to have stated: «[i]t is consoling to think and believe that our Holy Father has in all his official acts a light and guidance from on High- for according to all the rules of mere human prudence and wisdom the encyclical [Quanta Cura] with its annex of condemned propositions would be considered illtimed» (quoted in J. HENNESEY, *American Catholics. A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1981, p. 221).

¹⁵⁴ T.G. JELEN, *The American Church: Of Being Catholic and American*, in *The Catholic Church and the Nation-State. Comparative Perspectives*, ed. by P.C. Manuel, L.C. Reardon, C. Wilcox, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C., 2006, p. 82.



was the best kind of man for any time”¹⁵⁵.

Unlike Cullen, he did not play a major role in the collection of money to send to the pope within the context of the Roman Question. As regards the Zouaves¹⁵⁶, he was one of the American ecclesiastics who doubted about the legality of this enterprise and who feared that it might have dangerous consequences for the American Church¹⁵⁷. In 1868 McCloskey and Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati issued a joint declaration to condemn the recruitment of American Zouaves: «an example [...] of the unique American context of ultramontanism, “where loyalty to the papacy was a religious loyalty” and had nothing to do with recruitment of troops»¹⁵⁸.

Like Cullen, McCloskey took part in the First Vatican Council and his position will be dealt with below. Here suffice it to say that, when the Council took place, it was already recognized that times were ripe to appoint an American cardinal. In the previous years, President Lincoln himself reportedly “had urged the pope to choose one, believing it would help raise awareness in Europe and Latin America of the growing importance of the United States in world affairs”¹⁵⁹.

In the mid-1860, there was some newspaper speculation about the creation of an American cardinal. Interestingly, McCloskey wrote at this regard to Archbishop Spalding of Baltimore on 25 August 1864:

“[i]s it not provoking to have to endure such ridiculous reports as the one you extracted from the Express and sent to me. I hope we shall have no Cardinal’s hat in this country. We are better without one. I will not answer, however for what may be in store for you. For myself, I have no fears”¹⁶⁰.

However, “those with vision in Rome had realized that the most-cultured, well-spoken, godly American they knew, was John McCloskey”¹⁶¹. He was raised to this rank in the consistory of 15 March 1875¹⁶² and he was appointed a member of the Congregations of Bishops

¹⁵⁵ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 101.

¹⁵⁶ See H. MARRARO, *Canadian and American Zouaves in the Papal Army, 1868-1870*, in *CCHA. Report, 1944-1945*, XII, pp. 83-102.

¹⁵⁷ P.R. D’AGOSTINO, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2004, p. 45.

¹⁵⁸ P. BYRNE, *American Ultramontanism*, in *Theological Studies*, 1995, LVI, p. 305.

¹⁵⁹ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 109.

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in J.M. FARLEY, *The Life*, cit., pp. 275-276.

¹⁶¹ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 109.

¹⁶² In that consistory 11 cardinals were created, including seven from Italy, one from Belgium, one from England, and one from Poland.



and Regulars, of the Index and of Rites¹⁶³.

It is interesting to report what Father Hecker¹⁶⁴ wrote about this achievement, because it makes sense of the perception of the increasing internationalization of the Sacred College. In a letter addressed to newly-created cardinal McCloskey, he stated that

“[t]his elevation to the Cardinalate of an American prelate is a cheering sign that the dignities of the Church are open to men of merit of all nations, and it is to be hoped that every nation will be represented in this College of Cardinals in proportion to its importance and in this way the Holy See will be represented by its eminent advisers in the entire world, and thus render its universality more complete”¹⁶⁵.

Equally interesting is the letter sent by the teacher- and student-body of the American University of Louvain, where it was noted that since the erection of the first diocese in the United States, and in about 50 years only, the number of dioceses had raised to over 60. This success, “on account of our numbers and increasing influence”, had led to hope that the pope “would favor us with a voice in the august senate of the Church”¹⁶⁶. In fact, it was generally recognised that this honor had been conferred to acknowledge the flourishing Catholic Church in the United States and its growing importance within the universal Church¹⁶⁷. This consideration was also made in the aforementioned letter sent by Cardinal Cullen on behalf of the archbishops and bishops of Ireland. “We see the hierarchy of the United States, with the instinctive energy of its nation taking a foremost place amongst the hierarchies of the world”¹⁶⁸.

In another revealing passage of the letter, McCloskey was

¹⁶³ F. JANKOWIAK, *La curie romaine*, cit., p. 466.

¹⁶⁴ Whose name is well known to scholars, because the translation into French of his biography prompted a wide debate among French - and European - Catholics. The effects of this debate in the United States led Leo XIII to address an encyclical, *Testem Benevolentiae* to Gibbons on 2 January 1899, in which the pope condemned some new opinions referred to as ‘Americanism’ (J.T. ELLIS, *American Catholicism*, cit., 120-122; J. HENNESEY, *American Catholics*, cit., passim). The original text in Latin is available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/la/letters/documents/hf_l-xiii_let_18990122_testem-benevolentiae.html.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in J.M. FARLEY, *The Life*, cit., p. 309.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted in J.M. FARLEY, *The Life*, cit., p. 315.

¹⁶⁷ G.P. FOGARTY, J.W. MALONE, *The American Hierarchy: A Retrospect of Two Hundred Years*, in *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 1989, VIII/4, p. 42.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in J.M. FARLEY, *The Life*, cit., p. 328. Gaetano Bedini had already expressed the idea that the United States was the country of the future and could offer much to the Church (G. PIZZORUSSO, M. SANFILIPPO, *Dagli indiani agli emigranti*, cit., p. 42).



congratulated on for being selected by the pontiff “from among the assembled Prelacy of the Catholic world to be his helper and adviser in the government of the Universal Church”¹⁶⁹. This may seem quite an obvious consideration, but it is in fact telling of the awareness that this title was not only honorific, but also implied the exercise of special prerogatives. Nonetheless, McCloskey’s last ten years of life (he died in 1885) were not characterised by a significant role, as a cardinal, in the government of the universal Church; they were rather marked by a retreat from public activities, due mainly to health problems¹⁷⁰.

For the purposes of this essay, a noteworthy act is one - in Farley’s own words - “for which the American Church will ever feel deeply grateful”¹⁷¹. On 29 January 1884 the Italian Court of Cassation confirmed that the Institute of *Propaganda Fide* was an unabolished ecclesiastical body subject to Law of 7 July 1866, according to which property assets of ecclesiastical bodies, which had not been abolished, had to be converted, that is, confiscated. Cardinal McCloskey was among the ecclesiastics who informed the American government of the spoliation of an American property and asked it to use its good offices to save the college¹⁷². On 3 March, he wrote to President Arthur¹⁷³ as a representative of the Catholic episcopate of the United States, to inform him that the American College

“[t]hough technically held by the Propaganda, is virtually American property, as the bishops of the United States have the use of it, in perpetuity, free of cost, and as they have contributed large sums of money”¹⁷⁴ and to “beg [his] Excellency to ask the King of Italy for a

Almost two centuries later, Manlio Graziano has confirmed Bedini’s intuition, pointing out that American cardinals are today the second largest national group within the Sacred College. Further, Catholics’ presence in the country’s political life has dramatically risen. At the time Graziano’s book went to press, over one-third of the members of the United States Congress, the Vice-President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, half of the cabinet, 19 governors, the military leadership, and two-thirds of the members of the Supreme Court of the United States were reportedly Catholic (M. GRAZIANO, *In Rome We Trust. L’ascesa dei cattolici nella vita politica degli Stati Uniti*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2016, pp. 12 and 15).

¹⁶⁹ J.M. FARLEY, *The Life*, cit., p. 327.

¹⁷⁰ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 110.

¹⁷¹ J.M. FARLEY, *McCloskey, John*, cit., p. 488.

¹⁷² J.M. FARLEY, *McCloskey, John*, cit., p. 488; H.A. BRANN, *History of the American College of the Roman Catholic Church of the United States, Rome, Italy*, Benzigr Brothers, New York, 1910, pp. 151-154.

¹⁷³ R.F. McNAMARA, *The American College in Rome 1855-1955*, The Christopher Press, Rochester, 1956, pp. 279-280.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in H.A. BRANN, *History of the American College*, cit., pp. 160-161.



stay of proceedings, at least, in the premises, if it be not possible furthermore to exempt the institution, as virtually American property, from the operation of the law”¹⁷⁵.

On 12 March, Secretary of State Frelinghuysen informed the cardinal that the United States Minister to Italy, Astor, was “doing all possible to prevent sale of College”¹⁷⁶. The latter had been confirmed that the title of the property was vested in the Institute *de Propaganda Fide* and, thus, legally subject to confiscation. However, Archbishop Jacobini of Tyrus, secretary of the Congregation, had told him that the educational institutions of the Roman province were considered to be under the pontiff’s control and exempted from confiscation. Astor thus approached the Italian Minister of foreign affairs, who accepted this argument¹⁷⁷. On 29 March, Frelinghuysen wrote to the cardinal that he had «the honor to say that the following cablegram, dated yesterday, has been received from our minister in Rome, viz., “College exempted from Propaganda sale”»¹⁷⁸.

The subsequent events are more interesting for present purposes, as they refer to one of the few instances when McCloskey - along with James Gibbons, who would be the second American-born cardinal, and other leading American ecclesiastics - acted to obtain from Rome an advantage for the American Church. On 2 April, Gibbons, on behalf of several American bishops, wrote to cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* from 1878 to 1892, to ask that the title of the North American College was conveyed to the four Archbishops of the United States, in order to avoid facing seizure again, should there be a new, less benevolent Italian minister. Cardinal Simeoni replied thanking the American bishops for their role in saving the college, but - as regards their request - such a transfer would “be displeasing to the Holy Father”¹⁷⁹. However, Leo XIII was ready to grant something else, which the American bishops had long wished for, that is, the college’s canonical erection. In the past, there had been many problems preventing this recognition, not last the American Church’s reticence to contribute financially to it, and the college had thus opened as an institute of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*. Its rectors did not have any experience on American missions, and the college acquired a very European orientation; this further estranged the American bishops who regarded the institution as unfit to train clergy for

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in H.A. BRANN, *History of the American College*, cit., pp. 160-161.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in H.A. BRANN, *History of the American College*, cit., p. 183.

¹⁷⁷ R.F. McNAMARA, *The American College in Rome*, cit., pp. 280-281.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted in H.A. BRANN, *History of the American College*, cit., pp. 188-189.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in R.F. McNAMARA, *The American College in Rome*, cit., p. 283.



the American Church's particular needs. In August, the draft of the constitution prepared by the Congregation was submitted, but McCloskey and the other Archbishops were disappointed to find that the Congregation's Secretary remained the rector, and that the college was not granted the same independence as the English, Scots and Irish Colleges. They insisted on their position and they made it clear that the American bishops would have been less interested in the college if it had not been given enough autonomy. Whereas cardinal Simeoni and Archbishop Jacobini supported the continuation of the Congregation's control over the college, Leo XIII finally decided to second the American Archbishops' requests and issued the apostolic brief *Ubi Primum* on 25 October 1884, by virtue of which

“for the greater glory of God, for the increase of Catholic faith, for the honor and benefit of the great Republic of the United States of America, [...], we erect and establish the same College in this beloved City, adorn it with the name and title ‘pontifical’, and give it and bestow upon it all the rights, prerogatives, and privileges proper to such colleges”¹⁸⁰.

6 - The First Vatican Council

Both Paul Cullen and John McCloskey took part in the First Vatican Council (8 December 1869-20 October 1870), a truly ecumenical council, where the New World was represented for the first time¹⁸¹. Although it did not have the same international character as the Second Vatican Council, it still marked a striking difference with the previous ecumenical council, held in Trento, which had been attended exclusively by European Fathers, with a majority coming from Mediterranean countries. Approximately 700 Fathers (over two-thirds of those entitled) attended the First Vatican Council, including 60 Eastern-rite prelates from the Middle East (as a consequence of the creation of several Uniate Churches in the previous two centuries), 121 prelates from the Americas (including 49 from the United States), 41 from Asian missions, 9 from sub-Saharan Africa, and 18 from Oceania (11 of whom were from Australia). However, one-third of the bishops coming from non-European countries were still of European descent; further, with the exception of the Eastern-rite prelates, there was no Asian- or African-

¹⁸⁰ R.F. McNAMARA, *The American College in Rome*, cit., p. 283-286. The text of the pontiff's brief may be found at pp. 793-797.

¹⁸¹ J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 18.



born bishop¹⁸².

Originally, the First Vatican Council was convoked to take a position on modern theories like rationalism, but gradually the question of the declaration of the dogma of papal infallibility came to the foreground¹⁸³. Controversies around the ecumenical council and criticism over the doctrine of papal infallibility have been deeply examined in literature¹⁸⁴, and their detailed exam goes beyond the purposes of this paper¹⁸⁵. As known, the Council and the declaration of papal infallibility have been regarded as the apex of the centralization process carried out by the Roman Curia at least since 1848. The discussion on the new dogma was significant for the redefinition of the balance of power between the pope and the bishops. Apart from theological and historical reasons, anti-infallibilists were concerned by the prospect of an unwarranted expansion of the pontiff's power in the church government at the bishops' expenses¹⁸⁶. According to Gough, papal infallibility meant the Roman Curia's infallibility, because the pontiff did not draft himself dogmatic definitions - as it had happened with the proclamation of the dogma of immaculate

¹⁸² **R. AUBERT**, *Il Concilio Vaticano I (1869-1870)*, in *Storia dei Concili*, ed. by R. Aubert, G. Fedalto, D. Quaglioni, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo, 1995, p. 187.

¹⁸³ **R. AUBERT**, *Vatican I*, Éditions de l'Orante, Paris, 1964, p. 144.

¹⁸⁴ See inter alia **R. AUBERT**, *Vatican I*, cit. Hasler's book (**A.B. HASLER**, *How the Pope Became Infallible: Pius IX and the Politics of Persuasion*, Doubleday, New York, 1981) is an especially harsh treatment of the Council and the declaration of the dogma of papal infallibility, regarded as the product of manipulation, plotting and harassment by a number of bishops and a pope manifesting despotic traits and eccentricities.

¹⁸⁵ The complexity of this debate has been well summarized by Jankowiak. For example, von Döllinger denounced the declaration on papal infallibility as a «sovereign caprice, grounding "the Magna Charta" of ecclesiastical absolutism»; Veuillot linked infallibility and sovereignty, stating that the proclamation of the dogma only aimed at recognizing that the pontiff was the source of any authority, spiritual and temporal; Siegwalt saw the Council as the starting point of the process of "de-temporalisation", by its grounding the Church's jurisdictional power on the doctrinal teaching (**F. JANKOWIAK**, *La curie romaine*, cit, pp. 390-392). Looking at the declaration of papal infallibility from the American perspective, Jelen has stated that the limitation of its scope «to the realm of "faith and morals" constituted a strategic retreat on the part of the Church. By delimiting the boundaries of papal authority, the Vatican ceded some of its prior claims to temporal authority. Nevertheless, the reaffirmation of the Vatican's authority, occurring as it did during the first wave of Catholic immigration to the United States, was a stark reminder of the potential conflict between discipleship and citizenship for newly Americanized Catholics» (**T.G. JELEN**, *The American Church*, cit., p. 75).

¹⁸⁶ **F. JANKOWIAK**, *La curie romaine*, cit., pp. 387-388; **J. HENNESEY**, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 76; **F.J. BOLAND**, *The Attitude*, cit., p. 38.



conception, or the adoption of the *Syllabus errorum*¹⁸⁷.

Approximately 70 Irish-born bishops and 150 of Irish origin attended the Council¹⁸⁸, and they made their voice heard frequently in the course of it¹⁸⁹. They were led by two great ultramontane prelates, Paul Cullen and Archbishop Manning of Westminster¹⁹⁰, although the Irish contingent's position was far from being unanimous¹⁹¹.

Cullen played an important role. He was a member of the *Deputatio pro postulatis*¹⁹² and, with Luigi Bilio (one of the presidents of the Council and chair of the Deputation of Faith) he contributed to the compromise formula on papal infallibility. He further delivered two speeches which were very much praised¹⁹³. Cardinal Moran wrote that his first discourse, on 19 May,

“in defence of the prerogatives of the Holy See, mainly on historical grounds [...] was regarded as one of the ablest discourses delivered in the council. At its close the hall resounded with applause, and during the afternoon about eighty bishops called at the Irish College to present their congratulations. Pius IX in token of appreciation of the singular

¹⁸⁷ See **F. JANKOWIAK**, *La curie romaine*, cit., -p. 393.

¹⁸⁸ **S. GILLEY**, *Catholicism*, cit., p. 250; **P. Mac SUIBHNE**, *Ireland*, cit., p. 212.

¹⁸⁹ **K. WALSH**, *The First Vatican Council*, cit., p. 67.

¹⁹⁰ **R. AUBERT**, *Vatican I*, cit., p. 13.

¹⁹¹ **K. WALSH**, *The First Vatican Council*, cit., p. 67; **P. Mac SUIBHNE**, *Ireland*, cit., p. 216.

¹⁹² **N. TANNER**, *Paul Cullen and the Declaration of Papal Infallibility*, in *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world*, cit., p. 351. It may be useful to summarize the procedure and the work organization at the Council. Before its opening, preliminary commissions, whose members had been appointed by the Holy See, drafted schemata of Constitutions. After the Council was opened, four deputations were elected (respectively on faith; for matters of ecclesiastical discipline; on religious orders; for Eastern Churches and foreign missions), and entrusted with the revision of the schemata. One more commission was elected, *Deputatio pro postulatis*, which received proposals and petitions by the Fathers. Two types of meetings were held: the common ones were general congregations; the solemn ones were public sessions. Schemata were distributed to the Fathers, who discussed them at general congregations. They could submit written observations to the secretary of the Council, who would then forward them to the concerned deputation. Voting took place first on single parts of a schema and on the related proposed amendments. When the final draft of a Constitution was ready, Fathers voted on the schema as a whole. At general congregations, they could cast one of the following votes: *placet* (approval), *placet iuxta modum* (conditional approval), *non placet* (disapproval); in public sessions they could only vote *placet* or *non placet*. See **J. HENNESEY**, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., pp. 33-34 and 79-80.

¹⁹³ **N. TANNER**, *Paul Cullen*, cit., pp. 351-354; **K. WALSH**, *The First Vatican Council*, cit., pp. 65-66; **P. Mac SUIBHNE**, *Ireland*, cit., p. 217; **P. Mac SUIBHNE**, *Ireland at the Vatican Council - II*, cit., pp. 298 and 302-303.



ability of the discourse forwarded to the cardinal a gift of a very fine Carrara marble rilievo representing St. Paul addressing the Areopagus¹⁹⁴.

In his second speech of 18 June, Cullen reportedly said that

“when the pope acts as Vicar of Christ he acts by his own authority given him by Christ, not by the authority of the bishops or the consent of the churches. Christ did not say to Peter, ‘Thou are the Rock’ provided you consult bishops or theologians”¹⁹⁵.

According to Korten, Cullen’s position shared common ideological features with Gregory XVI’s, and “resonated with the ideas found in Cappellari’s *Il trionfo [della Santa Sede]*”¹⁹⁶.

English-speaking bishops were the second largest language groups, after the Italians, but they did not have a common position¹⁹⁷, and neither did the American prelates. Unlike their European colleagues,

“[t]he bishops from the United States were novice here, the council, an introduction to their episcopal function of responsibility for the whole Church. They brought with them as their contribution their own problems and some uniquely American solutions to those problems and to others”¹⁹⁸.

As regards the most controversial issue under discussion, Boland has divided the American Council Fathers into three categories: the anti-infallibilists, who believed that the doctrine of papal infallibility had foundation neither in the Scripture nor in Catholic traditions; the inopportunist, who “believed the dogma but deemed the period of 1870 unfavourable for any public definition”; the infallibilists, who “from the outset held for the definition of the doctrine”¹⁹⁹. The second group included about 13 ecclesiastics, among whom McCloskey was one of the most influential²⁰⁰. James Gibbons, who also attended the Council, wrote:

“I have a most distinct recollection of the attitude of the different prelates in regard to the question of Infallibility, and I recall most distinctly that Archbishop McCloskey was not opposed to the

¹⁹⁴ P.F. MORAN, *Cullen, Paul*, cit., p. 566.

¹⁹⁵ Quoted in E.C. BUTLER, *The Vatican Council 1869-1870*, Collins and Harvill Press, London, 1962, p. 355.

¹⁹⁶ C. KORTEN, *Converging Worlds*, cit., p. 44.

¹⁹⁷ J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., pp. 52 and 55. See also R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., p. 104.

¹⁹⁸ J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 18.

¹⁹⁹ F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude*, cit., p. 35.

²⁰⁰ F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude*, cit., p. 42.



Infallibility itself, but declared himself against the expediency of declaring it an article of faith at that time, an opinion held by many at the Council”²⁰¹.

There were a few reasons behind this position. One was the concern that the pope would end up “ruling each diocese personally with the bishops being relegated to unimportant and menial capacities”²⁰². This, in turn, risked bringing about discord among the bishops and division within the church. With specific regard to the situation of the Catholic Church in the USA, “filled as it was with religious bigots who were constantly picturing the Papacy in an unfavourable manner”²⁰³, it was feared that “a formal declaration might be seized upon as ipso facto evidence of the utterly foreign and antidemocratic nature of Catholicism”²⁰⁴. Would-be converts might have been discouraged by the misunderstanding that the pope had been conferred divinity, whereas anti-Catholic authorities might have used the doctrine as a pretext to persecute the Church and its members²⁰⁵.

Farley was aware that this position might have been misunderstood, and he dealt with this issue in his biography book of McCloskey:

«It has been erroneously stated that Archbishop McCloskey was opposed to Infallibility. Nothing could be further from the truth. [...]. His attitude on this question is clearly set forth in the following extract from a letter to Pius IX:

“Through the grace of God, the Catholics of the United States of North America are one and undivided in an orthodox faith, in an unwavering fidelity to all Catholic doctrines and principles, in an unreserved loyalty and allegiance to the infallible and sovereign authority of the Roman Church, and in ardent final love and devotion to your Holiness. It is our glory and our joy that we are preserved from error and directed in the sure way of temporal and eternal happiness by our subjection to the infallible teaching and supreme authority of the Mother and Mistress of Churches”²⁰⁶.

In fact, on 3 March the *Catholic Telegraph*, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, published a letter signed ‘Viator’, according to whom “Archbishops McCloskey, Purcell, and Kenrick had lost their

²⁰¹ Quoted in J.M. FARLEY, *McCloskey, John*, cit., p. 487.

²⁰² F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude*, cit., p. 42.

²⁰³ F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude*, cit., p. 42.

²⁰⁴ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 109.

²⁰⁵ F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude*, cit., pp. 42-43. See also J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., pp. 84-85.

²⁰⁶ J.M. FARLEY, *McCloskey, John*, cit., p. 487.



chances for a cardinal's hat because of opposition to the 'new dogma'"²⁰⁷. The newspaper later apologized for the untrue information, but it is nonetheless interesting to note that, on the one side, the creation of an American cardinal was already being debated and perceived of as something to happen sometime soon; on the other side, the First Vatican Council was regarded as the ideal context to select such a candidate. Farley reported that it was on the occasion of the Council that McCloskey "made the final impression which resulted in his elevation to the cardinalate"²⁰⁸. According to Marlin and Miner, too, the fact that he finally voted in favor of the declaration of the dogma did not go unnoticed by the pope²⁰⁹.

At the Council, McCloskey was granted a certain visibility by his election as a member of the Deputation for matters of ecclesiastical discipline on 20 December. At the beginning of the works, little was known in Europe about delegations like the American one and their members; the deputation elections allowed to know better at least some of the bishops coming from overseas. The election of the deputation members was preceded by the proposal of lists drafted by groups of Fathers, who had gathered according to their position on specific issues, not last the impending question of papal infallibility. Interestingly, in view of the election of the members of the Deputation for matters of ecclesiastical discipline, McCloskey's name was in the list of both those who were in favor of such a declaration, and those who opposed it, and he was the first for number of votes²¹⁰. At this regard, Aubert, who mentioned McCloskey only once in his study on the First Vatican Council, stressed that the Archbishop of New York was wise and his opinions were much listened to²¹¹.

Few days after the election of the members of the Deputation for matters of ecclesiastical discipline, a group of Fathers drafted a petition to submit to the *Deputatio pro postulatis* for the admission of the issue of papal infallibility to the Council agenda. McCloskey refused to sign it, reportedly because "he had enough to do in defending religion against his enemies, without having to defend it against Catholics also"²¹². Instead, he signed the

²⁰⁷ Quoted in J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., pp. 119-120.

²⁰⁸ J.M. FARLEY, *McCloskey, John*, cit., p. 487.

²⁰⁹ G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 109.

²¹⁰ J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., pp. 48-50; P. Mac SUIBHNE, *Ireland*, cit., p. 216. From the perspective of North-Atlantic Catholic communities, it is interesting to note that "[w]hen the question of the deputations arose, the Irish, the English and the Americans agreed to support each other's candidates" (J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 54).

²¹¹ R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., pp. 201-202.

²¹² Quoted in J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 95.



petition of 15 January to oppose the declaration of the dogma on the grounds that it would result in lack of unity, loss of converts and religious bigotry²¹³.

In the crucial meeting of 9 February, which Cullen attended²¹⁴, the *Deputatio pro postulatis* voted to recommend to the pontiff that the question of papal infallibility should be proposed to the Council. On 1 March the secretary of the Council was notified that Pius IX had given his consent. The related text was drafted as a *caput addendum* to include in the *schema* on the Church, which was being debated²¹⁵, and distributed to the Fathers on the 6th²¹⁶. The deadline to submit any written observations was the 25th of the same month. It was then decided that the additional chapter on infallibility, along with the chapter on the pope's primacy of the *schema* on the Church, should form a separate constitution, which would be called *Pastor Aeternus* and would be divided into four chapters. This text was distributed on 2 May²¹⁷. A number of objections were raised during the debate in the general congregations and some modifications were made. The revised text was distributed on the 9th²¹⁸ and the debate was resumed on the 13th²¹⁹. During this lapse of time, the opponents of the declaration on papal infallibility drafted lists to categorize the Fathers according to their alleged position on this issue, and the first name in the list of the doubtful was McCloskey's, "termed a man of great authority, uncertain about the truth of the question"²²⁰. In fact, after 9 May, only the Fathers who had conscientious scruples or serious intellectual and historical objections continued a genuine opposition, unlike those who supported only inopportunist arguments²²¹.

The final formula on papal infallibility was drafted by theologians Franzelin and Kleutgen, on the basis of an amendment proposed by cardinal Cullen on 18 June upon Bilio's suggestion²²². Proposed and

²¹³ F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude*, cit., p. 43; J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., pp. 100-101.

²¹⁴ G.D. MANZI, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, H. Welter, Arnheim, 1926, LI, p. 687.

²¹⁵ J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., pp. 173-174.

²¹⁶ The text is published in R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., pp. 301.

²¹⁷ J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., pp. 189 and 219-221. The text is published in R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., pp. 302-312.

²¹⁸ The text is published in R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., pp. 302-312.

²¹⁹ J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 225.

²²⁰ Quoted in J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 229.

²²¹ J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 231.

²²² R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., p. 225.



discussed formulas included: “we teach and define as a dogma of faith [...]”; “we teach and define [...]” with the dropping of “as a dogma of faith”; “we teach and define that it is faith [...]”; “we teach and define as true and Catholic [...]”. Cullen’s formula was “dogma revealed by God”²²³. This new formula was the seventh to have been drafted since the additional chapter had been distributed to the Fathers on 6 March. On the one side, it pleased those, like Manning, who could not admit the limitation of the scope of papal infallibility to the sole truth of divine faith (*tenendam* instead of *credendam*); on the other side, it only mentioned *doctrinal* definitions, thus excluding any intervention in civil or politico-religious matters, which governments and liberal Catholics worried about²²⁴.

On 4 July the Fathers agreed to terminate the discussion on the *schema*, which was returned to the Deputation on faith²²⁵, and on the 13, in the 85th general congregation, they voted on the whole *schema*. McCloskey voted *placet juxta modum*²²⁶ on the grounds that the words “anathema sit” at the end of Chapter IV of the Constitution should be dropped. Like others, he asked the restoration of the original clause, according to which those who refused the declaration of papal infallibility would be solemnly admonished because they were deviating from Catholic truth, but not hit by the anathema²²⁷. Later, in the fourth public session on the 18th, McCloskey just voted *placet*²²⁸; at the end of the day, 31 Irish prelates assembled in the Irish college to congratulate cardinal Cullen “on his able and successful vindication, in the Council Hall, of the rights of the Holy See,

²²³ J.A. ALCÁIN, *La tradición*, Publicaciones Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao, 1998, p. 341.

²²⁴ R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., pp. 225-226.

²²⁵ R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., pp. 269-270.

²²⁶ 601 Council Fathers attended the Congregation; 88 voted non placet and 62 placet *juxta modum* (R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., p. 228). Among the American prelates, 18 voted placet, 3 placet *juxta modum*, and 7 non placet (J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 274).

²²⁷ F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude*, cit., p. 44; J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 275. The last sentence of the Constitution reads as follows: «Si quis autem huic Nostrae definitioni contradicere, quod Deus avertat, praesumpserit; anathema sit». The text in Latin is available at <https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-ix/la/documents/constitutio-dogmatica-pastor-aeternus-18-iulii-1870.html>.

²²⁸ F.J. BOLAND, *The Attitude*, cit., p. 45. So did other 24 American prelates; 22 did not attend the session and one, Bishop Fitzgerald of Little Rock, provided one of the only two votes against (J. HENNESEY, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 9). However, there might have been as well a misunderstanding, with Fitzgerald reportedly saying nunc placet, instead of non placet. The other contrary vote was provided by Bishop Riccio of Caiazzo. In all, 535 Council Fathers attended the public session and 532 expressed their placet (R. AUBERT, *Vatican I*, cit., p. 232).



and of the tradition of the Irish Church concerning them, and testified that he had truly represented the faith and feelings of the Irish people"²²⁹.

7 - The 1878 Conclave

Cullen's and McCloskey's positions at the First Vatican Council are telling of the assembly's impact on the definition of the balance of powers between the universal Church (represented by the pontiff but also by the College of cardinals) and particular Churches (like dioceses), and on the related processes of centralization and Romanization. However, there is another assembly whose attendance is one of the most important prerogatives reserved to cardinals, that is, the conclave. Pius IX died on 7 February 1878; Gioacchino Vincenzo Pecci was elected on 20 February after only three ballots and took the name Leo XIII. Because the conclave was so short, neither Cullen nor McCloskey arrived in time to perform this fundamental task.

The 1878 conclave should nonetheless be mentioned for present purposes because scholars have illustrated "the extent to which Cullen's conciliar participation led contemporaries to consider him as a potential papal candidate in the event of Pius IX's death in the early 1870s"²³⁰. For example, Robert von Keudell, Prussia's ambassador to the Kingdom of Italy wrote on 9 October 1875 to the Secretary of State von Bülow that "[i]f the election of a stranger (i.e. a non-Italian) as pope were seriously considered, he would be the candidate of the reactionary cardinals"²³¹. On 31 January 1876, following a discussion with the Italian Minister of foreign affairs, Emilio Visconti Venosta, he further reported that Cullen would not be acceptable to the Italians, because of his excessive reactionarism (and neither would be Manning, whose name was also made). Interestingly, also McCloskey appears to have been mentioned: he was a moderate liberal, but "both parties concluded that America was too strange and remote for an American candidate to be considered seriously"²³².

8 - Appointment and Ecclesiastical Policy of Elzéar-Alexandre

²²⁹ P. Mac SUIBHNE, *Ireland at the Vatican Council - II*, cit., pp. 306-307.

²³⁰ K. WALSH, *The First Vatican Council*, cit., p. 58.

²³¹ K. WALSH, *The First Vatican Council*, cit., p. 59.

²³² K. WALSH, *The First Vatican Council*, cit., pp. 59-60.



Taschereau, the First Canadian-Born Cardinal

On 7 July 1886, Leo XIII created the first Canadian-born cardinal, Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau, and the second American-born cardinal, James Gibbons²³³. In January 1887 they left on the same steamship, *La Bourgogne*, to go to Rome and receive the red hat. They both aimed to take advantage of this occasion to promote their (opposite) point of view on the Knights of Labor²³⁴, the first major labor organization in the United States, originally founded as a secret society. In the 1880s American and Canadian bishops of French origin repeatedly wrote to the Congregation of the Holy Office to denounce trade unions and Irish societies²³⁵. Taschereau, in particular, complained about the *Chevaliers du Travail*, the Quebec branch of the Knights of Labour". On 5 October 1883 he sent the society's statute to the Holy Office to enquire whether it should be forbidden. Almost one year later, in September 1884, cardinal Simeoni forwarded him the answer from the Holy Office, according to which the Knights of Labor ought to be considered among the societies prohibited by the Holy See²³⁶.

American bishops worried about the application of this prohibition in the territory of the United States. On 3 September 1886 Gibbons wrote to cardinal Simeoni that he was afraid of the application of the prohibition to belong to the Knights of Labor; he depicted favourably the activities of the society, and stressed that their only aim was to join their forces in a legal way in order to protect their members from "the tyranny through which several, very rich companies, especially those controlling the railway sector, oppressed poor workers inhumanely"²³⁷. Gibbons noted that, on the one hand, the society was ready to introduce any amendments as deemed opportune by the Church; on the other hand, workers turned spontaneously to the Church to receive advice, and a condemnation would compromise the relations between the Church and the working class, by leading the

²³³ In all 7 cardinals were created, including three from France and two from Italy.

²³⁴ **G. STORTZ**, *The Charitable Endeavors of Archbishop John Joseph Lynch, C.M.*, in *Vincentian Heritage Journal*, 1984, V/2, pp. 100-103.

²³⁵ **M. SANFILIPPO**, *I complicati rapporti fra la Chiesa cattolica statunitense e la Santa Sede, 1880-1918*, in *Gli Stati Uniti e l'Italia alla fine del XIX secolo*, ed. by D. Fiorentino, Gangemi Editore, Roma, 2010, p. 62.

²³⁶ For the text of the communication, in Italian and French, see **H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON**, *Mandements, Lettres pastorales et Circulaires des Évêques de Québec. Nouvelle série. Son Éminence le cardinal Taschereau*. Volume deuxième, Imprimerie générale A. Côté et Cie, Québec, 1890, pp. 446-447.

²³⁷ Quoted in **P. SYLVAIN**, *Les Chevaliers du travail et le Cardinal Taschereau*, in *Relations industrielles/Industrial Relations*, 1973, XXVIII/3, p. 557.



latter to lean towards the agitators who claimed that the Catholic Church sided with the powerful and abandoned the weak. Once in Rome, Gibbons contacted prominent members of the Congregations of the Holy Office and *de Propaganda Fide*, and delivered a long document on this issue to Simeoni, dated 20 February, "which was undoubtedly the most important single factor in the settlement of the case"²³⁸. On 16 August 1887, Leo XIII declared that there was no ground for censure.

I have taken Taschereau's and Gibbon's diverging views on the Knights of Labor as the starting point of my analysis on the first Canadian-born cardinal, because interestingly while liberal Catholics in Europe and in the United States regarded him as reactionary, his opponents in Quebec, intransigent ultramontanes, labeled him as a liberal Catholic²³⁹. Claiming to uphold an unadulterated Roman doctrine, they repeatedly submitted to Rome accusations against Taschereau and requests for investigation²⁴⁰. But Taschereau successfully defended himself and maintained that his adversaries

«self-proclaimed "*Catholics par excellence*," to wit "a certain number of persons who believe themselves the only *Catholics* in the province, who claim to represent *everyone*, who flare up at the slightest word against a priest of their party, but who do not hesitate for a moment to accuse the archbishop and even Propaganda and the Holy Office when they do not share their views"»²⁴¹.

Taschereau's ecclesiastical policy was characterised by the opposition to the most intransigent ultramontanes. He adopted

"a moderate approach to the resolution of the great debates on Catholic liberalism, excessive clerical influence in politics, [...] and church-state relations", and he helped to "avoid confrontation with the state, even as he strengthened [the Catholic Church's] religious vitality and political power"²⁴².

In Canada, ultramontanism took root in the years 1820s-1830s, and became very strong in the 1860s. Nive Voisine has distinguished two groups

²³⁸ H.J. BROWNE, *The Catholic Church and the Knights of Labor*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 1949, p. 239. See also G. GOYAU, *Le Pape, les catholiques et la question sociale*, Perrin et C.ie, Paris, 1893, pp. 47-50.

²³⁹ P. SYLVAIN, *Les Chevaliers du travail*, cit., p. 560.

²⁴⁰ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau*, Elzéar-Alexandre, 1990, at http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/taschereau_elzear_alexandre_12E.html.

²⁴¹ Quoted in N. VOISINE, *Taschereau*, cit.

²⁴² N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, E.-A.*, in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, ed. by J. H. Marsh, McClelland & Stewart Inc., Toronto, 2000, p. 2292.



of ultramontanes: an “extreme” one, led first by Bishop Bourget of Montreal, and later by Bishop Laflèche of *Trois-Rivières*; and a “moderate” one, which included Taschereau. Moderate ultramontanes aimed at behaving prudently and, where necessary, with a compromise, and were denounced as “Catholic liberal” by the intransigent ones²⁴³. For the purposes of this essay, it is useful to describe briefly the group of intransigent ultramontanes, in order to appreciate better not only Taschereau’s ecclesiastical policy, but also the circumstance that the first Canadian-born cardinal - unlike the first Irish-born cardinal - was not chosen from among the most fervent ultramontanes.

Canada’s intransigent ultramontanes fought for “the control of education, the reform of laws in conformity with canon law, and the surveillance of civil legislation by the episcopate”, and promoted, as it will be examined later, a *Progamme Catholique*, “which would guarantee the supremacy of the church in political life”. Bourget, in particular, “led ultramontane ideas to triumph in every field (theology, education, church-state relations, etc) in Montréal and throughout most of Catholic Canada”²⁴⁴. He aligned “his church with Rome on liturgy, theological studies and devotions”²⁴⁵ inter alia by making use of the relics of the saints to develop spirituality, by encouraging conformity to the Roman practices in the observance of the days of fast and abstinence, and in the regular reception of the communion on Sundays and feast days, by promoting novenas and indulgences, and by organising processions and pilgrimages. Bourget had his clergy to wear the Roman collar instead of the French band, and tried to make Montreal a ‘little Rome’ through the building of a cathedral inspired to the design of St Peter’s in Rome, but one fifth of it in size²⁴⁶. He also set up an organizational committee to recruit Canadian Zouaves and send them to Rome to help defend it from Italian troops²⁴⁷.

²⁴³ N. VOISINE, *Ultramontanism*, in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, ed. by J. H. Marsh, McClelland & Stewart Inc., Toronto, 2000, p. 2406.

²⁴⁴ N. VOISINE, *Ultramontanism*, cit., p. 2406.

²⁴⁵ T.A. SMITH, *Catholicism*, in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, ed. by J. H. Marsh, McClelland & Stewart Inc., Toronto, 2000, p. 419.

²⁴⁶ T.J. FAY, *A History of Canadian Catholics. Gallicanism, Romanism and Canadianism*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 2002, pp. 77-78; P. SYLVAIN, *Bourget, Ignace*, 1982, at http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bourget_ignace_11E.html.

²⁴⁷ M. SANFILIPPO, *De Québec à Rome et de Rome à Québec: voyageurs canadiens-français et Italie et voyageurs italiens au Canada français entre la deuxième moitié du XIX^e siècle et le début du XX^e*, in *Constructions identitaires et pratiques sociales. Actes du colloque en hommage à Pierre Savard tenu à l’Université d’Ottawa les 4, 5, 6 octobre 2000*, ed. by J.-P. Wallot, P. Lanthier, H. Watelet, Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, Ottawa, 2002, p. 281. From



“No other Canadian bishop of the time was as attentive to the directives from Rome or as fervent a supporter of the papal cult”²⁴⁸, and newly elected Pius IX reportedly referred to Bourget “as the guiding spirit of the Canadian episcopate”²⁴⁹. Nonetheless, Pius IX, who created the first Irish-born and American-born cardinals, did not choose to make Bourget the first Canadian-born cardinal. Further, in most conflicts between Bourget and Taschereau, Rome (not only during the pontificate of Leo XIII, who raised Taschereau to the rank of cardinal, but also under Pius IX) accepted the arguments advanced by Taschereau and the moderate circle, and rejected the requests of Bourget, Laflèche and the supporters of intransigent ultramontanism.

Taschereau was born on 17 February 1820. After deciding to pursue the ecclesiastical career, he was in Rome in 1837 for a few months. He entered the seminary of Quebec in September 1837 and was ordained priest on 10 September 1842. In the years 1854-1856 he returned to Rome to obtain a doctorate in canon law, and in 1862 he was appointed vicar general by Archbishop Turgeon of Quebec.

Taschereau was again in Rome in 1862 and in 1864 to defend the rights of Laval University, which - as a member of the seminary council - he had contributed to found in 1852, and which he thought was threatened by Bourget’s plan to found a Catholic university in Montreal. In fact, it had been Bourget to suggest in the first place the founding of what would become Laval University. In his mind, however,

“the new university was to be a provincial one for which all the bishops of the ecclesiastical province took responsibility. It was not long, however, before he was forced to sound a different note, since the organization and management of the university were taken over entirely by the seminary and the archbishop of Quebec”²⁵⁰.

Thus, Bourget started envisaging the establishment of another

February 1868 to September 1870, 507 Canadians were recruited for “their moral qualities, because the main goal was to create an elite able to oppose the propagation within Québec of liberal ideas formally condemned by the pope. For this reason, care was also taken to ensure that every parish provided volunteers and financial support. Freedom of speech and conscience, popular sovereignty and the separation of church from state - such were the grand ideals that the Zouaves were to combat” (R. HARDY, *Zouaves*, in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, ed. by J. H. Marsh, McClelland & Stewart Inc., Toronto, p. 2572). See also H. MARRARO, *Canadian and American Zouaves*, cit.

²⁴⁸ P. SYLVAIN, *Bourget, I.*, in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, ed. by J. H. Marsh, McClelland & Stewart Inc., Toronto, p. 286.

²⁴⁹ P. SYLVAIN, *Bourget, Ignace*, cit.

²⁵⁰ P. SYLVAIN, *Bourget, Ignace*, cit.



university in Montreal, which - in Taschereau's own words - "would have no other effect than to ruin the Université Laval"²⁵¹. Both in 1862 and 1864, Bourget was permitted to explain his reasons to the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, which nonetheless had already taken the decision - before hearing him - that there was no need for a second Catholic university²⁵². Bourget had remarked that in the year 1863-1864 only 72 students were registered at Laval University, with very few from Montreal, despite the fact that the city had 530 Catholic students at the university level. Laval's supporters had replied that \$300,000 had already been spent to maintain the university, which would be definitely compromised by the creation of a similar institution in Montreal²⁵³.

The university question went on in the subsequent years. A Catholic university in Montreal was advocated by Laflèche, too, who urged to remove

«Catholic youth from the influence of Protestant, English-speaking universities, the danger presented by the "liberal" education dispensed by the professors at Laval [...]. He did not hesitate to go to Rome several times to [...] press for the founding of a truly Catholic, that is to say ultramontane, university»²⁵⁴.

On 1 February 1865 the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* decided that a branch of Laval University should be created in Montreal; the costs would be paid by Montreal, whereas the university authority would remain at Quebec. Bourget's resignation as bishop, tendered soon after, allowed him not to implement the decree²⁵⁵.

This issue was a very practical one, and Rome's decision was grounded on very pragmatic reasons. However, as regards the ideological

²⁵¹ Quoted in **N. VOISINE**, *Taschereau*, cit.

²⁵² This was a victory, but the issue of the university question continued to be brought up in the subsequent decades. As Voisine wrote: "Each time Taschereau spurred on, coordinated, and directed the defence, in Canada and in Rome. He oversaw the drafting of reports and counter-reports and regularly wrote long letters [...] In Rome he kept up extremely useful friendships with people who defended his interests and informed him of all his adversaries' ploys; Pâquet and Dominique Racine, bishops who had ready access everywhere and experience with the Roman *combinazione*, were sent there as his procurators. In 1872, 1884, and 1887 he himself intervened in Rome with the cardinals and staved off ominous decisions. In Canada he had all the documents from Rome favourable to him published in the newspapers" (**N. VOISINE**, *Taschereau*, cit.).

²⁵³ **P. SYLVAIN**, *Bourget, Ignace*, cit.

²⁵⁴ **N. VOISINE**, *Laflèche, Louis-François*, 1990, at http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/laflèche_louis_francois_12E.html.

²⁵⁵ **P. SYLVAIN**, *Bourget, Ignace*, cit.



divide between moderate and intransigent ultramontanes, it should not be neglected that a “central tenet” of both groups was the “attachment to the person of the pope and belief in the doctrine of his infallibility”²⁵⁶. While Bourget “was one of the earliest and most zealous advocates of the Infallibility, having called upon various other Bishops to get their signatures to the Postulatum or Petition to the Holy Father to have the question introduced before the Council for definition”²⁵⁷, and Laflèche declared that 18 July 1870 was “the finest day” of his life²⁵⁸, it goes without saying that Taschereau was as well «devoted to the Holy See»²⁵⁹. Unlike Bourget and Laflèche, Taschereau was not a Council Father, but he was in Rome as theologian and canonist for Archbishop Baillargeon during the First Vatican Council. By that time, he had acquired a very important role, as he also was superior of the seminary, rector of Laval University, and dean of the faculty of theology²⁶⁰. Taschereau’s role as Archbishop Baillargeon’s adviser in matters concerning theology and canon law suggests that the two men had to share similar ideas. Baillargeon was not a fervent ultramontane, unlike Bourget, who regarded

«Baillargeon’s own judgements “a little too precipitate and somewhat hasty.” These concerned, for example, Roman liturgy: “What a sorry affair their church services are!”; the mentality of the eternal city: “It is indeed at Rome that the law is made; but it is elsewhere that it is observed”; and the policy of the Vatican, which to Baillargeon seemed reactionary because the pope’s reforms were blocked by his entourage»²⁶¹.

Nonetheless, Archbishop Baillargeon would have voted in favour of the dogma of papal infallibility, if the discussion had not lasted longer than anticipated, and he had not had to return to Canada for health problems²⁶².

When it was time to name a new Archbishop of Quebec, Rome designated Taschereau, who was appointed on 24 December 1870 and consecrated on 19 March 1871. His name was the first in the list of three

²⁵⁶ N. VOISINE, *Ultramontanism*, cit., p. 2406.

²⁵⁷ W. CLEOPHAS [W.C. GAYNOR], *Papal Infallibility. Letters of “Cleophas” in Defence of the Vatican Dogma*, J. & A. McMillan, Saint John, 1855, p. 79.

²⁵⁸ N. VOISINE, *Laflèche, Louis-François*, cit.

²⁵⁹ H. TÊTU, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, cit., 1913, XIV, p. 462.

²⁶⁰ H. FISQUET, *Biographies. Portraits et autographes des Pères du Concile premier du Vatican*, Lemerrier et Cie, Paris, 1871, p. 37.

²⁶¹ L. LEMIEUX, *Baillargeon, Charles-François*, 1976, at http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/baillargeon_charles_francois_9E.html.

²⁶² L. LEMIEUX, *Baillargeon, Charles-François*, cit.



names that Baillargeon sent to Rome. He “was well known in political, educational, and ecclesiastical circles” and “[n]one of the episcopate had questioned” his qualities, although his opponents reproached him for «lacking “real energy in circumstances when it had to be displayed”»²⁶³. Taschereau’s appointment should be placed in the context of the peculiar situation in which the archdiocese was.

“Since Joseph-Octave Plessis’s death in 1825 virtually all the archbishops had been kept by age or illness from acting effectively and were forced to rely on coadjutors who, with limited jurisdiction, had scant opportunity to assert their authority. Leadership of the Catholic Church in Canada had thus passed to the bishops of Montreal, Jean-Jacques Lartigue and then Bourget. [...]. The winds of revolt were sweeping through the clergy. [...] some priests took extreme ultramontane positions on controversial questions such as education, the new Civil Code, and liberalism, thus departing from the moderation preached by archdiocesan authorities”²⁶⁴.

In this context, Rome must have regarded Taschereau as more suited to restore calm and order. However, Taschereau got involved in a number of quarrels and controversies with the defenders of intransigent ultramontanism. As reported by Ignazio Persico²⁶⁵ to Rome in 1875, the Church in Quebec was too much involved in political affairs and Taschereau did not manage to put a stop to it. Later, the apostolic delegate George Conroy - in a mission (1877-1878) which will be dealt with below - was shocked by the adversarial attitude of the bishops, whose agents in Rome further acted to defame him. The next apostolic delegate, Henri Smeulders (1883-1884) confirmed that Quebec clergy was contentious, ill-prepared and too concerned with the local political scene, and that Taschereau had not managed well the ecclesiastical province²⁶⁶.

On 3 April 1871, in view of the provincial elections to be held in summer, Taschereau addressed a circular letter to the clergy attaching the French translation of the 9th decree of the 4th provincial council of Quebec, as well as two excerpts of the pastoral letter of the Fathers of the same

²⁶³ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

²⁶⁴ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

²⁶⁵ A Capuchin Father, he was appointed Bishop of Savannah in 1870, but had to resign for health problems. He went to Canada to recover and was transferred to the parish of Saint-Colomban de Sillery.

²⁶⁶ M. SANFILIPPO, *L'affermazione del cattolicesimo nel Nord America. Élite, emigranti e Chiesa cattolica negli Stati Uniti e in Canada, 1750-1920*, Sette Città, Viterbo, 2003, pp. 195, 197 and 200.



council of 14 May 1868, concerning elections and oath²⁶⁷. These documents had to be explained “*avec soin et avec prudence*”²⁶⁸ to the parishioners in view of the elections. In particular, the abovementioned decree committed Pastors to guard the faithful from the corruption, scandals and dangers that may take place at election time; and to instruct them with care about their duties concerning these elections, stressing that the same law recognizing the right to vote to citizens imposed on them a serious duty. Voters were always obliged before God, and in all conscience, to vote for the candidate whom they regarded as truly honest and able to promote the good of religion and of the State. Pastors were required to insist on these matters, without going beyond in ordinary circumstances, and being careful not to do anything without consulting their bishop in particular or extraordinary ones²⁶⁹. As Voisine noted, although the concerned decree did affirm the Church’s right to intervene in the public life, it did so by espousing the moderate ultramontanes’ approach, as approved by the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*²⁷⁰.

By contrast, this moderate approach was not followed by the *Programme catholique*, an intransigent ultramontane manifesto published on 20 April²⁷¹. The initiative was launched by Catholic journalists and former Zouaves, who posed the following question. “What steps should Catholic voters take in the up-coming battle and what should be their policy in choosing between the candidates who will be soliciting their votes?”²⁷²

According to the drafters of the *Programme catholique*, it was

“impossible to deny that politics and religion are closely related, and that the separation of Church and State is an absurd and impious doctrine. This is particularly true in a constitutional regime that, having granted to Parliament all legislative authority, has thus laid in the hands of its members a double-edged weapon with potential terrible effects.

Thus it is necessary that those who exercise the legislative authority

²⁶⁷ Archevêque de Québec, Circular au clergé, 3 avril 1871, in **H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON**, *Mandements*, cit., Volume premier, 1889, pp. 25-33.

²⁶⁸ This expression was repeated twice (**H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON**, *Mandements*. Volume premier, cit., pp. 25 and 26).

²⁶⁹ **H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON**, *Mandements*. Volume premier, cit., p. 28.

²⁷⁰ **N. VOISINE**, *Rome et le Canada*, cit., pp. 501 and 503.

²⁷¹ **T.J. FAY**, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, cit., p. 80.

²⁷² The full text of the *Programme catholique* is available at <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/docs/catholic/text-e.htm>.



be in full agreement with the teachings of the Church.”

Catholic voters had the duty to choose representatives adhering fully and completely to the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning religion, politics, society and economy.

“As a matter of principle, we belong to the Conservative party, that is to say, to the party that has made itself the defender of established authority. [...].

In the political situation of our country, the Conservative party being the only one that offers serious guarantees for religious interests, we regard it a duty to loyally support its leaders.

But this loyal support must be subordinated to the religious interests that we must never lose sight of. Thus, if there are in our laws deficiencies, ambiguities, or other provisions that imperil Catholic interests, we must demand of our candidates a formal undertaking to work at removing these flaws in our legislation”.

This was especially true for laws diminishing the right of the Church, limiting its liberty, hampering its administration, or being interpreted in a hostile way, like the laws on marriage, education, erection of parishes, and registration of the civil status. This situation compelled “Catholic deputies to make the changes and modifications demanded by our Lords the Bishops of the Province in order to bring them into conformity with the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church”.

In order not to leave voters with any doubts, the drafters of the manifesto concluded by offering very practical suggestions.

“1. If the struggle is between two Conservatives, it goes without saying that we will give our support the candidate who will accept the programme we have just traced.

2. If, on the contrary, the contest is between a Conservative of any stripe and a supporter of the liberal school, our active sympathies will be with the former.

3. If the only candidates seeking our votes in a riding are all Liberals or oppositionists, we must support the one who will subscribe to our conditions.

4. Lastly, in the case of a contest between a Conservative rejecting our programme and an oppositionist who supports it, the situation would be more delicate. To vote for the former would be to place ourselves in contradiction to the doctrine we have just defined; to vote for the latter would be to imperil this Conservative party that we wish to see strong. What are we to do faced with these two dangers? We would advise



Catholic voters to abstain”.

Whereas Bourget and Laflèche had blessed this initiative²⁷³ and encouraged its implementation²⁷⁴, Taschereau, who believed that the clergy should distance itself from political disputes²⁷⁵, wrote a circular letter to the clergy on 24 April. He noted that the *Journal des Trois-Rivières* and the *Nouveau Monde* had published a political programme, addressed to the Catholics of the province of Quebec in view of the elections; and that he was not aware of this programme, which he came to know through the press, and which had the serious fault of having been drafted without any participation from the episcopate. He also declared that no member of the clergy of the archdiocese would be authorised to overcome the limits set at the 4th council of Quebec, as reminded in his circular letter to the clergy of 3 April²⁷⁶.

“Unlike the ultramontanists, whom they derisively labelled the *ultramontés* (the ultra-agitated), Taschereau and his supporters did not see liberalism as a threat and were unwilling to apply to the Liberal party the condemnations of Catholic liberalism emanating from Rome”²⁷⁷.

The split within the episcopate was brought into the open and prompted a series of submissions to Rome. In 1873 Laflèche, while in Rome, asked whether the *Programme catholique*, disowned by Taschereau upon some politicians’ pressure, could be nonetheless approved and promoted in order to guarantee a truly Catholic representation. The answer, signed by three canonists, was positive: although the text had not been expressly recognised by the ecclesiastical authority, it merely reiterated the position adopted by virtue of the 9th decree of the 4th provincial council. However, when this answer was made public by Laflèche, it was Taschereau’s turn to apply to Rome. On 4 August 1874, cardinal Patrizi, secretary of the Congregation of the Holy Office, replied. In the first place, he blamed the division within the episcopate, for which he considered Taschereau partly responsible. In the second place, he imposed silence on the bishops concerning the *Programme catholique* and any related question: nothing had

²⁷³ N. VOISINE, *Rome et le Canada*, cit., p. 503.

²⁷⁴ T.J. FAY, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, cit., p. 81.

²⁷⁵ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

²⁷⁶ Archevêque de Québec, Circular au clergé, 24 avril 1871, in H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON, *Mandements*, Volume premier, cit., p. 37.

²⁷⁷ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.



to be published which revealed diverging views within the episcopate²⁷⁸. A short-lived convergence between Taschereau and the intransigent ultramontanes took place when Bishop Langevin and his brother Hector-Louis were involved in lawsuits for undue influence in the elections in Bonaventure and Charlevoix. Bourget promoted the elaboration of a pastoral letter to be issued by the bishops of the ecclesiastical province²⁷⁹, thus including Taschereau²⁸⁰. After stressing not only the independence of the Church from the civil society, but also its superiority, and after mentioning the pope's doctrinal infallibility, the letter stated:

"Catholic liberalism - Pius IX said - is the fiercest and most dangerous enemy of the divine constitution of the Church. Similar to the snake that insinuated itself into the earthly paradise to tempt and have humans lost, it shows to Adam's children the deceiving lure of a certain freedom; a certain science of the good and the evil; freedom and science leading to death. [...].

The supporters of this subtle error focus all their efforts to break the bonds uniting the people to the Bishops and the Bishops to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. [...] they favour the most perverted doctrines, which Pius IX has so well described by defining them a fanciful conciliation of truth with error"²⁸¹.

According to the pastoral letter, Catholic liberals had to feel reassured by the fact they still had some Catholic principles and practices, and their blindness, preventing them from seeing the abyss dug in their heart by the error, which devoured it silently, was perhaps sincere. Nonetheless, having five apostolic briefs denounced Catholic liberalism "as absolutely incompatible with the doctrine of the Church, although it has not been yet formally condemned as heretical, it can no longer be permitted in conscience to be a Catholic liberal"²⁸².

The bishops were not unaware of the advantages of the constitutional regime considered in itself and of the usefulness of the parties' distinctions; but they deplored and condemned the abuses thereof, and the prevalence of the interests of one party over the common good. As to the role of the clergy in politics, it was a monstrous error to state that

²⁷⁸ N. VOISINE, *Rome et le Canada*, cit., pp. 503-504.

²⁷⁹ T.J. FAY, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, cit., p. 81.

²⁸⁰ Lettre pastorale des évêques de la province ecclésiastique de Québec, 22 septembre 1875, in H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON, *Mandements*. Volume premier, cit., pp. 320-336.

²⁸¹ H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON, *Mandements*. Volume premier, cit., pp. 323-324. The English translation is mine.

²⁸² Quoted in H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON, *Mandements*. Volume premier, cit., p. 324.



religion had nothing to do with politics, that religious principles should not be taken into account in the discussion of public affairs, that the clergy had no other functions than looking after the Church and the sacristy, and that people had to be morally independent in politics.

“Thus, the greatest enemies of the people are those who want to banish religion from politics; for, under the excuse of freeing the people from what they call *the priests’ tyranny, the priests’ undue influence*, they prepare for this same people the heaviest and most difficult chains to get rid of; they place force above right and take from the civil power the only moral obstacle able to prevent degeneration into despotism and tyranny!”²⁸³

A less intransigent stance seemed to be revealed by the bishops’ acknowledgment that the fact that a priest exercised all of the citizen’s rights was not always expedient; it may even have inconveniences and dangers. But this statement was not meant to ground a compromise; it was rather meant to reaffirm even more vehemently that the clergy could, and indeed should, intervene in the name of religion in those issues affecting the souls’ spiritual interests, “either because they concerned faith or morals, or because they affected the Church’s freedom, independence or existence, even in the temporal realm”²⁸⁴.

Thus - the pastoral letter concluded - when a candidate, or even a party, proved to be hostile to the Church or to threaten the Church’s interests, the priest and the bishop could and should, in all conscience, raise his voice to warn against liberalism, which adorned itself with the beautiful name of “Catholic”, in order to better pursue its criminal actions.

The letter of 22 September 1875 “was the strongest condemnation of Catholic liberalism to have been published in Canada thus far”²⁸⁵, and was used by the Conservative Party as a weapon against the Liberals²⁸⁶. However, after a few months, with the province in an uproar and the intransigent ultramontanes ardently taking a political stance, Taschereau’s entourage made him “come to realize the ambiguous nature of the September 1875 letter and the risk of its precipitating a confrontation with

²⁸³ Quoted in H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON, *Mandements*. Volume premier, cit., p. 326.

²⁸⁴ Quoted in Quoted in H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON, *Mandements*. Volume premier, cit., p. 328.

²⁸⁵ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

²⁸⁶ P. SYLVAIN, *Bourget, Ignace*, cit.



the Protestant majority in Canada”²⁸⁷.

On 25 May 1876, Taschereau issued a pastoral letter to the secular and regular clergy and to all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Quebec²⁸⁸, in order to remind their obligations of conscience on the occasion of the elections. He made no mention of the dangers posed by Catholic liberalism, and he rather stressed that he did not mean to tell them to vote for a certain party, or candidate, or for another one. It would have been very good if all voters, without distinction of political parties, had gathered to have a Mass celebrated to express the wish that the elections would bring the greatest spiritual and temporal good. Despite being divided on political matters concerning merely temporal interests, true Catholics had to remain united through the same faith on matters concerning religion. Taschereau concluded by inviting everybody to behave in a prudent, moderate and sober way.

The letter, which put the Conservatives and the Liberals on the same footing, was perceived by all suffragans, with no exception as “a slap in the face, because they thought it contested or in thinly veiled terms disapproved of the letter of September 1875”²⁸⁹. Thus, Laflèche went to Rome on behalf of all the bishops (except Taschereau) to defend the pastoral letter, to complain about the Archbishop and to justify the clergy accused of unduly interfering in political matters: in the suffragans’ view, intervention had been legitimate, because the Liberal party was a threat to the Catholic religion. On 18 September 1876, Pius IX issued an apostolic brief that praised the episcopate for teaching the right doctrine to the people and for warning it against the errors of the liberalism called ‘Catholic’. At the same time, the pope insisted on the need that each of the bishop said and taught exactly the same²⁹⁰.

However, this did not bring unity and concord. In order to put an end to the “suffragans’ revolt” and to “impose unity upon the bishops and silence upon the clergy in political matters”²⁹¹, in 1877, Rome sent an apostolic delegate, Bishop Conroy of Ardagh. He was one of cardinal Cullen’s most trusted men, and - according to Sanfilippo - his designation was indicative of the Holy See’s inclusion of Canada in that North Atlantic

²⁸⁷ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

²⁸⁸ Mandement du Monseigneur E.-A. Taschereau, Archevêque de Québec, sur les devoirs des électeurs pendant les élections, 25 mai 1876, in H. TÊTU, C.-O. GAGNON, *Mandements*. Volume premier, cit., pp. 403-414.

²⁸⁹ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

²⁹⁰ N. VOISINE, *Rome et le Canada*, cit., pp. 507-508.

²⁹¹ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.



Catholic world, which so far had had its pillars in Ireland and in the United States²⁹². For the purposes of this paper, the role of apostolic delegates' missions as 'agents of Romanization' is not irrelevant. On the one side, they were an important instrument to promote unity in an increasingly diverse Church. On the other side, they were an expression of the sovereignty of the Catholic Church, at a time when the pope had lost his temporal power and had to adjust the idea of the universal Church to the new reality²⁹³.

Conroy had to deal with a number of issues, including the abovementioned controversy over Laval University. In the second half of the 19th century, Canadian bishops increasingly tended to submit to the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* all sorts of problems, big and small, and to make it the arbiter of their different points of view²⁹⁴. Conroy was thus sent to settle them. As regards the issue of the clergy's involvement in politics, there was a basic misunderstanding about his mission. Whereas the bishops thought that the apostolic delegate's tasks were the request for and the collection of information, in order to provide the Congregation with the elements to make an informed decision, Conroy's purpose was in fact to have them accept what Rome had already decided. The directives Conroy had received from Rome were clear: the Congregation blamed the division within the episcopate and the clergy's excessive interference in political matters; the position adopted in the 1868 provincial council had to be respected and, consequently, silence had to be imposed; the Church condemned liberalism but did not mean to target any of the parties called liberal, because the censure referred to errors contradicting the Catholic doctrine, as well as to Catholic liberals and to their principles, but not to a specific party²⁹⁵.

These directives were translated into two documents that Conroy asked Taschereau and Laflèche to draft: respectively, a circular letter to the clergy, and a pastoral letter. Although these documents complied with

²⁹² M. SANFILIPPO, *L'affermazione del cattolicesimo*, cit., p. 197.

²⁹³ See F. JANKOWIAK, *La curie romaine*, cit., p. 467. As this scholar has pointed out that, under Leo XIII, some important religious meetings (for example, the 3rd plenary council of Baltimore in 1884) were chaired by a pontifical legate, who had to ensure the respect of Rome's honorific prerogatives, which were a manifestation of sovereignty.

²⁹⁴ For a description of the general context of the correspondence with Rome, see M. SANFILIPPO, *Écrire à Rome: la correspondance entre les francophones de l'Amérique du Nord et les représentants du Vatican (1850-1914)*, in *Envoyer et recevoir. Lettres et correspondances dans les diasporas francophones*, ed. by Y. Frenette, M. Martel, J. Willis, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec, 2006, pp. 227-247.

²⁹⁵ N. VOISINE, *Rome et le Canada*, cit., pp. 500-510.



Rome's directives²⁹⁶, the statement that Rome's condemnation of liberalism did not apply to the Liberal Party and the order that the clergy should «take the course of “discreet reserve” and “great prudence” [...] signalled victory for Taschereau's moderate line»²⁹⁷. Bourget tendered his resignation as a bishop to «quell the storm. Such was his wish when on 28 April 1876 he asked cardinal Franchi, Prefect of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* from 1874 to 1878, “to persuade the Holy Father, by accepting my resignation, that I be cast into the sea, so that perfect calm might be restored.”»²⁹⁸.

Taschereau not only entered into conflict with the intransigent ultramontanes - whose “extremism [...] offended his innate realism”²⁹⁹ - on nearly all the political issues of the 1870s and 1880s, but he also found the same adversaries in ecclesiastical matters³⁰⁰. This was the case of the controversy over the division of the diocese of Trois-Rivières and the creation of a new diocese (Nicolet), which Bishop Leflèche naturally opposed. At the beginning, he obtained a favorable decision: Conroy, whose mandate included the settlement of this issue, decided to leave the diocese of Trois-Rivières intact³⁰¹. Taschereau had sided with the supporters of the creation of the diocese of Nicolet, but initially he did not exert any special pressures on Rome. With the passing of time, things changed. Taschereau continued experiencing the opposition of Laflèche on a number of issues (among them, as mentioned, Laval University and the undue spiritual influence in political matters), while within his entourage Bishops Antoine and Dominique Racine suggested that Laflèche's resignation should be obtained. But with the Bishop of Trois-Rivières remaining firmly in his office, his opponents had to think that the best way to subdue the leader of the intransigent ultramontanes was the dismemberment of his diocese and the appointment of a bishop at Nicolet able to counteract his influence: “either consciously or not”, Taschereau embraced enthusiastically this view³⁰². Thus, since 1882, he started leading the movement in favour of the creation of the diocese of Nicolet, *inter alia* writing regularly letters to the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*. When another apostolic delegate, Henri Smeulders, gave a negative response,

²⁹⁶ N. VOISINE, *Rome et le Canada*, cit., p. 515.

²⁹⁷ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

²⁹⁸ Quoted in P. SYLVAIN, *Bourget, Ignace*, cit.

²⁹⁹ P. SYLVAIN, *Bourget, Ignace*, cit.

³⁰⁰ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

³⁰¹ N. VOISINE, *Rome et le Canada*, cit., pp. 510 and 517.

³⁰² N. VOISINE, *Monseigneur Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau et la création du diocèse de Nicolet*, in *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 1985, XXXIII/hors série, pp. 44 and 50.



Taschereau “did not hesitate to go to Rome, bring pressure to bear on Propaganda, and extract a final, favourable decision. He even used his authority as metropolitan to prevent Laflèche from making a similar trip”³⁰³. Finally, the diocese of Nicolet was erected by Leo XIII on 10 July 1885³⁰⁴.

In 1886, Taschereau was created cardinal, as it

“had long been desired and had been requested for at least two years by several bishops, François Langelier (the Liberal mayor of Quebec), Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau (an avowed opponent of the ultramontanes), Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald (a Protestant and a freemason!), and Governor General Lord Lansdowne (who was even prepared to get Queen Victoria to intervene). The appointment of the first Canadian cardinal was finally secured through the diplomatic skills of Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain, as well as of his friends Cyrille-Étienne Légaré, Charles-Octave Gagnon, and their acquaintances in Rome”³⁰⁵.

This promotion gave Taschereau unparalleled prestige in the entire country but, because of his poor health, it was in the end “more the crowning of his career than a spring-board for new undertakings”³⁰⁶. In 1891 a coadjutor was named, Louis-Nazaire Bégin, who would succeed Taschereau on his death on 12 April 1898, and who would be created

³⁰³ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

³⁰⁴ Laflèche did not bring papal authority into question and «asked the people of his diocese to be “completely submissive and obedient in every respect to the papal ruling.” He nonetheless proved a tough negotiator when the time came to divide debts and revenues with Nicolet. In 1888, when Rome decided on this issue, again Laflèche submitted, but he declared himself to be “in no way” surrendering “any of the rights that my diocese may still have in this matter or in that of its territory.” It came as no surprise therefore that until his death he made efforts to recover the south shore or replace it with parts of the dioceses of Quebec and Montreal. Feebly backed by his colleagues, even those who thought that the situation in the diocese of Trois-Rivières had to be improved, Laflèche regularly met with refusal from Rome» (N. VOISINE, *Laflèche, Louis-François*, cit.).

³⁰⁵ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit. See also D.C. LYNE, *Sir John A. Macdonald*, cit. At the request of Macdonald, the influence of cardinal Manning was used to secure Taschereau’s rise to the rank of cardinal. Interestingly, Cardinal Manning was equally ready to “to aid Gibbons in his defense of a society which the Canadian cardinal regarded as a menace to Catholic life among the factory operatives of Montreal” (D.J. MCDUGALL, *Cardinal Manning and the Social Problem*, in *CCHA Report*, 1957/XXIV, p. 59. See also G. GOYAU, *Le Pape*, cit., p. 50).

³⁰⁶ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.



cardinal by Pius X in 1914³⁰⁷.

9 - Final Remarks

Cullen died shortly after the 1878 conclave, on 24 October. Larkin, reporting an obituary published in *The Times* and commenting the portrait made of the cardinal, has asked “in what [...] *pace* the editor of the *Times*, does a great ultramontane consist besides being a fanatical and narrow-minded ascetic of mediocre talents and questionable patriotic credentials?”³⁰⁸.

The least that can be said is that Rome was everything to Cullen³⁰⁹ and that he shared Pius IX’s vision of the Church and of Catholicism - a vision which, as Duffy as pointed out, was a new one.

“If Paul Cullen has a fair claim to be considered the father of modern Irish Catholicism, Pius IX, the pope he served so ardently for thirty years, has an even clearer claim to have begotten the modern papacy, and with it, modern Roman Catholicism. Both men were examples of a kind of bishops new in the nineteenth century, men with a new vision of Catholicism. These ultramontanists saw the church as a monolithic and solitary beacon in a dark and ever-darkening world. It was an institution in which obedience was prized above all virtues and which insisted that its children - a telling epithet for adult believers - must march in step to the beat of the Vatican drum”³¹⁰.

At a time when the pope lost his temporal power, but Catholicism was expanding as the Church in the mission lands became more and more structured and organized, centralization was the strategy to promote unity³¹¹. This process was not a unidirectional one: it did not consist in a

³⁰⁷ Consistory of 25 May 1914, where 13 cardinals were created, including 5 from Italy, 2 respectively from Germany and Austria-Hungary, one from France, Spain and England.

³⁰⁸ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 15. For a general treatment of historiography on Cullen, see C. BARR, ‘*An Ambiguous Awe*’, cit.

³⁰⁹ O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Ultramontane Spirituality*, cit., p. 77.

³¹⁰ E. DUFFY, *The Age of Pio Nono*, cit., p. 47.

³¹¹ It should be noted that this issue was raised in the First Vatican Council not only concerning the declaration of papal infallibility, but also about the need to promote a reformation iuris. Whereas some prelates suggested the revision of the *Corpus iuris canonici* or a new collection, others supported codification, that is, the elaboration of a code in the modern sense. The latter was justified by the need to guarantee legal certainty on the basis of a written law, able to ensure unity of discipline within the entire Church. Whereas some infallibilists seemed to put forward such a proposal within a project of centralization aiming to enhance the pontiff’s power and to reduce bishops’ legislative autonomy, also anti-infallibilists favoured codification in order to provide protection from the Holy See’s



flow of orders issued from Rome to Cullen, who indeed used repeatedly his contacts and influence to promote the interests of the Irish Church and, more generally, of any Church where the Irish diaspora was relevant. The development of a Romanised hierarchy was “greatly reinforced when both Cullen and the Irish bishops successfully invoked the appellate jurisdiction of Rome in resolving the problems raised by the government and legislation in the Irish Church”³¹².

In Cullen’s view, the fostering of such interests coincided with the universal church’s concerns, as expressed by a pontiff who, in 1870, was declared infallible. The link between unity and infallibility may be further exemplified by Cullen’s reaction to the resistance manifested to the declaration of the dogma by the bishops of the Uniate churches in the First Vatican Council. According to him, even though “all the oriental Christians were to apostatize, their numerical loss would not be great”³¹³. The achievement of unity was a constant of Cullen’s ecclesiastical policy, but this objective could be only accomplished through the recognition of papal infallibility. Uniate Churches had a negligible number of members and, if they dissented on this fundamental tenet, then the (universal) Church “would be stronger without them: infallibility, not universality, had become for Cullen the only acceptable badge of a believing Catholic”³¹⁴. As pointed out above, the Church’s internationalization should not be confused with universalization, and, in this sense, Cullen was a true agent of Romanization. He “was a Roman *pur sang*. Rome and its pope were absolutely necessary for his psychological well-being”³¹⁵.

At the same time, it should be agreed with Larkin that obituaries like those mentioned above do not do full justice to Cullen’s ecclesiastical policy³¹⁶. Narratives only based on Cullen’s commitment to ultramontanism do not “explain why the Irish people *as a people* were also willing to make such psychological commitment”³¹⁷. It has been argued that

growing powers. As pointed out by Feliciani, the codification proposals originated non to so much from a desire for centralization, as from the need to guarantee a greater uniformity of the Church’s law, which implied on the one hand a limitation of disciplinary pluralism and, on the other hand, a prevalence of the unity of the universal Church over the diversity of the particular Churches (G. FELICIANI, *Le basi del diritto canonico*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2002, pp. 15-16).

³¹² E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 16.

³¹³ Quoted in E. DUFFY, *The Age of Pio Nono*, cit., p. 59.

³¹⁴ E. DUFFY, *The Age of Pio Nono*, cit., pp. 59-60

³¹⁵ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 32.

³¹⁶ See also O.P. RAFFERTY, *The Ultramontane Spirituality*, cit., p. 77.

³¹⁷ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 32.



the Irish Catholics had gradually lost their language, culture and way of life, and had been progressively “Anglicized, or perhaps, more appropriately, West Britonized”³¹⁸. Ultramontanism assured them

“that they would never be absorbed or assimilated by the greater English culture because the historical identity of that English culture was itself profoundly rooted in its Protestantism and could not, therefore, without becoming something other than it was, accommodate an ultramontane and Tridentine Irish Catholicism”³¹⁹.

Further, according to Coll, the Church that emerged at the time of Cullen, despite its undeniable paternalism, was

“an antidote to the poverty and misery which had been the lot of the vast majority of the population in the mid-nineteenth century. It provided a foundation which helped to lift a demoralized people to some level of self-respect and self-discipline”³²⁰.

It may thus be concluded that “Cullen was successful because he cut with the grain of Irish history rather than against it, and also because the Irish people eventually found his ultramontanism as congenial and agreeable in meeting their needs as he did”³²¹.

McCloskey was quite a different type of ecclesiastic. He certainly possessed that ‘Roman spirit’ which had made him a candidate to the cardinalate and, according to some speculations in diplomatic circles, also worthy of consideration - at least in abstract terms - for the pontiff’s throne. If we understand Romanization as the promotion of unity and pursuit of the episcopate’s concord within an expanding Church led by an infallible pontiff, then McCloskey undoubtedly contributed to this process. However, it may not be said that he Romanized the American Church in the way Cullen aligned the Irish Church - and the diasporic Irish communities - to Pius IX’s vision from the ideological, political, and pastoral perspective. Neither did he make repeated use of his contacts in Rome to give a specific orientation to his ecclesiastical policy or to thwart rivals, although there

³¹⁸ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 32.

³¹⁹ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 33.

³²⁰ N. COLL, *After the Wake*, cit., pp. 98-99.

³²¹ E. LARKIN, *Paul Cullen*, cit., p. 21. This view is not unanimously accepted. According to Hoban, MacHale - one of Cullen’s major opponents, who “distrusted Cullen’s Romanisation policy and seemed more at ease with a Gaelic, pre-Tridentine, folk religion” - “understood, in a way Cullen did not, the depth and resilience of a form of popular folk religion, which had thrived over the centuries - and, to some degree, continues to survive, despite the best clerical efforts to institutionalise it - a religion of the people rather than of the institution” (B. HOBAN, *A Time for Courage*, cit., p. 342).



have been episodes - like the recognition of the pontifical status to the North American College - where he acted along with other leading figures of the American hierarchy (including the second American-born cardinal James Gibbons) to secure a benefit for the American Catholic Church.

The creation of the first American-born cardinal was Pius IX's recognition that the American Church had acquired the same dignity as other 'national' Churches which had historically made the bulk of Catholicism; but McCloskey's rise to the purple was not a proper confirmation of his primacy within the American Catholic Church. At this regard, leadership is perhaps the most striking difference between Cullen and McCloskey.

One factor explaining this difference may be ecclesiastical hierarchy: Cullen was first Archbishop of Armagh, that is, Primate of all Ireland, and then Archbishop of Dublin, that is, Primate of Ireland. In the United States, no Archdiocese was granted the title of primatial see, but in the 9th provincial council of Baltimore of 1858 the episcopate wrote a petition to the Holy See for the recognition of certain honorary privileges to the Archbishop of Baltimore, having the diocese of Baltimore been the first diocese erected in the country. The Holy See thus granted him

“as ruler of the mother-church of the United States, an honorary pre-eminence, to consist in his taking precedence of any other archbishop in the country, without regard to promotion or consecration, and in his having the place of honour in all councils and conventions”³²².

However, even Archbishop Spalding of Baltimore, as revealed by the events of the First Vatican Council, “could not be considered the leader of the American Church as was John Carroll [the first American Bishop] before him or James Gibbons after him”³²³. During McCloskey's life Catholicism grew in the United States in a way probably unparalleled elsewhere: in 1829 there were one Archdiocese and 4 dioceses in the country; in 1884 there were 14 archbishops and 61 bishops. By way of comparison, in 1875 in Ireland there were 2 archbishops and 25 bishops³²⁴. These numbers may contribute to explain why it would have been difficult for any ecclesiastic in the United States (and not only for McCloskey) to assume such an overwhelming role within the episcopate, as Cullen did in Ireland. In fact, even for Cullen, the number of Irish bishops sometimes proved challenging:

³²² **W.H.W. FANNING**, *Baltimore, Provincial Councils of*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, cit., 1907, II, p. 241. See also **W.T. RUSSELL**, *Baltimore, Archdiocese of*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, cit., 1907, II, p. 233.

³²³ **J. HENNESEY**, *The First Council of the Vatican*, cit., p. 328.

³²⁴ **J.M. FARLEY**, *The Life of John Cardinal McCloskey*, cit., pp. 1 and 328.



in a letter of 29 March 1864 to Kirby, he wrote that “where you have 4 Archb[s] and 24 Bishops, you cannot get them to work harmoniously”³²⁵.

Another reason may be simply related to a different personal attitude, character and style of government, which did not make McCloskey take a role - and even less a leading one - in controversies³²⁶. This was the case of the school controversy, which divided the American hierarchy between Bishop McQuaid of Rochester advocating the spread of Catholic schools, and Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul regretting the need to create separate, denominational schools; and which prompted the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* to issue an instruction on Catholic children attending American public schools on 24 November 1875³²⁷. This trait of McCloskey’s character was confirmed by those who knew him. Gibbons, when comparing the Archbishop of New York with his predecessor John Hughes, wrote:

“McCloskey, meek, gentle, retiring from the world, reminds us of Moses with uplifted hands, praying on the mountain. Hughes, active, bold, vigorous, aggressive, was like Josue fighting in the valley, armed with the Christian panoply of faith, truth and justice”³²⁸.

Also for his biographer Farley, it was natural

“to look for the record of John McCloskey’s deeds within the silent enclosure of the Fold, within that sphere where the history of the growth of faith and religion can be seen, rather than in the larger world of men and politics”³²⁹.

Finally, Taschereau’s rise to the purple should be in the first place related to the acknowledgment of the growing importance of the Catholic Church in Canada. This recognition has occurred later than it did in Ireland and the United States, although - even during Pius IX’s pontificate - there was certainly no lack of candidates ideologically aligned with the pontiff. However, as the case of Bourget proved, an ardent devotion to the pope, the condemnation of liberalism and the implementation of a devotional revolution did not prove to be sufficient credentials. Indeed, the possession of the ‘Roman spirit’ implied the recognition that unity within the Church

³²⁵ Quoted in E. LARKIN, *The Consolidation*, cit., p. 136.

³²⁶ According to Marlin and Miner, this may be one of the reasons explaining historians’ relative lack of interest (G.J. MARLIN, B. MINER, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, cit., p. 83).

³²⁷ K. McKENNA, *Roman Intervention in the 19th Century Catholic School Controversy in the United States*, in *Studia canonica*, 2007, XLI/2, pp. 473-492.

³²⁸ J. GIBBONS, *A Retrospect of Fifty Years*. Volume II, John Murphy Company, Baltimore, 1916, pp. 37-38.

³²⁹ J.M. FARLEY, *The Life of John Cardinal McCloskey*, cit., p. 150.



was the first and foremost aim to pursue constantly.

At this regard, although Taschereau had its share of responsibility in keeping the episcopate divided (for example on the issues of Laval University, the clergy's involvement in politics and the creation of the diocese of Nicolet), he nonetheless called for the respect of directives, which were consistent with Rome's instructions: the clergy's excessive interference in political matters was not acceptable; liberalism, but not the Liberal Party, was to be condemned; silence had to be imposed on bishops in matters where diverging views existed within the episcopate. Rome must have further appreciated Taschereau's policy in Church-State relations, marked by his abstention from any adversarial attitude towards civil authorities and political parties. According to Sylvain, Bourget has been

“one of the great architects of the province of Quebec” and it “is impossible to think of [him] as other than a man of the church, but it was an authoritarian, uncompromising, intolerant church, in short the church of the last phase of the pontificate of Pius IX, whose anathema against the modern world in the end confined Roman Catholics as a body to a kind of ghetto”³³⁰.

In the specific Canadian context, where the ultramontane forces called for the supremacy of the church in political life, not only Leo XIII, but also Pius IX before him must have believed that the interests of the Catholic Church in Canada would be better served by Taschereau's ecclesiastical policy, characterized by a “sense of realism and moderation” and able to “to defuse a number of latent conflicts between church and state”³³¹.

With the passing of time, and with Leo XIII's succession to the pontifical throne, “the seeds of a more open spirituality began to sprout and flower”, and the universal Church's orientation “shifted from blessing ultramontane spirituality to blessing new openness within the church”: in 1886, Rome confirmed the “more open direction for the Canadian Catholics by making Taschereau the first Canadian cardinal”³³².

³³⁰ P. SYLVAIN, *Bourget, Ignace*, cit.

³³¹ N. VOISINE, *Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre*, cit.

³³² T.J. FAY, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, cit., p. 327.