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# An Analysis of the Portrayal of Catholicism on Prime-Time Network Entertainment Television, 1950-1980

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An Analysis of the Portrayal of Catholicism on Prime-Time Network Entertainment Television, 1950-1980

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Representations in popular culture entertainment both reflect popular thought about various subjects, and simultaneously influence perceptions of those same subjects. This dissertation proposes a twofold thesis: firstly, that the representation of the Catholic priest in American popular culture – particularly film and prime-time broadcast network entertainment television – was shaped by various real-life individual priests; and secondly, that such representations fell into a number of identifiable and frequently repeated tropes, which themselves served to influence later representations.

With the rise of mass popular culture in the 1920s (largely originated by the increasing influence of film and the rapid and widespread adoption of radio broadcasting), the image of the Catholic priest in America shifted from that of the effeminate, licentious, and sexually depraved predator which was widespread during the nation's era of domination by traditionally anti-Catholic Protestants to that of the "heroic priest": a tough, dynamic, manly individual dedicated to social reform, particularly involving battles against entrenched civic corruption and crime. The major model for the "heroic priest" was the famed "radio priest," Father Charles Coughlin, who in the early years of his fame was a far more populist and reform-minded individual than he was to become subsequently. Several other real-life priests, such as Boys Town founder Father Edward Flanagan and World War I chaplain Father Duffy also contributed to the image of the "heroic priest," which was reflected in such films as *Angels with Dirty Faces, Boys Town*, and

others. Post-World War II, the image of the "heroic priest" acquired a heavily anti-Communist cast, influenced by such real-life resistance to tyranny as that offered by Hungarian Cardinal Joszef Mindszenty, which was reflected throughout the television programming of the era, from the early *Studio One* to programs like *Mission: Impossible* and *The Outer Limits*. The image also softened somewhat into that of the "man of piety," dedicated priests who continued their devotion to social uplift though in less obstreperous ways, seen on programs ranging from *Dragnet* to *The Loretta Young Show*.

The 1962-63 ABC television series *Going My Way* (based on the famed 1944 movie) offered a unique picture of Catholic clergy and the Church on the eve of the Second Vatican Council. While overtly reflecting an older, traditionalist portrait of the "Catholic ghetto" of the 1930s, in its subtext the series uneasily confronted the Church's internal tensions over such issues as marriage, atheism, ecumenism, and race.

Finally, influenced by such real-life radical priests as Philip and Daniel Berrigan, media began portraying priests as radical reformers in such programs as *The Mod Squad*. This image soon softened into a portrait of Catholic clergy as "fully human," well-meaning but possessed of the full range of human foibles, as reflected on such television portrayals of priests as Father Francis Mulcahy on *M*A*S*H* and comedian Don Novello's humorous character Father Guido Sarducci – thus tracing a perceptual arc of the Catholic priest from depraved to heroic to fully human.

This dissertation by Christopher Gildemeister fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in History, approved by Leslie W. Tentler, Ph.D. as Director, and by Timothy Meagher, Ph.D. and Alexander Russo, Ph.D. as Readers.

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# INTRODUCTION

The story of the Catholic Church in America is one of antipathy to Catholicism rooted in both Protestant religious and secular Enlightenment thought, which respectively formed the dual pillars of American society since the arrival of the Pilgrims on these shores in the 17th century and the beginning of the American experiment in the 18th century. Such antipathy is well-documented by historians of American Catholicism, from general works by such scholars as Jay Dolan and James J. Hennessey to works focusing on specific incidents and controversies, such as those by Ray Allen Billington and Nancy Lusignan Schultz.[1] One particularly notable example is that with which John T. McGreevy begins his *Catholicism and American Culture*: that of ten-year-old schoolboy Thomas Whall, who as a Catholic was beaten for half an hour for refusing to recite the Protestant version of the Ten Commandments.[2] But in the period following the First World War, antipathy toward Catholicism in America was rapidly ameliorated, replaced first by grudging toleration, then acceptance, and, by the 1950s, enthusiastic embrace. The vast cultural changes which attended the late 1960s and 1970s in many ways reshaped and modified American understanding of Catholicism, but did not negate the broader culture's embrace of the Church.

This study assumes that the acceptance and eventual embrace of Catholicism in America was both reflected in and influenced by the portrayal of the Church (and specifically, its most notable representative, the Catholic priest) in the electronic media of the period – a common approach in the field of media studies. In her book *Wallowing in Sex,* media scholar Elana Levine demonstrates that the status of women as both newly-liberated and as sex objects was

both reflected in and, through a complex psychological interaction between program and viewer, influenced by television programming such as *Charlie's Angels* and *Wonder Woman*. Similarly, in her book *Groove Tube*, Aniko Bodroghkozy argues that the public perception of – and reaction to -- hippies and the 1960s counter-culture was shaped by their portrayal in television programming from *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* to *The Mod Squad*. In the same way, television's portrayals of the Catholic priest equally reflected real-life changes in the priesthood, and influence viewers' changes in attitudes toward both the priesthood and the Church.[3]

However, historians of American Catholicism have only recently begun to deal with the representation of the Church in popular culture. In her introduction to the collection of historians' essays on American Catholicism in film, *Catholics in the Movies*, editor Colleen McDannell laments,

> There are books about film and the Civil War, about film and the frontier, about film and the 1960s. In each of these cases, the focus has been on how Critical aspects of our society – race, class, ethnicity, gender, social change – are represented on the screen. What has been missing from the literature on movies are historical explorations of the place of religion in film. Historians and critics of the movies have forgotten that Americans are the most religious people in the Western world.[4]

In addition to McDannell's collection of essays, works presenting Catholic historians' view of Catholicism in media include Les and Barbara Keyser's seminal *Hollywood and the Catholic Church: the Image of Roman Catholicism in American Movies* (1984); Rebecca Sullivan, *Visual Habits: Nuns, Feminism, and American Postwar Popular Culture* (2005); Peter E. Dans, *Christians in the Movies: A Century of Saints and Sinners* (2009); Anthony Burke Smith, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (2010); and Richard Wolff, *The Church on TV: Portrayals of Priests, Pastors, and*

*Nuns on American Television Series* (2010). Of these, Dans is a collection of the author's individual reviews of various movies presenting images of Christianity (both Catholic and Protestant) and has no overriding thesis, while Sullivan is concerned solely with the representation of nuns, not priests, and thus was of limited utility for the present work.

As the first history of the portrayal of American Catholicism in film, Les and Barbara Keyser's *Hollywood and the Catholic Church* also remains the most influential of such works. In it, the Keysers advance the thesis that "any complete understanding of a significant segment of American life like the Roman Catholic Church must include a detailed sociological analysis of Hollywood's image of that group."[5] The Keysers then note several tropes regarding the portrayal of the Catholic priest in film which are in accord with those in this dissertation, as well. They note the rise of the "heroic priest" in the films of the 1930s – though without acknowledging the overwhelming part played in establishing the trope by the famed and controversial "radio priest," Father Charles Coughlin. The Keysers also detail the evolution of the priest in film from the straightforward heroism of the 1930s (*Angels with Dirty Faces, Boys Town, The Fighting 69th*) through the anti-Communist social crusader of the 1950s (*The Prisoner, On the Waterfront*) to the deconstruction, ridicule, and open detestation of Catholic clergy in the 1970 film *M*A*S*H*. Yet while discussing films about priests, *Hollywood and the Catholic Church* also devotes substantial attention to films about Catholic laity. As the first comprehensive look at the representation of Catholicism in film (as this dissertation aspired to be the first at the depictions of priests on television), the Keysers' book is primarily descriptive of the portrayals of American Catholicism in film, which it then relates to the real-life history, circumstances, presumptions,

and attitudes about Catholicism dominant at the time the films premiered – again, as this dissertation aspires to do for Catholic priests on television.

In his essay "Boys to Men: Angels with Dirty Faces" in McDonnell's *Catholics in the Movies*, Thomas J. Ferraro also deals with the movie about the quintessential "heroic priest" – yet claims that in the film, about the lifelong friendship between Father Jerry Connelly (Pat O'Brien) and gangster Rocky Sullivan (James Cagney), "though one of the two characters is a priest, the institution, people, and rites of official Catholicism are scarcely present [and] organized religion is reduced, unrealistically, to a single, unguardedly earnest man, Father Jerry…Rocky represents, or better embodies not so much the opposite of divine energy as an alternative incarnation of it."[6] Ferraro proposes Cagney's mobster as the picture's true hero and redemptive figure, essentially dismissing the film's "heroic priest" as ineffectual and even trivial, a "feminized," "desexed, domesticated" figure "in Roman collar drag," who "sacrifice[es his] sexuality, social influence, and reputation as a 'real man' to the increasingly marginal enterprise of the holy priesthood." [7] (Inevitably, Ferraro also assumes the Rocky-Jerry friendship contains a "homoerotic subtext," with Jerry all but worshipping the charismatic, unambiguously "masculine" Rocky.)[8] While this post-modern inversion of the overt narrative of the film posits a secularized "street Catholicism" embodied by a ruthless mobster as superior to the narrative's "heroic priest," it is safe to state that this is not in line with the filmmakers' intentions – nor with the understanding of most of the film's original (and present-day) viewers. For Father Connelly is the motivating factor behind the film's most decisive moment. Yes, the "Dead End Kids" do idolize Rocky (though they are shown as wrong to do so); but it is Father Connelly who

persuades Rocky to go to the electric chair acting the part of a shrieking, cringing coward. Rocky's "yellow" behavior destroys his status as a role model in the boys' eyes, thus opening them to the life of virtue offered by Father Connelly.

A similar revisionist approach to the portrayal of the "heroic priest" is taken by Anthony Burke Smith. While in his essay in McDannell, "America's Favorite Priest,"[9] Smith rehearses the virtues of the Bing Crosby film (it posits priests as genteel, sophisticated, and solidly middle-class and middle-American, in contrast to the stigmatized alien "other" Catholics had been considered by the traditional Protestant mainstream), in his later book *The Look of Catholics*, Smith eschews the importance of *Going My Way* for the assimilation of Catholics. Rather, Smith sees the film as part of America's wartime transition from progressive New Deal values to those of winning the war, under which Hollywood films moved from support for an underclass exploited by corrupt capitalism into the materialistic and anti-Communist "American Century" championed by Time publisher Henry Luce. "By affirming American society, this highly assimilated priest in fact represented a repudiation of the reformist values of the New Deal era. Community, in the hands of O'Malley and *Going My Way*, no longer centered on the common good of ordinary citizens, ethnics, and outsiders against the private interests of elites and the culturally privileged....*Going My Way* was nothing less than a symbolic cleansing of the streets of urban America, ridding them of all the critical, reformist energies that Hollywood had recognized in the 1930s."[10] Yet Smith's class-conscious and progressive-centered critique ignores the immense popular following the film rapidly garnered. The movie was a tremendous hit, receiving overwhelming public popularity (it was the highest-grossing picture of 1944) –

popularity the film should not have attained were Smith correct, given that the audiences who made *Going My Way* a hit comprised those very same "ordinary citizens, ethnics and outsiders against elites and the culturally privileged." Moreover, the film continues the portrait of the "heroic priest" as a civilizing force for order. Bing Crosby's Father O'Malley and Pat O'Brien's Father Connelly in *Angels with Dirty Faces* are of a piece: both get a gang of young toughs off the streets and into the choir loft; and if Bing Crosby does not convince a ruthless mobster to sacrifice his reputation for the greater good, he does help a young girl new to New York to find an apartment and a husband and rebuild his church after a fire destroys it. And Crosby's young, with-it, modern cleric effectively established in the popular imagination the notion of Catholicism as cheerful, modern, and democratic. This shift in perception heavily influenced the post-war embrace of Catholicism by American culture as a whole.

But however useful such engagement, critique, or extension in relationship to existing scholarship on the representations of the Catholic Church in film may be, it does not get at the central point of this dissertation: discussion of representations of the Catholic priest specifically on prime-time network entertainment *television*, 1950-1980. With the exception of several books on Bishop Fulton J. Sheen and his televised sermon program *Life Is Worth Living*,[11] as yet, no Catholic historian has dealt extensively with such representations on television. The Keysers and the essays in McDannell deal with movies, not TV; and in both his article and his book devoting attention to the film going my way, Anthony Burke Smith does not so much as mention the television series *Going My Way* (which was inspired by the film, and which is dealt with extensively in chapter three of this dissertation).

A work which does mention the television series *Going My Way* is Richard Wolff's *The Church on TV*.[12] Apart from Rebecca Sullivan (whose work is concerned with nuns alone), only Wolff has devoted extensive attention to the representation of clergy on American television. Wolff's primary thesis is that

> while the church's depiction on TV generally follows contemporaneous trends in church history, successful programs avoid focusing on contentious social issues and personal vices faced by church leaders, and instead take a cheerful, inoffensive approach to ecclesial subject matter.[13]

This is so, Wolff says, because "fictional faith is a reflection of actual believers' faith in the church and what it represents…it presents the world a popular image of an institution they consider sacred."[14] Wolff's assertion generally is sound enough in broad strokes – it is only logical that devoutly religious viewers would prefer their faith be presented in an upbeat, positive fashion, rather than portrayed as riddled with controversy, doubt, and hypocrisy – when it comes to the television series *Going My Way* specifically, Wolff overstates his case and demonstrates both a want of nuance and a lack of knowledge regarding trends and movements in American Catholic history of the period. (Wolff's objections will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter three of this dissertation, which is devoted entirely to the series *Going My Way*.)

Wolff is on sounder footing with another of his major theses. Wolff asserts that the less specific and detailed a television program is about a given denomination's faith practices, the greater the acceptance the program will achieve among a broad range of viewers.[15] This too is largely common sense, as television – particularly in the pre-cable era – sought to appeal to the broadest possible audience, and most viewers are disinterested in and even discomfited by specific religious practices with which they are not familiar or in which they do not believe

themselves. However, if a program *seeks* to appeal in some measure to members of a specific denomination, and is written or produced – as *Going My Way* was – by someone of that denomination who is striving for verisimilitude or a duplication of cherished memories (real or fictional), this argument loses some force; for while the greater part of a broad audience might tune out, those of that denomination should be devoted viewers, unless there are other factors in play (as, indeed, is argued in chapter three).

Finally, Wolff states that televisual depictions of religion encourage viewers to identify with younger, more progressive clergy, who are more willing to adapt to modern, changing circumstances.[16] This assertion is aptly borne out both by examples cited by Wolff and the evidence presented in this dissertation from television series ranging from *The Loretta Young Show* to *M*A*S*H* and *Saturday Night Live*. Yet this also is unsurprising, given television executives' (and advertisers') desire to appeal to ever-younger and more malleable audiences.

This dissertation also assumes – and sets out to prove – that the portrayals of the Catholic priest in the electronic media of the period 1930-1980 were inspired by the actions of individual, real-life priests who attracted widespread attention and publicity. That fictional characters were inspired by real-life individuals is commonly acknowledged by media studies scholars; in his *Citizen Spy*, Michael Kackman discusses the Cold War television series *I Led Three Lives* and its protagonist, the real-life Communist spy and FBI informant Herbert Philbrick, which "conflate[d] the public persona of the real Herb Philbrick with the narrative conventions of 1950s domestic drama."[17] Similarly, in *The Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy*

*Years*, Mary Ann Watson identifies several fictional television astronauts who were clearly inspired by exploits of the real-life Mercury Seven.[18] The literature of American Catholic history is voluminous regarding the prominence in widespread influence on American culture of such clergymen as "radio priest" Father Charles Coughlin, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, and Fathers Philip and Joseph Berrigan;[19] and, while he is little discussed in historiographical sources, the circumstances surrounding the departure from the priesthood of Father William DuBay clearly served as the inspiration for one episode of the 1960s television crime drama *The Mod Squad*.[20]

These portrayals in entertainment subsequently created in the minds of the audience the image and perception of what a Catholic priest was, and what the priesthood was about; and this played a significant role in the change in attitude towards Catholicism in America. Previously, the American Protestant mainstream had characterized Catholic priests as effeminate, abusive, dictatorial, or some combination thereof, as documented by Jenny Franchot in her seminal *Roads to Rome: the Protestant Antebellum Encounter with Catholicism*, and other historians of American Catholicism such as Philip Jenkins, Father Andrew Greeley, and Father James Martin, S.J.[21]

It is a long-standing debate among cultural critics as to whether popular culture shapes the understanding of its consumers (and by so doing, serves also to shape subsequent actions, choices, and reality), or whether entertainment merely reflects reality already in existence. The answer, of course, is "both." Since many – and in earlier days, even most – Americans had little or no personal experience of Catholicism or the priesthood, they relied upon cultural tropes and

stereotypes for their image of what a Catholic priest was. Until the 1930s, the vast majority of such stereotypes were relics of America's traditional cultural anti-Catholicism. Much the same observation can be made about any number of groups – African-Americans, Jews, Hispanics, *et al.* As with those groups, in the absence of any genuine personal experience, negative stereotypes and bigotry flourished. But with the rise of mass media, individuals in communities which had previously been largely homogenous now had a way to actually see, hear, and learn about groups with which they had no prior contact, and about the reality of which they knew nothing.

Nevertheless, the limitations of media, not to mention the tendencies of human nature, being what they are, oftentimes these new experiences simply resulted in NEW tropes and stereotypes, which then became perpetuated through endless repetition. If one has never met a Jew or Catholic priest (for example), and knows nothing about them, one can only rely on rumor, hearsay, and stereotype for knowledge; but if one then meets or experiences through media only ONE Jew or Catholic priest, all one's subsequent conceptions of the type will be colored by the impression made by that single individual, as noted by Les and Barbara Keyser: "As films grew in influence, the American vision of Catholicism would come more and more to depend on the movies. For many Americans, the only priests or nuns they would ever see closeup would be on screen."[22]

An excellent – and amusing – demonstration of this principle is found in the introduction to Aniko Bodroghkozy's *Groove Tube*, in which the author reminisces about the influence television had on her as a seven-year-old:

> Living in a squeaky-clean Canadian suburb, I had never actually seen any real, live hippies – except on television. Yet those video images were powerful because I knew I wanted to be a hippie; I wanted to dress like them; I wanted to be around them.[23]

That media portrayals of the priesthood were equally influential is attested to by Father Donald Cozzens in *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*: "Even to this day for Catholics over age fifty, it is difficult to exaggerate Father O'Malley's [Bing Crosby's priest character in the movie *Going My Way*] hold on the Catholic imagination."[24]

But there is another piece to this understanding: while a particular real-life individual may have defined the image of the Catholic priest which was then promoted by popular culture, the images shown in popular culture from then on also shaped the audience's perceptions – and shaped the imagery presented in other pop-culture products, as well.

Certainly, fictional entertainment is created by writers, producers, and directors; but they draw on previously-established knowledge and experience in making their creations -- and where they have no personal knowledge or experience, these creative individuals rely either upon research, or upon hearsay and already-established tropes and stereotypes. Some of this knowledge and research is provided by highly publicized actions of real-life individuals of the kind about which the creator is writing; but (particularly in the profit-driven American entertainment industry of motion pictures, radio, and television programming), many more are recycled in imitation of previous examples of entertainment, particularly ones which have proven popular and turned a profit. (As examples of this tendency, one need only observe the endless number of derivative reality shows and forensic crime dramas populating American television

currently, or the innumerable romantic comedies and comicbook-inspired films in movie theaters.) Such entertainments endlessly recycle a limited number of tropes in a number of mildly different configurations, until some new piece of information, so highly publicized it cannot be ignored, appears in the public awareness. Such information is then incorporated into the popular culture matrix, and henceforth influences further creative works and audience perceptions.

One example of this from a media studies perspective is the shifting portrayal of rape in media of the 1970s. As discussed by Elena Levine in *Wallowing in Sex*, in the wake of organized activism in the 1970s – most notably, the publication of feminist Susan Brownmiller's book *Against Our Will* – society's perception of rape rapidly shifted from a belief that it was a form of sexual lust to an understanding that it rape is motivated by hostility toward, and desire for power over, women. The newer understanding was soon reflected in television daytime dramas ("soap operas"), nighttime series, and made-for-TV movies.[25]

In a similar way, the vast fame, influence, and popularity of "radio priest" Father Coughlin created the portrayal of priests in other areas of popular culture as Irish, pugnacious, and willing to challenge entrenched authority, as was seen in such films as *Boys Town* and *Angels With Dirty Faces*; Jesuit Father John Corridan, who confronted New York's corrupt labor unions, served as the inspiration for *On the Waterfront*'s Father Barry; and Hungary's Joszef Cardinal Mindszenty, who was imprisoned and tortured by that nation's Communist regime, served as the model for various heroic, Communist-defying prelates in media ranging from

1950s theatrical films (*The Prisoner, Guilty of Treason*) to the 1960s television series *Mission: Impossible*.[26]

Finally, there is the debate: do the images and ideas individual audience members encounter in popular culture shape their perceptions, world-view, and actions? To any clear-minded observer, the answer must be "yes." Our perceptions shape our assumptions, and the ways in which we view the world; and obviously, the way we view the world shapes our responses to it. Given nearly a century of exposure to mass electronic media and entertainment, the influence such media and entertainment has had is clear. To take one innocuous example: how many people can sing advertising jingles they heard in childhood, and perhaps have not heard in decades since? How many can extensively quote dialogue from a particularly beloved film, radio, or television program? We all rely on perceptions shaped, even created, by media for much of our knowledge of the world outside our personal experience. As an extreme example: most Americans have a clear idea of how the Earth looks from the surface of the moon, yet only eight living men can claim personal experience of it. All others only know what they have seen in photographs or on TV.

Since every rational action an individual takes is based on what that individual knows or perceives, it stands to reason that if all (or even some) of what an individual perceives is derived from "knowledge" gained from entertainment media or popular culture, such "knowledge" will affect the decision-making process; and the less actual experience or extensive, factual knowledge the individual has of the matter in question, the more heavily the perceptions

engendered by entertainment will influence them. This is amply borne out by logic, not to mention the many scientific studies of the influence of entertainment on the behavior of children and teenagers.[27]

In spite of this fact, until recently television programming largely remained the proverbial "red-headed stepchild" of academic studies. This bias was no doubt due in part to the perception of television programming as the "lowest common denominator" of popular culture, a medium devoted to both blatant duplication of forms of entertainment popularized by other media, and to the crassest commercialism – even being so philistine as to interrupt ongoing dramatic presentations for "a word from your sponsor." By contrast, while movies were largely the products of vast commercial conglomerates and a repressive "studio system" -- particularly during Hollywood's "Golden Age" – the greater degree of control by and attention given to individual directors allowed the rise in the 1960s by French film scholars of "auteur theory,"[*] which gave film a veneer of artistic respectability in the academy, particularly over television -- in spite of the undeniable fact that television reaches a vastly larger audience, and hence has a concomitantly greater influence on shaping the perceptions of the populace.

While in recent years the attention of Catholic historians has begun to turn to the portrayal of Catholicism in film, the academic disciplines of both American Catholic history and

[*] The first articulator of what would become known as "auteur theory" is generally held to be French filmmaker Francois Truffaut, who introduced many of the key themes of the theory in his essay "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français" ["A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema"], originally published in the journal *Cahiers du Cinema*, no. 31, January 1954. In the United States, the theory was popularized by critic Andrew Sarris in the essay "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962", *Film Culture*, no. 27, Winter 1962. Sarris expanded on his definition and the theory in his book *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929–1968* (Dutton, 1968).

media studies have neglected the examination of portrayals of Catholicism in entertainment television. Until recently, mainstream historians have been disinclined to acknowledge the influence of television entertainment on popular thought and the formation of culture.

By contrast, while the entire concept of "media studies" is premised on the importance of media (including television) in shaping popular thought, such scholarship has rarely dealt with the portrayal of religion, and has not widely incorporated the context of religious history. This is understandable; media studies is its own discipline, with its own methods and philosophies, some derived from literary methods of analysis and some entirely original. While the current dissertation incorporates some knowledge more commonly found in the discipline of media studies (particularly the history of the development of American television broadcasting), it does not propose to incorporate the methodology unique to media studies. Instead, this dissertation attempts to merge the examination of media with the history of American Catholicism of the 20th century. By so doing, it is hoped that this dissertation will make an original contribution to the scholarly literature of the study of Catholicism in American history, through an examination of the influence of Catholic individuals and actions in the shaping of the portrayal of Catholicism, and specifically Catholic priests, in electronic media entertainment, particularly prime-time entertainment television, in the years 1930-1980.

Research for this dissertation was conducted during the years 2008-2013 using both secondary and primary sources. Primary sources comprised episodes of network broadcast television programming from 1950-1980. These dates were carefully chosen. Though its first

public demonstration occurred at the 1939 New York World's Fair, the primitive state of technology, combined with the disruption of industry -- particularly of research and development of items of purely commercial utility -- caused by the Second World War rendered television little more than an experimental process for the major networks and a toy for the wealthy of New York City and immediate environs throughout the war and immediately after. Prior to 1950, then, commercial television broadcasting was so circumscribed that, for all practical purposes, it was non-existent. The end date of 1980 was selected for a variety of reasons: first of all, the date rests on the cusp of the widespread, rapid adoption and mainstream use of cable television, which vastly expanded the number of channels and programs available to audiences. To keep this dissertation within manageable limits, it was decided to focus on the years prior to 1980, during which Americans television was dominated by the three major broadcast networks: NBC, CBS, and ABC. Secondly, 1980 is near the beginning of the reign of John Paul II as pope. A majority of the attitudes and perceptions about Catholicism reflected in the popular culture of the 1930s through the 1970s were shaped either by the historical events attendant on the Great Depression and the Second World War and the role Catholics played in them (particularly as reflected in the films of the 1930s and '40s), or by the events immediately prior to, surrounding, and subsequent to the Second Vatican Council (1958-65). While it would be going too far to claim that John Paul II "rolled back" the changes of the Council, it is undeniable that as his pontificate wore on, a more conservative and traditionalist tenor was asserted in the Church. This in turn influenced subsequent media portrayals, with the result that those portrayals, and indeed the Church itself, took on a different tenor, and entered a different era in the years after 1980.

In terms of research methodology, recent years and changing technology have provided media historians with an embarrassment of easily-accessible riches. Programs once consigned to dusty vaults and available only on film or videotape are increasingly available on DVD or online. For this dissertation, use was made particularly of Hulu.com and DVDs available through Netflix or available for private purchase. Where individual programs and episodes were still not available, archival resources were used. The Paley Center for Media and the UCLA Film and Television Archive, both located in Los Angeles, possess vast (if still understandably incomplete) collections of television programming from the earliest years to the present day. Both archives were utilized extensively.

The selection of which specific episodes were to be studied was made largely through an exhaustive examination of various online indices of television programming available through TV.com and the Internet Movie Database. With some understandable gaps (largely around programming which is no longer extant), these websites offer listings and brief plot summaries of most episodes of most television programs from around 1950 to the present. This author's original plan was to view *every* episode of *every* program which featured a priest in a substantial role; but the impossibility (not to say absurdity) of such an idea, particularly under the deadline of a dissertation process, rendered the idea useless. Instead, programming representative of larger trends in the history of television and reflective of trends in Catholicism were viewed and analyzed. For example, live dramatic anthologies were the dominant form of programming in television's earliest days. Those days coincided with the early Cold War, which was characterized in Catholicism by the Church's resistance under Pope Pius XII to communist (and

particularly Soviet) domination. Therefore, an episode of a live dramatic anthology telling the story of the anti-communist Hungarian Cardinal Joszef Mindszenty was selected for analysis. Similarly, Westerns, detective programs, and filmed anthologies hosted by (and occasionally starring) famous Hollywood performers were the dominant forms of programming in the later 1950s and early 1960s; hence, a sampling of these were studied. The same was true of spy dramas (growing out of the James Bond film craze) and science-fiction programs[*] in the mid-1960s, and "relevant" dramas and situation comedies dealing with the changing political and cultural situation in the 1970s. A representative sampling of each of these genres, in episodes featuring a Catholic priest, was viewed and analyzed.

The heavy focus on episodes from three specific programs, and their examination at greater length, deserves an explanation. The reader will discover that episodes of the filmed dramatic anthology *The Loretta Young Show* (which ran on NBC from 1953-61) are disproportionally represented. Unlike similar anthologies which featured a priest as central figure in a story perhaps once during the entire series – if at all – *The Loretta Young Show* did so consistently. Typically, one episode or more per season focused on Catholic clergy or religious. This was a deliberate choice by Miss Young, who was herself Catholic. Heavily involved as she was in selecting stories and scripts for the program, Miss Young also saw her program as an opportunity to spiritually elevate her audience. Not infrequently, Miss Young starred in such episodes herself (building on the success of her Oscar-nominated performance as a nun in the 1949 movie *Come to the Stable*). Thus, *The Loretta Young Show* offered not only more episodes

[*] Notably, two of the best-known science-fiction programs of the era – *Star Trek* and *Lost in Space* – were set in a future in which reference to (Earthly) clergy or religion was deliberately avoided.

featuring priests in lead roles, but episodes in which the priest's role was more substantial, and centered on the religious and cultural significance of Catholicism.

The second program examined at length is the 1962-63 ABC series *Going My Way*. Based on the 1944 Bing Crosby movie, *Going My Way* was a prime-time series with priests as the program's two major characters, with episodes centering on their work in their parish and involvement with the lives and issues of parishioners. For the scholar of the representation of American Catholic clergy in media, such a source is obviously invaluable. However, the series had a short and poorly-received original run, and was rarely if ever syndicated. Until very recently, it was totally unavailable for viewing, save at the UCLA Film and Television Archive. As a result, it has been ignored by scholars of Catholicism in media. This dissertation represents the first extensive examination of the television series *Going My Way*, and places it in the context of the era in which it aired – an era characterized by changing attitudes among Catholics, due largely to the papacy of John XXIII and the opening of the Second Vatican Council.

The final program given extensive attention is the CBS situation comedy *M*A*S*H*, which ran from 1971-1983. Here, the reason for the attention given the program is that one of the major characters, part of the program's lead ensemble, was a Catholic priest: military chaplain Father Francis Mulcahy. By sheer dint of its exposure alone – a major character on a widely popular and long-running comedy/drama series – the part of Father Mulcahy represented perhaps the most widely seen representation of Catholic clergy ever on American television. In addition, as the series moved away from comedy and became a drama, Father Mulcahy was given a

number of episodes and variety of storylines which contributed to making his the most thorough portrayal of a well-rounded and "fully human" clergyman – a fact brought about by the research and performing skills of the actor who played him, William Christopher. (Mr. Christopher also offered many insights into the portrayal of a priest, as well as the history of *M*A*S*H* and its sequel series *AfterMASH*, in an interview conducted by this author. The full interview with William Christopher comprises appendix 3 of this dissertation -- and also represents primary-source research.)

Secondary sources consisted of historiographical studies of American Catholicism; histories of electronic media, primarily film and television, as they developed and were implemented in the United States; several media studies works, including Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion*; Elana Levine, *Wallowing in Sex: The New Sexual Culture of 1970s American Television*; Michael Kackman, *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture*; and Mary Ann Watson, *The Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy Years*; historiography specifically addressing the portrayal of Catholicism in electronic media as cited above, including Les and Barbara Keyser's seminal *Hollywood and the Catholic Church: the Image of Roman Catholicism in American Movies* (1984); Colleen McDannell, editor, *Catholics in the Movies* (2008); Peter E. Dans, *Christians in the Movies: A Century of Saints and Sinners* (2009); Anthony Burke Smith, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (2010); and Richard Wolff, *The Church on TV: Portrayals of Priests, Pastors, and Nuns on American Television Series* (2010). As the recent provenance of all the above works save Keyser indicates,

the study of the portrayal of Catholicism in popular culture is a new one – one to which, it is hoped, the current dissertation will make a small but meaningful contribution.

A word about methodology: despite standard practice in the disciplines of literary and media studies, this dissertation has not made use of such primary research materials as advertiser or television network, or production company corporate archives, memoranda between television writers and production staff, letters to television networks or advertisers from viewers, and includes only cursory examination of commentary about the programs discussed in television reviews in the popular press. Such sources would no doubt yield valuable background information and insight into both the historical events and thought processes which influenced the creation of the programs, and the influence the programs had on viewers and the culture. Catholic responses to the programming discussed would be of value in understanding how those within the Church, laity and clergy alike, viewed the representation of Catholic clergy in a popular culture largely produced by non-Catholics. Similarly, the study of the responses of non-Catholic viewers to such representations would be useful in tracing the acceptance and assimilation of Catholics into American culture which took place from the 1930s through the 1960s.

However, such research and analysis was omitted from this dissertation for several reasons. Firstly, examination of the attitudes of so diverse an audience would require a degree of sociological method, and an understanding of the framework common to the discipline of media studies -- knowledge of which this author is not possessed. Secondly, because so much of the

specific programming discussed is, if not wholly unknown, at least unfamiliar, and because the examination of popular culture in the discipline of American Catholic historical study is still so new – and the current dissertation is, after all, one in the discipline of American Catholic history, not media studies -- it was thought this dissertation could best be used in focusing on the portrayal of priests itself. It is the intention of this dissertation to extensively document how television programming was representing priests, and to assess that representation in the context of the history of the American Church as it was unfolding at the time. Finally, such research and analysis was precluded by practical limitations of resources such as time, budget, and availability of research sources. Such research and analysis may be undertaken in future, but would of necessity build upon the general pattern of representation of Catholic clergy on television which is established by this dissertation.

Also omitted from his dissertation is discussion of the representation of Catholic nuns in the popular culture of the period. Nuns stirred tremendous interest in American viewers and filmmakers, as can be seen in films like *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945), *Come to the Stable* (1949), and others. The era of the 1960s immediately surrounding the Second Vatican Council saw a tremendous increase in such interest, with films like *The Sound of Music* (1965), *The Singing Nun* (1966), *Change of Habit* (1969), and the television series *The Flying Nun* (1967-1970). However, analysis of this phenomenon has been ably performed by Rebecca Sullivan in her book mentioned above, while a similar analysis of media representation of priests has not yet been forthcoming.

After a prologue discussing the traditional Protestant anti-Catholicism which dominated American culture prior to the 1920s (along with a brief discussion of the portrayal of the Catholic priest in that era), this dissertation proposes that such media representation is composed of several distinct memes, each the subject of its own chapter. In the 1930s – almost wholly, it will be argued, as a result of the broadcasts of the infamous "radio priest" Charles E. Coughlin – Catholic clergymen were represented as "heroic priests," typically men of indomitable will and Irish wit, who served as both moral exemplars and social crusaders, as represented in such films as *Angels With Dirty Faces, Boys Town* (both 1938), *Going My Way* (1944) and others. This "heroic" portrayal of clergy was slightly altered in the Cold War era, with priests also becoming crusaders against (both implicit and overt) communism, both in such films as *On the Waterfront* (1954), and television series like *Mission: Impossible* (1966-1973). Such portrayals were influenced by real-life figures like Hungary's Cardinal Joszef Mindszenty, and American bishop and television presence Fulton J. Sheen. Portrayals of the "heroic priest" are covered in chapters one and two.

Concurrent with the latter period of the "heroic priest" another form took shape: that of the Catholic priest as a "man of piety." In this portrayal, priests began the process of being brought "down to earth." Though priests remained exemplars of morality, their heroism was of a subtler kind, more realistic if no less noble. Such priests, rather than openly battling communist tyranny or organized crime, were largely shown working with the poor and underprivileged, in less overtly dramatic settings and stories. Many of the priests portrayed on *The Loretta Young Show*, the television series *Going My Way*, and most other dramas of the period were of this type.

One real-life example of a priest who served as an inspiration for the "men of piety" portrayal was Colombia's anti-poverty priest Raphael Garcia. It should be noted, however, that during this period portrayals of the "heroic priest" were also still common. This is understandable, as in the late 1950s and early 1960s the Church was passing through the Second Vatican Council, which was similarly causing the Church – and individual clergy – to re-evaluate themselves and their image. Such a change is also reflective of the change in emphasis of Pope John XXIII, who eschewed the Church's prior condemnation of Communism in favor of a policy of coexistence and mutual respect. The portrayal of the priest as a "man of piety" is discussed in chapter two, while chapter three's discussion of *Going My Way* documents the mixed portrayals and messages sent about both Catholic clergy and laity in a program aired even as the Council was unfolding.

Finally, as the changes of the Council and the much greater changes in the secular world attending the late 1960s took hold, two more distinct portrayals appeared. The first was that of the rebellious, socially active "radical priest," inspired by such real-life examples as the Vietnam War protester priests, brothers Daniel and Phillip Berrigan, along with other individuals like Fathers James Groppi, Charles Curran, and William DuBay. Examples of the "radical priest" are to be found (among many other places in the era) in television programs such as *The Mod Squad* (1968-1973) and the made-for-TV movie *Go Ask Alice* (1973).

As the 1970s wore on and real-life "radical priests" mellowed (or, frequently, left the priesthood and the Church), the portrayal of priests was similarly adjusted to reflect the view of the priest as "fully human" – a man possessed of neither superhuman virtue and prowess, nor

necessarily a rebel against an unjust religious Establishment. Instead, priests were shown to be mere men, generally of good intention and character and who work for the betterment of society, but who are prone to all the frailties and temptations of average people, from outbursts of temper, to disappointment with their career, and even to romantic and sexual entanglements. At various times – depending on the specific needs of an individual story -- the "fully human" priests portrayed in media might exhibit elements of all the previous memes: the courage and pugnacity of the "heroic priest," the humble devotion to duty of the "man of piety," and the rebellious nature of the "radical priest." The best example of the "fully human" priest on TV is *M*A*S*H*'s Father Mulcahy; but there were also others. Just as the real-life Church, having gone from a "heroic" era of anti-Communist and social justice activism, through a period of assimilation into the American mainstream as "men of piety," and then through the tumultuous rebellions of the Second Vatican Council and the late 1960s, found itself with a changed understanding of mission and self – less overtly "heroic" if no less sincere, and more accepting of the human dimension of its life – so too did its representatives in fiction. These depictions are the subject of chapter four.

Throughout the 1930s, then, and even up to the present day, the American understanding of Catholicism in general and the Catholic priesthood in particular has been shaped by its presentation in entertainment media – a presentation which has itself been shaped by real individuals. This presentation greatly assisted, if it did not make wholly possible, the move of American Catholics from a "Catholic ghetto" toward assimilation of Catholics into the American cultural mainstream, by promoting a familiarity and comfort with and acceptance of Catholics as equal citizens. By an understanding of the vast implications the portrayal of Catholicism in the

popular culture of the past had for the acceptance of the Church, so too can scholars perhaps understand how the presentation of Catholicism in the popular culture of today may shape the acceptance of – or antipathy to – the Church in the future.

## Prologue: Anti-Catholicism in American culture, 1620-1920

For much of its history -- from its earliest days until the 1920s -- the culture of the United States of America was hostile to that of the Roman Catholic Church.[1] American anti-Catholicism was rooted in the events of the English Reformation. As European settlement in what was to become the United States (outside of Spanish-held territories) was overwhelmingly British, it is unsurprising that early American settlement was also British in its orientation. Long before the various colonies came together to form the United States, Catholicism was maligned, distrusted and held in suspicion and contempt by the inhabitants of colonial America. British suspicion of Catholicism originated in Henry VIII's break with the Catholic Church in 1534, over his desired divorce from Catherine of Aragon and his desire for control over the wealth and power of the Church. Subsequently, Henry declared himself supreme head of the Church in England, which eventually resulted in the separated Church *of* England. Throughout the reigns of Henry's children Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, toleration of Catholicism seesawed back and forth from repudiation by Edward, to embrace by Mary, to moderate antipathy under Elizabeth.

But the harshest blow against Catholicism in Britain came with the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, a failed assassination attempt in which a group of English Catholics planned to set off a massive explosion during the State Opening of Parliament on November 5th, 1605. The conspirators hoped a popular revolt by English Catholics would follow, during which they would establish Princess Elizabeth, the nine-year-old daughter of King James I, as the new Catholic head of state. The plot was discovered, however, and for generations in Britain "Catholic" became synonymous with "traitor" – with the hanging and burning in effigy of one plotter, Guy Fawkes, continuing to this day.

The replication of such anti-Catholic influences in America was only natural, given the circumstances of most of the colonies' founding. The first Pilgrim settlers in Massachusetts, arriving on the *Mayflower* at Plymouth in 1620, were a sect of Puritan dissenters from the Church of England, which they abhorred for its ritual, organizational, and remaining theological resemblances to Catholicism – "base and beggarly ceremonies" and "lordly and tyrannous power of the prelates" comprising a "yoke of antichristian bondage," in the words of Pilgrim William Brewster.[2] This desire to "purify" their faith by purging it of all Catholic influence was only reinforced by the mass exodus of the Puritans from England (motivated by their desire to escape the dictates of the autocratic and "high-church" Bishop Laud), their arrival in the New World, and their subsequent foundation of the Massachusetts Bay Company and Colony after 1630. "It was only fifteen years after the unmasking of the Gunpowder Plot...that the Puritans came to America in 1620 to establish the Plymouth Colony. And they brought with them a hatred of Catholicism that was strongly affected by the populist anti-Catholicism engendered in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot. This anti-Catholicism would become an integral part of American culture and thought."[3]

Also influential among British-descended colonists, given both Britain's traditional rivalry with Spain and that nation's presence in and domination of much of the New World, was the so-called "Black Legend," a polemical version of history which dwelt on the allegedly overwhelming cruelty and violence with which the Spanish Empire treated Protestants and Jews, as well as the indigenous peoples of its colonies in the New World. Particularly exaggerated were the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition. Additionally, many of the other ethnic groups which

had settled in colonial America, such as the Dutch, were also heavily Protestant in composition, and strong positions against the Roman clerical hierarchy and the papacy were held by those from both Reformed and Lutheran traditions.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, many charters granted by the British monarchy for the starting of colonies, and laws passed in those colonies, proscribed Catholics holding offices or political power. In 1642, the Colony of Virginia enacted a law prohibiting Catholic settlers, and five years later, the Massachusetts Bay Colony did the same.The sole exception to this model was Maryland; and even there, the Catholic Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore) was more interested in founding a profitable business enterprise than a refuge for persecuted Catholics. With the failure of Calvert's endeavor – due largely to the colony's built-in flaws (like Calvert, the "gentleman adventurers" comprising the founding group's upper class were Catholic, while the overwhelming majority of the colony's population were working-class Protestants), and the events of the English Civil War, in which Calvert supported the doomed Charles I (thus leading pro-Cromwell Virginian settlers to invade Maryland, displacing Calvert and establishing a Puritan regime there), by the time of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Maryland was a royal colony with a governor appointed by the (Protestant) Crown, the Church of England was officially established as the state religion in Maryland, and Catholics were compelled to pay taxes for its support but cut off from all participation in public life. Additional laws prohibited Catholic religious services and parochial schools.

Such suspicion and official censure continued throughout the colonial period. In 1704, the Maryland Assembly passed "An Act to prevent the Growth of Popery within this Province,"

which made illegal any baptisms, Eucharistic services or preaching by any "Popish Bishop, Priest or Jesuite" (though this law was subsequently softened to permit worship services within private homes). Other laws banished Catholic teachers and levied taxes on "Irish Papist" servants; and during the French and Indian War, such measures were stepped up (Catholics being seen as holding allegiance to, or at least sympathy for, Catholic France).[4] And in 1719, Rhode Island also imposed civil restrictions on Catholics.

With the coming of the American Revolution, official positions toward Catholicism began to be modified. Suspicion of the Quebec Act (which guaranteed the free practice of the Catholic faith in British Quebec, allowed Catholics to participate in provincial government, reestablished the collection of tithes, and permitted Jesuits to return to the province) caused it to be grouped with the other Intolerable Acts by Americans agitating for revolution. The provisions of the Act were named as one of the many causes that "impel separation" in the Declaration of Independence ("abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, [and] establishing therein an arbitrary government"); but the process of close cooperation which attended wartime effort in the larger cause of liberty from England created a greater tolerance for divergent religious opinion in the United States. This process was aided by the open and fervent support for the revolution of signer of the Declaration of Independence Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a prominent Catholic. Ultimately, with the passage of the Bill of Rights and the First Amendment's provision both prohibiting "an establishment of religion" and permitting the "free exercise thereof" – provisions influenced by the participation of Catholics Daniel Carroll and Thomas Fitzsimmons in the Constitutional Convention[5] -- proscriptive and discriminatory

legislation directed specifically against Catholics began to fade, and gradually became a thing of the past.

Some participants in the Revolution demonstrated toleration of Catholics. Notably, George Washington abolished the burning of effigies of the pope on Guy Fawkes Day in the army in 1775. Washington understood that wooing Catholic France as an ally in the American colonies' revolution against England might be made difficult by demonstrations of such bigotry among his troops.[6] Years later, Washington penned a gracious letter of thanks to the Roman Catholics in the United States for their good wishes at the beginning of his presidency. And in 1783, the widely-traveled and open-minded Benjamin Franklin used his position as envoy to France to press the elevation of John Carroll (brother of Daniel and cousin of Charles) as first Catholic bishop in the United States.[7]

But the underlying anti-Catholicism of the dominant Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture was little altered. Under the combined sway of colonial post-Puritan Protestant culture and Enlightenment thought, and intoxicated by their own anti-monarchial and anti-authoritarian mindset, many of the Founders were vehemently anti-Catholic. Deeply immersed in the rationalistic tenets of the Enlightenment, they found Catholicism hopelessly irrational, adhered to only by the ignorant, illiterate rabble of Europe, so benighted that they willingly submitted themselves to the rule of tyrannical kings, nobles, and bishops. Such a creed, they believed, could hardly be suitable for the intelligent, "enlightened," hardy, and self-reliant residents of the new Republic.

In 1788, John Jay urged the New York legislature to pass a law requiring office-holders to renounce foreign authorities "in all matters ecclesiastical as well as civil;" but the finest example of the Founders' disdain for Catholicism was John Adams. In 1765, this proud descendant of Puritan stock had penned an anonymous essay for the *Boston Gazette* stating that the "whore of Babylon" had falsely grabbed the "keys to heaven," claiming that religious canon law was created by the "the Romish clergy for the aggrandizement of their own order," and accusing the Catholic Church of "reducing [Catholics'] minds to a state of sordid ignorance and staring timidity" as part of a "direct and formal design…to enslave America."[8] Several years later, he wrote his wife Abigail recounting his impressions after attending a Catholic mass in France. In a letter dripping with contempt, Adams described

> the poor wretches fingering their beads, chanting Latin, not a word of which they understood, their holy water—their crossing themselves perpetually—their bowing to the Name of Jesus, wherever they hear it – their bowings and kneelings and genuflections before the Altar....How shall I describe the picture of Our Savior, in a frame of marble over the altar at full length upon the cross in agony, the blood dropping and streaming from His wounds?….Here is everything which can lay hold of the eye, ear, and imagination, everything which can charm and bewitch the simple and ignorant.[9]

Writing to his frequent intellectual sparring partner Thomas Jefferson in 1816 about Pope Pius VII's recent restoration of the Society of Jesus after its suppression in 1773, Adams remarked, "I do not like the late resurrection of the Jesuits. If ever any congregation of men could merit eternal perdition on earth, and in hell, it is this company of Loyolas....Their restoration is indeed a step toward darkness, cruelty, perfidy, despotism, and death. I wish we were out of danger of bigotry and Jesuitism."[10]

While Adams and Jefferson often disagreed, they were united in their loathing for Catholicism. Jefferson enthusiastically joined his interlocutor in his disdain for the Church, remarking in one letter that "In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own."[11] In another, Jefferson opined that "there would never have been an infidel, if there had never been a priest. The artificial structures they have built on the purest of all moral systems, for the purpose of deriving from it pence and power, revolts those who think for themselves."[12] Jefferson even invoked the supernatural in his claim that "priests dread the advance of science as witches do the approach of daylight, and scowl on the fatal harbinger announcing the subversions of the duperies on which they live."[13]

Though few expressed it as eloquently as did Adams or Jefferson, this intellectual and cultural disdain for the Catholic faith persisted in America throughout the 19th century. These sentiments sometimes flared into violence, as was displayed during the burning of the Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts in 1834.[14]

Largely the reaction of Puritan-descended Protestant Bostonians to the increasing influx of Irish Catholic immigrants, which created both religious and economic disruption (the newcomers taking many laboring jobs), the friction came to a head in August of 1834. Following rumors that one young postulant had fled the convent but was forced to return, local newspapers and broadsides began shrilly urging Protestant men to attack and demolish the convent. In response, a group of town selectmen investigated, toured the convent, interviewed both the postulant and the Mother Superior, and issued a statement that the young woman was

not being held against her will. Yet a small mob broke into and ransacked the building, then set fire to the convent, which burned to the ground.

Though official responses from both the town council and Boston's Bishop Fenwick condemned the violence and sought to mollify Catholics and Protestants alike, the next day mobs again attacked the remains of the convent, after finding the town's Catholic church guarded by police. After being brought to trial, all the rioters were acquitted. Subsequent requests from the convent for financial restitution were repeatedly rejected by the state assembly.

Shortly after the riots, a number of writers capitalized on the anti-Catholic sentiments of the day by combining them with the classic themes of Gothic literature -- a young, innocent woman trapped in a remote, gloomy estate, where she learns dark secrets, is imprisoned, and finally escapes. These writers penned lurid, semi-pornographic tales of sexual slavery and infanticide featuring secret tunnels from clerical residences to convents-cum-brothels, depraved, lustful priests and pimp-like mothers superior abusing terrified, helpless young postulants (generally good Protestant girls who had been tricked into entering a religious order), who were forced to bear illegitimate babies, which were then strangled and thrown into lime pits (after being baptized as Catholics, of course). The first such novel was Rebecca Reed's *Six Months in a Convent*, published in 1835. This was followed a year later by the infamous *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, or, The Hidden Secrets of a Nun's Life in a Convent Exposed.*[15] As scholar of antebellum Catholicism Jenny Franchot notes, in these books

> priests lured women from their sheltered domesticity to even more privatized spaces, where their spiritual and sexual purity could be violated – a violation that resulted either in the pitiable death of the Protestant victim or her conversion to Catholic

> licentiousness...The priests' abuse of women emanated from their vows of celibacy, for these vows repressed their sexual energies to the point of madness.[16]

Both books became best-sellers, with some later historians asserting that Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures* was America's most widely read novel prior to the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[17] Other, similar books soon followed, fanning still further the flames of anti-Catholicism and contributing to another two decades of rage and violence against Catholics. Such sentiments largely led to the creation of the nativist American party in the 1840s and 1850s – better known as the Know-Nothings.[18]

With a party platform demanding limits on immigration, a wait of 21 years before an immigrant could gain citizenship, and restriction of public school teachers and political offices to native-born American Protestants, the Know-Nothing movement played on popular conspiracy theories that the foreign hierarchy of the Catholic Church was plotting to subjugate the United States through (primarily Irish) Catholic immigrants, who were controlled by bishops and, ultimately the Pope – who, it was believed, opposed all forms of liberty and democracy. After some successes in electing candidates in 1854, the party quickly divided over the issue of slavery, with its presidential candidate, former president Millard Fillmore, carrying only one state in the election of 1856. Typifying the sentiments of the time was a Boston minister's description of Catholicism as "the ally of tyranny, the opponent of material prosperity, the foe of thrift, the enemy of the railroad, the caucus, and the school."[19]

The fear of Catholic immigration was reinforced by the violence of the New York City draft riots in the midst of the Civil War. The riots, caused largely by Irish immigrants, resulted in

the murder and wounding of thousands, many of them African-Americans, and the destruction of several Protestant churches.[20] Further compounding the negative image of Catholics as violent rabble-rousers were the actions undertaken by supporters of a free Irish republic, known in America as the Fenian Brotherhood.[21] Initially interested merely in raising funds for Irish independence, in the immediate postwar period the group's members attacked various forts and outposts in British Canada, including Campobello Island in New Brunswick and Fort Erie at Niagara. Though accomplishing little, the Fenian raids further cemented anti-Catholic sentiment in American culture.

This sentiment was particularly reflected in a leading form of popular culture of the day, the artwork of America's foremost editorial cartoonist, Thomas Nast. Though remembered today for his creation of the popular image of Santa Claus and his fierce attacks on New York's Tammany political establishment, Nast was equally forceful in attacking Catholicism. Himself a German Protestant, Nast saw the Roman Catholic Church as a threat to America, and frequently portrayed Church leaders as power-hungry and corrupt.[22] Nast's 1871 cartoon "The American River Ganges," portrayed mitered Catholic bishops as crocodiles waiting to attack American school children; "The Promised Land" showed the pope, surrounded by priests and monks, atop St. Peter's Basilica, scheming to conquer America; and "Between Two Evils" portrays Columbia, the female personification of the United States, crowded between a raving Communist and a club-wielding Irish Catholic.

This last is especially significant, as anti-Catholic sentiment flared again in the late 19th century over the issue of public funds being used to supplement private education. In 1875,

Grant called for a Constitutional amendment that would mandate free public education and prohibit the use of public money for sectarian schools, declaring that church and state should be "forever separate." Republican Congressman James G. Blaine soon proposed the amendment to Congress, where it failed by only four votes. Soon, however, such “Blaine Amendments” banning the use of public money or land by Catholic schools were incorporated into some 34 state constitutions.[23]

With the active antipathy to the Church of many in government, social anti-Catholicism flared. In 1887, the militantly anti-Catholic American Protective Association was formed, with members promising never to vote for a Catholic, never hire a Catholic when a Protestant was available, and never join Catholics in a strike.[24] By the early 1890s the APA registered over one million members. “APA meetings – like those of the Know-Nothings four decades earlier – often included fraudulent tales of ex-nuns escaping convent imprisonment, fevered warnings about priests stockpiling arms in rectory cellars, and forged papal encyclicals putatively calling for a Catholic uprising.”[25]

Suspicion of Catholicism continued into the early twentieth century. In the cities, the “Settlement House” movement by such Progressives as Jane Addams sought to bring an implicitly Protestant “Social Gospel” to the many (now southern European) Catholic immigrants in need of education and reform; while in rural America, the popular press continued to harp on anti-Catholic themes. In 1914, the Knights of Columbus counted over 60 anti-Catholic publications nationwide.

The most notable such publication was *The Menace*. Beginning publication in 1911, by 1914 the weekly had a circulation of over a million. In addition to the usual convent captivity narratives and political conspiracies, *The Menace* also accused the Catholic Church of being behind the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the then-recent death of President Warren G. Harding, and being sole instigator of World War I. Perhaps its most famous canard was that of the "secret oath" of the Knights of Columbus, under which each Knight allegedly swore to "make and wage relentless war against all Protestants and heretics, to rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women, and crush their infants' heads against the walls in order to annihilate their execrable race." (In a prime example of the law of unintended consequences, *The Menace* also inspired Father John Noll to form *Our Sunday Visitor*, which was to become the leading Catholic newspaper and publication house in America.)[26] And while the original post-Civil War Ku Klux Klan was concerned almost exclusively with race, beginning in 1915 the reorganized Klan, abetted by the suspicions generated by *The Menace* and its ilk, chose Catholics as a prime target.[27]

Throughout the period of America's anti-Catholic bias, the image of the priest was a melding of disparate elements. One was of the priest as an authoritarian tyrant, "lording it over" their immigrant flocks, whom Protestant Americans assumed were filthy, uneducated, and ignorant of the ways of democracy. (This image was reinforced by the obstreperous defense of their Irish immigrant flocks by numerous members of the Catholic hierarchy, notably New York's bishop "Dagger John" Hughes in the 1840s, and Boston's Cardinal William O'Connell at the turn of the twentieth century.) Others were of the priest as a licentious, depraved sexual

predator (arising from the tales of Maria Monk and other convent captivity narratives), crossbred with a perception of Catholicism itself – and therefore, its principal symbol and practitioner, the priest – as unmanly and effeminate. "As a cultural landscape," Catholicism was characterized by a "romantic association with the feminine."[28] To fundamentalist Protestants, this was symbolized particularly by Catholicism's use of highly sensual elements: candles, incense, and sacred art were foreign (and therefore suspect) to many Protestant denominations in which the Bible, shorn of all sensual attraction, was considered sufficient. Priestly vestments such as cassocks, with their resemblance to women's dresses, and surplices, heavily embroidered with lace at cuffs and "skirt," compounded the image of effeminacy. Added to these elements was the implication of the priest's vow of celibacy, which (to Protestant eyes) cut off the priest from a proper masculine role as a literal father of children and head of a family, and thereby from the community he served. Such images were the legacy of America's heritage of anti-Catholicism.

But even as the forces of traditional American Protestantism rallied one last time, they were fading – as was the heavily Protestant ethos which had for so long been a major part of American culture. Yet while many tensions arose from the clash between Catholic beliefs and Protestant reaction against them, others were inherited from America's democratic form of government and post-Enlightenment culture. James Martin, S.J. has isolated several "inherent tensions between the nature of the church and the nature of the United States."[29]

First, in any democratic form of government there is a natural distrust of organizations run along hierarchical lines, as this hearkens back to the discredited notions of aristocracy. This

is compounded by certain points of Catholic doctrine, such as the insistence on papal inerrancy, and the Church's regulation of belief, its canon law, and practices of the *magisterium*. On a practical level, the governance and control of the Church – from the hierarchy down to the local parish – is vested entirely in ordained clergy, who are conceived of as "men set apart." Theologically, through ordination (which to Catholics, unlike Protestants, is a sacrament and a conferral of grace, not simply the certification of a religious organization for a theologically-trained individual to preach and teach) priests acquire a specific charism and even become an *alter Christus*. This clashed both with the embrace by Protestant denominations of the concept of the "priesthood of all believers," and the congregational model of church governance, wherein it became axiomatic that to be a mainstream American Christian is to have democratic church government. To many Protestants, such Catholic beliefs seemed similar to an invocation of the "divine rights of kings;" and since America was founded on the separation from a monarchy, such sentiments ill accord with those inherent in American culture.

Second, the Church's communitarian ideal is in many ways at odds with the American ideal of "rugged individualism." The ideal hero in American culture is the lone cowboy or frontiersman fighting the forces of nature and man, not an order of monks or nuns working side-by-side to tame and civilize the frontier. This attitude extends even to the spiritual realm; in the past, Protestants had "circuit riders" who operated solo, and pastors who ran their local church with little interference (or aid), as opposed to the monastic system or that of parish and diocesan governance. The legacy of America's individualist ethos is seen even more strongly in popular culture today, in which organized religion and institutional churches -- Catholic and,

increasingly, even Protestant – are criticized, but a vague, highly personalized "spirituality" is celebrated.[30]

Finally, in a rational, post-Enlightenment society, the Church's emphasis on ancient texts, medieval scholarship, and transcendent spirituality clashes with America's progress-oriented obsession with the new, whether in industry, technology, or ideas. For traditional Protestants, the Catholic belief in sacred tradition, the inerrancy of the pope, and the teaching of the *magisterium* went against the *sola scriptura* tradition of Luther and Calvin. In the modern era and up to the present day, when every text and even the very notion of objective truth is suspect, the temptation of the predominant culture is to ask: "how can an intelligent person believe in such things?" Thus, Martin concludes, "Anti-Catholic bias in the United States is therefore something more than simply a historical legacy. It is the result of inherent tensions between aspects of the Roman Catholic worldview and a democratic, post-Enlightenment, (and today, postmodern) American culture."

But while post-modern American culture is increasingly rejecting organized religion in general and Catholicism in particular, from the 1930s to the mid-1980s, the mass culture of "modern" America largely embraced it – particularly on the level of popular entertainment. This embrace can be credited to a greater tolerance for "the other" and a diminution of the traditional Protestantism of American culture – a diminution which was heavily influenced by the rise of mass entertainment and electronic media. Such movements first emerged at the end of the First World War; and so it is to the First World War we now turn.

## Chapter 1: The Rise of the "Heroic Priest", 1920-1950

The First World War was the first major stimulus for widespread acceptance of Catholicism in America, and marked the beginning of the Church's emergence from its "fortress" or "ghetto" mentality into the greater public sphere. Much of the earlier concern about Catholics holding divided loyalties and being insufficiently "American" was ameliorated by the Church's participation in the war effort. In order to unify and coordinate the Church's many charitable and benevolent efforts during wartime, the American hierarchy established the National Catholic War Council in 1917. The NCWC made a tremendous impression, both within the Church and in secular American society. The Church's overt and institutional commitment to political and social action, and the large number of laity it organized for service, represented the ability of Catholics to work for positive change on a large scale.[1]

In addition to the Church's obvious display of patriotism and loyalty to American institutions and causes, and the inevitable assimilation that occurs during war, when individuals from disparate backgrounds are thrown together and come to understand, appreciate, and work with others, both in the military and in organizations outside of it, the NCWC and its post-war successor the National Catholic Welfare Council brought the Church into national action in a unified, institutional manner in areas which had formerly been the prerogative of traditionally Protestant Progressive reform and "social gospel" movements.

It was also during the 1920s that strains of modernism were unleashed into American culture. Throughout the decade, the Protestant tenets which had formed the bedrock of traditional

American cultural and moral belief and practice were increasingly ridiculed by America's burgeoning intellectual urban elite –for example, the pro-evolution bias of press and publishing's reaction to the Scopes trial, or H.L. Mencken's references to the "booboisie." In this general spirit of progressive (and Progressive) liberalism which flourished among the urban cultural elite during the decade, the traditional animosity towards Catholicism softened, even as traditional Protestantism was subjected to disdain. Ironically if not necessarily causally, fundamentalism's loss of stature on the public stage coincided chronologically with that of Catholicism's gain.

This assault on traditional American culture resulted in a backlash from the forces of reaction; and for most of the decade competing visions of America warred with each other. Internal dissent consumed the Democratic national convention in 1924, where the party's urban, "wet" wing championed New York Catholic Al Smith for the nomination, while its more conservative rural Midwestern and Southern constituents endorsed the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and the candidacy of William McAdoo. Ultimately, the forces of the new urban elite won out, as was shown by Smith's nomination in 1928. But the opposition of the Klan, *The Menace*, and the remnants of Protestant anti-Catholic opposition stretching back to Puritan days saw its last major success in the 1928 election, when Smith's candidacy was greeted with a fresh wave of anti-Catholic hysteria – hysteria that ultimately caused Smith's defeat.

Les and Barbara Keyser, in their seminal analysis *Hollywood and the Catholic Church,* perhaps best summarize Smith's electoral debacle:

> [Smith's] candidacy did become a *de facto* trial for Catholic rights and acceptance in America. Propaganda painted Smith, who never operated a motor vehicle, as a drunken driver menacing law-abiding temperates, and pictured his abstemious wife as an alcoholic floozy. Widely circulated pamphlets spoke of Papal Wings at the White House, cardinals patrolling the halls of Congress, and of obsequious public officials, including the Commander in Chief, genuflecting to kiss the rings of Catholic clergymen. New York was pictured as "Satan's Seat," a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah of foreign accents, swarthy men, dark women, saloons, brothels, and worse. All the old prejudices were stirred up: Catholics were sinister foreigners with secret allegiances to an Inquisitorial Empire, or they were genetically inferior peasants breeding huge cadres of sub-human juvenile delinquents, alcoholics, nymphomaniacs, and drug addicts who would infect American values, corrupt native institutions, and pollute the genetic pool. Catholic sacraments and ceremonies were presented as orgiastic and licentious; the Catholic immigrant's lifestyle was denounced as perverse and scandalous.[2]

With the defeat of Smith, the old American Protestant consensus of anti-Catholicism had its last victory – and sealed its own fate. That the traditional suspicion of Catholicism was not yet totally moribund was proven by Smith's defeat in the presidential race; but Smith's nomination as candidate of a major party itself proved that Catholicism was slowly gaining acceptance in mainstream American thought. Urban progressive elites, while retaining suspicions of Catholicism's supposed "authoritarian" and "anti-democratic" tendencies, saw political potential in the now-assimilated Irish and German Catholic population; and many were horrified at the outright bigotry of the anti-Smith campaign, given the progressive tendencies that the Catholic Church, and Smith himself in his gubernatorial administration, had recently shown. In large measure this reaction led to an acceptance of Catholicism, a new element on the American scene.

Also involved in the new toleration of Catholicism was a large degree of political calculation. After Smith's triumph at the 1928 Democratic convention and the party's

consequent repudiation of its more traditionalist elements, a new modern, urban, industrial consensus began to emerge; and party leaders, including the next presidential nominee Franklin Delano Roosevelt, began forging the Democrats' prior collection of traditionalist political domains, from Northern urban "machines" to Southern rural segregationists, from socialist-leaning labor groups to Catholics, into a new coalition of majoritarian Democratic party politics – one which arose in the wake of the stock market crash of 1929 and the election of Roosevelt as President in 1932 and was to endure into the 1980s, and which formed the base of Roosevelt's program of activist government –the New Deal.[3]

Indeed, while sometimes suspicious of a secular federal bureaucracy, by the early 1930s the Catholic Church stood firmly behind efforts at reform and assistance to the poor – which resulted in a corresponding diminution of the anti-Catholicism of the previous decade. Social action within Catholicism flourished during the Depression, with the Church's own institutions working to help individuals cope with poverty and want. With the government also increasingly active in relief efforts, the traditional Catholic emphasis on collective action and the common good gave the Church a new credibility among non-Catholics, particularly those interested in reform.[4]

As industrial unionism emerged as a force in New Deal politics, "labor priests" like Pittsburgh's Father James Renshaw Cox (the leader of "Cox's Army," a march on Washington by poverty-stricken Pennsylvanians, and the first Catholic priest to be nominated as a presidential candidate) and his intellectual protégé Father Charles Owen Rice became household

names. While delivering the benediction at the CIO's first convention, Rice proclaimed, "A victory for labor in its struggles for decent conditions is a victory for Americanism and Christianity."[5]

Roosevelt's administration cooperated extensively with Catholics in all walks of life. Among them were laity like New York Senator Robert Wagner, who authored both the National Labor Relations Act and the Social Security Act, and United Steelworkers of America and CIO president Philip Murray; priests like Rice, involved in the CIO and the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (founded in 1937 by followers of radical Catholic activist Dorothy Day – herself an extremely influential and popular anti-poverty crusader, with her "houses of hospitality" and her newspaper, the *Catholic Worker*); and members of the hierarchy like Chicago's Auxiliary Bishop Bernard Sheil, champion of meat-packing workers, and his superior, Archbishop (later Cardinal) George Mundelein. When the senior prelate requested that aid from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration be channeled through the archdiocese's charities, Roosevelt gratefully granted the request.[6]

But foremost among Roosevelt's allies -- and the best exemplar of the Church's new commitment to "reform" causes -- was Monsignor John A. Ryan, a professor of political science and moral theology at the Catholic University of America, and the longtime director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Council.[7] Even before the emergence of the New Deal, Ryan had been inspired by Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* to champion a distinctly Catholic economic progressivism.

Ryan had taken the lead in moving American Catholicism toward greater involvement in progressive politics. Ryan's 1919 proposal "Social Reconstruction: A General Review of the Problems and Survey of the Remedies," better known as the "Bishop's Program," advocated Church support for a minimum wage, public housing, organized labor, old-age and unemployment insurance, and regulation of public utilities.[8] Ryan's proposals, and the sympathetic hearing they received from the American episcopacy, impressed and greatly appealed to many – particularly Eastern, urban liberals, who had previously been suspicious both of the "repressive" and "authoritarian" hierarchy of the Church, and the working-class, foreign immigrants who made up much of its membership, as Catholic historian Jay Dolan notes:

> People were amazed that the Catholic hierarchy could be so socially progressive. The progressive secular press expressed "incredulous delight" with the document; liberal Protestants responded favorably, as did labor leaders. Upton Sinclair called it nothing less than a "Catholic miracle.[9]

Ryan was a devoted Roosevelt partisan. In addition to delivering the invocation at FDR's 1937 and 1945 inaugurals Ryan was also appointed a member of the President's Advisory Council, and was invited to serve on the National Recovery Administration's Industrial Appeals Board in 1934. Most famously, in 1936 Ryan publicly denounced a fellow priest's criticisms of the president in a speech titled, "Roosevelt Safeguards America."

While Cox, Rice, Ryan, and many of the other "labor priests" were public figures, their influence was largely limited to specific spheres. Cox was briefly famous during the march on Washington of "Cox's Army," but he rapidly faded from prominence thereafter. Rice's influence was largely limited to those interested in the labor movement, while the ACTU priests moved in

even more radical circles; and Ryan, while occasionally mentioned in print, was known primarily in liberal intellectual circles and the upper echelons of government. Despite Ryan's standing in the popular President Roosevelt's administration, it is somewhat ironic that the "fellow priest" with whom he disagreed about the president's merits was much better known; for it is indisputable that by far the most popular and influential Catholic cleric in Depression-era America was one who melded a uniquely American form of Catholic populism with a newly-popular and immensely powerful electronic medium capable of reaching millions[10] -- the famed "radio priest," Father Charles E. Coughlin.

Father Coughlin's reputation has not fared well among academic historians, many of whom conflate Coughlin's early populism with his undeniable later anti-Semitism. Most histories of Coughlin focus so obsessively on his late descent into racist rhetoric and sympathy for fascism that they fail to acknowledge that during the earlier period of his greatest popularity, Coughlin was a far more mainstream, if no less rhetorically confrontational, figure.[11]

The man who was to become America's most influential Depression-era priest was born in Ontario in 1891, to a mother whose fondest wish was that he enter the priesthood. Accordingly, Charles E. Coughlin was ordained in 1916. After several years in the Basilian order working as a teacher, drama club advisor, and athletic coach, Coughlin was incardinated into the Detroit diocese. Following a few brief assignments as curate, in 1926 he was assigned pastoral duties in Royal Oak, a new suburb of Detroit swelling with those drawn to work in the city's growing auto industry. Shortly after erecting a small wooden church, Coughlin reported that he

was startled one night to find a fiery cross, the symbol of the Ku Klux Klan, alight on the church's lawn. Beating out the flames, Coughlin vowed to someday build on the spot a church "with a cross so high that neither man nor beast can burn it down."[12]

Energized to speak out against the Klan (and, no doubt, also wanting to raise the public profile of his church), Coughlin spoke to the head of Detroit radio station WJR, and by late October was on the air. Originally calling his program "The Children's Hour," the priest spoke weekly on such typically Catholic concerns as the evils of birth control, communism, and Prohibition, and on the importance of the family. In 1929, Coughlin's program spread to two other stations, WMAQ Chicago and WLW Cincinnati (with its 500 kilowatt signal, the latter was at the time the most powerful broadcast transmitter in the country), thus reaching much of the Midwest. In that year also occurred the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression. Gradually, Coughlin began addressing the problems of society through a broader social and economic lens.

The year 1930 was the turning point for Coughlin. The priest's home base of Detroit had the highest unemployment rate of any major city in the U.S., a level of desperation and destitution with which the city's public relief agencies were unable to cope.[13] Confronted with huge masses of unemployed workers, Coughlin began discussing economic matters in earnest, castigating bankers (whom he called "banksters"), callous businessmen, and international financial markets for their roles in bringing about the crash and subsequent unemployment. In July, the already popular and influential priest was invited to testify before a Congressional

committee about communism; but Coughlin startled the conservative committee members (who had every reason to presume the priest would confine himself to the evils of the political left) by attacking private enterprise in general and Henry Ford in particular, stating that in their greed, capitalists like Ford were themselves the cause not only of poverty, but of workers turning to socialism.[14] As a result of his radio popularity and the publicity surrounding his Congressional testimony, in the summer of 1930 Coughlin's program was picked up by the CBS radio network, vastly expanding Coughlin's audience and influence.

But what was the man already famed as the "radio priest" saying in his weekly broadcasts? Historian of the Depression Alan Brinkley offers an incisive portrait of the ideals, theories and philosophies which underpinned Coughlin's broadcasts. Though hardly a "labor priest" like Rice or a sophisticated social theorist on the level of a John Ryan, during his time with the Basilians Coughlin too had been exposed to and excited by the documents and ideas of Catholic social activism.

Prime among these was Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* which, while affirming the right to private property and rejecting communism, also condemned unrestricted capitalism and supported the right of laborers to form unions, to help alleviate "the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class." Descended from Thomas Aquinas' concept of the just community, as part of which the saint argued that "man ought not regard external goods as his own, but as common so that, in fact, a person should readily share them when he sees others in need," Catholic social theory in the wake of *Rerum*

*Novarum* saw that social justice "required neither rigid collectivism nor *laissez-faire* individualism [but] a system of private ownership tempered by recognition of the individual's obligation to his community."[15]

Whether through conscious conviction or coincidence, it happened that many of the Catholic communitarian principles on which Coughlin based his speeches were also compatible with and reflective of many of the traditional concerns and beliefs of American populism.[16] The affirmation of the ideals of community and of threatened (largely small-town, Midwestern, and middle-class) values; the belief that institutions should remain small and accessible enough to prevent abuse of power and accumulation of excessive wealth; the demand for reform carried out by federal powers, but only through a carefully restricted expansion of government; an undercurrent of opposition to "steady erosion of individual's ability to control his own destiny;" and the assignment of scapegoats allegedly responsible for the current crisis, such as (implicitly Eastern, urban, and upper-class) bankers and industrialists; these were the beliefs which motivated much of the populist movement from the 1870s through the 1930s, and many of which still have force today – as can be seen in the rise of the modern-day Tea Party. This happy correspondence of belief immeasurably helped to ensure and confirm Coughlin's popularity with his (also largely middle-class and Midwestern) audience.[17]

With his new access to the CBS network, Coughlin radically altered his program. Now renamed the "Golden Hour of the Little Flower," after his parish church's patron saint, Thérèse

of Lisieux, known as the "Little Flower of Jesus," Coughlin emphasized his burgeoning concern with the plight of unemployed workers and destitute farmers during the Depression.

Coughlin now had the ideal circumstances in which to put into practice the ideals and principles of Catholic social activism: a means of spreading his message to a widespread audience who were primed to hear it, and an economic crisis which made such action both appealing and necessary. By publicizing the lessons of *Rerum Novarum* and the other teachings of Leo XIII, Coughlin could do his duty both as a social reformer and a priest, by bringing Catholic social teaching to the secular world.[18]

Coughlin also invited members of his listening audience to join the newly-established "Radio League of the Little Flower," a simple mailing list through which listeners could obtain printed copies of his sermons and make donations. Coughlin used the contributions which poured in from members around the nation to create a charitable organization which distributed food and clothing to thousands of needy citizens in the Detroit area. In addition to using some of the wealth to fund construction of a new church, the Shrine of the Little Flower, Coughlin donated large sums to various private relief efforts and national charities.[19]

Coughlin's efforts – as well as those of Ryan and other labor and social justice Catholics – were reinforced in 1931, with the promulgation of Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. The papal exhortation stated that private property loses its morality if it is not subordinated to the common good, and endorsed government's limited right to pursue redistribution policies.

It also encouraged greater solidarity, cooperation and communication between employers and employees, and condemned exploitative international finance markets -- just as Coughlin was already doing.

The encyclical brought a new fire of enthusiasm to the social justice field. Catholic publications became powerful organs advocating reform, with particularly liberal Catholics considering *Quadragesimo Anno* a mandate for social action.[20] Coughlin himself intensified his rhetoric, causing a break with CBS. The network, worried that Coughlin's increasing denunciations of business and industry would offend some in Congress (and thereby imperil the network's status with the Federal Radio Commission), suggested the priest moderate his comments. In response, Coughlin attacked the network on its own airwaves, accusing CBS of censorship. A tide of protest from listeners caused CBS to withdraw its complaint; but when Coughlin's contract came up for renewal, the network quietly dropped him, claiming a policy against selling airtime to religious groups.[21] (The network continued to make time available to religious entities free of charge at its own discretion, but used the new policy to rid itself of the increasingly inflammatory priest.) But by this time, it no longer mattered; Coughlin was easily able to assemble his own network of stations through which his program was syndicated. Few station owners could resist the appeal of, and the audience clamor for, the popular priest's program.

By this time, Father Coughlin had largely moved away from general discussions of the unemployment crisis, and began offering concrete proposals for economic reform. Basing his

argument initially on restructuring the nation's financial institutions (such as eliminating the Federal Reserve and instituting an all-powerful Bank of the United States to dictate fiscal policy) and currency reform (principally, removing the United States from the gold standard and remonetizing silver),[22] at times Coughlin proposed far more sweeping change. As described by Catholic historian James Hennessy,

> Coughlin wanted wholesale constitutional change, with the population organized in vocational or trade bodies which would elect a House of Representatives. The representatives would choose the President. A Senate composed of one representative of capital and one of labor from each state completed the picture. The government would have the authority to regulate supply and demand, limit profits and output, settle labor disputes, guarantee employment, tax incomes, and 'counsel' and 'guide' workers in dealings with industry.[23]

As the 1932 election approached, Coughlin, thoroughly disgusted with the pro-banker philosophy of the Republicans and the Hoover administration, began championing Franklin Delano Roosevelt's run for the presidency. Coughlin's approbation intensified after Roosevelt met the wildly popular priest.

Roosevelt believed that having Coughlin in his camp would allow the Democratic party to more easily unite its rural Protestant and urban Catholic wings. Using his own considerable personal charisma, Roosevelt charmed the priest. Flattered by the candidate's attention, Coughlin soon believed (and, even after events proved him wrong, never quite stopped hoping) that he would be rewarded with an important position in government. As a result, Coughlin threw the considerable weight of his own popularity and rhetoric behind electing Roosevelt. While never mentioning Roosevelt by name, the priest's excoriation of the Hoover Administration made his

position clear to all.[24] When the candidate from Hyde Park won the election, Coughlin openly showed his support for the new president, proclaiming Roosevelt's "New Deal" to be "Christ's Deal." Alan Brinkley notes that "throughout most of 1933, [Coughlin's] radio sermons were so lavish in praise of the president as to be almost embarrassing."[25]

But gradually, the mercurial priest began to cool toward the administration. In part, this can be attributed to Coughlin's not-inconsiderable ego; while pouring substantial effort and enthusiasm into praising the new president and his program (and despite frequent efforts to ingratiate himself with the president's advisors), Coughlin was not recognized or rewarded with position or presidential accolades, as was Ryan; nor did the administration adopt any of his policy proposals.

But also, in large measure Coughlin's increasing disapprobation was due to the failure of Roosevelt's "New Deal" to make any substantial difference in the lives of the thousands of workingmen who were his parishioners. As a parish priest in the midst of industrial Detroit, and as one who received mail from literally millions of listeners, Coughlin had a far greater sense of the effectiveness – or lack thereof -- of government policy than did theoreticians like Ryan. Ensconced in a comfortable university office, and surrounded by the other idealistic intellectuals of FDR's "Brain Trust," Ryan busily wrote articles adapting the latest theories for use in a political program; meanwhile, Coughlin was faced daily with thousands of unemployed, destitute auto workers clamoring for relief.

This failure was due primarily to the premises of the "New Deal" itself. With organizers and administrators composed largely of academics and theoreticians, what historians have come to call the "first New Deal" concerned itself with realigning relations between capital and labor, regulating industry on a grand scale, and establishing systems which – in time – might provide a more equitable distribution of wealth in society. While the ultimate efficaciousness of such policies can be debated, what cannot is the fact that this "first New Deal" provided little immediate, tangible assistance to the millions of unemployed. Thus, by 1934, after giving Roosevelt a year to make good on his sunny, optimistic rhetoric, disappointed Americans – many now unemployed for several years – demanded drastic solutions, and sought them from a variety of other political groups. Upton Sinclair's End Poverty in California (EPIC) gubernatorial campaign, the policies of North Dakota's Non-Partisan League, Minnesota's Farmer-Labor party under Floyd B. Olson, Wisconsin's revived Progressive party under Phil and "Young Bob" LaFollette, and Louisiana boss Huey Long's "Share Our Wealth" plan, among others, attracted millions of followers with their promise of alleviating poverty through direct assistance to individuals.[26]

Unsurprisingly, given his longtime reformist ethos and anti-capitalist rhetoric, Father Coughlin played a significant part in contributing to the popularity of such movements at the expense of the Roosevelt administration. In January of 1934, Coughlin issued an "open letter" to Congress, urging the body to ignore the president and to start creating their own recovery programs, and warning that Roosevelt's monopoly on government power was "beginning to resemble a dictatorship."[27] After he attacked the National Recovery Administration and the

Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Coughlin's unwavering support for the New Deal ended in the spring of 1934.

In the fall of that year, Coughlin announced the formation of a new organization, the National Union for Social Justice. Though promoted with much fanfare by Coughlin, the NUSJ was in fact poorly thought-out, a mere paper organization little different from his mailing-list League of the Little Flower. While Coughlin seems to have had some idea of using the NUSJ as a "lobby of the people," a pressure group to try to sway government policy, he failed to set up any structure or local organization for the group. Nevertheless, the founding of the NUSJ gave Coughlin the opportunity to articulate his "sixteen principles of social justice." Among these were a living wage for all laborers, cost of production plus fair profit for farmers and agricultural workers, the nationalization of resources "too important to be held by individuals," all private property to be controlled by the government "for the public good," "in time of war, the conscription of wealth as well as men," and a statement that government's chief concern should be with the poor.[28]

In 1935, Coughlin irrevocably placed himself in opposition to the Roosevelt administration, urging listeners to oppose a Congressional vote on the United States joining the World Court (a bill in which Roosevelt had invested considerable personal effort and prestige). This stance resonated strongly with Coughlin's traditionally isolationist Midwestern audience (and drew especial sympathy from Irish and German listeners, who had bitter memories of Woodrow Wilson's pro-British attitudes, and his success in involving America in World War I

on the side of the Allies.) Swamped by thousands of telegrams sent at Coughlin's urging, Congress voted against the bill; but this was to be Coughlin's last concrete triumph. An enraged Roosevelt saw to it that any bill based on Coughlin's proposals which subsequently did manage to make it to the floor of Congress was destroyed.[29]

Yet encouraged by his still-great popularity – in October of 1935, the priest for the first time added radio stations in California, Washington, Oregon, Colorado and Utah to his network – Coughlin persisted in his ill-fated opposition to the president. In 1936, he misguidedly joined with elderly Social Security advocate Dr. Francis Townsend and the now-murdered Huey Long's demagogic heir, Gerald L.K. Smith, in organizing the Union Party, a third party alternative to the Democrats and Republicans. The Union Party was doomed to failure; by this time, the Roosevelt administration had responded to the political disarray and threatened desertion of voters in 1934 with the "second New Deal," entailing the creation of such bodies as the Works Progress Administration – direct aid organizations which put unemployed individuals to work improving local, state, and national infrastructure across the country. Having made a visible and concrete difference in the lives of millions, the administration was vindicated in the public mind, and most of the new movements from 1934 lost the majority of their adherents. So too did the Union Party; forced to choose between President Roosevelt and Coughlin's candidate, the decidedly uncharismatic North Dakota Congressman William Lemke, voters overwhelmingly chose the president – by a margin so vast, Coughlin was thoroughly humiliated.

The defeat of the Union Party destroyed Coughlin's influence. In choosing to openly oppose perhaps the only man in America more popular than Coughlin himself – President Roosevelt – the priest forced listeners to choose between them. With the president's policies concretely improving their lives while Coughlin made empty speeches, the public naturally chose Roosevelt. Coughlin's image suffered badly due to his break with the equally popular FDR (who, in addition to making public policy, was as adept as Coughlin at using the radio to influence Americans through his charming and homey "Fireside Chats"). Coughlin's third-party push exacerbated the break. To the many who could compare the local Democratic party structure which provided aid, and the vastly more powerful federal institutions now being brought to bear, with Coughlin's empty demands for change, choosing the Union party seemed the very height of irresponsibility.

The Union Party gambit marked the end of Coughlin's influence over all but his most rabid and fanatical listeners. Radio stations rapidly abandoned Coughlin, with only a handful retaining his programming.

The disappearance of his fame and vast influence produced a change in Coughlin. As Alan Brinkley notes, "the remaining years of his public career were a time of steady deterioration....By 1938, Coughlin could hardly be taken seriously as a major political force; and aware of the dissolution of his power, he had become a harsh and embittered man. His retreat into bigotry and hysteria was largely an act of resentful desperation."[30]

In the years after 1938, Coughlin became increasingly shrill, his actions earning him the justifiable title of "hatemonger" which some apply to his entire career. This began with overt anti-Semitism, such as publication of the infamous and fraudulent *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Though in his early speeches Coughlin had pointedly avoided identifying corrupt bankers specifically with Judaism, he now did so, as well as associating Jews with the origins of communism. Coughlin also moved from advocating traditional populist isolationism to offering positive praise for Germany's Nazi movement, even going so far as to crib speeches from Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels. Urging his few remaining followers to organize into "platoons" to oppose communism, Coughlin's words resulted in the organization of the so-called "Christian Front," groups of primarily Irish anti-Semitic thugs who terrorized and assaulted Jews in New York, Boston, and Hartford throughout 1940. By the end of the year, every radio station in the country had dropped his program. Coughlin carried on his pro-Nazi ranting in his newsletter *Social Justice* until early 1942. After a series of encounters with his new ordinary, Archbishop Edward Mooney of Detroit – encounters comprising equal parts equivocation and defiance – Coughlin's racist and fascist activity ended when, in the wake of Pearl Harbor and Germany's declaration of war against the United States, the lay publishers of *Social Justice* were investigated on federal sedition charges, and Mooney threatened Coughlin with suspension from the clerical state. By May 1942, the once-famed voice which had influenced millions was definitively silenced.[31] Coughlin took up the humble life of a parish priest and never again published newsletters or made speeches to anyone other than his own congregation, continuing as pastor of the Shrine of the Little Flower until his retirement in 1966. He died in 1979.

Despite his descent into racist fanaticism at the end of his public career, at its outset Father Coughlin was easily one of the most, if not THE most, influential individual on the new medium of radio; and it is his appearance at the beginning of the first mass electronic medium which led in large part to his influence. Commercial radio was less than six years old when Coughlin began broadcasting in 1926; while "wireless telegraphy" was in widespread use prior to and during World War I, most accounts consider the broadcast of the 1920 election returns on Pittsburgh's station KDKA in 1921 to be the beginning of civilian broadcasting in the United States. Just as radio ownership and use was becoming widespread, Coughlin appeared on the airwaves.

But Coughlin's fame and influence was the result of more than just his involvement in a new medium; it was also the use Coughlin made of it. Even Coughlin *bête noire* Donald Warren concedes:

> [Coughlin] ushered in a revolution in American mass media by his dramatic ability to blend religion, politics, and entertainment in a powerful brew whose impact is still being felt decades after his demise as a public figure. Two significant media phenomena, televangelism and political talk radio, stem back to him....Coughlin transformed radio broadcasting, and therefore public discourse, in American society. From his time on, no one could ignore the fact that this new medium required a technique that projected a sincerity, warmth, and power based solely on the human voice.[32]

Broadcast pioneer Frank Stanton, President of CBS from 1946 to 1971 and the man responsible for CBS' expansion of its news division and move into color television, later said that Coughlin's was "the greatest voice of the twentieth century...Coughlin was ahead of the

industry and had a better grasp of what the medium could do in the area of ideas than the industry did."[33]

Another reason for the priest's popularity was what one scholar calls Coughlin's "ecumenism of discontent." In an era when many – particularly Midwestern Protestants – retained an anti-Catholic bias, Father Coughlin's broadcasts transcended ethnic and religious lines. By giving voice to the frustrations of the millions of Americans suddenly jobless for reasons they could not understand, and by advocating values cherished by his audience and attacking their presumed oppressors, Coughlin drew in listeners who normally would have had little time for a Catholic priest. So vociferous was Coughlin's denunciation of the economic evils of the day that he transcended mere religious differences, and found listeners among Protestants, atheists, and Jews alike. Despite living in an anti-Catholic, Anglo-Saxon Protestant neighborhood, Stanton recalled, "no one I knew...brought up the Church issue at all."[34] *

But perhaps the most credit of all for his success must go to Coughlin himself. Even today, many scholars marvel at the power and lyricism of Coughlin's voice as preserved on recordings. How much more powerful it must have seemed in the days when the same voice was coming out of the aether into a seemingly magical box in the home. Coughlin's voice has been characterized as

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* As anecdotal evidence of Coughlin's broad appeal in this period, while going through the effects of his deceased grandfather – who had always exhibited cynicism about all forms of religion – the author of this dissertation was astonished to find a copy of *By the Sweat of Thy Brow*, a collection of Father Coughlin's sermons published by the Shrine of the Little Flower in 1931.

> A beautiful baritone...his range was spectacular. He always began in a low rich pitch, speaking slowly, gradually increasing in tempo and vehemence, then soaring into high and passionate tones. His diction was musical, the effect authoritative. His Irish ancestry betrayed itself in the way he trilled his r's, making the word "church" sound like "charrch."[35]

Novelist Wallace Stegner remembers that Coughlin had "a voice of such mellow richness, such manly, heart-warming, confidential intimacy, such emotional and ingratiating charm, that anyone tuning past it on the radio dial almost automatically returned to hear it again, without a doubt one of the great speaking voices of the twentieth century...It was a voice made for promises."[36] Historian Alan Brinkley says Coughlin was possessed of

> a voice resonant with strength and anger and hope and promise…. [and an] ability to make his sermons accessible, interesting, and provocative to his audience...Coughlin used a wide variety of rhetorical techniques: maudlin sentimentality, anger and invective, sober reasonableness, religious or patriotic fervor. Rarely did successive broadcasts strike precisely the same tone, and in this unpredictability lay much of Coughlin's appeal.[37]

All these things contributed to Father Coughlin's popularity; but most important of all was not the content of what Coughlin said, nor even the tone and tenor in which he said it, but the style he used in saying it. Whether discussing the tenets of religion, arcane economic theory, or the details of everyday life, Coughlin had a manner of plain speaking which made his messages accessible to the everyday individual. In an era when many preachers still clung to a style of elocution more appropriate to the previous century, Coughlin used what Donald Warren calls "tough, almost profane language to address the enemies of the common people."[38]

While he could be mawkishly sentimental when touching on a tender subject, Coughlin was undeniably at his dynamic best when he was assailing the twin evils of communism and capitalism, and the masters of industry and finance who exploited the working man. At such times, Coughlin's voice and rhetoric rang with moral outrage: demanding that Congress "keep America safe for Americans and not the hunting ground for international plutocrats,"[39] the priest bellowed on one occasion that "Modern statecraft, modern finance, and modern industry seem to have forgotten that a carcass of decayed meat cannot help but breed maggots!"[40] On the failure of Detroit banks in 1932, Coughlin exclaimed, "modern banking has degenerated into a crap game where the dice were often loaded; a crap game played by the unscrupulous experts with other people's money...the gamblers of Wall Street, well assisted by their lieutenants in crime."[41]

In his pro-Roosevelt years, opponents of the administration were "crack-brained publicity seekers spewing damnable lies," and socialist Norman Thomas was a "soft-brained radical;"[42] in later years, the League of Nations was "the most loathsome afterbirth of the World War,"[43] and the New Deal "two years of surrender. Two years of matching the puerile, puny brains of idealists against the virile viciousness of business and finance. Two years of economic failure."[44] And during the 1936 Union Party convention in Cleveland, even Coughlin acknowledged he went too far -- yet brought his small audience of loyalists to their feet roaring approval when he bellowed, "I ask you to purge the great betrayer and liar, the anti-God, the man who claims to be a Democrat, from the Democratic party – I mean Franklin double-crossing Roosevelt!"[45]

It was this fearless, dynamic, "manly" approach which appealed most of all to listeners; and while Coughlin's wisdom and tact can be questioned, his popularity in the early 1930s cannot. Broadcast around the nation on his network of more than thirty radio stations, Coughlin attracted a weekly audience estimated as high as forty million listeners, in virtually every major population center in the East and Midwest – at the time, the largest radio audience in the world.[46]

Coughlin received more mail than anyone else in America – more than any film star or sports hero, more than the president; by 1934, more than 10,000 letters were received every day, with 65% of them from non-Catholics. After a particularly spectacular sermon, he received over a million letters a week, requiring a clerical staff of more than a hundred to deal with the flood of mail. In 1934, a survey asked radio listeners, "who is the most useful citizen of the United States, other than the president?"; 55% answered, "Father Coughlin." Another station offered its listeners a choice on Sunday afternoons of Father Coughlin or the New York Philharmonic; 7,000 voted for music, but a whopping 112,000 demanded Coughlin.[47] Little wonder that

> in urban neighborhoods throughout the East and Midwest – not only Irish communities, but German, Italian, Polish; not only Catholic areas, but Protestant and, for a time, even Jewish – many residents long remembered the familiar experience of walking down streets lined with row houses, triple-deckers, or apartment buildings and hearing out of every window the voice of Father Coughlin blaring from the radio. You could walk for blocks, they recalled, and never miss a word.[48]

At Coughlin's home church, the Shrine of the Little Flower, eight masses were held each Sunday, with attendance at each averaging 3000.[49] In 1933, Coughlin offered a written compilation of his sermons to listeners, and sold over a million copies. The same year,

Hollywood approached Coughlin for permission to make a movie based on his life, to be titled *The Fighting Priest*, but Coughlin declined.[50]

Given this popularity, it is no wonder that, despite his later descent into extremism, Coughlin was remembered by those who listened in his early days as the most famous of the American social justice Catholics. Far more even than Monsignor Ryan or the era's other "labor priests," Coughlin popularized the notion that concentrated wealth by the rich and low wages for the poor were immoral, and that it was a Christian duty to provide a social "safety net" for the less fortunate.[51] Even many of those who vehemently condemned Coughlin for his later pro-Nazi stances showed an ability to separate the embittered Coughlin's fascist and anti-Semitic rhetoric from the social justice populism of his early years, and even retained respectful and affectionate memories of Coughlin's early 1930s broadcasts, stating that Coughlin had provided their first inspiration to social thought. "People today have no idea of Father Coughlin's impact in awakening the social conscience of America," recalled Dorothy Day disciple Richard Deverall, later executive secretary of the ACTU and co-founder of *Christian Social Action* magazine.[52]

Unfortunately, academic historians have demonstrated little understanding of the mainstream ideals articulated by the early Coughlin, preferring to emphasize the extremism of his later years. When they mention him at all, standard histories of the Depression era dwell almost exclusively on the post-1936 period of Coughlin's radio program, thereby caricaturing

him as purely a fascist demagogue with an appeal only to ultra-right-wing bigots.[53*] As a result, the extent to which Father Coughlin overwhelmingly influenced, even defined, the image of the Catholic priest for an America just beginning to emerge from its centuries-old cultural anti-Catholicism has also been overlooked. By dint of his widespread fame and popularity in the early 1930s, it is indisputable that Father Coughlin was responsible for instilling the image of the Catholic priest which dominated popular culture, and which most Americans were to hold for years afterward: the Catholic priest as a passionate, two-fisted Irish crusader for justice, unafraid to use both word and deed to challenge vested interests and entrenched corruption in his fight to defend the interests of the poor and downtrodden.

Through the radio, most Americans went from knowing nothing about Catholic priests to knowing a great deal about one Catholic priest – Father Coughlin. The impression Coughlin created (perhaps modified by snatches of news about Cox, Ryan, and others) served to define the image of the Catholic priest from then on...until subsequent exposure or personal experience added more information to the individual's conceptual matrix.

Previously throughout American history, Catholic clergy had been stereotyped as lascivious, effeminate, and corrupt proto-tyrants, preying on young women, dominating ignorant working-class immigrants, and plotting to overthrow American traditions of liberty and democracy in favor of installing a dictatorial theocracy. It was precisely these images which

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[*] The fact that both blatant advocacy of socialism and extreme anti-Semitism existed in the same individual should call into question modern academia's presumption that racism is solely characteristic of the political right.

were challenged and replaced by the newly-prominent priests of 1930s mass culture. Father Coughlin, with his tough, "manly" rhetoric and his image as "the fighting priest," standing up for poor workers and the American lower- and middle-classes against the corrupt capitalists of Wall Street, led the change. Thus, a whole new set of tropes and stereotypes of the Catholic priest emerged, which were to characterize the image of Catholic clergy in popular culture from the 1930s through the 1960s.

Now, priests were portrayed as overwhelmingly Irish (as, indeed, nearly all of the prominent priests of the 1930s in fact were – the names Coughlin, Ryan, Rice, Cox, Duffy, and Flanagan alone tell the story). In keeping both with the traditional image of the Irish as combative, and with Coughlin's boisterous rhetoric, priests were shown as undeniably "manly": tough, fearless, and uncompromising in their speech, but also physically strong, capable and athletic. Though Coughlin was never known to get in a brawl, the priest who was able to "handle his fists" soon became part of the stereotype.

Along with the above, priests were also shown as compassionate, though in a "manly" way -- without being effeminate, they demonstrated their compassion through a concern for the poor and weak (though often, if the poor and weak individual was an adult male drunkard or ne'er-do-well, this compassion was demonstrated by urging the individual to exercise self-discipline and face his troubles "like a man.") Influenced by Coughlin's seeming erudition about economic and social policy, as well as the genuine scholarly nature of priests like Monsignor Ryan, priests were also now portrayed as intellectuals; but while knowledgeable about all

manner of matters, be they philosophical, psychological, developmental or political, the imaged priest wore his learning lightly, nearly always maintaining the common touch, and demonstrating his learning (as Coughlin did) in language the average person could understand.

The new image of the pop-culture priest put all this courage, physical prowess, learning, and compassion to use as a crusader in social activist causes, battling crime, corruption, poverty, bigotry and (particularly in the late 1940s and early 1950s) communism. In practical terms in the entertainment of the day, this could mean fighting criminal bosses and corrupt businessmen, or raising money for an orphanage to succor troubled youth. Naturally, it was simply presumed that such heroic and omnicompetent individuals were totally incorruptible and morally pure, never tempted by material gain or infidelity to their vows. The one activity in which priests in entertainment were rarely if ever shown engaging were the actual religious duties of a priest: saying mass, reading the breviary, praying, offering blessings, and hearing confessions. Presumably, this is because such activities were foreign to the non-Catholics in the audience; and (until recent years) Hollywood has rarely seen any percentage in alienating its customers with material which may be unsettling to them.

The new image of the priest, and its use in popular culture, was accompanied by the concurrent acceptance of Catholicism into the American cultural mainstream. With the rising acceptability of things Catholic, the American entertainment industry entered into an uneasy accommodation with Catholicism.

This accommodation – and uneasiness – occurred for several reasons. While it could provoke discomfort from some audiences, because it was to some degree still seen as an alien "other", Catholicism also had a fascination and appeal. “The Catholic Church...is ancient in a culture that celebrates the new, professes truths in a postmodern culture that looks skeptically on any claim to truth, and speaks of mystery in a rational, post-Enlightenment world,” notes James Martin, S.J. [54] Such contrary attitudes can fascinate audiences without provoking discomfort or disdain.

Also, the very elements which made Catholicism “alien” to many – the sacred art, incense, vestments, and so forth – also make it supremely visual and sensual (as witness John Adams’ remarks about Catholicism’s “bewitching” appeal to the “eye, ear, and imagination”), and therefore attractive to movie producers and directors concerned with visual imagery. The Catholic Church, therefore, lent itself perfectly to use in visual media.

This largely explains why the new image of the Catholic priest became successful and widespread in some media and not in others. While there had been novels and stories featuring priests, such literary works were still primarily confined to the “Catholic ghetto,” and were largely unread by non-Catholics; and while a number of the new “modernist” writers of the era, such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, were Catholic and indeed featured Catholic themes in their work, such themes were rarely overt, and even more rarely featured clergy as characters.

Even apart from Father Coughlin, Catholicism was present on the radio; but almost never in any fictionalized manner. When it came to religion – Catholic and Protestant alike – network radio in the 1930s and '40s largely confined itself to making airtime available for programming provided by various denominational groups. For Catholics, such programs included *The Catholic Hour,* which featured distinguished speakers such as Monsignor Ryan, Cardinal Spellman, and Catholic University philosophy professor Fulton J. Sheen, and music by the Paulist Choiristers and popular 1930s soloist Jessica Dragonette; and *The Ave Maria Hour*, produced by the Brown Friars of Graymoor, which aired choral novena services and dramatizations of the lives of the saints. Programs featuring stories from the Bible, such as *The Greatest Story Ever Told* and *The Light of the World*, were deliberately non-sectarian in their approach; and while the noted dramatic anthology *Family Theater* was created by Father Patrick Peyton[55] as a means to promote family unity and prayer, neither the dramas presented on the program nor the inspirational messages aired in place of commercials were overtly Catholic, the program deliberately eschewing denominationalism to better attract all listeners. (The program did become famous, however, for repeatedly stating Father Peyton's messages, "A world at prayer is a world at peace," and, most notably, "The family that prays together stays together.")[56]

But it was in the medium of film that the newly-accepted, and newly imaged, Catholic priest was to achieve his first spectacular successes. The "heroic priest" as a type became a trope at this time, once which entered American popular culture and was to remain influential in the popular imagination and other forms of media for decades.

There are many reasons why the Catholic priest became a popular heroic figure in the films of the 1930s and '40s. In large part, this had to do with the adoption of the Motion Picture Production Code and its bureaucracy, the Production Code Administration -- and the influence of the Catholic Church's organization of laity devoted to the cause of media propriety, the Legion of Decency.[57]

Stemming from several highly publicized examples of scandal emanating from Hollywood in the early 1920s – the unsolved murder of actor William Desmond Taylor, the mysterious death of director Thomas Ince (rumored to have been shot by publisher William Randolph Hearst), and perhaps most notably, the death of actress Virginia Rappe, allegedly the result of a violent sexual assault by popular silent screen comedian Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle – various cities and states around the U.S. began setting up their own film censorship boards, with 250 city boards operating in 1921 alone.[58] Moved to shore up their own image in the minds of middle America, film industry moguls chose to appoint their own "film commissioner" to assure probity, in imitation of the institution of a commissioner of baseball following the "Black Sox" World Series scandal of 1919. They chose Will H. Hays, Postmaster General under Warren G. Harding, former head of the Republican National Committee, and a Presbyterian elder. Hays was to serve as president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (forerunner of today's Motion Picture Association of America, which is still responsible for rating movies) for the next quarter-century. But while Hays met with various studio heads, few studios altered the content of their films.

Then, in 1926, events occurred which would lay the groundwork for the vast influence the Catholic Church was to play in regulating the content of films for the next forty years. Movie producer Cecil B. DeMille, in preparing to film the silent version of his biography of Christ, *King of Kings*, contacted the National Catholic Welfare Conference and asked the council to suggest a Catholic clergyman as liaison to the production. (DeMille, aware of the extreme religious sensitivity of the project he was undertaking and the potential for bad publicity, also secured the services of several Protestant clergymen and a Jewish rabbi as consultants as well.) Suggested for the post was Father Daniel Lord, a Chicago Jesuit then teaching drama at St. Louis University, who was himself an enthusiastic moviegoer. Lord forged a close friendship with DeMille, even defending some of the mogul's questionable choices in costuming and storyline as "dramatic license" when various Protestant and Jewish groups complained. This led to a working relationship between Lord and Hays.[59]

Meanwhile, to counter the anti-Catholic influence of the reorganized Ku Klux Klan (which had held a 50,000-man march down Pennsylvania Avenue a year earlier), Chicago's Cardinal George Mundelein had organized America's first Eucharistic Congress, with bishops from all around the U.S. and Europe, and over a million American Catholic laity, in attendance. At Mundelein's request, Catholic layman Martin Quigley, owner and editor of the film industry's major trade newspaper for producers, distributors and exhibitors, the *Motion Picture Herald*, arranged with the Fox movie studio to film the congress. After its conclusion another Catholic layman, the congress' publicity director Joseph Breen, was put in charge of distributing the film to Catholic churches and schools around the nation.

By 1929, Lord was increasingly dismayed with the continued proliferation of racy films. Working together, Lord, Breen, and Quigley collaborated on a document which would become the Motion Picture Production Code – a statement of principles and practices which would guide the content of Hollywood films. Underlying the document was the understanding that "correct entertainment raises the whole standard of a nation; wrong entertainment lowers the whole living conditions and moral ideals of a nation." They then enlisted Mundelein's aid in selling the Code to the major banking firms which underwrote the studio system, thereby applying irresistible pressure to Hollywood to accept the Code.[60]

But even with the Code in place, the studios continued to flout its provisions. In 1933, a disgusted Lord finally broke with Hays. "Trying to put everything right with a bit of moralizing in the last hundred feet of film, the priest warned, did nothing to wipe out the previous seventy-five minutes of indecency."[61] Lord's disgust and unwillingness to work with Hays any longer initiated a major shift in the attitude of the Church toward Hollywood. Catholic willingness to cooperate with Hays had rested largely on the presumption that Hays was acting in good faith and was truly committed to reforming the entertainment industry; but the film "commissioner's" continual practice of turning a blind eye to violations finally convinced Catholic leaders of the need for independent action.

Lord's disdain was buttressed by the publication of the book *Our Movie-Made Children*, a summary of twelve scientific research studies on the influence movies had on the attitudes, beliefs, character, and behavior of elementary and high-school students. Financed by the Payne Fund, the studies found that increased movie-going resulted in lower grades, decreased moral

standards, greater interest in criminal activity, and increased sexual experimentation by youngsters. Notes Hays code scholar Frank Walsh, "The publication of the Payne studies...was the last straw. The Catholic Church, which had opposed child labor legislation for fear that it would undermine parental control, spent millions of dollars developing a separate school system to inoculate its children against the evils of a secular world. And yet a series of sexual images on a silver screen seemed to threaten everything the Church had tried to accomplish."[62] The Catholic press was filled with demands that Hollywood be brought to heel; so great was the outcry that, at their annual meeting, the nation's Catholic bishops considered the matter of movie morality as a group for the first time, largely at the instigation of Lord, who had continued to bombard members of the hierarchy with letters about Hollywood's immorality and the need to find some way to enforce the theoretically stringent but practically toothless Production Code.

The enforcement mechanism was found on April 11, 1934, with the formation of the National Legion of Decency. At the Legion's first gathering in Cleveland, fifty thousand Catholics took the Legion's oath:

> I condemn all indecent and immoral motion pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals. I promise to do all that I can to strengthen public opinion against the production of indecent and immoral films, and to unite with all who protest against them. I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life. I pledge myself to remain away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy.[63]

But it was Philadelphia's archbishop, Cardinal Dennis Dougherty, who showed the new organization's true power. On May 23, in a statement read at every mass in every church in the diocese, Dougherty denounced the film industry as "the greatest menace to faith and morals in

America." Eschewing a limited ban on only objectionable films – which, he argued, would be ineffective, since ticket sales on morally acceptable movies funded the same studios that made problematic ones – Dougherty commanded Philadelphia's 800,000-plus Catholics, "under pain of sin," to boycott *all* movies.[64]

Dougherty's proclamation at last achieved results. Within weeks, *Variety* magazine reported that nearly two million Catholics had signed the pledge; and in addition to the attention the Legion was receiving from the press, dozens of Protestant clerics were came out in support of it, as well. Faced with disastrous publicity and plummeting box-office receipts, Hollywood capitulated. On June 13, 1934, the Production Code Administration was established, with Catholic Joseph Breen as its head. The PCA required all films to obtain a Code Certificate of Approval before being released, and gave Breen the authority to demand changes in films at the script stage, as well as final approval of the finished product. Thus, while the Production Code Administration regulated the film industry, it was the Legion of Decency which provided the popular and financial "muscle" that ensured Hollywood obeyed it.[65] As Les and Barbara Keyser observed:

> The Legion was very effective as a pressure group because its threatened economic boycott was well-aimed, well-timed, and well-organized by the hierarchy of the Church. The Catholic threat to withhold patronage from immoral films and theaters which habitually displayed them was awesome; immigrants and ethnics were not only the subject of many films but were also the most frequent patrons. Urban Catholics were the mainstay of first-run theaters; without their dollars, the industry could not go on.[66]

The widespread popularity of the Legion and the institution of the PCA must be seen as a legitimate reflection of the philosophical and political trends of the era. Indeed, just as Father

Coughlin's early rhetoric melded the tenets of Catholic social justice with the concerns of traditional American populism, so too did the institution and widespread popularity and success of the Production Code represent a melding of middle America's traditional Protestant morality with progressive Catholic social teaching, including the use of semi-official bodies to codify and enforce moral and societal standards. And just as the Church's social documents and its "labor priests" sought the good of workers by teaching that industrial capitalists should not exploit their bodies through overwork or unfair wages, and must respect every individual's human dignity – even enlisting the aid of government to ensure such fair treatment -- so too did the Church's hierarchy and laity, through the Legion of Decency, seek the good of all members of society by teaching that Hollywood capitalists should also respect human dignity by not subjecting the audience's minds to imagery which had a deleterious effect on their thoughts and behavior, and negative consequences for society as a whole.

Threatened with moral disapproval, boycott, and financial ruin should the Legion of Decency be displeased, the studios reluctantly adhered to the Code's moral standards. And considering that the script and finished product of every studio film was scrutinized by the devoutly Catholic Joseph Breen, it is easy to see why Hollywood chose to draw on then newly-revised tropes and stereotypes, and introduce into its films a new kind of hero certain to ensure Catholic approval and enthusiasm, one most obviously representing the Church itself – the heroic priest.

The decision to use the Catholic priest as an icon of heroism in the movies of the era is well-explained by Les and Barbara Keyser:

> The Motion Picture Production Code, which governed the industry from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s, is very explicit on the matter of religion…ministers must not be ridiculed or used as comic characters and villains "simply because the attitude taken toward them may easily become the attitude taken toward religion in general," and because "religion is lowered in the minds of the audience because of the lowering of the audience's respect for a minister."[67]

Furthermore, the priest fit into the dramatic needs of most Hollywood screenplays well. Priests almost perfectly exemplified the heroic attributes necessary for screen heroes; they belonged to no particular social strata, but could move easily in upper-, middle- or lower-class society, as a plot demanded. They were authority figures, yet ones sympathetic to and with their charges, and could still be "one of the boys." They could be found in nearly any setting, whether the scene was urban America, the countryside, or a foreign country. Best of all, they represented morality and incorruption, but without self-righteousness or arrogance.[68]

This explosion of heroic priests into the popular culture through its most popular and dominant visual medium, the movies – aided by the ongoing assimilation of Catholic ethnic groups and the mixing of groups through service in World War I, as previously mentioned -- irrevocably altered the understanding of Catholicism in the public mind. Throughout the 1930s and '40s, Hollywood embraced priests (and with them, Catholicism) – an embrace which proved wildly popular with audiences and critics alike. From a move initiated solely to placate Catholic criticism and ensure continued box-office attendance, the film industry led the establishment of a "Catholic moment" in the popular imagination and American culture.[69]

One of the first major hit movies to incorporate several elements which would become common in films featuring a Catholic priest as a lead character was the 1936 combination musical drama and disaster film, *San Francisco*.[70] As the movie opens, Mary Blake (played by Jeanette MacDonald), a naive but deeply religious daughter of a Colorado preacher, has newly arrived in San Francisco, where she seeks to become an opera singer. Down on her luck, Mary ventures into the wild, bawdy Barbary Coast area of the city, looking for work. There, Mary catches the eye of Blackie Norton (Clark Gable), an openly atheistic, street-smart hoodlum who runs the Paradise, a combination saloon and gambling hall. Impressed with Mary's singing ability (and her legs), Blackie signs her to a two-year contract to sing in his saloon.

Mary is also befriended by Father Tim Mullin (Spencer Tracy), Blackie's best friend since boyhood. Having grown up in the same difficult circumstances, Father Tim understands Blackie, and realizes that despite their divergent life paths, he might well have ended up selfish and amoral, as Blackie has. Father Tim continually (but gently and subtly) tries to persuade Blackie to give up his coarse ways; but in addition to being his philosophical opponent, Mullin is also Blackie's sparring partner in boxing. In both areas, the priest consistently trumps Blackie, but the saloon owner remains unmoved and continues living his dissolute life. Taking an interest in Mary, Father Tim begins coaching her on how to deal with Blackie. When Blackie asks Mary to marry him, Father Tim intervenes, telling Mary she is making a terrible mistake. An enraged Blackie punches Father Tim.

Without warning, the famed 1906 earthquake strikes the city. Buildings collapse, streets split open, and the city burns. Running frantically through the city in search of Mary, Blackie comes to the aid of numerous trapped and helpless people. Eventually, he locates Father Tim, and the two of them find Mary in a Salvation Army camp. Overcome by the grace which has saved his love, Blackie falls to his knees and thanks God – thus fulfilling Father Tim's many prayers for his soul. The three vow to help build a newer, better San Francisco on the ruins of the old.

*San Francisco* features several tropes which were to become standard in films featuring the "heroic priest" archetype. Notable is the friendship between a pseudo-gangster and a priest, with both having risen from similar backgrounds on "the wrong side of the tracks." Such a friendship, though seemingly incongruous, in fact underlines both the humble origins of the (inevitably Irish) priest, and serves as an intriguing mirror image reflecting two sides of urban society: the gangster is characterized by sin, loose women, betrayal, and deceit; the priest by sanctity, nuns, fidelity to lifelong vows, and faith.[71] Also, of course, such an unlikely friendship serves as a convenient plot device which both offers a clear contrast between good and evil, and permits representatives of each to share the screen. By casting charismatic actors in both parts -- Gable would go on to be similarly roguish in such films as *It Happened One Night* and *Gone with the Wind*, while Spencer Tracy playing a priest would soon become a stereotype itself -- Hollywood indulged in the glamour of the seamy, while still ensuring that "evil" lost, and upheld the "good," without it seeming stodgy and dull. Soon, priests became standard heroes in the

crime genre, nearly equal in stature and frequency of appearance to FBI agents or police officers as crusaders for justice and "the American way."[72]

Finally, there was the above-mentioned "manly" athletic prowess and ability to "handle his fists" demonstrated by Father Tim Mullen. Les and Barbara Keyser describe

> the elaborate machinations in *San Francisco* that were meant to assure the audience that Father Tim could easily have defeated Blackie in a fistfight over virtue, but chose not to....Joe Breen objected to the original draft of the scene, fearing audiences would identify with Gable and rejoice in his humiliation of the Church. So an elaborate sequence in a gymnasium was added to show that Father Tim could easily outbox, outslug, and outsmart Blackie. In this context, Father Tim lets Blackie knock him out, thus "turning the other cheek" and emerging the hero of the encounter.[73]

Spencer Tracy – nominated for a Best Actor Oscar (though in reality the part was a supporting one) for his role as a priest in *San Francisco*, later won the award for his role playing another priest, Father Edward J. Flanagan, in the beloved 1938 picture *Boys Town*. The film was based on the life and work of the real Father Flanagan in founding of a home for wayward youth. Consumed with a passion for helping the downtrodden, particularly boys who, due to the circumstances of their upbringing in the slums, have found their way into the juvenile delinquency system, Flanagan has established a school and community for disadvantaged boys, where they learn the skills, both social and vocational, that will enable them to become contributing members of society – thereby showing that "kindness and love and the fundamental belief in the decency of youth have proved at Boys Town that there is no such thing as a bad boy."

But Father Flanagan is also brave and rugged. In one of the film's most memorable scenes, Flanagan goes at the urging of a convicted mobster to redeem the mobster's younger brother, Whitey Marsh. Entering the young hoodlum's rented room, Flanagan is confronted with the deliberate and studied disrespect of the boy, who cocks his hat and with a sneer puts his feet on the table. The priest, after knocking the hat off and slapping his feet to the floor, seizes Whitey by the collar and yanks him to his feet, then casually sits down in the punk's chair himself. "I can be tougher than you are," Flanagan tells the young hoodlum mildly, and he proves it throughout the film. Once in Boys Town, Whitey's tough-guy veneer is gradually eroded by the straight-arrow attitudes of the other boys (who are unanimous in their respect for Flanagan), and by the admiration of the little boy Pee-Wee, who seeks to emulate Whitey. After Pee-Wee is almost killed in a car accident, Whitey flees Boys Town, but is convinced to return by his older brother, who is later gunned down in a mob war.

But throughout the picture, it is Father Flanagan who remains the most obviously heroic figure. In addition to battling the legal system, which frequently condemns the disadvantaged boys out of hand, and often the boys themselves (most notably, the recalcitrant Whitey), at the film's climax Flanagan apprehends the mobster who killed Whitey's brother by punching him in the face. Flanagan's toughness is confirmed in the film's 1941 sequel, *Men of Boys Town*, wherein Flanagan similarly faces down a corrupt prison warden. "If ya had that collar turned around, I'd convince ya pretty quick," sneers the warden. Flanagan responds by stripping off his clerical collar and shaking the brutal official by his lapels.[74]

The Catholic concern for social justice and alleviation of poverty through personal assistance to individuals found perhaps its most obvious expression in *Boys Town*. Flanagan's concern, not merely with the economic causes of poverty, but with its true human victims, cried out for an innovative answer; and this he found in going even beyond the help government could provide to combining philanthropy, organization, and moral suasion to create his own communitarian setting, taking the age-old cliché of the Catholic orphanage to its logical conclusion – yet doing so in a way which empowered the victims of poverty themselves and transformed them into useful citizens.

So respected was Flanagan that actor Spencer Tracy presented his Best Actor Oscar trophy to the priest with the inscription, "To Father Edward J. Flanagan, whose great human qualities, kindly simplicity and inspiring courage were strong enough to shine through my humble efforts." The publicity brought by the film to Flanagan's efforts ensured the continued success of Boys Town (and its eventual expansion into Boys and Girls Town) – a success which continues to this day.

Many of the stereotypes and themes first presented in *San Francisco*, and confirmed in *Boys Town*, were revisited and heavily reinforced with the acclaimed and memorable 1938 film *Angels with Dirty Faces*. In it, Pat O'Brien's Father Jerry Connelly – himself a hoodlum as a boy – applies Flanagan's Boys Town methods in the inner city, working with his childhood friend, James Cagney's gangster Rocky Sullivan (with whom Connelly once ran away from a break-in) to reform a local street gang, the "Dead End Kids."

Using the information Rocky has gathered for criminal purposes, the heroic priest is uncompromising in his quest for justice. He tells his childhood friend, "I'm going to use your case as a crowbar to pry open and uncover this cesspool. I'm going to force the law, corrupt or not, to indict and prosecute and bring to the light of day this entire filthy affair…And if you happen to get in the way, I'll be sorry, but you'll be stepped on just as hard." "PRIEST DECLARES WAR ON UNDERWORLD VICE!" screams a subsequent newspaper headline, over a story beginning, "The battling, two-fisted clergyman of the East Side, 'Father Jerry' Connelly, issued a lusty challenge yesterday to the forces of civic corruption."

Connelly tries to convince Rocky to walk the straight and narrow. Though failing in this, he does succeed in stopping the neighborhood boys from idolizing the gangster by convincing Rocky to pretend to "crack" as he is dragged to the death house for execution, inspiring Rocky to give his life humbly so that others may have life more abundantly – in effect, to Christ-like sacrifice his pride and die a supposedly ignoble death for others. And as the neighborhood boys turn away from Rocky, disgusted by his apparent cowardice, Father Connelly leads them in a prayer "for a boy who couldn't run as fast as I could."[75]

In its combination of gangster action with social conscience, *Angels with Dirty Faces* set the pattern for Hollywood's subsequent portrayal of priests for a decade or more.[76] As Les and Barbara Keyser note, within the film is virtually every significant feature of Catholicism in 1930s America. In his speechmaking and willingness to confront corporate and political corruption, Pat O'Brien's Father Jerry Connolly obliquely mirrors the actions of Father Coughlin

and his call to Catholic social activism; but the film also touches on both the social causes of crime (poverty and juvenile delinquency) and the necessity of personal moral choice (where Rocky is content to be carried along by his upbringing into a life of crime, Jerry chooses the priesthood and fights against the malign influences in his past.) As the Keysers note, the film also

> clearly presents the priest as a powerful agent for profound social change and….mirrors the emergence of wide-spread Catholic political and social activism, the landmark work of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the heroic dedication of Monsignor John A. Ryan.[77]

Most of all, however, *Angels with Dirty Faces* cemented the image of the "heroic priest" into that of a screen icon. It established a new trope of the priest as a counselor to inmates on death row (a trope still to be seen in 1970s television), as well as a crusader against corruption and crime. Finally, the film reiterates the heroic priest's aptitude in athletics: in his criminal youth, Father Jerry was able to "run faster" than Rocky; he went on to "dash ninety yards" as a football star at Fordham; and when the boys reject his overtures and a nearby hood sneers, "What's the matter, can't you get them to go to Heaven with you?", Father Jerry knocks him unconscious with a single punch – thus clearly settling any questions about clerical "manliness."[78]

The stereotype of the Catholic priest as courageous, manly and heroic was reaffirmed yet again when James Cagney and Pat O'Brien reteamed for 1940s *The Fighting 69th*. With war already raging in Europe, Hollywood was quick to hop onto the pro-intervention bandwagon;[79]

and *The Fighting 69th* joined in the pro-war parade with its tale of the lusty, brawling, all-American fighting Irishmen of New York's famed 69th Brigade, which had seen service in the Civil and Spanish-American wars as well as World War I.

Cagney again stars as a brash and abrasive street-smart punk, but this time with a difference: once he experiences the terrors of close-quarters combat, Cagney's Jerry Plunkett becomes a cringing coward. Ordered to stand guard duty, Plunkett leaves his post and gets drunk, assaulting his sergeant in the process. Recaptured, he is made to join a scouting party; but at the first sight of bloody corpses, victims of a recent shelling, Plunkett shrieks in terror, attracting the attention of the enemy. As his comrades are cut down in a hail of bullets, Plunkett ignores their cries for help, shoving aside the wounded so that he can flee the trenches.

When Jerry is again recaptured, the 69th's commander, Colonel "Wild Bill" Donovan, sentences Plunkett to execution; but the unit's chaplain, Father Duffy, intervenes. Father Duffy promises to help Plunkett find God; but the cowardly soldier rejects the priest's blessing. "Don't stand here talking like a sap. Help me escape!" Plunkett begs; but Duffy is a soldier as well as a priest, though a compassionate one: "I don't think you're as tough as you think. You're just kidding yourself. You're lonesome, I know. You haven't made any friends," he tells Plunkett. Ultimately, Plunkett's redemption comes when he sees Father Duffy's steady courage when the military hospital is bombed, and contrasts it with his own terror. Father Duffy calmly recites the Lord's Prayer with a group of wounded soldiers, and the intransigent Jerry Plunkett finally joins

in. As Plunkett dashes out to lend a hand to the wounded men on the battleground, Father Duffy softly recites the parable of the lost sheep. [80]

The courage and heroism of Father Duffy in the picture was underlined by the fact that Duffy, like Father Flanagan, was a real individual.[81] Not only was Francis Patrick Duffy the chaplain of the actual "Fighting 69th", he became the most highly decorated cleric in the history of the U.S. Army. Ordained in 1896, Duffy was both a soldier and a scholar; holding a doctorate from the Catholic University of America, Duffy served on the faculty of St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie as professor of philosophy and edited the *New York Review*, at the time one of the most scholarly and progressive Catholic theological journals in the nation. Eventually assigned a pastorate in New York, Duffy served as the chaplain of the 69th in both the Spanish-American War and World War I. In the latter conflict, Duffy was a common sight in the midst of battle, and was considered a key element in the unit's morale. For his actions in the war, Duffy was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Croix de Guerre. After the war, he resumed his pastorate. Duffy then served as a pastor of Holy Cross Church in the Hell's Kitchen area of New York. Upon his death, a statue of him was erected a block from his parish in Times Square, part of which was renamed Duffy Square in his honor.

With the American entry into World War II, Catholics again had the opportunity to prove their patriotism – though given the constant parade of heroic priests on both movie screens and real life during the previous decade, few Americans now doubted it. Yet Catholics, both clergy and laity, shared in the wartime and post-war consensus of opposition to tyranny and fascism –

and in the postwar era, opposition to communist tyranny, as well. Throughout the war, the increased popularity of religious themes prompted even greater acceptance of Catholicism. Though a priest was not its focus, 1943's *The Song of Bernadette* (about the life of St. Bernadette Soubirous and her vision of the apparition of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes) was tremendously popular, being nominated for 12 Academy Awards and winning four, including Best Actress for its lead, Jennifer Jones. That a picture not only about a Catholic saint, but focusing on a specifically Catholic dogma that many Protestants found baffling if not incomprehensible, demonstrates the increased acceptance, even popularity, of Catholicism in this period. But the era's most popular film about Catholicism and Catholic priests arrived in 1944, with the light musical drama *Going My Way*.[82]

*Going My Way* starred Bing Crosby as youthful priest Father Charles "Chuck" O'Malley, newly assigned to St. Dominic's parish in New York City. Ostensibly curate to St. Dominic's pastor of 40-plus years, the elderly fussbudget Father Fitzgibbon, in fact O'Malley has been assigned to take over administration of the parish and ease the elderly pastor out, as "Fr. Fitz" is increasingly ineffective and out of touch with community life. In the course of the movie, Father O'Malley gets a gang of young toughs off the streets and into St. Dominic's choir loft; raises money for the parish by writing several hit songs; helps a young girl new to New York to find an apartment and a husband; rebuilds the massive St. Dominic's after a devastating fire destroys the church; and even brings Father Fitz's 90-year-old mother over from Ireland for a visit -- all while finding time to play championship-level tennis and golf and croon his friend's troubles away.

Starring one of the most popular singers and public personalities of the day, and replete with songs, gentle comedy, and a positive, sunny portrait of Catholic life, the movie was a tremendous hit, receiving overwhelming public popularity, acclaim from critics, and recognition from the entertainment industry alike. *Going My Way*, the highest-grossing picture of 1944, was nominated for 10 Academy Awards and won seven, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor (Bing Crosby) and Best Song, while Barry Fitzgerald was nominated for both Best Actor *and* Best Supporting Actor Oscars as Father Fitzgibbon, and won the latter.

Playing the priest with a roguish twinkle in his eye and a light-hearted manner, Crosby's Father O'Malley introduced other aspects to the portrayal of Catholic clergy which were to become stereotypes: in addition to a concern for the inner-city poor and an athletic background (while eschewing the fisticuffs which had previously been common for movie priests in this period, O'Malley is shown to be adept at golf, tennis, fishing, and baseball), excellence in music or some artistic endeavor was now added, as well as a slightly more multi-dimensional awareness of what the Church would call the "human aspect" of life, namely, past romantic entanglements. In the course of the movie, it is revealed that before becoming a priest, O'Malley had had a romance with opera star Genevieve Linden. The movie also introduced another theme that was to become a cliché: the young, with-it, modern cleric clashing with a hidebound, conservative and traditionalist superior, thus establishing in the popular imagination the notion of Catholicism not as dour and authoritarian, but as cheerful, modern, and democratic. This shift in perception heavily influenced the post-war embrace of Catholicism by American culture as a whole.[83]

Les and Barbara Keyser have aptly summarized the impact of *Going My Way*. To several generations of Americans, Bing Crosby's Father O'Malley was

> the best known fictional priest in America and the official ambassador to the world of Hollywood catechism. O'Malley became an important icon in American culture. Crosby's puckish charm struck a responsive chord in a war-weary America. His bold optimism and unflagging faith in the powers of good kindled a real popular affection for this archetypal man of the cloth. Crosby made O'Malley's Roman collar a powerful and positive icon, undermining anti-Catholicism at the very primitive level where prejudices are formed, the level of memory, association, and emotion.[84]

Indeed, so iconic was the film's portrayal of the priesthood that it "prompted one cardinal to say that it did more for the Catholic Church than a dozen bishops could have accomplished in a year."[85] And, while its impact was felt most strongly during the era in which it was released, *Going My Way* and Bing Crosby's portrayal of Father O'Malley cast a spell of fascination with the priesthood which lingered for decades. Writing in the year 2000, scholar of the priesthood Donald Cozzens stated, "Even to this day for Catholics over age fifty, it is difficult to exaggerate Father O'Malley's hold on the Catholic imagination's image of the ideal priest."[86]

The popularity of *Going My Way* was sufficient to prompt the making of a sequel; and if one of America's top male stars could play a priest, why could not one of its top female stars play a nun? Thus, the wide audience appeal accompanying Bing Crosby's return as the redoubtable Father O'Malley was even more greatly increased the next year, when Ingrid Bergman co-starred as Sister Mary Benedict in 1945's *The Bells of St. Mary's*.[87]

In a plot even thinner than that of *Going My Way*, Father O'Malley is assigned as principal of St. Mary's, an inner-city parochial school about to be condemned. In fact, O'Malley believes the school should be closed, so that the students can be sent to a more modern facility; but the nuns who run the school – led by Sister Mary Benedict – are certain that God will provide for them. The nuns put their hopes in Horace P. Bogardus, a businessman who has built a modern building next door to the school and which they scheme to encourage him to donate to them. The laid-back Father O'Malley and the stubborn, traditionalist Sister Mary Benedict must learn to work together to save the school, though they often clash – most notably, regarding the treatment of pupils. Displaying a decided lack of concern for academic rigor, O'Malley favors waving a failing girl through to the next grade, while Sister Mary Benedict staunchly supports adherence to scholarly standards and refuses to pass the girl until she proves herself in a difficult exam. By contrast, Father O'Malley is deeply concerned that a weak boy who is bullied by the other boys be taught to "fight like a man." Though appalled by O'Malley's apparently cavalier attitude toward violence, after seeing the boy beaten and humiliated, the good sister capitulates and takes it upon herself to teach the boy to box, whereupon he soundly thrashes the bully.

But just as Bogardus signs over his building to the nuns and construction of the new school begins, Sister Mary Benedict is ordered transferred. In what would be considered a hideous violation of individual rights today (if the film is at all accurate, at the time Church rules for religious and the vow of obedience must have operated substantially differently than they do now), the sister's transfer is decided upon because she is suffering from life-threatening tuberculosis – but Sister Mary Benedict herself is never informed of this fact! Instead, she is left

to assume that Father O'Malley has found her so disagreeable that he has ordered her away from her heart's labor, St. Mary's school. After interminable mental suffering by Sister Mary Benedict, O'Malley eventually informs her that she has tuberculosis, and that she is being sent for a rest cure. Reassured that her work has been satisfactory, the sister leaves willingly.

Though equally well-known and arguably even more popular today than *Going My Way* (likely due to the presence of Bergman and a scene of a musical Christmas pageant, which assures the film of frequent television play during the holiday season), *The Bells of St. Mary's* had little of the previous film's cultural impact. In fact, it subtly downgrades the role of the priest. While Father O'Malley appeared dynamic and progressive when contrasted with the elderly, intransigent Father Fitzgibbon, when matched against the beautiful and obviously more intelligent Sister Mary Benedict, he comes across as a bit of a buffoon, unconcerned with anything other than crooning a song now and then. Hollywood, while still enamored of Catholic elements in films, apparently agreed, and failed to award *The Bells of St. Mary's* the flood of trophies which accompanied its prequel. Nominated for eight Oscars, including Best Picture, Actor, Actress, and Director, the film won only one, for Best Sound Recording.

This increasingly human (but still heroic) image of the Catholic priest recurred throughout the 1930s and '40s and into the following decade, including, but not limited to, films such as *Over the Wall* (1937), *We Who Are about to Die* (1938), *You Only Live Once* (1938), *The Devil's Party* (1938), *Castle on the Hudson* (1940), *San Francisco Docks* (1940), *The Keys of the Kingdom* (1944), *Fighting Father Dunne* (1948), and *The Miracle of the Bells* (1948). One of the

most dynamic representations was 1954's brilliant *On the Waterfront.*[88] Though the central plot details the punch-drunk longshoreman Terry Molloy's growing conviction that he must confront a corrupt labor union which exploits his fellows (a role which earned Marlon Brando a Best Actor Oscar), no less important to the film is the role played by the film's "labor priest" Father Barry, played unforgettably by Karl Malden.

Yet Malden's was not a mere fictionalized portrayal. Just as Fathers Flanagan, Duffy, and Dunne were real individuals, so too there were real priests who sought to counter the advance of worldwide Marxism by confronting crooked, self-serving union organizers. One such individual was the Jesuit Father John Corridan. Characterized by the Keysers as "fast-talking, chain-smoking, hardheaded, sometimes profane, [and] brimming with talk of revolution and reconstruction, of social justice and Christian charity," Corridan served as the inspiration for *On the Waterfront*'s Father Barry. So dynamic was Corridan that screenwriter Budd Schulberg recalled director Elia Kazan asking him, "Are you sure he's a priest?"[89]

In the picture, Father Barry gradually moves from ignoring his parishioners' problems by hiding in his church, to actively urging longshoremen to stand up to their corrupt, criminal union bosses. After the murder of a longshoreman who planned to go to a crime commission investigating labor racketeering with information, Father Barry demonstrates his status as both an anti-Communist and an "heroic priest" by delivering an oration every bit as forceful and down-to-earth as any delivered by Father Coughlin:

> Some people think the Crucifixion only took place on Calvary. They'd better wise up. Taking Joey Doyle's life to stop him from testifying is a crucifixion. Dropping a sling on Kayo Dugan because he was ready to spill his guts tomorrow, that's a crucifixion. And every time the mob puts pressure on a man, tries to stop him from doing his duty as a citizen, it's a crucifixion. And anybody who sits around, and keeps silent about something he knows has happened, shares the guilt of it just as much as the Roman centurion who shed the blood of our Lord . . . You want to know what's wrong with our waterfront? It's the love of a lousy buck. It's making the love of a buck, a cushy job, more important than the love of man! It's forgetting that every man down here is your brother in Christ! But remember, Christ is always with you . . . and He's saying with all of you, "If you do it to the least of mine, you do it to Me.

But times were changing. During the post-War years, filmmakers began challenging the Production Code and the Legion of Decency. One such individual was multi-millionaire Howard Hughes, whose independent film *The Outlaw* was refused a Code seal due to the film's unapologetically lascivious characters (and, as demonstrated by the advertising Hughes insisted upon for the film, the physical characteristics of the movie's star Jane Russell).[90] Increasingly, filmmakers sought ways to evade the Code's restrictions. The slackening in the authority of the Production Code Administration was accelerated by jurists who increasingly gave preference to movie studios' and exhibitors' "freedom of speech" over long-established sensibilities limiting indecency in entertainment. The largest blow was struck by the Supreme Court's ruling on *Joseph Burstyn Inc. v. Wilson*, better known as the *Miracle* case. A New York theater owner sued for the right to show the Italian film *The Miracle*, which New York's censorship board had prevented on the grounds that the film was "sacrilegious." The Court recognized film as an "art" rather than a "business," essentially ruling that government no longer had power to limit exhibition of film.[91]

Furthermore, the late 1940s and 1950s saw the rise of a younger generation, whose experience as veterans and war workers had eroded the unquestioning adherence to tradition (and Church authority) possessed by their often-immigrant parents and grandparents. The causes for this are many: exposure during the war to a wider and more diverse world outside their immediate geographic area and culture; the flush of postwar affluence making possible both geographic and class mobility; the rise of mass culture itself; these and many other influences all contributed to changing mores in the postwar generation.[92]

This was accompanied by a waning in the influence of the Legion of Decency. The extent to which the Legion's power had been eroded in the postwar era was shown in 1956, when Cardinal Francis Spellman denounced from the pulpit the film *Baby Doll*, a picture about a sleazy mobster's attempt to take the virginity of a nymphet by seducing her away from her unconsummated marriage to her white-trash, common-law husband. But Spellman's thunderous condemnation had little effect. Where once such an action would've guaranteed a film being withdrawn or at least failing at the box office, *Baby Doll* did neither. With the flight of younger American Catholics away from the urban, ethnic Catholic "ghetto" to multi-ethnic, ecumenical suburbia also came a democratic lifestyle in which more importance was given to individual rights and desires than to the authoritarian pronouncements of the hierarchy.[93] These changes also influenced the portrayal of Catholic priests on the big screen. While still fairly reverent toward clergy, filmmakers began to push the boundaries in their depiction of priests, moving from an unqualified heroism to a more shaded portrait in films like *I Confess* (1953), *Say One for Me* (1959), and *The Hoodlum Priest* (1961).

Through the popular culture of the 1930s and ‘40s, the image of the Catholic priest in American popular culture had been firmly set: manly, courageous, intelligent, and utterly fearless in standing up to any form of tyranny or evil, be it tangible foes such as slumlords, Nazi soldiers, crime bosses, and Communist subversives, or social evils like poverty, corruption, and prejudice. But in the 1950s and ‘60s, even as film gradually became a place of greater realism and nuance, the image of the priesthood instilled by earlier movies continued into a rising new medium. It was an image that was to be carried over undiluted, and even added to, as Americans increasingly turned from their radios and movie screens to a new form of mass entertainment and mass socialization which combined the features of both, and which was to revolutionize American culture: television.

## Chapter 2: "Heroic Priests" and "Men of Piety": Catholic Clergy on Television, 1950-1970

Television – the broadcast of sound and pictures directly into the home via the airwaves – was a technical reality long before it was a commercially practical one.[1] Following early experiments by pioneers such as Vladimir Zworykin and Philo T. Farnsworth, by the late 1920s companies like Westinghouse and the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) were airing experimental television broadcasts. Extremely limited programming was available by the late 1930s, though it was almost exclusively confined to the New York area; and the then-exorbitant expense of television sets put them out of the price range of all but the wealthiest owners. The diversion of resources to wartime priorities during the Second World War further delayed television's development. Postwar, programming gradually expanded to fill more hours, more local stations were established, and rudimentary networks of network owned-and-operated stations and affiliates were set up, while various technical issues were sorted out between RCA (which owned the National Broadcasting Company [NBC] radio network), and its competitor, the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).

The earliest years of widespread American television programming differed greatly from those which were to arise even half a decade later. Television's status as a new and untried medium was compounded by the fact that, while specific interactions with Hollywood's studios were complex, TV was largely reviled by the still vastly-powerful movie industry. For decades, Hollywood had a near-monopoly on providing Americans with visual entertainment, having as competition only live theater. With the decline of vaudeville and professional theater companies

across most of the nation, Hollywood's hand was strengthened. It was only natural for the film industry to resent (and fear) the upstart television for daring to disrupt its monopoly.

And a disruption it was. Though in the medium's earliest years few homes owned a television set, this began to change once the masses were introduced to the new technology. The 1947 World Series was viewed by, it is estimated, nearly four million people – 3.5 million of whom watched in bars. As a way to see live sports, the set caught on quickly with male breadwinners.[2]

Television grew rapidly in popularity after that, with several programs, such as Milton Berle's *Texaco Star Theater* and Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town* causing tremendous interest in television. As a result, sales increased dramatically -- but only in certain areas. With the exception of New York, Chicago, and a few other large urban areas, most cities in the U.S. were served only one or two stations.[3] Furthermore, such stations were not equally distributed geographically. In the early 1950s, nearly 25 percent of all homes in the Northeastern states had televisions, as compared to nine percent in the Pacific states, and only two percent in the South.[4]

Though for many years it was commonplace to state that television rapidly became popular throughout the U.S., in fact, numerous recent histories have made it clear that in its early years, television was very much an East Coast phenomenon. The major radio broadcasting networks, CBS and NBC, were headquartered in New York, and much of their programming originated there. (Major exceptions were top radio comedians like Bob Hope, Jack Benny and

Bing Crosby, who lived and performed their shows from Los Angeles; these major stars' activity in motion pictures, as well as their wealth and desire for "the good life," caused them to relocate to the West, and the networks had little choice but to accommodate them.)

Since CBS and NBC were the dominant powerhouses in early television as well, TV programming also originated from New York. In the early days, network programs originating in New York had to be transmitted via coaxial cable to affiliated stations. Not until fall of 1951 did the cable reach the West Coast, thus allowing the entire nation to see network television programming. Even then, little live programming originated in the West, as it was difficult and expensive to reverse the cable system to carry programming from West to East; thus, television originating from New York was the norm.

Before the late 1950s, programming was largely dictated by the primitive technical capabilities of early television. Early television productions were confronted with many shortcomings which did not apply to film. Without the advanced cameras and lighting equipment, large sound stages, and substantially larger budgets of Hollywood movie studios, early TV was forced to substitute innovation and enthusiasm for experience and polish.[5] Space was at a premium, and former radio studios, small theaters, and even converted warehouses were pressed into service as makeshift TV studios. With film standards impossible (and actually disdained by many in the evolving new industry), early TV drew on programming which could be easily staged in a small physical space, and in which large, theatrical, easily visible gestures were preferred over small, subtle movements.

Originating as it did in New York, and created as it was by those living there, early television drew most heavily on what New Yorkers knew, that which was around them already. Because television was reaching overwhelmingly Eastern audiences, in the early years a New York emphasis carried over into a preference by viewers, television critics, and most particularly programmers, for two particular forms of entertainment: cabaret-style comedy-variety, and live original drama.

Television's first comedies were loud, raucous, and made in the style to be found in various "big city" venues common in New York, previously home to innumerable vaudeville theaters, burlesque houses, nightclubs, and cabarets. Fast-talking Borscht Belt comedians, singers, dancers, acrobats, and performing animals, alongside comic sketches heavy on slapstick and double-*entendre* comedy – these were the hallmarks of the new style of video comedy-variety, perhaps best exemplified in TV's first major hit, *Texaco Star Theater*, and its headliner host, Milton Berle.

The program originated with the oil company and service station giant Texaco, which was willing to underwrite a Tuesday night variety show for NBC; but a host had to be found. Waiting in the wings was Milton Berle, a longtime vaudeville comedian and – to that point – career failure. Berle had bombed in films, the Broadway play which he was to headline never opened, and he had starred in no fewer than five radio series, all of which had been cancelled within a year of their debut. But Berle did have a successful nightclub act, and – most importantly – was based in New York.

Berle's comedy normally consisted of wisecracks and insults directed at members of the audience. He would introduce variety acts which he would then interrupt, appeared in outrageous costumes, and often dressed in drag. Berle's slapstick resonated particularly with urbanites, who fondly recalled the vaudeville, burlesque, and night club acts which television and film had only relatively recently replaced.[6] As a result, Berle proved an immense hit in TV's earliest days. Debuting in 1948, Berle, more than any other individual, helped to launch the East Coast TV boom, with television set ownership rising from 0.4% of American homes in 1948 to 23.5% in 1951, with the majority of the new set owners living in the East.[7] As documented by TV scholars Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, Milton Berle's program set the tone for early television comedy and variety:

> Berle's Tuesday night *Texaco Star Theater* was typical of the first wave of television programming – frantic, corny, but always highly visual....Berle gave [viewers] fall-down slapstick with crazy costumes and sight gags galore. Ed Sullivan offered a three-ring circus of comedians, acrobats, opera singers, scenes from plays, and dancing bears. *The Ed Wynn Show, The All Star Revue* with Jimmy Durante*, Your Show of Shows* with Sid Caesar*, Fireball Fun-For-All* with Olsen and Johnson, and *The Colgate Comedy Hour* with practically everybody (Eddie Cantor, Martin and Lewis, Abbott and Costello, Bob Hope) all did the same. Such broadly played slapstick and variety looked so old fashioned that some called it 'vaudeo' – a wedding of vaudeville and the new video medium.[8]

But early television was not all slapstick. There was also a desire for more serious dramatic fare; though here again, the networks turned to a native New York phenomenon for inspiration: Broadway and the "legitimate theater." The result was an abundance on television of what came to be known as "dramatic anthologies," original dramas written, produced and aired weekly on a tight budget and tighter schedule. Performed live with retakes impossible, such production necessitated constant new material in the form of original scripted drama. Even

today, the names of many of these dramatic anthology programs retain their luster: *Kraft Television Theater, The Hallmark Hall of Fame* (the only such program still in occasional production today), *Playhouse 90*, and *Studio One*.[*]

These new playlets were written, produced, and acted in by previously unknown individuals who became famous for their work in the new medium, and many of whom later went on to stellar success in motion pictures: writers Gore Vidal, Reginald Rose, and Rod Serling; directors Frank Schaffner [*Patton*], Sidney Lumet and George Roy Hill; and actors like Charlton Heston, John Forsythe, Leslie Nielsen, James Daly, and James Gregory all got their start, and flourished, in the dramatic anthologies.[9]

Because television was centered on New York City, and because the writers of the new live dramas aspired to duplicate the quality and power of Broadway and other original dramatic plays, many of the original dramas dealt with real-life situations, ranging from the romantic problems of shy urban, working-class individuals (Paddy Chayefsky's "Marty") to the corporate infighting of the business world (Rod Serling's "Patterns").[10] Many of the writers of these plays

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[*] Not treated in this paper are the numerous filmed dramatic anthology programs with specifically religious themes created and produced by various religious denominations, such as *This Is The Answer* (Southern Baptists), *Insight* (Catholic Paulists) and *This Is the Life* (Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod). Airing sometimes on networks and sometimes in syndication, these programs and others were a part of television from the early 1950s through the 1980s and beyond. Aired in accordance with FCC requirements that stations show a certain amount of non-profit programming to serve "the public interest," such programs were abandoned – along with the FCC requirements that promoted them -- during the deregulation era of the 1980s. They are not treated here, as they were not prime-time programs, most being confined to the "Sunday morning ghetto" or the hours "Between Sign-Off Films and Test Patterns," in the evocative title of Mark Quigley's journal article about *Insight*. For more information on such programs, see Quigley's article and Cullum, Paul, "Old-Time Religion: Christian Experimentalism and Preaching to the 'Unchurched'," both in *The Moving Image*, vol. 9, number 1, Spring 2009. For more about *Insight*, see the autobiography of the program's Paulist founder: Kieser, Ellwood E., *Hollywood Priest: A Spiritual Struggle* (Doubleday, 1991).

were "angry young men," World War II veterans with similar personality traits, including a deep skepticism of all forms of authority, a distrust of conformity, a desire to find their identity and achieve self-respect, and a liberal political bias (Arthur Miller was the role model of several such writers). These traits naturally informed the content of the plays they wrote, many of which dealt with the protagonist's psychological struggles or ennui and their dissatisfaction with everyday life.[11] The plays produced by these men were lauded by critics and programmers alike. Indeed, for decades this era was (and to many, still is) known as the "Golden Age of Television." The excitement engendered by completely new, contemporary plays of power and dramatic intensity, dealing with the concerns of everyday people in the modern world, and performed live nightly for a mass audience, brought the classic elements of literature and drama into every American home with a TV. Sadly, today many of the original episodes from TV's "Golden Age" dramatic anthology are now missing and are unobtainable. Having been broadcast live, those few which have survived exist only in the form of kinescopes[*]. The vast majority of such programs are gone forever.

The choice of live drama had also in some respects been dictated by the values of those in charge of early television, particularly in the case of NBC. That network's head of television, Sylvester L. "Pat" Weaver – often dubbed "Mr. Spectacular" in the press, both for his impressive

[*] In the 1950s, kinescopes were on rare occasions made so that programming could be re-aired in another time zone at a more convenient time. More often, they were made as "airchecks," proof to advertisers that the commercials they had paid for had actually aired during the program they had sponsored. A "kinescope" was created by aiming a movie camera at a television screen and filming the result. Viewers watching a kinescope broadcast thus saw a TV image of a movie of a TV image. Given the era's primitive TV broadcasting equipment and television sets, and frequent atmospheric interference with transmission, the image quality thus achieved was abysmal; yet it is to such images that historians of the medium must look for what little documentation of the early years of television remains.

resume and intellectual acumen, and for his reliance on specials over regular weekly series on the TV schedule – strongly advocated that television take a role in "uplifting" the viewer by bringing to them cultural material which previously was largely available only to the well-educated. In Weaver's own words to a gathering at the University of Chicago in 1955, "We must open the doors of privilege to the people. We must expose all of our people to the thrilling rewards that come from an understanding of fine music, ballet, the classics, science, the arts....To make us all into intellectuals – there is the challenge."[12] Indeed, in a speech to the owners of NBC affiliate stations, Weaver went so far as to proclaim, "We don't want to give the people what they want. We want to give the people something that will make more of them want more of the better shows."[13]

Both the comedy-variety shows and the dramatic anthologies were a unique and genuinely creative and artistic form of expression, and were lauded by television's early East Coast-centered critics and audiences; but they carried within them the seeds of their own destruction. As television spread across the country, early television's New York-centric orientation increasingly proved a detriment to wider, less urbanized audiences, as noted by media scholar James Baughman:

> Network telecasts in the late 1940s and early 1950s had a decidedly New York, big-city flavor. Most network programs were produced in New York. Many of the references on Milton Berle's show, the first great TV hit, left one assuming his entire audience resided in one of the five boroughs or northern New Jersey...Viewers in smaller cities and towns were less taken by – and some even hostile toward -- performers like Berle. Their New York fixation could be off-putting. "I'm getting tired of localized New York jokes," complained one set owner. "Out in the 'sticks' we don't know or care about the details and they aren't funny to us."[14]

Viewers in the South and Midwest were also less receptive to the original dramas,[15] preferring programs with standard story lines and likeable characters. Such shows were not likely to provide many psychological insights; but they represented a warmer, more "feel-good" approach to entertainment, one welcomed by the majority of the new audiences now tuning in. However, many of the writers and producers of television's early New York years, then as now largely out of touch with the thoughts and feelings of those outside their immediate surroundings, failed to realize that while TV's audience was growing, it was also changing.[16]

The growing nationwide audience was better served by a major change to television programming strategies in the mid- to late-1950s, when pre-filmed, regularly-scheduled series began to make their debut at the behest of "Pat" Weaver's opposite number at CBS, William Paley. Already the head of the CBS radio network in the 1940s, Paley first gained public attention when he vaulted the network into first place over NBC by a stunning "raid" on NBC's long-established stable of stars like Bing Crosby, Red Skelton, Jack Benny and others.[17] As his network moved into television, Paley also insisted on CBS creating its own series, rather than relying on advertisers to do so, which had been the normal practice up to that time. In the event, the actual work of creating programs was often subcontracted to independent production companies by the network; but CBS, not an advertising firm, retained overall control.[18] And in terms of corporate culture, CBS was very much NBC's opposite. Unlike the RCA-owned NBC, at CBS the emphasis was on broadcasting and ratings, not electronics. In James Baughman's pithy phrase, at CBS, "show business mattered."[19]

Paley also saw the tremendous benefit in adhering to the lessons learned from radio: giving audiences regular series, on at the same time each week, in formats made familiar by decades of replication on radio or in motion pictures: comedy-variety featuring personalities who had been successful on radio, such as Jack Benny, George Burns and Gracie Allen, and Arthur Godfrey; Westerns; police and detective shows. CBS was not totally devoid of artistic programming; the network did air a number of "culture" shows of its own, such as *Playhouse 90* and *Omnibus*, but it did so on a regular schedule, eschewing NBC's irregular "spectacular" policy. And it showed some "dramatic anthology" programs, but these were carefully structured so that there was an overall theme (often, suspense) to each program, and so that each featured a familiar figure as host to provide continuity for the viewer (*The Twilight Zone, Alfred Hitchcock Presents*). The network also invested heavily in its news division, which ultimately paid dividends with the prestige of Edward R. Murrow's successful programs *See It Now* and *Person to Person* (a prestige which was to continue with future newscasters like Walter Cronkite and programs like *60 Minutes*).

But the network's greatest success came in the development and use of filmed situation comedies featuring talents who, though perhaps having a background in radio or film, were largely new to television viewers. The most notable example was Lucille Ball, who became TV's best-beloved comedienne with *I Love Lucy*. Other stars followed, from Phil Silvers' Army con-man comedy character Sergeant Bilko to Jackie Gleason's *The Honeymooners*. While the top talent available to CBS and its foresight in pursuing filmed situation comedies placed the network in the #1 position – a position it was to retain for decades – an upstart competitor also

made use of the concept of filmed series...and changed the pattern of television viewing in America forever.

The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) had been created in 1943, when a court order required NBC to split its radio network by divesting itself of a smaller chain of stations which RCA had acquired previously. As a television network, ABC began with few of the advantages of either NBC or CBS; not only did it lack CBS' wide talent pool, it also could not draw on RCA's technological and financial base, as could NBC; and it owned fewer stations outright, and had fewer affiliation agreements with local stations, than did the "Big Two." As a result, the third-place network could not afford the typical New York disdain for Hollywood. Quickly allying itself with first United Paramount Theaters (the distribution and theater chain portion of Paramount, which had also been shorn away from the movie production studio by anti-trust rulings and was now an independent entity), which provided an influx of operating capital, ABC turned to independent film production companies, chief among them Warner Brothers, Screen Gems, Ziv, and MCA/Revue (later acquired by Universal Studios). Eschewing live drama and variety, ABC took CBS' success with filmed programming and applied it to a narrow variety of genres, taking advantage of Hollywood's expertise in producing "B-movies." The result was a flood of low-budget filmed Westerns, comedies, and crime dramas, which filled the airwaves. By 1958, there were 31 Western series on in prime time, and filmed Westerns made up seven of the top ten programs on TV.[20] Critics sneered, but the more populist approach was essential to ABC's survival. Eschewing the news and culture programs on which CBS and NBC prided themselves, ABC devoted its schedule to Westerns and detective shows. This

strategy proved so successful -- particularly with small-town viewers in the South and Midwest[21] -- that soon, NBC and CBS imitated it.[22]

While the majority of such shows were cheaply-made, disposable entertainment, the filmed series were not universally execrable. Working with Warner Brothers, ABC created filmed TV series like *Maverick* and *77 Sunset Strip* – programs possessed of good writing and quirky characterization, even if they were formulaic and not as filled with angst and antagonism toward authority as those of NBC's vaunted (and vanishing) dramatic anthologies. And when ABC partnered with Walt Disney for the new television series *Disneyland* (later known as the *Wonderful World of Disney*), a pop-culture powerhouse was born -- one which dominates television and American culture to this day.[*] Unlike NBC under "Pat" Weaver, ABC succeeded by giving consumers what they wanted. In a direct contrast with Weaver's philosophy of aesthetic uplift, ABC head Leonard Goldenson stated that television "isn't a Tiffany business. It's Woolworth and K-Mart."[23] With the rising popularity of filmed action series came the demise of the live dramatic anthologies, to the dismay of the proponents of the older style. In 1951, programs like the *Kraft Television Theater, Somerset Maugham TV Theater,* and *Schlitz Playhouse of Stars* dominated the prime-time schedule; by 1958, titles like *Wagon Train, Bat Masterson,* and *Peter Gunn* held sway. The success of ABC's filmed programming quickly led to such shows becoming staples of the TV entertainment diet – as they remain today.

[*] In 1996, the ABC television network was purchased, and is now wholly owned, by The Walt Disney Company.

In his presumption that his philosophy of aesthetic uplift would trump pre-existing popular preferences, NBC's "Pat" Weaver had erred gravely. Middle Americans, more accustomed to and comfortable with the Westerns, action pictures, and romance genres provided by Hollywood's already nationally-distributed movies, found much of the New York-centered entertainment off-putting. While Weaver's determination to "elevate" the tastes of Americans was applauded by some – particularly New York-based writers and critics – as television spread across the land, ultimately this approach was a failure. James Baughman concludes that Weaver "suffered from a classic mass communicator fallacy, confusing himself with his viewers...He was envisioning a network *he* would watch."[24]

Another major difficulty presented by Weaver's New York-centric attitude was his insistence on live programming. To those outside of New York, this appeared to be a lack of regard, even blatant disdain, for viewers in other time zones. In the days before technology permitted taped delays and later rebroadcast, live programming had to be seen across the nation when it originated. As a result, some of Weaver's much-lauded "spectaculars," shown in prime time in New York, were aired at four in the afternoon on the West Coast.[25]

Finally, corporate politics played a part in Weaver's removal and the failure of his vision. In part, this occurred because the RCA-owned NBC's corporate culture gave preference to electronics research and manufacturing over Weaver's emphasis on providing cultural programming.[26] Weaver's own arrogance also played a part; his ego led him to clash with RCA's founder and Chairman David Sarnoff, with predictable results.[27] But ultimately,

Weaver's downfall came about due to viewer preference for the conventional and regularly-scheduled filmed Westerns and action series presented by CBS and ABC. With many viewers now preferring CBS, and advertisers buying time there instead as a result, NBC slipped into second place, a position it was to retain until the 1980s.

Although recent histories have stressed the cultural divide between programming acceptable and preferred by New York/East Coast audiences, creators, and critics, and those chosen by Midwestern and Southern audiences, no consideration has been given to one possible factor in this difference. While many historians and cultural critics emphasize the allegedly greater intellectual sophistication of urban audiences, they give little attention to the likelihood that more specifically *religious* cultures and attitudes predominated in the Midwest and South. Though America was rapidly urbanizing, and had been increasingly influenced by mass media like motion pictures and radio, still at midcentury there was a clear divide between the polyglot urban East and the more ethnically separate and communitarian ethos of the South and Midwest. While large Eastern cities, including New York, had their ethnic (and religious) enclaves, still they were all part of the same urban environment, and were often thrown together and forced to interact, unlike those in more homogenous small-town environments. Not that those from small-town America were more religious than urban dwellers, precisely; but that they were less accustomed to having to make accommodation for a wide diversity of cultures, and were certainly unused to entertainment which challenged or even defied traditional systems of belief.

Proof of this theory can be seen in the success of one filmed series at the expense of two popular live dramatic anthologies, as documented by James Baughman. In 1956, "CBS' *Studio One* and NBC's *Robert Montgomery Presents* struggled against one of Lawrence Welk's corny musical programs [on ABC]....Welk's success can be seen as a mass rejection of the Eastern cosmopolitanism that many network programmers assumed the mass audience preferred. The son of German immigrants, Welk had grown up in rural North Dakota and never discarded his small-town morality."[28] Welk was noted for firing a singer for showing too much knee, removing all double *entendres* from songs, and offering no comic sketches in his program, only wholesome music. So great was Welk's popularity that, when ABC finally cancelled his program after a twenty-year run, the program moved to syndication, where it continued to delight Midwestern audiences for another decade.

Yet there was another manifestation of this tendency, one with tremendous significance for Catholicism, both in the acceptance finally received by the faith in traditionally anti-Catholic America, and in the portrayal of the religion in popular culture which furthered such acceptance: the television program *Life Is Worth Living*, with Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.[29] After a childhood in Peoria, Illinois, Sheen was ordained to the priesthood in 1919 and attended the University of Louvain (with coursework in London and Rome), earning his Ph.D. in 1923. Shortly thereafter, he became a professor of philosophy at the Catholic University of America. Sheen became known for aiding the conversion to Catholicism of various public figures, including Congresswoman Clare Booth Luce and Louis Budenz, former editor of the Communist *Daily Worker*. Beginning in 1930 and throughout the 1930s and '40s, Sheen spoke frequently on

radio's *The Catholic Hour*. Sheen became so identified with the program that Archbishop Robert Lucey, formally in charge of the show, complained that "Our listeners are not able to distinguish between Monsignor Sheen and *The Catholic Hour*."[30]

In November 1950, Sheen was appointed head of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, an organization tasked with raising money to support Catholic missions around the world. Eight months later, he was consecrated an auxiliary bishop of New York. Shortly thereafter, Monsignor Edwin Broderick, who had briefly been Sheen's assistant at Propagation and was now head of the Catholic Apostolate for Radio, Television and Advertising, approached Sheen about doing a television program similar to his work on *The Catholic Hour*. Sheen agreed, and the new program, to be called *Life Is Worth Living*, was placed on the schedule of the perennial last-place DuMont television network.[*] DuMont was chosen both because it was willing to air the program in prime time, and because it had consistently championed religious programming. Beginning in 1947, the network aired *Elder Michaux*, a weekly broadcast of the Washington D.C.-based African-American preacher Lightfoot Solomon Michaux's revival meetings. DuMont had also created *Morning Chapel*, a daily program which featured clergy from Jewish, Catholic, and various Protestant denominations on a rotating basis. On its side, DuMont was willing to air

[*] The ill-fated DuMont network was early television's most notable failure. Started by the DuMont electronics and television manufacturing company, the network began with the proverbial "two strikes against it." Unlike CBS, NBC, and ABC, DuMont had no pre-existing network or chain of affiliated stations to air its programming. It also had no top-name talent; DuMont's sole breakout star, Jackie Gleason, was quickly lured away by CBS. Financially, the company did not have the resources to compete with the major networks. An FCC "freeze" on allocating new station licenses, and a court ruling that DuMont's attempted alliance with Paramount movie studios (not the theater chain) was in violation of anti-trust laws, sealed the network's doom. By 1955, DuMont was off the air. Today, the network is remembered – if at all – for airing America's first science-fiction program, the low-budget *Captain Video*, and Bishop Sheen's program. For a history of DuMont, see David Weinstein, *The Forgotten Network: DuMont and the Birth of American Television* (Temple University Press, 2004).

Sheen's show not only out of conviction in favor of religious programming, but also to curry favor with the Federal Communications Commission, which required that stations and networks carry a certain amount of programming that was "in the public interest."[31]

In the event, *Life Is Worth Living* proved a tremendous boon for DuMont. The program was scheduled for Tuesday nights at 8:00 p.m. Eastern, opposite comedian Milton Berle. At this stage in the early 1950s – with television programming still in its comedy-variety "vaudeo" and live drama phase -- NBC's *Texaco Star Theater*, now renamed *The Buick Berle Show*, was one of the most popular programs on television. Thus, the Tuesday 8 p.m. timeslot was referred to by some in the industry as the "obituary" or "suicide" slot.

Appropriately, DuMont originally placed Bishop Sheen against Berle out of a sense of fatalism. Unlike CBS or NBC, DuMont had no previously-existing radio network, and hence no ready-made stable of stars to put up against the powerhouse Berle; nor was the small network's budget equal to the task of creating original programming to compete. Various other programs DuMont had placed in the slot had performed disastrously. If *Life Is Worth Living* also failed, network reasoning went, at least it would generate some good will for DuMont as it did so.

Ultimately, however, *Life Is Worth Living* proved a cunning choice, one of the first – and still one of the most successful – examples of "counter-programming." Rather than attempting to battle one highly successful comedy-variety program with another, by screening Bishop Sheen's show, the network appealed to an audience who found Berle's humor crass or unfamiliar, or who

simply preferred more serious subject matter. In this, the program – and Bishop Sheen – succeeded brilliantly.

Premiering on February 12, 1952, *Life Is Worth Living* ran on DuMont until 1955, when the network itself went out of business; thereafter, the program continued for two more seasons on ABC. According to DuMont scholar David Weinstein, *Life Is Worth Living* "was the most widely viewed religious series in the history of television and the only such show to find a large prime-time audience on network television...At its height, during the 1953-54 season, DuMont reported that the show was carried by 169 stations."[32] During the same season, more than 30 million people watched Sheen each week.[33]

As a result, Sheen rapidly became a familiar and wildly popular, even beloved, public figure. The success of *Life is Worth Living* earned Sheen a cover story in *Time* magazine in 1952[34] -- the same year that he won an Emmy as the Most Outstanding Television Personality.[35] Throughout the Fifties, Sheen consistently made the top-ten lists of the most admired men in America; in 1956, Sheen came in third place on that list, making him more popular among Americans than the Reverend Billy Graham, and outranked only by President Eisenhower and Winston Churchill.[36]

Key to Sheen's success was his innate understanding of the *zeitgeist*, which underpinned many of his talks. The bishop himself stated that he chose the title *Life Is Worth Living* "first, to appeal to many who are despairing because of their anxieties and frustrations, and second, to

suggest the words of Our Lord: 'I have come that you may have life more abundantly.'" As historian Thomas Doherty notes, "Anxiety amid abundance – not a bad description of Cold War America."[37]

Sheen was a source of tremendous pride for American Catholics, being the most visible and prominent symbol of Catholicism on early television. His popularity marked the "arrival" of Catholicism into mainstream American culture.[38] Catholic scholar Mark Massa attributes Sheen's success with Catholic audiences – and his significance in American Catholic history – to the fact that Sheen "announced an ecological move of Catholics from the margins to the center of American culture [via] an essentially accomodationist, therapeutic understanding of Christianity [by] providing a quite popular and ecclesiastically approved bridge for Catholics wishing to leave behind the 'Catholic ghetto' and move into an affluent culture where religious homogeneity, not difference, assured social acceptance,"[39] while the Lutheran scholar of religion Martin Marty agrees that "Sheen demonstrated a gift for reading the discontents of middle-class Catholic Americans and ministering to them."[40]

But Sheen's understanding did not apply only to Catholic viewers.[41] Although the 1950s were also the era in which Paul Blanshard's anti-Catholic diatribe *American Freedom and Catholic Power* enjoyed a vogue, it is notable that Blanshard's polemic and criticisms of Sheen were popular almost solely among the audiences of publications like the *Christian Century*, the organ of left-wing "progressive" Protestantism.[42] To most average Protestants in the pews (and in front of the TV), Sheen was as popular as he was among Catholics. Even today, those who

grew up in the era in question recall the popularity commanded by Bishop Sheen. This is true not only of those from Catholic homes, but those in which religion was not stressed. Even in many staunchly Protestant homes, Bishop Sheen was well-respected, and was the preferred choice over Milton Berle.[43]

Sheen rapidly gained a large and loyal audience. Sheen's substantial personal charisma was a crucial part of his importance on early TV, and was reinforced by the dramatic impact and vividly visual nature of Catholic ritual dress, as media scholar Thomas Doherty notes:

> Bedecked in the full-dress finery of ecclesiastical formalwear – scarlet skullcap, gold crucifix, and a long, flowing red cape set off against a jet-black cassock – [Sheen] stood poised for action like a dashing Don Diego Zorro or a suave Count Dracula....No less than Berle, Lucy, or Liberace, Bishop Sheen was a pure product of the material conditions of early television, a time when a singular face in close-up on the small screen could lull viewers into a trance of attention.[44]

Indeed, Sheen's intellectual demeanor, attractive appearance, and intense personal charisma inspired an admiration from some which was hardly spiritual. Sheen was frequently mobbed after his show by women attracted to what one DuMont executive called Sheen's "tremendous sex appeal."[45]

Sheen's popularity was also due to the intellectual content of the bishop's televised sermons, and to the forceful oratory in which he expressed them. "No less than his vestments, Sheen's sermons were a uniquely Catholic expression of faith in a nation that had only lately welcomed Catholicism into the American mosaic."[46] Again, however, Sheen's speeches appealed to a broader audience than merely Catholics. By avoiding specifically "Catholic"

language, refusing to overtly promote specifically Catholic doctrines, and addressing broader topics of American life, Sheen made himself a welcome visitor in homes across America's political and religious spectrum. His weekly homilies covered topics ranging from the importance of the family and personal morality to global geopolitics and opposition to Communist oppression. In them, Sheen outlined the history and philosophical underpinnings of Marxism, and refuted them in ringing tones and with a philosophical vigor nevertheless comprehensible to his viewing audience.

Yet despite his obvious erudition and innate urbanity, Sheen also possessed the common touch. Viewers were impressed by his Latin quotations and familiarity with history, philosophy, theology, and science; but they could hardly consider Sheen a stuffed-shirt intellectual when he included in his homilies lines like, "To the moon, Alice!" (a reference to Jackie Gleason's catch phrase on his situation comedy *The Honeymooners*) [47], or appeared as a "mystery guest" on the TV quiz show *What's My Line*.[48] Indeed, "Bishop Sheen performed the duties of three serious vocations: cold warrior, defender of the faith, and master of the medium."[49]

While Sheen's erudition and personal charisma were obvious reasons for his popularity, the dynamics of early television audiences were another. When television broadcasts became widely available outside the immediate New York area, Milton Berle's popularity declined rapidly. As Americans across the country joined the audience, Milton Berle's program gradually lost the viewership and influence it had held at the outset of the television age. James Baughman notes that

> Berle's video fate was closely tied to his program's New York City orientation. He laced his humor with specific references to the city and its institutions, [and] the program not only was produced in New York but often appeared to be written for a New York audience....The newer television viewer was decidedly less enthusiastic about a heavy New York accent. Sketches frequently alluded to New York and even Jewish culture. "I'm Don Jose from Far Rockaway," [Berle] boasted in one scene. For too much of the new audience, it was too New York, too big city.[50]

Many academics (themselves often products of the urban East Coast *milieu*) attribute such unpopularity to the ignorance, lack of sophistication, and inherent racist anti-Semitism which they believe to be the overriding characteristic of everyone living west of the Hudson River. But a fair-minded assessment shows that the humor employed by Berle and other Manhattan-based comedies and programs *was* provincial in the extreme – far more so than were the viewers in the Midwest. Only those familiar with New York City could comprehend the incessant references to specific neighborhoods, intersections, and restaurants employed by Berle and his ilk. Then too, the semi-burlesque nightclub style of comedy common in New York-based early television programs often proved too crass, racy, and buffoonish for viewers in the more rural and conservative Midwest. Programs produced in New York were frequently the target of complaints couched in terms of good taste, opposing the "big city" sensibility of the networks' New York programming to the standards of the rest of the country. A 1955 book, *Television Program Production*, by Carroll O'Meara, complained:

> What is acceptable to broad-minded nightclub audiences in Manhattan, Hollywood or Las Vegas is rarely apt to be fare for admission in homes in any city or town. Jaded and liquored celebrants in a nightclub will accept as sophisticated humor and wit what is actually nothing but smut....What many entertainers fail to realize, actually, is that the areas containing the bistros, night spots, and bright lights are only a minute segment of America. And yet, somehow, they insist on broadcasting to the entire nation comic and other material definitely not acceptable in the average American home...Our nation consists of 160 million citizens, most of whom live in small towns, go to church

> on Sunday, attempt to bring up their children decently, and do not regard burlesque shows as the ultimate in theatre.[51]

In an era when, particularly in rural America, daily life still largely adhered to patterns similar to those of the last century, the importance of piety, education, and personal moral conduct were still verities, and predisposed audiences to appreciate Sheen's messages. Just as Midwesterners preferred the straightforward good-versus-evil storytelling of Westerns and crime dramas to the psychological dramas to be found in many Manhattan-based live anthology programs, so too Sheen was more popular among Midwestern audiences than his rival in the same timeslot. Midwestern viewers found Bishop Sheen's optimistic emphasis on the triumph of God and the human spirit over the evils of the world more uplifting than dramas focusing on the neuroses of city dwellers. Lest this be taken as proof of Midwestern viewers' innate lack of sophistication, however, it is worth noting that Sheen's frequent references to Plato, Aquinas, and Shakespeare, popular with Midwesterner "hicks in the sticks," compare favorably to Berle's Borscht Belt seltzer-water-and-pie-in-the-face antics and cross-dresser clowning, preferred by allegedly more "sophisticated" New Yorkers.[52]

Yet Sheen had many other effects on American culture, ones apart from those provided by his own words. In many ways – particularly in terms of popularity -- Fulton J. Sheen was his era's counterpart to Charles Coughlin, though a far more positive one. Even in his early years, Coughlin was brusque, strident, and divisive, while Sheen was never anything but suave, calm, and conciliatory.[53] Just as Father Coughlin, the most prominent Catholic clergyman in the media of his day, symbolized (and helped inspire) the portrayal of the two-fisted "fighting priest"

crusading against corruption and for the welfare of the common people in the movies of the 1930s, so too did Bishop Sheen, by his American patriotism, his anti-Communist fervor, his refusal to indulge in religiously sectarian disputes, and above all, his image of calm, collected, and deeply intellectual yet simultaneously passionate faith inspire a newer, more respectful treatment of Catholic clergy on television.[54]

The influence that Sheen had on viewers previously unfamiliar with, or even hostile to, Catholicism is incalculable. Sheen presented a positive image of Catholics as handsome, charming, urbane, witty, intellectual, and solidly American – characteristics also associated with the man who was to become the first Catholic President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy. While it would be going too far to state unequivocally that Sheen was responsible for Kennedy's election, it is undeniable that the positive image of Catholics created by Sheen confirmed and consolidated the acceptance, and even popularity, of Catholicism in the American mainstream.

Sheen's presence on television both caused and confirmed the presence of Catholicism as firmly American. Unlike the "outsider" Father Coughlin, Sheen had no need to set up his own ad-hoc chain of stations; he began on a national network, and when DuMont folded, he stepped easily onto ABC. Unlike Coughlin, Sheen's broadcasts caused no friction with others, whether inside the Church or outside it; there was never any conflict between Sheen and other Catholic prelates or intellectuals over the content of his talks. And unlike Coughlin, while Sheen did discourage greed and excessive materialism, he did not condemn capitalism as a system, or

bankers or business as a whole; his program was even sponsored by a major business. Sheen's commercial and popular success was a testament both to the increasing acceptance of Catholicism, and the growing religious tolerance of America;[55] but Sheen also provided a real-life template for the portrayal of priests.

Inspired both by Sheen, and by the Spencer Tracy/Bing Crosby/Pat O'Brien characterizations from previous decades of film, throughout the 1950s and '60s, Catholic priests on television demonstrated their faith's accommodation to and acceptance in mainstream American culture through two major forms of characterization: "men of piety," devout clerics who, in their day-to-day ministry, become involved in events around them, and assist the program's protagonist in doing what is right; or as truly heroic figures, themselves victims of (generally Communist) oppression, who serve as symbols of freedom and crusaders against tyranny. But unlike the earlier manifestation of priests in the films of the 1930s, priests on television led the fight for justice with their faith, not with their fists. When they were shown, Catholic clergy invariably fell into one of these two categories.

Yet depiction of Catholic clergy on fictional dramas or comedies remained more or less rare. While heroic priests had been a staple of mainstream Hollywood movies since 1938, their presence on television was limited. Catholic clergy were not recurring characters on weekly television programs throughout the 1950s. Given the prominence of such characters in the movies, the reasons for this general absence can only be speculative. In part, it may have been a manifestation of the "consensus" mood of the 1950s, one in which television in particular, as a

"guest in the home," sought to avoid anything even potentially divisive. Such a treatment was rigorously reinforced by advertisers, who were notoriously skittish about anything controversial; by network "Standards and Practices" divisions, which sought to ensure quality in television; and by local stations themselves, which stood to be fined or even potentially lose their broadcast licenses were they to incur the wrath of the Federal Communications Commission.

As a result, programs like *Father Knows Best* and *Leave It to Beaver* focused on bland, white, suburban families in which, though middle-class morality was always strongly adhered to, there was never any mention of which religious denomination (if any) was preferred. With the rise of the Cold War "consensus" in American culture came a more ecumenical perspective, under which it was considered bad form to emphasize the specific doctrines of a particular religious denomination in any but specifically worship-related contexts. And as a mass medium and "guest in the home," television in particular emphasized such ecumenical consensus. Though most dramas and situation comedies featured episodes tied to Christmas, for example, rarely if ever were any specifics of denomination, ritual, or doctrine visible.[56] Similarly, Western and detective show heroes embodied an explicit moral code, in which good was rewarded and evil punished; but although such shows rarely treated religion or clergy openly, when they did so it was always in a respectful, even reverent, manner.

It should come as no surprise that both were treated with the same degree of respect on the perennial adventure favorite *The Lone Ranger.* "With his faithful Indian companion Tonto, the daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains led the fight for law and order in the early

western United States," becoming an iconic presence on America's radio airwaves for over twenty years, after premiering on Detroit radio station WXYZ in 1933. So great was the popularity of the program that *The Lone Ranger* served as the cornerstone upon which was built the Mutual radio network.

The long-term radio popularity of *The Lone Ranger* guaranteed the program a place on the television schedule, coming to third-place network ABC in 1949. In an early demonstration of the network's strategy of promoting programming popular with young viewers early in the evening in the hopes that older viewers would then leave the television tuned to the network for the rest of the night (a strategy ABC pursued even more fully with its series1954 *Disneyland* [57]), *The Lone Ranger* remained ensconced in a timeslot at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays from 1949 throughout its entire eight-year run.[*]

Even on the *Lone Ranger* radio series, Catholic clergy were treated well. (It is unknown whether the fact that the radio program originated from Detroit – home to Father Coughlin – played a role in this decision; but certainly, *Lone Ranger* writer Fran Striker and others on WXYZ's creative staff could scarcely have been unaware of Coughlin's regional prominence and nation-wide popularity.) One of the Lone Ranger's infrequently-appearing allies was the

[*] This practice of deliberately marketing programming -- and sponsors -- to a younger demographic was in fact pioneered by ABC President Oliver Treyez after reading an academic study prepared by Columbia University sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld, which stated that younger audiences are more desirable to advertisers, as their purchasing habits are not yet determined. As programming like today's *Gossip Girl* and *Glee* demonstrates, this principle is still in force – and has been elevated to such extremes that now programming intended for anyone outside the 18-34 demographic can scarcely be found on prime-time television.

nameless "padre" who served as pastor to one of the West's Spanish missions. So worthy of respect was this priest that he became one of the few individuals entrusted with the secret of the Masked Man's origins and true identity. In one episode of the radio program, when the Lone Ranger voices his intention to destroy a criminal gang and admits the possibility that his efforts may result in his own death, the padre promises that he will be laid to rest alongside his fellow Texas Rangers.[58]

Similarly, several episodes of the TV series featured respectful portrayals of Catholic clergy. In the 1955 *Lone Ranger* episode "The Lost Chalice"[59], one such ecclesiastic plays a crucial role in the plot. Arriving during a dry spell which is harming the efforts of the farmers in Mission Valley, the Lone Ranger notes to Tonto, "The last letter from the padre sounded worried. He loves this land and these people. I hope we can help him." But the padre (clad in a Franciscan habit) has other problems, as well: a bandit has assaulted one of his parishioners and taken the mission's gold chalice. Notes the padre: "For years we have prayed to the Mother of God that our valley would always have water. We have always kept a chalice there to show our gratitude. Now a drought has come upon us, and our chalice has been taken. I think it means our faith is being tested. It may even mean that if we keep our faith now, even better things than we have ever had before shall come to us." As the Ranger confers with the padre, he reveals the respect for morality which made the program a positive influence for young viewers when he states, "I have close friends in every religious faith, and I respect each of them equally. I believe that the paths to God have many beginnings, but each of them has the same destination" -- a

sentiment closely correspondent to Will Herberg's evocation of American religious psychology in his classic essay on religious sociology published the same year, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*.

Obviously, the criminal who robbed the church has no such reverence for religion. But the robber's motive went beyond mere opportunity theft. The bandit responsible boasts to his cronies, "As a kid, I used to sneak into church and just look at the chalice. I've planned to swipe it for years. It belonged to the King of Spain 100 years ago." He also recounts the legend of the Lost Treasure of Mission Valley: when the king deeded the land in the valley, he also gave enough gold and silver to take care of the people for generations; but the first padre buried it all, except the chalice, in an unknown location. Following the cunning crook's suspicions, the criminals find a map to the treasure hidden in the base of the chalice. As the map is in Spanish, the crooks force an elderly peasant, Jose, to translate it for them, and discover that words on the map equate to verses of the Bible. Tonto arrives to visit Jose, but is assaulted by the criminals, knocked out, then forced at gunpoint into the slave labor of digging for the treasure. (As generations of comedians have noted, was there ever a sidekick more abused than Tonto? "This time, *you* go into town for supplies, *kemo sabe*.")

Meanwhile Jose, whom the bandits mistakenly believe they left for dead, staggers to the mission, where he recalls the Biblical citations on the map. The Ranger realizes that "a hundred years ago, these landmarks had Indian names, which would have been unfamiliar to the padre back then," and concludes that the Bible verses – with their references to dried-up riverbeds, clefts of rock, pits, and "lifting up eyes to the hills" – do indeed provide directions to the

treasure. Now aware of the treasure's location, and informed of Tonto's capture, the Ranger rides to the rescue, as Jose notes, "He might need help," and the padre piously responds, "If he does, I am sure he will receive it."

The Ranger, using his preternatural skill with firearms, rescues Tonto by shooting the guns out of the bandit's hands, while Tonto has the satisfaction of hurling a knife into the chest of the man who assaulted him. Using dynamite stolen by the bandits, the Ranger and Tonto blast through the ground, unleashing a flood of water from an underground reservoir; and from their newly-revealed vantage point, they "lift up their eyes" and see a cross, which leads them to a hidden vault filled with treasure. Having thus alleviated the valley's parched condition and provided the poor with enough treasure to care for their needs, the Lone Ranger and Tonto return the golden chalice to the padre. The worthy priest responds, "Thanks be to God. God bless you, my friends. Remember you are always welcome here," and concludes with an ironic reference noting that the criminals did not pay adequate attention to one of the Biblical quotes they'd uncovered: "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it."

The ubiquity of Spanish missions throughout the West – and the fact that many such mission church buildings still exist, and thus were available for filming – made the "Spanish mission padre" a recurring figure on many of the Westerns which littered the television landscape in the 1950s. Spanish missions and missionary priests made for convenient plot devices and colorful settings, and therefore provided instances in which Catholic clergy were visible to the television audience. In those shows, following the respectful attitude towards

matters of faith in American culture generally held in the era, the missions and the priests inhabiting them were invariably portrayed in a positive light, not only in such kid-friendly shows as *The Lone Ranger*, but even in the so-called "adult Westerns."

In 1950, two men working in the field of network radio originated what was to become a bold new direction in mass-media programming, the repercussions of which are to some degree still being felt today. Norman McDonnell, assistant director on the CBS dramatic series *Escape*, and John Meston, a story editor at the same network, began laying the groundwork for what was to become a new genre, the "adult Western."

The Western genre had dealt with "adult" themes and messages before, in novels such as Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1903); and certainly, some films had dealt with the Old West on an "adult" basis, like 1939's *Stagecoach*. But following the conventions and understanding of the day, novels and even film were allowed more latitude to deal with "adult" subjects than was radio; the former had to be actively sought out and purchased, whereas radio came into the home for free, and was easily accessible to every child. Film and novels were clearly the province of adults with purchasing power, while radio and television were "guests in the home," and could not presume to present programming which could potentially disturb viewers. As a result, similar to its attitude toward science fiction, radio had considered Westerns primarily suited for children, in shows like *The Lone Ranger, The Cisco Kid,* and *Red Ryder*[60] – programs which tended to present the Old West in a manner similar to the dime novels of an earlier generation, as a setting for carefree adventure devoid of more serious considerations.

But in the wake of the Second World War, -- much as Serling, Rose, Chayefsky, and others would do while crafting their early TV dramatic anthologies -- many creative individuals drew on their experiences when producing fiction; and because the war had brought with it such widespread awareness of increased violence in the public arena, such was increasingly seen as acceptable in entertainment. Increased levels of realistic brutality were to be found across the spectrum of popular culture, from serious novels like Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, to war comic books like *Frontline Combat* and *Two-Fisted Tales*. This more "adult" attitude was reflected in movie Westerns as well, from 1948's *Red River* to director John Ford's "Cavalry Trilogy" *Fort Apache* (1948), *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), and *Rio Grande* (1950). Given this *zeitgeist*, it is unsurprising that MacDonnell and Mestin were tremendously successful in their creation of network radio's first "adult Western," *Gunsmoke*, which debuted on radio in 1952, and became an immediate hit. Due to its overwhelming critical and commercial popularity, the program was quickly adapted for television, and became American television's longest-running prime-time Western. With *Gunsmoke*'s success, soon other "adult Westerns" were created specifically for television. One of these, while not having the longevity of *Gunsmoke*, was easily as popular.

Premiering on CBS in 1957, *Have Gun -- Will Travel* starred Richard Boone as Paladin, a mysterious combination of mercenary and man of culture. The show's title was taken from the words on Paladin's business card, and little was revealed of the character's background, save that he had attended West Point and served in the Civil War. When not working, Paladin (no other name was ever given for the character) relaxed in an expensive hotel in San Francisco, wearing

the most fashionable clothing, dining in expensive restaurants, and enjoying opera, literature, and the theater.

But when on the job, Paladin presented a very different image. Dressed entirely in black, he was a "hired gun," a combination of mercenary, enforcer, investigator and negotiator. Yet he had a personal, if eccentric, code of ethics; he often tried to resolve the matters for which he was hired without using violence, but if necessary he was capable of killing quickly and efficiently -- sometimes even killing the very men who hired him, if he learned that they had lied to him or were using him to harm innocents. Paladin's brutal code of justice extended to other areas as well: in one episode, Paladin told a man who had abducted (and, it was implied, raped) a woman, "If this girl has been harmed in any way, I'll flip a coin to decide which of you I gun down first."[61]

*Have Gun -- Will Travel* was co-created and written by Sam Rolfe (who later went on to develop the spy series *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*), and Herb Meadow, formerly a writer on many TV Westerns, including *The Lone Ranger*. The program immediately became an hit (ironically given its "adult" nature, it was particularly popular with children), ranking in the top five programs on TV in its first season, and in the top three for three years in a row (1958-61). The show's theme song likewise was a hit single;[62] and the program gained the unique distinction of reversing the usual trend by becoming the only television program to spawn a radio spin-off.

Given his nature as a roving mercenary, Paladin became involved with a wide variety of experiences and individuals. This aspect made the program, and Westerns in general, extremely adaptable, as there was a rationale for lead characters to become involved in many different scenarios, and for the shows to tell many different stories. Invariably, some of these took advantage of the "Spanish mission" setting; one such was the 1958 *Have Gun -- Will Travel* episode "The Statue of San Sebastian".[63]

The opening of this episode finds the jauntily-dressed Paladin in the small town of San Sebastian, waiting for a stagecoach. A young boy, Pedro, begs Paladin for a donation for "the padres at the mission. They need it very badly!" Paladin hands over a dollar, flashing his well-stocked wallet as he does so.

As Paladin washes in the back room of the stagecoach depot, Pedro slips in and steals his wallet. Back in the main room, Paladin notes a "wanted" poster offering a $100 reward for information leading to the capture of one Sancho, the reward being offered by wealthy rancher Ian Crown – who happens to be sitting in the room. After a brief discussion, Paladin makes to offer Crown his business card…only to find his wallet missing.

As Paladin arrives at the nearby Mission of San Sebastian, he finds Pedro giving all his stolen cash to one Padre Bartolome (played by the stentorian-voiced John Carradine), who is dressed in the simple habit of the Franciscans. After explaining the situation, Paladin is given his money back, and the Padre orders Pedro to retrieve the wallet. With Pedro gone, the Padre begs

Paladin, “Please do not be harsh with the boy. He’s not really a thief. He’s an orphan, and we’ve raised him.” Paladin agrees.

Over a glass of wine, Paladin notes, “Father, you’ve done a remarkable job of restoring this mission. Most are still in ruins.” The priest replies, “We were fortunate. Most of the people who owned the missions before President Lincoln returned them to the Catholic Church were not interested in the buildings, only the land. Seňor Crown is more careful about property. He had to be forced to relinquish the mission and the land around it. He was paid fairly, but he was not in sympathy with the price. He has a statue of our founder, St. Sebastian, and he refuses to return it unless we pay him for it -- two thousand dollars, an impossible sum. Without the statue, our people are unhappy. They want St. Sebastian to return.” Pedro returns Paladin’s wallet, having taken a business card from it.

Back in the village, Paladin learns that Sancho has robbed the stagecoach, which was carrying Crown’s payroll for his hired men. Pedro again approaches Paladin, showing him the business card and revealing his scheme: Pedro asks Paladin to catch Sancho…and in lieu of a reward, to ask Crown for the statue of St. Sebastian, which Paladin can then return to the Mission.

Paladin accepts this plan, and goes to bargain with Crown. When the greedy cattleman complains about the “blood and sweat and twenty years of work” he has put in on his ranch, Paladin reprimands him: “The Franciscans were here a long time before you. Their blood and

sweat went into those missions, too. The Mexican government sold it out from under them, and they got nothing." At first intransigent, Crown agrees to Paladin's proposal.

Carrying a duplicate payroll as a lure, Paladin dupes Sancho into appearing and shoots him in the arm. Sancho flees to the Mission, where he is bandaged and cared for by Padre Bartolome. When Paladin appears and Sancho draw his pistol, the priest's voice cracks like a whip: "Sancho! Remember where you are!" Paladin coldly informs Sancho, "You're going one way or another," but the padre tells them both, "Guns and violence will not be tolerated here."

To the priest's dismay, Sancho demands sanctuary: "You cannot refuse me. You cannot turn away anyone who seeks help and shelter." Paladin attempts to tell the padre about the bargain he made with Crown, but the priest replies, "If this man wishes to stay here, he shall have the care and protection of San Sebastian."

Reporting back to Crown, Paladin seems not at all perturbed by the padre's actions, and is even respectful: "Sancho got away, went to San Sebastian. He demanded sanctuary, and of course Father Bartolome had to grant it," he tells the rancher calmly. The scheming cattle baron pays Paladin for information leading to capture of Sancho, and plans to get Sancho himself – he and his men will surround the Mission, and he will not give Paladin the statue. Paladin refuses the robber baron's money and goes to mission to warn its inhabitants.

The padre states his belief that “everyone respects the law of sanctuary;” but he soon learns differently when Crown and his men arrive and demand Sancho. Informed that he has been granted sanctuary, Crown sneers,” You’re going to protect a thief, a common criminal? You -- a priest?”

Padre Bartolome replies, “I will shelter anyone who seeks my help, because I am a priest.” Crown threatens to take Sancho by force, but the padre says in a steely tone, “You do not dare. This is holy ground!” Crown decides to set his men to surrounding the Mission, stating, “We’ll see how good your sanctuary is without food and water!”

Three days later, Crown’s men are still there, but growing restless. Crown’s foreman tells the rancher, “The men don’t think this is right. Goin’ after Sancho’s one thing -- but the padres?” But Crown is indifferent to the suffering he is causing: “They can leave any time they want, so long as they leave Sancho behind.”

Indeed, though they are almost out of food and water, the brave fathers refuse to leave Sancho, though he urges them to do so. But Padre Bartolome tells him, “San Sebastian will provide. “

Finally, enraged by the sight of the priests near starvation, Paladin lassos Sancho with a whip and makes a stern demand: “I don’t ask you to think of anyone but the padres. Your fight is

harming innocent people. Our water runs out tomorrow. If you haven't thought of what to do by then, I promise you I will!"

Later that day, Paladin approaches the gate where Crown's men are encamped and makes a bargain with them: the statue of San Sebastian in exchange for him "dealing with" Sancho. Crown agrees; and when Sancho emerges from the building, Paladin brutally guns him down.

After seeing Sancho's body, Crown leaves the statue of San Sebastian at the Mission and departs satisfied. The padre chastises Paladin – "You violate sanctuary and you kill. May God forgive you!" – only to receive a shock when he enters the next room and finds Sancho alive. Paladin reveals their ruse of faking Sancho's death, by which they tricked Crown into returning the statue. As the priest reverently restores the statue to its alcove, Paladin states that he will keep his bargain: he will "deal with" Sancho by taking him to another part of the country. Sancho willingly agrees, and the two depart, as the priest blesses them with a hearty, "*Vaya con dios*, my friends!"

As far as a respectful portrayal of Catholic clergy goes, the casting of the classically-trained John Carradine could scarcely be bettered. Carradine cuts an impressive figure, and his stentorian voice and theatrical manner lend significant dramatic impact to the role of Father Bartolome. (Among many other roles, Carradine played Aaron in Cecil DeMille's 1956 epic *The Ten Commandments*.) Particularly impressive is the manner in which he forcefully confronts those who attempt to violate the rules of the sacred and of the church. The padre is not one to be

intimidated, not by Sancho, Ian Crown, or even Paladin himself. Father Bartolome is clearly a devout man of God, devoted to helping those in need and upholding the ancient tradition of Sanctuary, no matter who is invoking it.

Given the time in which the episode was airing, this presentation is yet another demonstration of the respect in which the Catholic Church was held in late 1950s America. The first the viewer hears of the Church is young Pedro's begging on behalf of the "good fathers." Next, the mission is shown as caring for the orphaned Pedro; yet in the tradition of generations of Catholic priests and nuns, while the Church is succoring Pedro's body, his moral development is also not neglected. The no-nonsense padre orders Pedro to return the money which the pre-pubescent peasant pilfered from Paladin. The padre is also a generous realist, being happy about the return of most mission buildings to the Church, while regretting but accepting Crown's possession of the statue of St. Sebastian. He is thrilled when Paladin offers to negotiate for the statue's return; however, though he is displeased by Sancho's law-breaking attitude (and cannot be happy that Sancho's rebelliousness is undermining the mission's attempt to retrieve the statue), nevertheless grants Sancho Sanctuary when he demands it. He refuses to back down before Crown's threats, and even defies Paladin.

A better demonstration of the portrayal of Catholicism by 1950s American media can hardly be imagined. The Church is shown to be a historical presence in early Western America; past anti-Catholic attitudes and troubles are (obliquely) referred to but not resented; the Church is shown to be active in "social work" (caring for orphans) as well as the spiritual well-being of the

community (and, implicitly, to be advocating on behalf of ethnic Hispanics in opposition to wealthy, white landowners – not unlike the current situation *vis a vis* immigration reform!); a stern moral code is adhered to, and moral behavior is strongly encouraged in others; yet in granting Sanctuary to a criminal, the padre demonstrates both a respect for traditional Catholic belief, and the understanding that in the Church, mercy must always trump justice.

Furthermore, if one assumes that, as the program's protagonist and "hero," Paladin's attitude is the "correct" one with which a viewer is supposed to sympathize, we find the tough but intellectually enlightened gunslinger accepting of and even respectful toward Catholicism. Paladin begins his conversation with the padre by complimenting the Franciscans on their excellent work in helping others. He freely volunteers to undertake the task of regaining the statue of St. Sebastian on behalf of the mission, even forfeiting his usual fee. When the padre shelters Sancho – a man who held Paladin at gunpoint and, presumably, would've been willing to kill him -- Paladin accepts the situation with equanimity. When the padre honors Sancho's demand for Sanctuary, Paladin calmly states that the churchman "had no choice" but to grant it, thus demonstrating both familiarity with and respect for Church history. Finally, Paladin is only impelled to break Crown's siege by faking Sancho's murder when it becomes clear that the mission's food is running out. Thus, throughout the episode, Paladin views Catholicism in general, and the mission and Father Bartholome in particular, as admirable and just institutions; they draw Paladin's sympathy and respect, and inspire him to give the Church mission and its adherents his best efforts. Paladin regains the statue with such symbolic (and spiritual) value for the mission, and ensures that Crown will leave the mission unmolested in the future – and does

so without being paid, a rare demonstration of charity for the high-living mercenary. Thus, *Have Gun, Will Travel* presented viewers with a picture of Catholicism as an institution both noble and historic.

That this attitude was a common one in the 1950s is demonstrated by another episode with a Spanish mission setting – but one taking place in 1953, on the wildly popular crime drama *Dragnet*. Originating on radio, *Dragnet* was the brainchild of Jack Webb, who also wrote, directed, and starred in the show. The success of *Dragnet* was immediate; by 1952, it was being carried both on radio and television.

*Dragnet* was the original "police procedural." While playing a role in the 1948 movie *He Walked by Night*, Webb made the acquaintance of a real-life police officer who was serving as the film's technical consultant. Webb became fascinated with the idea of bringing to the air a program which demonstrated genuine police policies and procedures with as much accuracy as possible. This approach, which eschewed the over-the-top melodrama and violence of crime drama up to that time, proved tremendously popular, and *Dragnet* enjoyed an eight-year run both on radio and television, as well as a big-screen movie in 1954. The show's deadpan acting and clipped dialogue ("This is the city," "My name's Friday. I'm a cop," "Just the facts, ma'am") also spawned many parodies, chief among them comedian Stan Freberg's satirical spoken-word short, "St. George and the Dragonet." These in turn made the program even better known, transforming the show's characters and concepts into household words. So iconic was *Dragnet*

that after its 1959 cancellation, the program was revived for more new episodes from 1967 through 1970, this time filmed in color.

The *Dragnet* episode "The Big Little Jesus" (most early *Dragnet* episodes were titled "The Big" something-or-other), first aired on Christmas Eve 1953.[64] The episode opens with Webb's laconic Sergeant Joe Friday receiving a call from Los Angeles' Old Mission Plaza church (a still-extant genuine Spanish mission from which the current city of Los Angeles grew). Arriving on the scene, Friday and his partner Frank Smith speak with Father Xavier Rojas, who informs them that the statue of the Child Jesus has been taken from the church's Nativity scene. In the terse but evocative dialogue for which *Dragnet* was famous, Friday notes in voice-over:

> It was a seventy dollar duplication of the scene at Bethlehem. The parishioners had taken up a collection for it thirty years ago. It was put up every year on December twenty-second and taken down after the holy season. It was beautiful, except that one of the shepherds had lost an arm, and one of the sheep was old and cracked...and the Infant Jesus was missing.

Discussing the theft with Father Rojas, the police learn that the church was open all night. An irritated Friday asks, "You leave it open all night, so any thief can walk in?" "Particularly thieves, sergeant," Father Rojas dryly responds, drawing a smile from the hard-boiled cop. Standing before a large painting of Christ crucified, the father then discusses the importance the statue has for the members of his parish:

> The statue is only worth a few dollars. We could get a new one, but it wouldn't be the same. We've had children who grew up in this parish, married here, and it was the only Jesus they've ever known. And we've had children die, and it was the only Jesus they've ever known. So many of the people who come here are simple people. They wouldn't understand. It would be like changing the evening star. That's why it would mean so much to have it back for the first mass on Christmas.

The priest concludes his speech by observing, "It's a pity some men learn to steal." The always-realistic Friday replies, "But consider us, Father. If they didn't, you and I would be out of work."

Friday and his partner, Frank Smith, attempt to get leads on the statue, visiting pawnshops and retailers that deal in religious items. They also learn that an altar boy who served at the morning Mass noticed the statue missing. (In a touch which realistically reflects the legalistic pietism which often characterized Catholicism in the era, the boy notes that though he has the most seniority of all the altar boys, he chooses to serve the 6 a.m. Mass to circumvent the canonically-imposed fast since midnight: "If you receive communion, you get to have breakfast sooner.") Interviewing the boy leads Friday and Smith to a homeless man previously convicted of theft, but he proves not to have taken the statue. Out of leads and ordered to abandon the case by their superior, the detectives drive to the Mission in the early evening of Christmas Eve.

While Friday and Smith are making their apologies to Father Rojas, a little Hispanic boy comes into the mission, pulling a toy red wagon. Within is the statue. Friday asks for an explanation, and Father Rojas translates:

> "All through the years he's prayed a red wagon for Christmas, but never got one. So he prayed to the child Jesus – if he got one, Jesus would get the first ride in it. He wants to know if the devil will come and take him to hell." Friday replies, "That's your department, Father." The priest tells the boy, "*No. No diablo*;" then he and the boy replace the statue of Christ in the manger, as the camera focuses softly on the statues of Mary, Joseph, and the Nativity scene. The boy then departs, his wagon rattling across the mission's cobblestone floor. Father Rojas further explains, "The firemen fix old toys and give them to families. His family is poor." As background music soars, Friday looks

> around the church, now decorated for Christmas, with candles aglow, asks, "Are they, father?"

Though both *Dragnet* and Jack Webb personally were widely known for their conservative, law-and-order messages -- by the late 1960s the program verged on self-parody, with Webb delivering soliloquies on the evils of marijuana or campus protests which were deadpan in delivery but so reactionary they bordered on hysteria in terms of content -- oddly, religion was treated only rarely on the program. "The Big Little Jesus" was the most notable exception; so popular was this episode that it was shown every year thereafter as *Dragnet*'s annual Christmas episode. For the 1967 series, "The Big Little Jesus" was remade in color and retitled "The Christmas Story;"[65] but apart from shifting the setting from Los Angeles to the San Fernando Mission, virtually no other changes were made – even the same actor played Father Rojas in both versions.

While Father Rojas' role in the episode is not decisive, it is of a piece with the standard presentation of Catholic clergy in the television programming (and public perception) of the era – devout, skilled with other languages (a given in an era when Latin was still the language of the liturgy), and concerned about (and implicitly more intelligent and assimilated to American ways than) his parishioners. Also notable is the compassion shown by each priest – willing to grant "sanctuary" even to a criminal who means ill toward his parishioners, and unwilling to berate a child who has innocently caused trouble.

This more traditional presentation of priests as pious men of God, concerned about their parishioners and often, in particular, children, was seen in "The Faith of Chata," an episode of *The Loretta Young Show* – a program which not infrequently featured Catholic clergy, due largely to the presence and personal faith of its star.

Though little remembered today, Loretta Young was a prominent actress in the mid-twentieth century. Beginning her career as a child in silent movies, in time Miss Young had a long string of starring roles, the first prominent one being her star turn in the successful movie *Kentucky* (1938) opposite Walter Brennan. The years around 1950 were the most successful for Miss Young; in 1947, she starred in *The Bishop's Wife* with David Niven and Cary Grant (a movie which became a perennial Christmas favorite). The same year, she starred in *The Farmer's Daughter* – a role for which she won the Oscar for Best Actress. Miss Young was nominated for Best Actress again two years later, for her role as the feisty Sister Margaret in the tremendously popular *Come to the Stable* -- a film in the vein of *The Bells of St. Mary's*, about a pair of French nuns assigned to build a children's hospital in New England, and their difficulties with the local bishop, an eccentric artist, and a mobster who owns the land on which they want to build.

It comes as little surprise that one of her most successful roles was playing a nun, for Loretta Young was famous for two characteristics in Hollywood. One of these was her intense devotion to her Catholic faith. It was Miss Young herself who urged Daryl Zanuck to make Clare Booth Luce's story *Come to the Stable* into a movie. Nicknamed "Saint Loretta" by some, during

the movie's filming Miss Young – who had attended a convent school herself, and was notably the only Catholic in the cast – insisted on changes to make the nuns' behavior more realistic, such as asking for a retake of a scene in which co-star Celeste Holm, as Sister Scholastica, acted flirtatious. *Come to the Stable* also marked the first appearance of Miss Young's practice of installing a "swear jar" on the set, and insisting that each cast and crew member pay 25¢ for each "blasphemous" word they uttered, the money being donated to charity. The "swear jar" soon became a fixture on future productions in which Miss Young was involved.[66]

Surprisingly, given her great success in movies, Loretta Young abandoned film to jump wholeheartedly into the new medium of television in 1953, as star of her own dramatic anthology. Television's first decade was filled with such programs, with shows like *Douglas Fairbanks Presents, Jane Wyman Theater,* and *George Sanders Mystery Theater* attempting to compete with live dramatic anthologies like *Playhouse 90*, using the "star power" of their leads to draw in viewers. Miss Young's, however, was by far the most successful and popular such anthology, with only *Robert Montgomery Presents* coming close to matching it in quality and longevity. Ultimately, Miss Young's program had greater success than any other such series, lasting eight years from 1953 to 1961.[67]

Originally named *Letters to Loretta*, the series utilized the gimmick of Miss Young opening each episode by "answering" an alleged letter from a fan, which then led into the story. This was abandoned after the first season, with the program renamed to the more conventional *The Loretta Young Show*. In addition to high-quality dramas, the program was notable for its

opening, which prominently displayed Miss Young's other famous characteristic: her love of elaborate and glamorous gowns. The always beautifully-attired Miss Young would make a dramatic entrance, "sweeping through a doorway with her full-skirted dress swirling around her, and move into the center of the room to introduce the evening's play. Equally distinctive was the program's close, when she would return and read a few lines of poetry or a passage from the Bible,"[68] pointing out the episode's moral lesson.

Though they varied from serious to sentimental to outright comedy, the stories featured on *The Loretta Young Show* were consistently uplifting, always teaching some moral lesson or portraying the nobility of the individual. This had been a key motive in Miss Young's move to TV. Hollywood mogul Louis B. Mayer warned her that that she would never star in a movie again if she "took TV's side" in the acrimonious "movies vs. television" feud then gripping the entertainment industry. Miss Young replied, "If I could get one wholesome and positive idea into the mainstream of life each week, wouldn't it be worth any amount of work and risk?"[69]

Miss Young starred in every episode for the program's first two seasons, after which she reduced her involvement. Over the course of the entire series, she starred in about half the episodes broadcast. The Procter & Gamble-sponsored show went on to great success, with Miss Young winning Best Actress Emmys in 1955, 1957 and 1959, thus making Loretta Young the first actress to win both an Oscar and an Emmy. The program also helped build the careers of Miss Young's various co-stars, including future television series leads as Eddie Albert, James Daly, Claude Akins, John Newland (who also directed several episodes), and Ricardo

Montalban, who starred on nine different occasions (and who, not coincidentally, was Miss Young's brother-in-law).[70]

By 1961, dramatic anthologies were largely out of favor with both viewers and the networks, and *The Loretta Young Show* came to an end. The actress attempted to return with *The New Loretta Young Show*, which featured Miss Young in a standard sitcom-style setting; but the new show was cancelled after a year, and Loretta Young settled down to a long and happy retirement, involved in charity work and writing a column for the Catholic News Service. She had a final success with her role in the 1986 NBC made-for-TV movie *Christmas Eve*, for which she won a Golden Globe, and died August 12, 2000.

The 1953 episode "The Faith of Chata"[71] was one of the first episodes of *The Loretta Young Show* in which Catholicism (and Catholic clergy) played a major role. During her introduction, Miss Young reads a letter from a friend recalling a recent trip to Mexico. "Do you remember the night we sat on the patio and heard the story of a little girl named Chata…how deeply impressed and puzzled we were?" she asks, as the camera fades into the story.

Chata is a nine old girl living in small house with her mother Paula, a woman who is forced to earn her living as a dancer in the local cantina. Chata has a strong devotion to St. Ines (the Spanish spelling of St. Agnes, a virgin martyr and the patron saint of young girls). With her saint's day approaching, Chata has already built a grotto using castoff bricks from a local quarry. To celebrate the day, Paula gives Chata a small statue of St. Ines, which Chata places in the

grotto and decorates with flowers; but the little girl worries that her grotto is "not good enough for Santa Ines. Once I worried that you wouldn't get me the statue, then I worried that a homemade grotto wouldn't be good enough." Her mother reassures her, "Chata, homemade things are not always made with the finest tools and materials, but always they are created with love. This is the best way." "Sometimes I feel that YOU are exactly like Santa Ines!" Chata tells her mother.

However, the little girl grows fearful that night when a thunderstorm strikes. Chata goes out in the pouring rain, brings the saint's statue back in the house, and holds it as she lies shivering in bed, whispering a prayer: "Santa Ines, please ask God to make me not be afraid of the thunderstorm. Let me be close to Him and as close to you as I am to your statue."

The next day, Chata is sick with chills and fever. Paula chides her for going out in the rain, and Chata replies, "I did not want St. Ines to get wet the first night, and I was afraid of the thunder." Paula goes to fetch a doctor, but pauses to return the statue to the grotto, praying in the process: "You are the patron saint of my little girl. Please look after her!"

Later, a grim doctor reports after examining Chata, "It is pneumonia. She's a very sick child -- too sick to move her to big city hospital. We must wait and hope." "And pray," adds Paula. Suiting her action to her words, Paula goes to the church to pray, as the doctor stays with Chata. After lighting a candle for Chata, Paula kneels before a statue of the Blessed Virgin, crosses herself, and prays silently. As she does so, the parish priest approaches. When Paula asks

in anguish, “Why?” the priests states, “There are some things that are very hard to bear, yet we must, with courage and faith. We cannot always know the reason for these things, but God does, and His purpose is always good.” The priest goes home with Paula to greet Chata, only to find on their arrival that the child’s condition has worsened. The doctor states that there is nothing more he can do for her.

The priest addresses Chata: “I saw the grotto you built for Saint Ines. It is very beautiful. Your heavenly patroness must be very proud of you, very happy that your mother placed you under her special care. She will be most happy if you pray with her that God will make you well again.” After blessing mother and child, the priest departs; but Chata begins to despair, telling her mother, “Nothing can hurt me any more. I’m going to be with Santa Ines in heaven forever. Soon!”

Panic-stricken, Paula runs to fetch the doctor, who tells her that Chata is delirious. Paula is doubtful, but the doctor refuses to argue the point while Chata’s life slips away. He does, however, urge Paula to bring the priest: “Perhaps he can convince Chata she is misinterpreting what St. Ines is saying,” the medical man offers.

The next day, Paula tells the doctor that the priest was there for several hours, speaking of faith. “He says not even the smallest bird can fall without God’s knowing. He says, God knows all our needs, and if we do the first one thing in a dozen, God gives us the other eleven. This is God’s way of measuring. This is what the padre says.” A tearful Paula also states that Chata has

told her that "soon she will see St. Ines. She says she will look like me, but won't be able to dance as well."

The doctor has a brainstorm. Thinking that the power of Chata's belief may help her get well, he tells Paula, "Tonight, you appear to Chata as St. Ines. Explain that she misunderstood you, and that she can be with you without dying!" When Paula objects that it would not be right to pose as a saint, the doctor counters, "Is it right to let a beautiful child die? Do as I say. Get a white robe, pose as the saint. She already thinks the saint resembles you. I am of the world, and I am sure it will work. I know these things."

Two days later, the doctor greets a smiling Chata, who is well on the road to recovery. "Soon, you will be up and picking flowers for the festival of St. Ines," he tells her. Chata replies, "That's what she said last night. She visited with me! She said there was no need for me to go to Heaven, to the other side. She said, 'Chata you are at my side at the grotto, in the church, in school, when you work in the fields, everywhere. So long as you love God and serve Him, this is the best way to love me, your momma, and all God's creatures.' Then she talked about the grotto. She liked it very much! She told me other things I am to do. And I will begin as soon as I am well!"

The doctor approaches Paula, who is praying at Chata's grotto. The medical man smugly states, "She remembers every detail of the visit of St. Ines. She told me word for word. You did a fine job posing as the saint. This was a wise thing to do." But the doctor is disabused of his

superior attitude when Paula tells him, “I went to see the padre last night. He told me it would not be right to pose as St. Ines. I could not. It would have been wrong!” As church bells sound, the camera focuses on the statue of St. Ines, leaving the viewer to wonder: if Paula did not appear to Chata as the saint...who did?

Loretta Young returns with a final word. “With this letter, I received a newspaper clipping dated 13 years after story of Chata took place: ‘Fifteen orphaned children narrowly missed dying when their school bus collided with a truck. The heroic action of a young woman in charge of the group is credited with saving the lives of the children. She removed the children from the bus. The children referred to her as Chata.’ Thirteen years. A long time to wait for an answer. Or not, if you look at it this way: ‘Though the wheels of God grind slowly/yet they grind exceedingly small/Though with patience He stands waiting/with exactness grinds He all.’ Longfellow. And, I believe...I believe it.”

Although the character of the “padre” is seen only briefly, he remains a major instigator of the actions undertaken in the episode, both by Chata and by her mother Paula. It is the priest’s recognition of the faith of Chata which encourages both Chata’s own faith and that of her mother. It is his insistence on the reality of divine and saintly intercession in everyday life that gives Chata hope...and, it is implied, ultimately what preserves her life against the purely material and cynical advice of the professionally competent but disdainful doctor.

Here, as in other programs, the priest is seen as a man more learned than the uneducated "simple faithful" to whom he ministers; yet he is also possessed of greater wisdom and understanding of both the seen and unseen world than better-educated but more secularized and "scientific" figures as the town doctor. Indeed, the portrayal of clergy possessing educational "book-learning" greater than that of the majority of people, his experience with "the real world" through the trials and travails of his parishioners, his noble "higher calling," which led him to forsake marriage and family in the name of serving his people and his God, and his (presumed though never seen) experience with the world of the spirit and willingness to accept the possibility of miracles and the supernatural, combined to make the priest perhaps the ultimate authority figure worthy of respect in the popular culture of the day.

Also notable in the episodes discussed above – which are typical of the entertainment of the 1950s – are the similarities in the way such entertainment represented Catholicism itself. Each episode is set in the North American West at a Spanish mission (even the *Dragnet* episode taking place in the modern day). With the exception of the priest himself, the other Catholic characters are portrayed as simple-minded working-class individuals -- "peasants" or farmers in the Old West settings, carpenters and other blue-collar occupations in *Dragnet*. True, Chata, Pedro, and the boys in the *Dragnet* episode show a degree of precociousness; but they are also possessed of the same sincere, "child-like" faith of their elders. Such a "child-like" faith is acceptable in these characters, since they are children; but when adults like Loretta Young's Paula and *Have Gun Will Travel*'s Sancho exhibit similar traits, the scholar can be forgiven for

wondering whether the writers were indulging in stereotyping of Catholics as ignorant "foreigners" (i.e., non-WASPs) that goes back to the Know-Nothings of the 1840s.

A further theme common to these episodes is the emphasis given to physical objects. In three stories, it is a statue which serves as the major signifier of Catholicism; in the fourth, it is a chalice. The exact significance of this fact is, however, open to interpretation. One possibility is that it is simply an extension of the portrayal of Catholics as "simple" and "ignorant." According to the traditional assumptions of many American Protestants, Catholics were unfamiliar with the Bible and incapable of understanding advanced dogma or theological concepts (an ironic assumption, inasmuch as Catholicism had given Western civilization a millennium and a half of advanced theology and philosophy before the Reformation even began). Instead, this misunderstanding of Catholicism and foreign ethnic customs may have combined with the alleged "superstition" of Catholics, rooted in such customs as veneration of the saints, to create a perception that "those ignorant Catholics worship and pray to statues." This theme recurs throughout portrayals of Catholics in the period. Certainly, the emphasis put on the importance of such purely physical objects of veneration as statues in each of these episodes – particularly to the "simple-minded" – argues that, at least in part, such assumptions were made by, or were familiar to, the episode's writers.

By contrast, this tendency may also represent a genuine recognition of the greater emphasis on, and importance of, liturgical art in the history of Catholicism. The rich art, music, and sensual imagery common in Catholicism (and of which Puritans like John Adams were so

suspicious) contrasted sharply with the "bare walls" and greater emphasis on the written and spoken word in traditional Protestantism.

It is also notable that such assumptions were made solely about "ethnic" – i.e., non-Northern European – Catholics. Spanish, Mexican, and Italian Catholics were largely the focus of the characterization as "ignorant" and superstitious. (The religion of Eastern European immigrants, such as Poles and Slavs, was rarely treated in the media of the time.) By contrast, Irish Catholics were portrayed as "reasonable" and far less concerned with material manifestations of their faith – at least ones like statues. Far more often, however, the Irish Catholic clergy were shown as obsessed with a different sort of "materialism" – a concern with amassing worldly wealth so as to pay off a mortgage, begin a building program, or support some other, more "practical" endeavor...one with which Protestant viewers could easily understand and even sympathize. (This would be a recurring theme of ABC's 1962 television series *Going My Way* -- for which see next chapter.)

But the fair-minded analyst must admit that there are possible explanations other than casual (or subconscious) bigotry on the part of 1950s television writers. One such possibility is that the use of a statue (or chalice) was simply conceived of as what film director Alfred Hitchcock called "a MacGuffin," a name given to any device used solely to drive the plot of a picture. (In a spy movie, "the MacGuffin" might be secret papers spies are trying to steal; in a crime drama, it might be a stolen necklace or suitcase full of money, and so forth – anything which impels the characters in the story to take action and come into conflict with one another.)

Add to this the fact that, in an Old West setting particularly, there were few sources of such riches. Short of a cattle baron, a stagecoach, or a bank, what other sources of wealth were there to drive a theft plot? But the Spanish missions were well-known for their artwork, and churches have traditionally possessed items such as gold chalices. (Additionally, robbing a church – particularly in a 1950s drama – would make the villains appear even more evil than a mere bank robbery could.) Finally, there is the point made by James Martin, S.J.: Catholicism possesses unparalleled elements of interest, both conceptually and visually. Spanish mission churches have unusual and appealing architecture; Catholic clergy – particularly those belonging to religious orders – wear distinctive garb; statues of various saints would have been unfamiliar, yet beautiful, artistic, and interesting to many Protestant viewers; and the existence of unusual (to Protestants) customs such as "sanctuary" and veneration of patron saints would have piqued the curiosity and interest of Protestant viewers unfamiliar with such. Of course, no one of these explanations may be exclusively correct; indeed, all may be, with some functioning on a conscious level, others on a subconscious, and still others purely unconscious, in the sense that they were merely assumed by the culture at large.

However, Spanish missions, statues, and ignorant lower-class "ethnics" did not comprise all representations of Catholicism and clergy on 1950s television. A more modern, if equally positive and low-key picture of Catholicism was to be found in a 1956 episode of *The Loretta Young Show* titled "The Cardinal's Secret"[72]. The episode opens with Ricardo Montalban playing one Father Gomez, a parish priest. As Father Gomez putters outside the church near the parochial school's field, some boys are playing ball. Father Gomez catches a fly ball and throws

it back, then takes the time to teach a boy how to swing a bat. The church's housekeeper, Mrs. Bagley, approaches, and discusses the parlous state of the parish's finances with the father. She tells him that they need $2,750 by the end of the month, and suggests that the young priest discuss the problem with his bishop. Father Gomez worries, "Do you realize how many times I've bothered him with my little problems? I've made such a pest of myself…" But pressed by Mrs. Bagley, he consents to do so.

The next scene shows Father Gomez being berated by his bishop: "I put you there to straighten things out, not to come running to me with your financial troubles! Do you think yours is the only parish that has problems? I'm surprised at you, Father. I thought the young men of this modern age could do anything! Use your head, Father. Use your imagination!" Father Gomez meekly submits to his superior's dressing down; but when he bends to kiss the bishop's ring, the prelate twists the knife further: "And you might add a prayer to St. Jude!" Gomez mumbles (for the benefit of Protestants in the viewing audience), "The Saint of Impossible Causes!" and departs. After Gomez leaves, the bishop is shown smiling to himself, in a manner which contradicts his harsh words to Gomez; the viewer is given to understand that the prelate did not truly seek to discourage or berate Gomez, but rather to spur him to greater efforts to creatively solve his own problems.

Back in his parish, Father Gomez studies a wall plaque which reads, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and He shall direct thy paths." As he kneels, crosses himself, and tries to pray, Gomez is distracted by the radio playing in the other room, where Mrs. Bagley is listening

to the baseball scores. After hearing one announcement on the radio, Mrs. Bagley approaches Father Gomez. “I saw you coach that boy this morning. Didn’t you play baseball professionally?” Gomez replies, “No, I couldn’t even say semi-professionally. Besides, that was before I went into the seminary,” thus revealing that the Father does have considerable talent as a ball player.

Mrs Bagley refuses to take Father Gomez’s modesty at face value, however. “You once preached on talents. God gave us talent, and it’s our job to use it to God’s glory, you said. He gave you the talent to hit a ball with a bat...and the Saint Louis Cardinals need hitters.” Gomez is inspired by the notion: “It might work at that! I have a month of vacation coming…and if the Cardinals will take me, I’m sure I can get a priest to cover me here.” But Father Gomez then has second thoughts: “No, what am I saying? I’m a priest! My job is to take care of the needs of the people of this parish.” Mrs. Bagley responds tartly, “And they won’t have a place to pray unless you come up with that money! The bishop told you to use your imagination!”

Shortly thereafter, Gomez appears in civilian clothes in the St. Louis Cardinals office, where he wheedles an opportunity to try out for the team from the Cardinals’ coach. After suiting up (and discreetly crossing himself and praying before swinging), he succeeds in impressing the team’s general manager, who hires him. When Gomez asks for the amount he needs, the manager demurs, on the basis that the amount is excessive for an untried rookie player. Eventually, Gomez makes a deal on this basis: if he gets one hit every day for 30 days, he will

receive the full amount; if not, he will receive nothing. Soon, newspaper headlines proclaim, "Cards win again! Gomez drives three runs" and "Cards win fifth straight: Gomez four for five."

But not every part of Gomez's new life as a ballplayer is as congenial. Daily at 6 a.m. he sneaks out of the dormitory room he shares with another player, and is shown kneeling before painting of Christ, reading his breviary and praying. Gomez attempts to return to the room by 7:30, but one morning his roommate catches him coming back in and taunts him: "You got a milk route on the side? Where do you go every morning? You stick to yourself. You don't join us on dates. You clam up when people ask you something more personal than the time of day. You're just not one of us, and you seem to like it that way. If you have breakfast with me, I promise not to preach." Gomez ignores the questions but wryly replies, "I don't mind preaching."

Nor are his fellow players the only ones to notice Gomez's peculiarities. Ruth, the manager's daughter (who is extremely popular with the other players), appears put off by Gomez's lack of interest in her, and corners and questions him. When Gomez denies being married but will not respond to questions about whether he has "someone else," Ruth invites him to go dancing, but the disguised cleric refuses. A hurt and disappointed Ruth says, "I can take a hint," and leaves him alone; but when Father Gomez's anxiety grows over his worry about a recent no-hit streak during practice and its implications for his parish's finances, Ruth encourages him. "What makes a batter is timing, and timing is nerves. When you're at the plate, you need to think about baseball, not whatever it is that's worrying you." With this inspiration,

Gomez snaps out of his slump, and it appears that he will be able to keep to the deal...until one of the final games of the month.

While in the dugout, a member of the Cardinals – ironically, named "Roarke"[*]– collapses from a heart attack and calls for a priest. Father Gomez, although torn as he is the next hitter, ultimately chooses to do his duty, and reveals himself, to the astonishment of the other players. Father Gomez hears Roarke's confession and grants him absolution, then stays with the man until a doctor arrives.

A concluding scene shows Father Gomez entering the locker room wearing his collar at the end of the game, and thanking the entire team for their kindness. The manager surprises him with a check for the full amount he requested. When Father Gomez protests, "But I didn't earn it," he is told, "The fellas chipped in. We've got a lot of respect for you – in both uniforms." Warmly blessing the team members, Gomez replies, "You'll be remembered every day in my prayers, every one of you." Departing, he bids farewell to Ruth, who admits in embarrassment, "I feel like such an idiot, Father." Father Gomez, having saved his parish, grins broadly and replies, "How could you have known? Anyway, it isn't every day a priest gets to be a Cardinal."

Though light-hearted in its portrayal, this episode clearly shows the popular image of the Catholic priest both as a "man of piety" and as a "man apart." Notably, Father Gomez does not

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[*] On the 1970s ABC television series *Fantasy Island*, Ricardo Montalban played the eponymous island's mysterious host -- one Mr. Roarke.

take part in any of the team's social activities such as dating or carousing; he remains apart, devoted to his vocation and his serious self-appointed task of raising money. Yet clearly, he is a "man of piety;" indeed, his faith allows him to bring about success and a minor miracle, simply through the strength of his convictions and the power of his belief.

A more serious characterization of Catholic clergy – one which showed the priest as an uncompromisingly courageous "man of piety" earning his heroic status through discreet acts of minor martyrdom – was shown in yet another episode of *The Loretta Young Show* to feature a priest, 1961's "Enter at Your Own Risk."[73] Willis and Lenore Cooper, described by Miss Young as "two very attractive, and very worldly, people," are shown pulling up to a trading post in the contemporary West. Lenore, resplendent in a fur coat, states firmly, "I want a hot bath and dry martini." Her husband tells her, "You'll get it as soon as we get to Grand Canyon Lodge. I'm sorry about the detour."

However, the couple's comfortable overnight stay is not to be. A store clerk informs Willis that though the post has a gas pump, it contains no gas. Furthermore, there is none at the next town, as the road has washed out and the gas truck couldn't get through. The shopkeeper does refer the couple to the local Catholic mission, stating that Father Pius might have some fuel. "I should've believed the sign when we entered the reservation: Enter at your own risk," Willis mutters as he drives on.

At the adobe mission, Willis encounters a man in work clothes and a rough jacket, who is talking on the hand-cranked telephone about having to rebuild his generator. As the man uses a hand water pump to wash his hands, he tells Willis, "You're welcome to a gallon if you can siphon it out of the jeep." When Willis asks to see the priest in charge, the rough-looking man responds in amusement, "I'm Father Pius. It's a natural mistake. I wear these clothes during the week, and save my robes for Sundays." Father Pius tells the Coopers that the washed-out road will not be repaired for a week, and offers to let them stay at the mission. Upon learning that there are no motels or dude ranches for a hundred miles, Willis accepts...though his attitude towards church and clergy quickly become apparent when he tells the priest, "It's only fair to tell you we're not Catholics. We do go to church sometimes, though. Christmas and Easter…" Father Pius sardonically responds, "Fine. We have two masses on Sunday," to which Willis reacts, "Oh, we won't be here THAT long, I hope!"

After the Coopers move into the mission's spare room, Lenore complains about the junk filling the closet, then whines, "I must have a new mink for Christmas. This one's out of style." Invited to dinner, the couple grimaces at the meager fare presented them: a soup Father Pius made himself out of "leftover chicken noodle, pepper pot and lamb stew," and Navaho bread. When Lenore complains that the bread is very bland, Pius tells her that he has no butter, "but I do have some peanut butter."

The Coopers' sensuous lifestyle is further contrasted with that of life on the mission during dinnertime conversation. Willis states that he owns a fancy imported food market, and

that during World War II, he was in the service – "Armed Forces Radio, in Washington." By contrast, Father Pius was a chaplain in the Marine Corps, stationed in combat zones in the Pacific. Asked if Pius is his "real name," the priest reveals more about himself: "No, Elvin Schumacker. We take saints' names at the seminary. I picked the shortest I could find. I've been here at this mission 15 years. We're kept here until we learn the Indians' language."

Asked if he ever gets lonely, Pius replies, "I don't have time to get lonely." "I suppose it does keep you busy, saving souls and like that," smarms Lenore. "Unfortunately, that's only part of our work. We do the best we can to help people here – vaccinations, set a broken arm or leg. I'm not really a doctor, but since there are none we do the best we can." Called away from the table by a Native American at the door, Father Pius excuses himself: "There's a little girl on the reservation sick, coughing up blood. I have to leave."

"To think, last night we were at the craps tables, watching the naked girls dance and laughing at the dirty jokes. It sure is another world out here. Here's a man all alone in the wilderness, giving up 15 years of his life for some poor Indians. Doesn't that make you think a little?" Willis muses. Lenore callously responds, "Yes. It makes me think I prefer Vegas."

The next morning finds Willis inspired. He goes to the trading post and brings back supplies for Father Pius, and attempts to fix the short in the mission's generator, while Lenore expresses her discontent: "What a delightful weekend! Powdered milk and canned peas! No steak. Or milk. Or liquor!" Willis remembers a bottle of liquor he'd stashed in their suitcase, and

the couple goes upstairs to retrieve it. At that moment Father Pius returns, filthy and exhausted from his ordeal – only to find a Navaho named Charlie with a cut on his head waiting for him. Stating that he has been in a fight with the Navaho police and put one officer in the hospital, Charlie draws a look of resentment mingled with resignation from Father Pius. "You've been drinking again. You know what liquor does to you. Once I patch you up, I want you to go to the tribal council and give yourself up. You assaulted one of your own peace officers." Charlie states that he will not give himself up, and will run from the law instead. Pius asks, "What about your kids?" "They'll go hungry," the self-centered Charlie replies. With quiet rage, Pius promises,"I'll see they're taken care of, Charlie." This gesture shames Charlie, and he agrees to give himself up. "I wouldn't do it for anybody...but you're all right, Father."

Returning from their lark upstairs, Lenore greets Father Pius by asking how the little Indian girl is doing...only to be shocked into silence when the priest bluntly states, "She's dead. Malnutrition. When I gave her the last rites she said she was glad she was going to Jesus, because He was a shepherd, like her people. She would've been eight years old next month. I see so much of it, but I never get used to it. I christened her here in the church. Maria Bluebird. It's strange for a priest to say, but it's like they're all my own. At Christmas it's really something. Some drive a hundred miles to get here. The gifts aren't much, just secondhand clothes and shoes and castoff toys." Lenore is ashamed to realize that this is the "junk" she complained about in the spare room's closet. "Last year we ran out, so this year we started collecting early. Maria wanted a doll. There wasn't one left," the exhausted priest concludes.

A humbled Lenore meekly offers, “How would you like some ham and eggs?” “That WOULD be good!” Pius responds, before realization takes hold, and he amends his answer: “Er, just eggs for me. It’s Friday. Excuse me, I’ve got to go clean up.” When Willis asks how he got so dirty, Pius tells him: “I had to bury the child. The Navaho are afraid of the dead. They’ll even move out of the hoedown where the child died. They’ll live under a ledge in the canyon until they build a new one. They need some food.” Over the Coopers’ objections, Pius plans to hand out the food they bought to thank him personally to his Native charges.

The next day finds the Coopers shocked out of their complacency. Lenore sews up the torn dolls and clothing in the closet, as Willis muses, “I’ve been thinking. We’ve got friends who could send them lots of toys, not beat-up stuff like this.” “And you could send them food -- you get it wholesale,” Lenore adds. “And I don’t need a new mink.” Touched by his formerly complaining wife’s new compassion, Willis remarks fondly, “I’d forgotten what a good person you really are.”

Sunday finds Father Pius – finally seen in a Franciscan habit -- giving Lenore a turquoise bracelet, as he tells her, “The Navaho believe it protects you from evil.” Meanwhile, Willis whispers to the trading post’s storekeeper, “There’ll be some packages arriving for the mission. See that Father Pius gets them...and don’t tell him where they came from.” As the newly-redeemed couple departs, the shopkeeper remarks, “When they first arrived, I thought they were just ornery city folks.”

Here, the portrayal of a priest as a "man of piety" is far more low-key and realistic than in many of the Hollywood movies of the past...but it is no less impressive. Father Pius' record is contrasted with the shallow materialism of the Coopers: their war records, with Pius enduring Pacific theater combat while Cooper worked at a radio station in Washington; Pius spending fifteen years at a desert mission, while Cooper enjoyed a life of ease; and most of all, the heartache, loneliness, and hard physical labor of Pius' life, as opposed to the hedonism of the Coopers. Father Pius' portrayal once again highlights the everyday heroism of Catholic clergy as "men of piety."

A final example of the portrayal of priests as "men of piety," differs in that it took place within the confines of a situation comedy. While neither dramatic anthologies, nor Westerns, nor police shows, shied away from using priests as characters, such usage in a comedy during American television's first two decades was extremely rare, to the point of being practically non-existent. This is unsurprising; in addition to network and sponsor fears of causing controversy with a portrayal that even a handful of viewers might find offensive (and in an era when memories of the power the Catholic Legion of Decency exerted on Hollywood for decades were still recent and strong), the Code of Practice adopted by the Television Board of the National Association of Broadcasters in 1951 stated that "ministers, priests and rabbis portrayed in their callings are [to be] vested with the dignity of their office and under no circumstances are to be held up to ridicule."[74]

In such circumstances, not even the mildest jokes were directed at clergy. Typically, the entire subject of religion was avoided in television humor – just as it was rare in the vast majority of other types of programs. Yet one episode did address faith and specifically Catholic clergy in a humorous context – and did so with unparalleled taste and comedic results. That both were the result is not surprising, given that the program which did address it has been hailed as one of the greatest television situation comedies of all time, with a creative staff to match.

Premiering in 1961 on CBS, *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was created by Carl Reiner, the comic genius behind the classic 1950s variety program *Your Show of Shows*. Though Reiner based the show on his own experience as a TV comedy writer and intended to star in it, the program's producer, Sheldon Leonard (who also produced *Make Room for Daddy, The Andy Griffith Show,* and *I Spy*) told him that, given his fame, he would not be accepted by audiences as a "man next door." Instead, Reiner and Sheldon cast little-known song-and-dance man Dick Van Dyke in the lead role of TV comedy writer Rob Petrie, and chose a previously unknown actress, Mary Tyler Moore, as his wife Laura. Through a magical combination of casting, acting, and writing, *The Dick Van Dyke Show* became a classic of television, eventually earning 15 Emmy awards.[75]

The 1964 episode "The Life and Love of Joe Coogan"[76] opens with Rob, his co-worker Buddy, their producer Mel, and new acquaintance Joe Coogan at a golf course. Joe thanks the threesome for letting him play with them, and falls into conversation with Rob. In response to Rob's questions, Joe states that he is not married, and that "I've only been in love once, and it

was a long time ago. Her name was Laura. I was in college. I didn't know I could write poetry until then. I spent all my time writing sonnets and sending them to her...She got married. Joined a USO troupe to entertain servicemen. She was a dancer. Last time I heard she wrote to tell me about this sergeant she met in Missouri. I assume she married him. I haven't heard from her since."

In an early demonstration of continuity within a television series, all of the incidents about Laura to which Joe refers had already been seen by viewers in previous episodes of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, during stories which showed "flashbacks" to Rob and Laura's courtship. Thus the viewer would know – as Rob now does – that the Laura to whom Joe Coogan is referring is Rob's own wife.

A flabbergasted Rob asks Joe, "You're not carrying a torch for her?" Joe responds in the negative, then invites Rob to golf with him again the next week. After Rob departs, the bartender says, "He called you 'Joe.' It's funny to hear you called that." Joe replies, "Some people can't play their regular game when they know who I am... they become inhibited when they know I'm a priest."

Back home, a rattled Rob asks Laura why he never told her about Joe Coogan. Laura assumes that Rob found the love sonnets Joe wrote her, which Laura has kept. Rob is suspicious, and believes that the handsome Joe deliberately arranged to run into him "accidentally" and "find out about the stability of our marriage....I don't trust your friend Mr. Coogan. He's too nice."

Later, Laura discusses the matter with her friend Millie. Laura berates herself for hurting Rob's feelings, and wonders why she kept the poems after she was married, rather than throwing them away. "I never really felt this chapter in my life was closed...Because I was so young I withheld my true feelings from him, and now I'm guilty that I did. He wrote me these beautiful love sonnets, and I answered him with these chatty little letters...I never even told him I was leaving," Laura realizes. Millie urges her to see Joe again, to clear up their past misunderstanding, prove to herself that she doesn't love Joe any more, and assuage her guilt.

The next Friday finds Laura and Millie at the golf course, where she literally runs into Joe, who is now clad in his clerical collar. "What have you been doing?" Laura stammers, then catches herself, and introduces Joe to Millie as "my friend, Joe. My Father Joe. My..." Regaining her composure, Laura invites Father Joe to dinner to meet her family. Joe states that he is free that evening and asks for her address, whereupon Laura stammers, "Do you have a piece of fish? I mean, a piece of paper. Fish, because you're a Friday. I mean..."

Father Joe accepts her invitation to dinner for that night. After Joe departs, Millie urges Laura, as a joke, not to tell Rob that Joe is a priest. Laura protests that that would be unfair; but when she telephones Rob at his office to tell him about having invited Joe to dinner, Rob is angry that she went to the golf course to meet Joe. With both spouses irritated, the call ends with Rob still not knowing Joe is a priest.

Rob invites his co-worker, the single, man-hungry Sally Rogers, to come to dinner, “and you don’t have to just sit there, either,” Rob adds, pointedly. “Oh, you mean I can flirt a little bit?” Sally asks. “No, a LOT!” Rob exclaims. Sally decides to wear a revealing dress to dinner.

Father Joe arrives for dinner, but while Laura is in the kitchen, the vindictive Rob enters and approaches Joe, who is seated with his back to Rob. Rob slaps him on the back and says, “How’s the old duffer?” When Joe stands, Rob goggles at his clerical collar, then stammers, “I didn’t mean you were an old duffer, Father. Father Duffer. I mean, Father Duffy.” When Laura rejoins them, Joe remarks about how Rob let him go on about Laura, without mentioning she was Rob’s wife. “I didn’t know you were a...” Rob states, gesticulating wildly at Joe’s collar.

Rob and Laura’s mutual suspicion gets the better of them when Rob reveals that Sally will be joining them for dinner. Knowing Sally’s proclivity for chasing men, Laura remarks, “I sure wish you’d told me Sally was coming,” to which Rob replies, “I wish you’d tell me something too once in a while.” On her arrival, Sally brashly barges into the room and makes a beeline for Joe: “Where’s this tall, good-looking, charming…PRIEST?!” the humiliated Sally shrieks in mortification.

Father Joe bursts out laughing, and remarks, “Well, I’m the only priest here, so I guess it must be me.” As Sally looks on incredulously, Rob stammers, “This is Sally Rogers. She’s, um...very religious.” “Always nice to meet one of the flock,” Joe replies dryly, shaking Sally’s hand. After pausing to consider every word he says, Rob offers, “How about...YEAH! Some

wine!" Along the way, Sally refuses Laura's offer to take her coat (and thus expose her revealing dress). Joe proposes a toast: "To Laura and Rob: a long and happy life. And to Sally Rogers: may the next blind date Rob arranges for you be more your type." "Amen! I mean, I'll drink to that," Sally replies.

In a serious coda after the others have gone home, Rob notes that Laura is depressed. Laura tells Rob that she reread the sonnets Joe wrote her, and urges him to do the same. Rob reads: "Mine eyes will ne'er behold/Which my heart doth see so clearly/Inward stirs this passion, deep, benighting/Leading my path away from all/And to my love/I reach out for thee/and pray thy hand be there to welcome mine/Your light to illume/Where my light be spent/Where my soul must soar."

Rob remarks that the poem is beautiful. Laura mournfully states, "It is beautiful, and I feel so silly. Like an idiot, I thought he meant me...He was telling me in those sonnets that he planned to dedicate his life to God." Rob replies, "Well, you don't have to feel so bad about it. Look at it this way: you lost him to a better man."

"The Life and Love of Joe Coogan" neatly encapsulates many of the attitudes prevalent in mid-20th century America about Catholic clergy. Most notable – and the source of the humor of the episode – are the reactions of the program's regular characters in being unexpectedly confronted with a Catholic priest in everyday settings. Father Joe himself states this at the

episode's outset, when he notes that "Some people...become inhibited when they know I'm a priest."

At this time – likely due to the influence of films like *Going My Way* and others, crossbred with the lingering "alien otherness" of Catholic culture to those from a traditional Protestant background – the Catholic priest was still seen as a somewhat mysterious, "otherworldly" being: having forsworn marriage and romantic entanglement and typical domestic life to devote himself to a mystical "calling" which, many presumed, made him morally superior to average people.

Of course, many people in real life – particularly those who had daily contact with priests or religious – understood that clergy were "just people" like everyone else; but the mythical aura of moral superiority and "otherness" still clung to the role of priest for many, perhaps most, Catholics -- as it certainly did for those whose only knowledge of the Catholic priesthood came from popular culture.

This certainly is the case with the characters of Rob, Laura, and Sally in the episode. From their frequent nervous fumbling and obvious concern for behaving "properly" and doing what is "right" (not just in terms of etiquette, but presumably morally), it is clear none of the characters are familiar or comfortable with Catholic practice. As he is about to suggest they share a glass of wine, Rob significantly pauses mid-sentence, as if mentally "checking" to be certain that Catholics are not abstainers from alcohol. Similarly, Laura, when thinking about having

invited Father Coogan to dinner on a Friday night, asks Millie for a piece of fish – reflecting the abstinence from meat on Fridays which was at the time of the episode still universal practice in Catholicism.

The episode's humor, while arising from Rob and Laura's discomfort and exaggerated reactions to Joe's presence, plays most of all off of the fact of the Catholic priest as a celibate male, one presumably devoid of romantic attachment. Examples in the episode abound: the incongruity of Laura's past romantic attachment to a man who is now perceived as being "above" such things as romantic love, and Laura's embarrassment at being around a man who she thought once loved her, but who now does not and, it appears, never truly did; Rob's insecurity and jealousy of a man who clearly has no designs on his wife, and the exaggerated steps he takes to counter Joe's assumed interest in Laura; and the inappropriateness of Sally's "man-crazy" attitude and sexy dress when confronted with a man who is not – indeed, cannot be -- interested in her.

In keeping with the values espoused by entertainment in the era, "The Life and Love of Joe Coogan" is respectful of clergy and religion. There is no mockery of Catholicism, of Joe's vocation as a priest, or even of Joe himself as a person. Indeed, while Rob, Laura, and Sally react to him in an extreme manner, Father Joe comes across very much as a "regular guy" who takes their bizarre behavior in stride. With his toast, Father Joe exhibits a sense of humor and a refusal to be offended or take their actions amiss.

This episode is particularly an artifact of the time in which it was made. The key conceit of the episode – the absolute conviction that priests were totally committed to a life of celibacy in thought, word, and action, and were utterly disinterested in romantic attraction or marriage -- could not have been made even a few years later, when in the wake of the "reforms" of the Second Vatican Council hundreds of priests forsook their vows, deserted their seminaries, religious orders or dioceses, and left the priesthood to marry. Although it took American television until the early 1970s to acknowledge the changed state of affairs, in time even TV began to acknowledge that, indeed, being a priest did not make one superhuman in terms of interest in romance or sex.

There is one other point of interest in the episode. As mentioned, at this time the image of the priesthood widely subscribed to was that of men who were not romantic or passionate; but it is notable that in the story, before he entered the priesthood, Joe Coogan wrote passionate love poetry to Laura. Even though, in the episode's coda, Laura and Rob determine that Joe's poetry was actually written about (and to) God, clearly, at the time he wrote it, Coogan did relate to Laura as a woman. Coogan even states, when first talking with Rob, that he was "in love" with Laura, and "spent all [his] time writing sonnets and sending them to her." It is possible that, at the time he was writing the sonnets, not only did Laura "think he meant me," but Joe Coogan did, too. Only later, perhaps, did he come to the understanding that, though Laura was the intended recipient, the inspiration for the poems was not someone of earth, but of Heaven.

This speculation provokes yet one more. While Rob and Laura's conclusion that Joe Coogan wrote his sonnets to God is sound enough, to one with a truly Catholic sensibility an even better inspiration and spiritual recipient for the poems would have been the Virgin Mary. Devotion to Mary was "shot through with religious sentimentality,"[77] and it was not uncommon throughout church history to find instances of passionate poetry written to the Blessed Virgin. From the "cult of courtly love" poetry of the 13th century[78] through the writings of Thomas Merton,[79] such poetry was not uncommon in Catholic circles.[80]

Within the fictional conceit of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, Rob and Laura's failure to see the possibility of Joe Coogan's poems as a form of Marian devotion proves only that Rob and Laura are not Catholic, and hence would be unfamiliar with expressions of devotion to Mary. In a real-world context, it is equally unlikely that the episode's writer, the Jewish Carl Reiner, would have known much of the prominence the Blessed Virgin assumed in the devotional lives of many Catholics.

Yet even if he had known, it is unlikely that Reiner – or anyone else in television at the time – would have made use of the knowledge in their broadcasts. As has been noted, Catholicism in entertainment television was represented by a variety of signifiers: priests, nuns, church buildings, statues, and even devotion to saints. All of these forms of reference would have been familiar to Protestant viewers, while being largely uncontroversial with Catholics. But devotion to the Virgin Mary, even in stories with a heavily Catholic component, was apparently taboo. Marian devotion was enormously popular among American Catholics in the 1950s, and

far outstripped devotions to the saints – which is precisely why television writers, networks, and sponsors tread carefully, to the point of avoiding all reference to the Mother of Christ. With advertisers and programmers alike keen to avoid even the slightest whiff of controversy, nothing was to be gained by mentioning the Blessed Virgin. Doing so would run a twofold risk: that of antagonizing Catholic viewers who had such devotions themselves and drawing accusations of anti-Catholic bigotry, and also of accusations of favoritism toward and proselytism on behalf of Catholics by Protestants unfamiliar with or even hostile toward Catholic doctrine. In the entertainment industry's ecumenical "consensus" of the era, drawing attention to existing religious doctrinal differences was discouraged by sponsors and network practice. As a result, while other, less potentially troublesome markers of Catholic dogma and identity could be and were used, the Blessed Virgin remained safely unmentioned, invisible, and inviolable.

In the totality of television entertainment programming of the period, priests were never major continuing characters in serialized dramas or situation comedies. Yet as we have seen, they could and did assume prominent guest-starring roles in such programs, while in non-recurring roles in dramatic anthologies they could even be the main character, typically that of the "man of piety." But in some programs, the portrayal of priests went far beyond that of a "man of piety" and assumed an openly heroic role reminiscent of those seen in the films of the 1930s through the 1950s. In such parts, clerical characters were typically cast as fighters against tyranny; and since the best-known source of tyranny in Cold War America was communism, it was the priest as heroic anti-communist crusader which assumed the most prominence in this period.

The events of the era provided ample reason for such a portrayal. When the Soviet Union moved to militarily dominate Eastern Europe in the wake of the Second World War, there arose Catholic clergy of genuine courage and heroism who opposed it. For the television viewer at home – and for the writers and creators of television drama – in addition to Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, there were other examples of Catholic clergy who modeled courage, strength of character, and Catholic opposition to corruption and tyranny. In fact, in the early 1950s another real-life anti-Communist Catholic bishop served as another, and perhaps ultimately an even more influential, template and model of the "heroic priest": Hungarian Cardinal Joszef Mindszenty. His story, already familiar to many Americans through coverage in mainstream news publications like *Time* magazine, was also dramatized on one of the most notable and lauded of TV's showcases of drama, *Studio One*.

One of the most prominent of the New York-based anthologies of the early 1950s, *Studio One*, was produced by Worthington "Tony" Miner, and aired an original, live drama every Monday night on CBS. Lauded by critics and the public alike, Miner explained the program's experimental and literary qualities as originating due to a low budget: "We couldn't get rights to great big Broadway hits or anything that had been sold to films…so we went into public domain a great deal to find the classics, or we went into short stories, which weren't tremendously expensive."[81] *Studio One* was also famed for its attention to the visual aspects of the production, as Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh reveal:

> Miner's approach to television was somewhat different from that of many of the other producers of early dramatic shows. His concern was with the visual impact of the stories, for television was a visual medium, and he placed greater emphasis on that

> than on the literary merit of the story. It was not that he produced second-rate plays…but Miner's major contribution to television drama was more in his experimentation with camera techniques and other innovations in what the viewer saw, rather than what was heard.[82]

In addition to its adaptations of short stories and classical literature, throughout its decade-long run the hour-long *Studio One* was noted for its many powerful original dramas. The program is perhaps best remembered today for its daring-for-the-time modern-dress staging of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and for the courtroom drama "Twelve Angry Men," which was remade as a 1957 motion picture starring Henry Fonda and nominated for three Academy Awards.[*]

Like "Twelve Angry Men," many of the original dramas on live TV dealt with contemporary concerns. Thus it was little surprise, at a time when the Korean War had come to an uneasy standstill, and Eastern Europe was dominated by the Soviet Union, that a drama would choose to focus on individuals involved in the struggle for freedom from communism.

The years after World War II saw the partitioning of Europe into Eastern and Western power blocks. Consequent was the conquest and enslavement of millions of Eastern Europeans, as the Soviet Union consolidated its power. Poland, the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and East Germany were completely

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[*] *Studio One* was also responsible for the rise to prominence of Betty Furness. Though she did not go on to success in theater or film, in her role as spokeswoman for *Studio One*'s sponsor Furness became familiar to a generation as the woman forever opening refrigerators, demonstrating electric appliances, and proclaiming, "You can be sure, if it's Westinghouse."

dominated by the Soviet Union; and nearby nations like Yugoslavia and Albania, while maintaining a slight degree of autonomy, also fell victim to pro-Soviet dictatorships.

In the aftermath of the war, a generation of Americans who had willingly gone to war to free Europe and Asia from Nazi and Japanese domination were fully able to recognize another totalitarian dictatorship when it made its appearance. The occupation of Eastern Europe and the pogroms which followed, leading as they did to such events as the Berlin airlift and the partition of Germany, were clear signs of communism's dictatorial objectives. Many of those in the nations recently freed from the Nazi yoke, while desiring freedom and democracy, were too weakened (and often riven by internal political dissent) to effectively resist the armed might of the Soviet occupiers.

One of these nations was Hungary. Though it had cooperated with the Axis powers in the earlier portions of World War II, joining Germany in invading the Soviet Union, after the Hungarian Second Army suffered massive losses at the Battle of the River Don, the Hungarian government sought to negotiate a surrender with the Allies. This action incensed Hitler, and Hungary was occupied by the Nazis in early 1944. In October a puppet Nazi regime took and held power until Germany's surrender. Thereafter, Soviet troops occupied the country, and Hungary became a Communist satellite state of the Soviet Union. Many Communist partisans, who had been leaders of the abolition of the monarchy and the reorganization of the Hungarian government in 1919, returned from Moscow and assumed positions of power. An estimated 2,000 people were executed, over 200,000 died in captivity, and more than 100,000 more were

unjustly imprisoned under the Communist regime, with thousands more being deported to Soviet gulags and labor camps. After Stalin's death, Hungarians found the stifling Soviet domination unbearable, and staged the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, under which Hungary withdrew from the Warsaw Pact. But the revolution was brutally crushed by a Soviet invasion, with planes dropping tanks and troops to once again occupy the country.[83]

From the beginnings of Marxism, the Catholic Church had noted communism's potential for tyranny, and its propensity for denying rights to individuals. As early as 1864, Pope Pius IX had condemned communism in his "Syllabus of Errors," calling communism "absolutely contrary to the natural law," a system which, if adopted, would "utterly destroy the rights, property and possessions of all men, and even society itself." As the Soviet Union came into existence and began pogroms against the Church and the faith, and became involved in the Spanish Civil War, Pius XI took greater and more specific notice not only of communism's theoretical defects, but of its actual support for tyranny. In 1933, Pius released the encyclical *Dilectissima Nobis*, which condemned the Communist oppression in Spain as originating in "hatred against the Lord and His Christ, nourished by groups subversive to any religious and social order," and which urged Catholics in Spain to "unite for the defense of the Faith." And in March, 1937 – just days after the release of the encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*, condemning the Nazi regime – Pius released *Divini Redemptoris*, the Catholic Church's strongest statement against communism.[84] *Divini Redemptoris* called communism the "modern revolution [which] exceeds in amplitude and violence anything yet experienced in the preceding persecutions launched against the Church…Bolshevistic and atheistic communism aims at upsetting the social

order and at undermining the very foundations of Christian civilization because it means the destruction of its foundations; because it ignores the true origin and purpose of the State; because it denies the rights, dignity and liberty of human personality."

Before World War II, Communist regimes persecuted Catholic clergy and laity, most notably in the Soviet Union, Mexico, and Spain. After the war, this persecution intensified and became more widespread, particularly in Eastern Europe, where many Church leaders led a public (if non-violent) resistance to Soviet oppression, and were imprisoned and tortured for their defiance. Archbishops Stefan Wyszinski of Poland, Aloysius Stepinac of Yugoslavia, Josef Beran of Czechoslovakia, Augustin Pacha of Romania, and Josyf Slipyj of the Ukraine all were subjected to phony show trials, imprisonment, and not infrequently, torture; but in America, none was so well-known as the Primate of Hungary, Joszef Cardinal Mindszenty.[85] Consecrated bishop of the Hungarian diocese of Veszprém in 1944, Mindszenty had already become notable for his courageous opposition to Hungary's fascist Arrow Cross Party – an opposition for which he was arrested and imprisoned by the Nazis, who had occupied Hungary. Released from prison after Germany's defeat in 1945, Mindszenty was appointed Archbishop of Esztergom, which also made him Primate (ceremonial head of the Roman Catholic Church) of Hungary; a year later, he was elevated to the cardinalate by Pope Pius XII. The day after Christmas, 1948, Mindszenty was arrested again, this time by the Communist puppet regime installed by the Soviet Union. Before his arrest, he cunningly wrote a letter to the other bishops of Hungary, noting that he was not guilty of treason or any conspiracy, and that any confession he might make would be the result of torture and "human weakness."

Mindszenty was indeed tortured while in prison (he later reported having been beaten with rubber truncheons), and under the duress, he "confessed" during a show trial in 1949 to such ludicrous charges as stealing Hungary's crown jewels, planning to crown a new Hapsburg emperor of all Eastern Europe, and plotting to start World War III. Mindszenty was stripped of his property and sentenced to life imprisonment; but the letter he had previously written, along with the obvious falsity of his "confession," made him a martyr in the free world; and Pope Pius, taking a forcible stand against Communist tyranny, excommunicated all persons who had had any part in the Cardinal's persecution. The Cardinal remained in prison until 1956, when the Hungarian Revolution freed him. When the Revolution was crushed by the invading Soviet army, Mindszenty sought asylum in the U.S. embassy, where he remained for another 15 years.

In the late 1940s and early '50s, the treatment which Cardinal Mindszenty received made him an icon of resistance to the tyranny, brutality and injustice of communism. Particularly in America, Mindszenty served as a reminder of the fate which awaited those who dared to defy Communist governments. When the drugged, tortured Mindszenty appeared for his sham "trial" before Hungary's Communist puppets, American opinion was outraged. New York's archbishop, Cardinal Francis Spellman, declared "Cardinal Mindszenty Day;" the U.S. Senate passed a resolution condemning the Communist treatment of Mindszenty; Catholic laity formed "Mindszenty Circles," study and protest groups opposing communism; *Look* magazine ran a story about the Cardinal titled, "The Pope's War on communism;" and, in an extraordinarily hyperbolic reaction, Brooklyn Congressman Andrew L. Somers wired Hungarian leader Mátyás Rakosi, threatening to personally travel to Hungary and overthrow its Communist government.[86]

Mindszenty's plight inspired several films, among them *Guilty of Treason*, a 1950 movie starring Charles Bickford as the cardinal, and the 1955 film *The Prisoner*, a psychological drama about the cat-and-mouse interplay between a prison interrogator and an unnamed and unjustly imprisoned cardinal clearly modeled on Mindszenty, played by Alec Guinness (who subsequently converted to Catholicism.) In American entertainment, Mindszenty served as THE symbol of the courage of an individual of faith (and not coincidentally, the power of the Catholic Church) to oppose communism. Characters clearly based on Mindszenty recurred throughout American film and television for decades. Such characters rarely acknowledged their inspiration directly, and often bore different names; but one who did not appeared in a dramatization of the Cardinal's plight on *Studio One*.

Given the significance of Cold War issues of the day, and communism's notorious treatment of Mindszenty, it is little surprise that *Studio One* produced a live drama on the subject. The May 3, 1954 episode "Cardinal Mindszenty" recounts many of the key episodes in the trials undergone by the heroic Hungarian prelate. Adapted from the 1949 book *Cardinal Mindszenty: The Story of a Modern Martyr* by Bela Fabian and "written especially for *Studio One* by William Templeton," the episode starred French actor Claude Dauphin in the title role.

During the episode's opening credits, the sound of a church choir singing a Latin *gloria* fades into marching jackboots and the *Horst Wessel Leid*. As a huge swastika fills the screen, a narrator announces:

"On the 19th of March, 1944, the Nazis occupied Hungary…All opposition was ruthlessly suppressed. Jews were persecuted. The National Church of Hungary was shackled. Members of the former liberal government were thrown into concentration camps. "

An onscreen title reads, "June first, 1944, during the Nazi occupation of Hungary." The scene fades in on a man whose suit is disheveled and whose manner betrays ill treatment. He is ordered about by a minor Nazi official (ironically, played by Werner Klemperer, who a decade later would star as the Nazi Colonel Klink on the comedy *Hogan's Heroes*!) Surrounded by rifle-wielding soldiers, the man is conveyed to Dr. Schiberna, the Chief of Police, who is seated in a courtroom.

The impoverished man is revealed to be Kerek, a member of the Hungarian parliament, who opposes the Nazis. Dr. Schiberna, a Nazi sympathizer, attempts to intimidate Kerek, but is interrupted by a figure in a cassock, his back to the camera. The figure questions Kerek: "You are opposed to Nazism. Is there any other reason for your internment here?"

"No, it is political," Kerek responds.

"You are not the only person who disagrees with the policy of the current government, Mr. Kerek. I myself don't agree with it. Neither do the majority of the Hungarian people," says the figure, who then asks for Kerek's release, and is told that such is impossible.

"Then arrest me also! I freely identify myself with the political ideals of Mr. Kerek!" says the figure, spinning around and dramatically revealing himself as Jozsef Mindszenty. A close-up shows Mindszenty as a distinguished, formidable figure, with an angular face, aquiline nose, and graying hair.

The Nazi stooge Schiberna simpers, "I have no right to arrest Your Eminence. [Kerek's] arrest was ordered by Minister of Home Affairs." Mindszenty then tells the chief to call the Minister and ask him to order the release. The chief demurs but eventually places the call, asking for the release "at the request of Jozsef Mindszenty, Bishop of Veszprém." Kerek is released, but the chief warns the bishop: "You cannot set yourself against the Nazis and survive. You are not above the law of the state." The heroic bishop replies, "I am not. But God will always be."

The scene shifts to November of 1944 and Mindszenty's office, where the bishop's assistant, Monsignor Tote, speaks with Mrs. Pehm, the bishop's elderly mother. Tote tells her, "Your son wants me to go to Budapest and use my underground connections to save the Jews of the city." Soon, Mindszenty himself arrives, and orders the cleric, "Visit every cloister, religious house, parish and church. All religious institutions must throw open their doors to the Jews! They must all receive false Christian papers." When Tote protests that all those who help Jews are threatened with death, Mindszenty replies, "We must do our duty. Those who threaten one religion threaten all religions! Execute the missions in my name and in the name of the Church. There will be no time to rest. Every day now, the Jews are driven west along the Vienna road

like herds of cattle. Old people. Children. Women. Girls. You will see them on the way to the city. You will be too late to save the ones you pass, but there will be many others."

Tote asks whether there are Jews in hiding in Veszprém. With grim humor, the bishop states, "There is a great deal of space in the cellar under the palace." When Tote warns his superior that he could easily die from his opposition to the Nazi regime, the bishop replies, "Rome can find another bishop if I do…but we won't find followers if we run away from danger." After Tote kisses his ring in obedience, Mindszenty blesses him, and Tote departs.

Shortly thereafter, a young woman enters the office and states that she is Jewish. When Mindszenty asks if she seeks sanctuary, she tells him instead that the police are about to search the bishop's palace. As Dr. Schiberna arrives, Mindszenty gazes out the window and remarks in an amused tone, "I wonder why he feels it necessary to bring so many men." The woman urges him to escape with them, but the bishop contemptuously states, "Dr. Schiberna is not a man I'm ever likely to run away from."

A priest is thrown at Mindszenty's feet by Nazi stormtroopers, as Dr. Schiberna states that the bishop is under arrest. When the prelate asks what he is charged with, Schiberna reads from a document stating that the bishop is guilty of refusing to cooperate with the authorities in searching his palace, and insulting the prefect of police. "I'm glad my views are so well known you can prepare an order like this in advance," Mindszenty says acidly. Asking leave to get his coat, Mindszenty steps into the other room, while Schiberna talks with Mrs. Pehm. "My son

changed his name to Mindszenty because he thought Pehm was too German," the spritely old woman informs the Nazi official. As machine guns are heard outside the palace, Mrs. Pehm tells Schiberna, "I think the people would like my son to walk to prison, to be able to give his benediction as he passes. If you're afraid they will demonstrate against you, talk to my son. He will talk to them and they will let him pass."

Bishop Mindszenty then emerges from the other room, defiantly resplendent in full liturgical garb – including a jeweled miter, cope, and crozier. Mrs Pehm taunts Dr. Schiberna, asking the prefect of police whether he is afraid to leave the palace. "It is your son who should be afraid," Schiberna feebly responds. Mrs. Pehm stoutly replies,"My son fears only God!" Preceded by his priests, Bishop Mindszenty leads the liturgical procession to the jail, blessing the crowd as he walks, followed sheepishly by the crestfallen Nazi troopers, as a choral *gloria* sounds.

The second act begins in April 1945, after Hungary had been liberated from the Nazis. But, warns the narrator, "by losing one oppressor, they had opened their doors to another," as the camera fades in on a hammer and sickle and a Communist anthem is heard.

In the bishop's palace, Monsignor Tote and Mrs. Pehm greet Mindszenty's return. Stating that he travelled back to the palace by "freight train, oxcart, and walking," the bishop states, "I'm glad I travelled like that. I was able to see what happened to Hungary. It made me angry. The Russians were polite to me at first, but as I passed through the villages, I realized how far this

politeness extended. Russians took all the cattle. The bishop of Dura is dead. He was killed trying to defend women who sought refuge with him." His mother tells him, "The Russians left a message for you here. They said when you returned you should go pay your respects to the commander of the town." The defiant Mindszenty states, "A Hungarian bishop doesn't pay his respects to the commander of an occupation army! Hungary must be cleansed of Russians!" Tote protests that "They control the radio. The government. The newspapers. There is no voice left to speak for our country." The camera zooms in on Mindszenty's pectoral crucifix as the bishop defiantly proclaims, "I have still a voice!"

The scene changes to the bishop giving a sermon in his cathedral: "For five hundred years, our nation was a glorious nation; for two hundred years, a struggling, bleeding people. The 20th century has transformed our world into a valley of blood and sorrow. Let us be now a nation of prayer. If we can learn anew how to pray, we shall have the source whence to draw strength and hope….Do not lose confidence! Let us hold fast without wavering! Let us be strong for the struggle ahead! Through the grace of Our Father the Almighty and our Mother Mary, I shall become the conscience of our people. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church!"

Later, Tote and Mrs. Pehm discuss her son. Tote states that Mindszenty "would've been silenced long ago if the Communists had dared to touch him. But Bishop Mindszenty represents the Church. When they attack him they attack the Church. They may not be ready to do that yet -- but the time will come when they are ready." The bishop enters and announces that the Pope has just appointed him Archbishop of Esztergom and Primate of Hungary, and that, through

arrangement with the American military mission, he will shortly go to Rome to be made a Cardinal of the Church. His mother begs him to stay in Rome; but the soon-to-be Prince of the Church tells her he will return, as "my fight is just beginning!"

The scene shifts to 1947 and the office of Dinnyés, the Communist Prime Minister of Hungary. Told that Cardinal Mindszenty is waiting to see him, the Red puppet whines, "I'd be out of office in a minute if the Russians thought he was a friend of mine." But the cardinal has cunningly arrived without an appointment, knowing that if he made one, Dinnyés would simply have arranged to be absent. The corrupt premier tries to ingratiate himself with the cardinal, stating, "As a private citizen, I'm pleased to see you," but Mindszenty thunders in reply, "I didn't come to see you as a private citizen! Some of my priests have been tortured, and asked to obtain false evidence against my bishops and myself. Use your influence to stop this!" When the Communist official demurs, Mindszenty states, "In a few months I will probably be waiting for my turn in a hangman's cell," Dinnyés smarms, "I assure you, cardinal -- if you wish to leave the country, no obstacles will be put in your way." The prelate stoutly replies, "A shepherd's place is with his flock. I prefer to stay!" He then tells the Red overlord that he has ordered the bells of all the churches in Hungary to be rung for an hour in mourning: "People are dispossessed of their country, their homes, their property, all their rights as individuals. Without reason, vicious attacks are launched against Church institutions. Nursing sisters are removed from the hospital. Teachers are prevented from teaching. Freedom of worship is suppressed. THAT is why the bells are ringing throughout Hungary!"

The Communist occupiers intensify their campaign against the bold prelate. Monsignor Tote informs the cardinal that a newspaper campaign is raging against Mindszenty, and that spies are following his every move; and another priest, Zoltan, comes to his bishop a broken man, warning him:

"Time is running out. You can't trust your friends. I am here to spy on you -- like so many others in your household. When they arrested me, they took me to 60 Andressy Street. Do you know what happens to you there? After twenty days, I was so weak…I am to report on everyone in your service, who your contacts are in Rome, and anything you say that can be used against you. If you're taken, they'll make you confess to things you never did."

Mindszenty informs the loyal priest of a sealed envelope he has addressed to the other bishops of Hungary, to be opened if he is taken prisoner. The letter within states: "I have taken part in no conspiracy whatsoever. I do not wish to confess anything to those who accuse me, and I have no statement to sign. If I do make a confession, it will be only a manifestation of human weakness." The cardinal says his only wish is to celebrate one more Christmas mass with his flock, and concludes by saying, "A dead primate may be a greater power than a living one." As the brave prelate is shown being arrested by Communist troops while kneeling after Christmas mass, the narrator states, "The number of people at that Christmas mass surpassed all such numbers in memory."

Act Three opens at the Communist's kangaroo court trial, during which, after extensive torture, Cardinal Mindszenty is tried on phony, trumped-up charges. Interrogators mercilessly hammer questions at the disheveled and exhausted prelate: "Is it true you were planning to overthrow the government? That you asked the American government to intervene by force? Did you discuss the overthrow of Hungary with your friends in Rome? Be warned: there is no obstinacy we cannot overcome. There is no spirit we cannot break!"

Standing utterly alone in a harsh spotlight, a confused Mindszenty rambles, "Sixty-six hours with nothing to drink," then collapses, as the camera zooms in on huge hammer and sickle emblazoned on a banner behind him. Yet the accusations continue: Mindszenty has "tried to ruin the Hungarian people with murderous weapons wrapped in religious phrases, tried to take the land back from the peasants and the factories from the workers, and to push the people back into the darkest misery." The broken Cardinal, enfeebled by weeks of deprivation and torture, struggles to keep his composure and courage. The interrogator sneers, "You look tired," and orders an aide to bring the Cardinal a chair; but the prelate musters one last act of defiance and kicks the chair away. The interrogator mockingly states, "If you are you mentally tired, I shall order a recess. Shall we go on with the trial?" Mindszenty bellows in helpless rage, "Yes!"

Riddled mercilessly with question after question, accused of conspiring with the United States to overthrow Hungary's "legitimate" Communist government, Mindszenty is told, "You are charged with treason. Do you wish to make a final plea?" The shattered Cardinal stutters, "I do. I never meant to violate the laws of my country. If for reasons beyond me this has occurred, I

regret it. But I was not against peace. This morning a prayer came to my lips. Lord, give us peace in your time. Give us peace for the Hungarian state…and for my soul."

Freedom fighter Kerek and Mrs. Pehm listen to a broadcast of the trial. "That's not his voice. That's not my son," sobs the prelate's mother. Kerek soberly states, "He may no longer be the man any of us remember. But no one believes the confession. It's all fake. They used torture and drugs. He left a statement saying any confession he makes is false, merely 'a manifestation of human weakness.' "

As the radio announces that Cardinal Mindszenty's property has been confiscated and the prelate has been imprisoned for life, Kerek proclaims, "Even at the last he defeated them! They didn't dare to condemn him to death. They knew they could never kill him! His name is more alive now than ever before. This is what he wanted to do – to stir the conscience of the world!" The episode fades out on Cardinal Mindszenty, standing strong and alone, as the strains of the *gloria* rise behind him.

"Cardinal Mindszenty" clearly demonstrates the obvious budgetary limits under which live drama anthologies like *Studio One* operated in the early 1950s. As stated above, much of the original drama lauded today and later as the "Golden Age of Television" was, in effect, live theater performed in front of a TV camera. The plays themselves may have been original, the camera angles and photographic techniques innovative for the time; but the sets are extremely limited. These are literally stage plays thrown together in a week's time – and they look it. For

example, in the opening of "Cardinal Mindszenty," Kerek is marched by Nazis from a jail cell to a courtroom. In fact, the "cell" is a simple chair; the "escort" two men in Nazi uniforms holding rifles; the "journey" to the courtroom is represented by climbing up one side of a set of free-standing stairs, then down the other; and the "courtroom" is barely suggested by the police chief sitting behind a tall desk with a Nazi flag behind him. So it goes throughout the production; Cardinal Mindszenty's episcopal office in the cathedral is represented in a similarly minimalist theatrical style by a table, two chairs, and a Gothic window frame *sans* glass. In fact, these are the only two sets seen in the entire drama; the play opens and closes in the courtroom set, and the rest of the drama's "action" (all of it verbal) occurs in Mindszenty's office. Yet, the words and the acting are overpowering even today. Critics of the day celebrated the absence of glossy "movie-style" backgrounds, sets, costumes and other flourishes in televised drama, claiming that the minimal production values, and the fact that the dramas were aired live, engendered a sense of reality and "authenticity" between the viewer and the performer.

"Cardinal Mindszenty" offers a fascinating insight into the view that was taken of both Communist oppression and the Catholic Church in the early 1950s. That all were aware of (and opposed to) Communist tyranny is amply demonstrated both by the depiction of actual, documented Communist actions in Hungary, but also the deliberate equating of communism with Nazism.

Notably, at the time this episode first aired, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen had already been on television for several years. This would have made a well-spoken and staunchly anti-Communist

Catholic bishop a familiar concept to television audiences. It is even possible that Sheen served something of a televisual model for actor Claude Dauphin's portrayal of Cardinal Mindszenty; between Sheen's weekly anti-Communist oratory and opposition to Soviet communism offered in public by Cardinal Spellman and others, it is hardly to be wondered that the portrayal of Mindszenty followed similar lines.

In the *Studio One* production, Mindszenty comes across as firm and formidable, willing to defy authority for the sake of principle and fair treatment for others; yet he is also compassionate toward those possessing less fortitude than he. By defying Nazi and Communist dictatorship alike, Mindszenty demonstrates that it is the Church and the values of Western religion and Western civilization (largely understood at that time to be inseparable) that truly sets people free. Dauphin's portrayal, however, emphasizes the strength and unbending will of the cardinal, more than a "softer" or "more human" side, as was frequently to be seen in characters that imitated Mindszenty in future TV dramas.

"Cardinal Mindszenty" presents an image of the Catholic Church which is nothing short of heroic. The acknowledged leader of the Catholic Church in Hungary opposes first Nazi fascism – even sheltering Jews personally and providing them with false papers so that they may leave the country – and then communism. Withstanding all manner of humiliating persecution, Mindszenty heroically defies the forces of communism, sacrificing even himself as a martyr, broken mentally and physically by torture. Yet, as Kerek points out at the end, Mindszenty achieves a double victory: first, by issuing the letter before his arrest, he conclusively

demonstrates that communism lies and resorts to torture, thus disproving its claims to fairness and justice; secondly, by the regime's reluctance to kill him, he demonstrates that the influence of the Church, and the sentiments it can inspire in its followers, are in the end more powerful than those which communism can bring to bear. Coming as it did in 1954, "Cardinal Mindszenty" is a perfect reflection of the *zeitgeist* as regarded both communism and the Catholic Church in 1950s America.

The trials undergone by the real-life Cardinal Mindszenty at the hands of Communists, and his heroic defiance, also had a long-term effect on American popular culture. From the early 1950s through the late 1960s, nearly every television program which featured a Catholic priest as a protagonist (rather than a supporting character) presented him as willing to defy corrupt authority in order to help others and do what is right. Thus, while Fulton Sheen's mannerisms may have inspired TV creators as writing priests as cultured, well-spoken, forceful, and witty, it was Mindszenty's martyrdom which often inspired the stories told, and the image of priests as selfless, courageous, and heroic. Such imagery recurred throughout the dramatic anthologies and dramas of television into the late 1960s.

Similar Cold War concerns were addressed in yet another episode of *The Loretta Young Show* featuring Ricardo Montalban as a priest battling economic difficulties – but this episode was far less light-hearted than "The Cardinal's Secret." Dramatizing a true story, not a fiction concocted by a television writer, the 1961 episode "The Man Who Couldn't Smile"[87] was an earnest, sober, at times grim tale confronting the triple specters of poverty, corruption, and

attempted Communist subversion in South America. The episode opens with a view of the poverty-stricken slums of Bogota, as star Ricardo Montalban states in voiceover:

> Father Raphael Garcia Hererros is a man with a tremendous vision. This man, one of seven children of a rich and distinguished family, is the voice of Bogota's poor -- a voice that speaks the ancient story of the destitute. Like cities all over the world, Bogota has its slums, and these are Father Garcia's concern: breeders of filth, disease and death, where men are born, live out their pitiful lives, and die, without having known the meaning of joy. The keystone of his work is a new settlement of clean houses, ballgames, and sunshine. But his goal is not just to build houses and find poor people to live in them. Rather, it's to organize a new way of life in which man will be able to live and work in dignity. He finds ways for them to become self-sufficient through small industries. All the children must attend school, and the adults learn reading and writing in evening classes. This community is called *El Minuto de Dios*, "The Minute of God," named after Father Garcia's five-minute television program. Each evening Father Garcia presents on television a different destitute family. He lets the television audience see the desperate needs of these people. He does not present them as an exhibition of charity, but to stir the conscience of his audience. From the rich he asks 5000 pesos for a new house. From everyone else, only one centavo a day…He is himself a man who never smiles.

The scene shifts to Father Garcia in his television studio, speaking to his program's viewers. "I have received a letter from a child who asks me why I do not smile. I understand that many people have asked this, but since she is a child and a child deserves the truth, I wish to tell her that I would like to smile – but I can't. Not while so many are so poor and their plight is so serious."

But poverty is only one of Father Garcia's problems. The priest's assistant Theo shows him a newspaper containing a photo of Garcia speaking to donors to his causes – one of them holding a Soviet flag – under the headline, "Red Flag at *El Minuto de Dios*!" Theo complains, "They maneuvered you and used you!" As a propaganda move, communists are offering Garcia a loan to build his housing projects – and to the dismay of two of Garcia's donors, the priest

considers accepting. The capitalist donors believe Garcia should reject the funding, because of its communist source; but Garcia tells them, “It’s not that simple. You make it black and white. Hunger is gray. Come down to the slums for yourself and see.” One donor replies, “Poverty may be gray, but this money is red!” Garcia looks at him with sad disdain and remarks, “You are so clever with words. Is that your answer?” The two capitalists depart, as Garcia is approached by a Soviet representative, who urges him, “Take the money. Once you have it, it doesn’t matter where it came from.” “Only to me,” the priest states, revealing that he will not, in fact, accept communist funds – but that he acted as though he might, to get his wealthy capitalist donors to realize that the lives of the poor are what really matter, not politics or the source of his money. Father Garcia wants his donors become genuinely concerned about others and feel a genuine connection to and compassion for them, rather than merely writing a check or viewing those they help as “the poor,” not as human beings deserving of dignity and respect.

This concern is thrown into sharp relief when one of Father Garcia’s major donors arrives. The donor, a millionaire businessman named Cabrera, is enraged by the newspaper photo. “There’s been talk for some time about you and your political leanings,” he tells Father Garcia, who responds, “I don’t care about politics.” “Your ideas are radical,” Cabrera accuses, to which the priest shoots back, “So was Christianity!”

“I didn’t come to argue,” blusters the millionaire boss. “I came to warn you about the Portillo family. I don’t want them here in this development. You know the kind of man he is. I tell you they’re not acceptable. I’m tired of defending you among my friends! There’s been much

criticism about you and your liberal ideas. Now this photograph and headline. And now you want to bring Portillo here! This is the last straw. I can defend you no longer. I withdraw my support!" Cabrera bellows as he departs.

Soon thereater, a woman comes to Father Garcia with her own problem. She is the wife of the Portillo to whom Cabrera objected. She states that "they hate the name Portillo. My husband led a strike, and made many enemies. They hold it against him. He also drinks too much." Father Garcia promises he will come to see Portillo later that night. When he arrives, he finds Portillo drunk and beating his wife. Father Garcia physically drags the man away from his wife, whereupon Portillo drunkenly punches the priest in the mouth, bloodying it. In remorse, Portillo empties his bottle on the floor. Father Garcia says, "The wine is spilled. Let's let it stay that way," and the agonized Portillo reveals he is Cabrera's son. As a young man, he angered his father by marrying a woman considered "below his class," then enraged his father further by siding with his workers in a labor dispute.

Father Garcia privately vows to do what he can to help Portillo, and goes to visit Cabrera. The millionaire encourages him to build houses for the poor, but not to "encourage" them. Father Garcia responds, "Let's not be patronizing toward the poor. Those hands that reach out for us – if we don't take them, who will? I don't say the rich are wrong, I only say that the poor also have the right to a decent life. The sons of God are not beggars. We have excluded them from the warmth of the human family. If they can become part of that family again, we won't have to worry about revolt. The problem will have been served with one word: love."

The cleric then draws a parallel by discussing the parable of the prodigal son. When Cabrera says not to use guilt against him, Father Garcia tells him, "I don't have to. It gnaws at you, drives you to make amends with your money." "Is it my fault they live like pigs?" the millionaire replies. An enraged Father Garcia responds, "Yes, they live like pigs. That is your fault! Have you ever been to see them, see how they live? Six children, filthy and hungry and cold! Go and look at what you've done! Go if you dare! And then keep your money. All the pesos you own will not buy you a moment's peace."

As a means of dealing with all the problems that beset him, Father Garcia puts the Portillo family on his television show, then addresses the issue of communist funding:

> We have been offered money by people who are not popular in our country. And those who have been good to us in the past say they will take away their support if we accept this money. I will tell you something. It is hard to turn down money when you watch a child crying for milk, and there is no milk. For me to stand on principle is an easy thing. I have an overcoat to keep me warm. But the principles are there. We cannot ignore them. The poor are not a propaganda tool, and we will not be used for anyone's political purpose of either side. We don't want any money with strings attached. That is final.
>
> To those who will open their eyes and their ears, I say this: don't pat the poor man on the head and then send him away to die in some slimy hole. He's there. See him! He's crying out. Hear him! Don't drown out the memory of his cries with louder talk about "social justice." Forget empty words like "social justice," and try to love! If a man is hungry, do we give him bread? If he is thirsty, do we give him water? If he is naked, do we give him a rag to cover his shame? If we don't, we are not Christian. We are not even human. And the stench of our selfishness would choke off the breath in our bodies. And we will perish in our greed. We see our movement as a revolution – but a peaceful revolution. Our people rightfully want the opportunity to earn these things, too. But please do not make the mistake of thinking that we are beggars. All they ask is that others more fortunate help them to help themselves. Good night. God bless you.

A final word from the program's narrator states, "This has been just one story. But Father Garcia's struggle will go on."

Although the live dramatic anthologies had contained their share of moral lessons, American viewers were unaccustomed to being confronted with stories challenging them to do something about poverty, particularly in other nations. That a message of such unusual social consciousness would be delivered in a light entertainment program demonstrates that – the condemnation of New York-centered writers and critics to the contrary – dramatic programs with a message and a moral were still made and broadcast, even in filmed series.

"The Man Who Couldn't Smile" was very much a document of the early 1960s, and demonstrates perfectly the melding of media, politics, social consciousness, and Catholicism which was occurring at that time. Anti-communist concern over Soviet propaganda gestures in sending funding and food to third-world nations, even using Catholic missionaries to inadvertently spread their word, had been a major plot point in Eugene Burdick and William Lederer's 1958 novel *The Ugly American*. Just after Thanksgiving of 1960, journalist Edward R. Murrow presented the documentary "Harvest of Shame" on his program *CBS Presents* (successor to *See It Now*), that network's premier news program. Detailing the travails of migrant workers in the United States, "Harvest of Shame" had a tremendous impact on television viewers, particularly those in "progressive" political circles. Perhaps most influential of all, in March of 1961, newly-elected President John F. Kennedy (America's first Catholic chief executive) announced the formation of the Alliance for Progress, a program of economic aid to

Latin America.[88] In Kennedy's phrase, the Alliance for Progress was intended to "build a hemisphere where all men can hope for a suitable standard of living and all can live out their lives in dignity and in freedom" – sentiments remarkably congruent with those voiced by Father Garcia. Clearly, the idea of a telegenic, avowedly anti-communist Catholic leader calling for economic aid to South America was in the *zeitgeist*, and may well have inspired the April 9th episode of *The Loretta Young Show*.

Though not suffering Mindszenty-like torture, there can be no doubt that Father Garcia is a heroic Catholic priest, if one taking a less obvious route to such heroism. While he certainly displays a fair share of personal courage – facing down angry donors and communist agitators alike – Garcia hardly fits the view of the "heroic priest" which had been typical in American popular culture up to that time. One can easily imagine what the reaction of a "two-fisted fighting priest" like Spencer Tracy's Father Flanagan or Pat O'Brien's Father Connolly would be to the drunken Portillo punching them in the face – and it likely would not have been to passively "turn the other cheek," then gently talk the man around!

A less obvious, allegorical example of a "heroic priest" standing against tyranny was to be found on an episode of ABC's science-fiction anthology *The Outer Limits*. Inspired by the success of *The Twilight Zone, The Outer Limits* has often been denigrated for its reliance on a "monster of the week" format, with one pair of media scholars even stating openly, "*The Outer Limits* just don't get no respect."[89] Yet *The Outer Limits* was much more. The series was written and co-produced by Joseph Stefano, who wrote the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

Many episodes were directed by experienced science-fiction filmmakers like Byron Haskins (director of such movies as *The War of the Worlds, Conquest of Space,* and *From the Earth to the Moon*) and boasted moody *chiaroscuro* camerawork by future three-time Oscar-winning cinematographer Conrad Hall. And while Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone* indulged in twist endings, many were merely cleverly quirky or even humorous, bringing an ironic smile to the viewer. *The Outer Limits*, by contrast, was grimly serious, even dark, with an unseen narrator opening and concluding episodes with poetically philosophical homilies on the flawed nature of man or the dangers of the universe. "The special effects were good, the alien costumes interesting, and the plots inventive, often leaving viewers with a sense of unease," says one major history of television programming,[90] while another reviewer calls *The Outer Limits* "humorless, bleak, surreal, and scathing at the bleeding edge of morality and ethical quandary."[91] Such qualities were on display in the 1964 episode "A Feasibility Study."[92] At the episode's opening, the narrator states that the alien inhabitants of the planet Luminos

> seek a planet on which life is healthy, vibrant, strong, and mobile. They need such people to do their work, to labor and slave for them, to manufacture their splendored dreams. The Luminoids need slaves, and they have chosen the planet off which their slaves will be abducted. Not too many at first, a neighborhood-full, perhaps....a neighborhood like mine or yours. Those who will be abducted sleep in dreamy ignorance, unaware that they are about to become the subjects of a grotesque and sophisticated experiment -- a feasibility study.

In this alien abduction story, the inhabitants of the neighborhood are puzzled to find their area swathed in fog. Eventually making contact with the Luminoids, one human couple becomes infected with an alien disease which hideously disfigures them. Confused and dispirited by the turn of events, the neighborhood assembles in the local Catholic church (the bells of which the

priest has rung incessantly, and which, heard throughout the episode, symbolize hope to the neighborhood's residents). After the priest leads the community in the Lord's Prayer, a hammering is heard at the church door as one of the infected humans seeks entry. The priest, Father Fontana, defies the frightened crowd and opens the door, proclaiming, "We close our doors to no one. This man, who does nothing and still strikes fear into your hearts, is your neighbor." After a doctor, who has spoken with the aliens, explains their scheme to enslave humanity, Father Fontana, gazing at the crucifix, realizes that others on Earth will also be abducted and enslaved unless the people assembled in the church defy the Luminoids and put a stop to their plans. Father Fontana joins hands with the infected man. Following his example, everyone in the community deliberately chooses to infect themselves, thus sacrificing their lives and saving the population of the Earth. "It could have happened to any neighborhood," concludes the narrator. "Had those who lived in this one been less human, less brave, it would have happened to all the neighborhoods of the Earth. Feasibility study ended. Abduction of human race: infeasible."

Catholic clergy were also frequently shown resisting traditional tyranny of a much more down-to-Earth kind than that of the fictional, alien Luminoids, on the espionage series *Mission: Impossible.* After the phenomenal success of the first movies in the James Bond film series, *Mission: Impossible* was one of the many Cold War-based spy series originating in the 1960s, along with *Secret Agent, The Avengers, I Spy, The Man from UNCLE* and others.[93] Created by Bruce Geller, *Mission: Impossible* was a highly stylized show, featuring baroque plots, incredible technical gimmicks, elaborate plans, and last-minute saves by a team of civilian

specialists -- a planner/leader, a master of disguise, a technology expert, an alluring model, and an athletic strongman. Backed by a throbbing theme tune and incidental music by Lalo Schirfin and intricate plotting and elaborate scripts, the program won multiple Emmy awards, and made stars of future Oscar-winner Martin Landau, Barbara Bain, and Peter Graves.[94] It also proved to be the longest-lasting of the '60s spy series, running from 1966 to 1973.

A major premise of the series in its early years was opposition to the tyranny of the Communist bloc. Though in order to avoid litigation the nations involved were fictional, they inevitably bore names like the "Eastern European People's Republic," leaving no doubt in viewers' minds as to the identity of the opposition. Equally unambiguous were the program's multiple portrayals of heroic Catholic prelates – several of them obviously modeled on Cardinal Mindszenty – and their battles against communist oppression. The first such was the two-episode 1966 story "Old Man Out."[95] As did every episode of the series, the story opens with the Impossible Mission Force leader (in the first season, Dan Briggs) receiving taped instructions from his anonymous government boss:

> Anton Cardinal Vossek, despite being 80 years of age and physically infirm, is nonetheless the acknowledged leader of his country's freedom movement. The government toward whose overthrow Cardinal Vossek is working has arrested him preparatory to a trial before a people's court, which is certain to convict him...Your mission, should you decide to accept it, would be to rescue Cardinal Vossek.

Though no religious affiliation or motivation is ever given for Briggs or his team members, all are nevertheless clearly impressed by Vossek's heroic struggle, and are willing to risk their lives to rescue him. Assembling his Impossible Missions Force, Briggs persuades the

reluctant trapeze artist Crystal by stating the purpose of their mission: “Ever heard of Cardinal Vossek?...You know what that one old man means in that part of the world!” Later, team member Cinnamon brings Briggs the news that Vossek’s execution has been ordered. Briggs states, “They’ll try to break him first.” When Cinnamon asks, “Will they [succeed]?”, Briggs passionately responds, “No!”

Though most of the episode is devoted to the IM Force’s actions, the story’s glimpses of the imprisoned Cardinal Vossek portray him as both heroically defiant and endearingly human. When team member Rollin (who has been imprisoned with Vossek as part of Briggs’ plan) first approaches the prelate with the details of the escape, Vossek suspects a trick by his captors, and asks, “Why should I believe you?” Rollin responds, “Faith, sir.” His face lighting up with a smile, Vossek replies, “How can a prince of the church argue with that?”

The captive cardinal’s strength of will is further demonstrated when, though pain-wracked and infirm, he nevertheless follows Rollin up a long stairway as part of the escape. Both his defiance and a sense of humor are shown when guards try to disrupt his sleep by shining a light in his face: “Cardinal Vossek is not at home,” the cardinal states. “However, he’s expected shortly.” And the prelate’s sense of humor reappears when Rollin addresses him as “Your Eminence;” grinning broadly, Vossek tells him, “Thank you – but while in my underwear, I think I would prefer ‘Anton’!”

But the most humanizing moment in "Old Man Out" comes when a prison captain, obviously conflicted by his assignment to break Vossek, begs the elderly cardinal to talk. Vossek's first reaction is to offer the conscience-torn officer confession and absolution. The captain refuses, but states that he wanted Vossek to know that his execution is being arranged. "So that I could make my peace with God? ***I*** will have no trouble!" Vossek gloats, betraying an all-too-human moment of bitterness – an understandable reaction, considering what he has been through. But instantly, the cardinal regrets his words, and speaks gently and sincerely to the officer: "I am sorry…I am tired, or I would have understood. What you want is to be forgiven." Taking the captain's hands, the sympathetic prelate says, "You are by me." He then urges the captain to try to forgive himself. The rest of the episode is devoted to following the Impossible Mission Force as it pursues the escape plan. Ultimately, the Force's mission succeeds, and Cardinal Vossek escapes the prison and the country, presumably to carry on his work of leading and inspiring his countrymen in their battle for freedom.

Heroic, anti-dictatorial members of the Catholic hierarchy reappeared in two 1968 episodes of *Mission: Impossible*'s third season. In "The Heir Apparent,"[96] the IM Force is instructed:

> In exactly five days, Archbishop Djelvas, the ecclesiastic patriarch of Povia, must name a regent to succeed the king, who died recently leaving no heir…General Enver Qaisette has vowed that unless he is named regent, he will seize the throne in a bloody *coup d'état*. If Qaisette succeeds, Povia, a free constitutional monarchy, will become a military dictatorship.

The IM Force plans to thwart Qaisette by spreading rumors that Povia's heir apparent, Princess Celine, who vanished decades before and was long believed dead, has been found and will reappear to claim the throne. After the disguised IM Force penetrates Povia's cathedral to obtain vital information (amusingly, the African-American Barney poses as an Eastern European monk!), team member Cinnamon is transformed via Rollin's skill with disguise into the aged Princess Celine.

As the IM Force makes its preparations, Archbishop Djelvas must contend with Qaisette's bullying, but proves himself equal to the task. The Archbishop is shown to be both loyal to the cause of freedom and heroically courageous, even in the face of Qaisette's threats. Suspecting Djelvas of spreading the rumors of Celine's return, Qaisette accuses the churchman, "Perhaps His Eminence has heard these rumors?" The Archbishop replies, "I know only that I pray with all my soul that these rumors are true." Qaisette sneers, "Your prayers are wasted. Also your rumors. You must declare the throne vacant and declare a regent." "I will never proclaim YOU as regent!" the prelate responds. When asked if he believes the rumors about Celine, the faith of the bishop is revealed: "I believe only in prayer."

After Qaisette meets "Celine," he himself is unsure whether or not she is genuine, but vows to remove her as a threat to his plan. He tells the Archbishop that she is a fake and that he need not concern himself with investigating her. "I will decide that!" the churchman snaps. "Or are you afraid to let her be examined? By law, it is a matter for the Holy Office…and I will not

allow you to stand in the way of its judgment." "You have no right to insist on that!" Qaisette objects. "In the name of the people, I have every right!" the metropolitan thunders.

Qaisette's plan, stated to his lackey, is revealed: "Once the Archbishop says that she is the real Celine, we expose her as a fraud. The people will be terribly disappointed. The Archbishop will be discredited as a gullible old fool. And we'll be rid of him once and for all."

But in addition to being courageous, the churchman is also wise. As the disguised Cinnamon undergoes various tests to prove she is the real Princess Celine, the canny Archbishop covertly reveals that he has not been taken in by her imposture – yet is grateful for this answer to his prayers, and for a chance for freedom for his nation. "I do not know who you are," he whispers to Cinnamon, "I only know that divine Providence has brought you to save my country." After passing the tests and completely discrediting Qaisette, "Celine" announces that she is abdicating, and states, "I ask only that Archbishop Djelvas choose a ruler for Povia, and that his choice is accepted by the people." Having foiled the scheme of the would-be dictator the IM Force departs, content to leave the choice of Povia's new leader completely in the hands of the incorruptible Archbishop.

But the program's definitive statement on the heroism of the Catholic hierarchy came in the 1968 episode titled "The Cardinal."[97] In one of the convoluted plots so typical of *Mission: Impossible*, the ubiquitous taped voice sets the premise:

> General Casimir Zepke is plotting to make himself a dictator. Only one man stands between Zepke and absolute power: Stanislaus Cardinal Souchek, whose influence with the people has kept his country free. Zepke imprisoned the cardinal six weeks ago when he entered Zolar monastery for his annual retreat. Zepke plans to replace him with an exact double who will politically endorse Zepke, guaranteeing his final seizure of power.

At the monastery, Zepke and his Souchek imposter toast their upcoming victory as they spy on the real Cardinal Souchek who, although imprisoned and under surveillance, continues to go about his devotions with quiet faith, reciting the *De Profundis* and other psalms. When told that "after tonight, we won't need you any more," the genuine Cardinal Souchek replies, "At least you are an honest murderer."

The imposter "Souchek" is infected with a disease by the IM Force and becomes ill on the very day Zepke expects him to make a broadcast supporting the would-be tyrant's goals. IM Force members arrive as "doctors" to care for the imposter, and Zepke is further unnerved when master-of-disguise Rollin appears in the guise of apostolic delegate Cardinal Ottoloni and demands to see Souchek. When "Souchek" fails to recognize "Ottoloni," the disguised "cardinal" Rollin confronts the dictator: "I am certain you know what I will tell the world about that man in there…that imposter!" The savage Zepke orders Rollin – whom Zepke believes to be a Roman Catholic cardinal and a personal representative of the pope – entombed alive in a marble sarcophagus in the catacombs beneath the monastery.

Naturally, Rollin escapes (by means of tools concealed in his pectoral cross), and through a series of complex maneuvers employing the arcane gadgetry, uncanny skills, and split-second

timing of the IM Force, the real Cardinal Souchek is substituted for the imposter just before he is due to speak to the world's reporters. Introducing what he still believes to be his disguised flunky, Zepke tells the press, "I can promise you, whatever the great spiritual leader of our country says, I will observe." Asked what he will tell the country, the real Cardinal Souchek replies, "I will tell them the kind of man General Zepke truly is: a monstrous liar, a traitor, and a murderer! I will exhort heaven and earth to prevent his election!" booms the cardinal. As the flabbergasted strongman stammers in shock, Cardinal Souchek departs, surrounded by lionizing members of the international press, to expose the hapless dictator's depravity to the world.

This episode serves as one of *Mission: Impossible*'s most potent portrayals of the evils of totalitarianism. Throughout the episode, the brutal and blasphemous nature of Soviet-style dictatorship is clearly demonstrated by the actions undertaken by the show's villains, in a manner rarely indulged in even by the unshakably anti-communist *Mission: Impossible*. Perhaps not coincidentally, only months earlier, in August 1968, the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact nations had invaded Czechoslovakia and brutally crushed the reforms of Alexander Dubček's "Prague Spring," thereby incensing world opinion.

But while it does repudiate Communist dictatorship and portrays the real Cardinal Souchek as heroic, the episode also demonstrates the changing attitudes toward and portrayal of Catholic clergy which were underway in American culture by 1968. In what may have been a subtle acknowledgement of the unpopularity of Pope Paul's reign – particularly his issuance of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in July of 1968, several months before "The Cardinal" aired – the

episode also features some subversive mockery of the unquestioning esteem with which Catholic clergy and religious (particularly members of the hierarchy) had been portrayed by American television in this period – not least, on *Mission: Impossible* itself. Throughout the episode, all of Zepke's fascist lackeys wear ecclesiastical garb. Cowled monks are actually storm-troopers, and a female member of Zepke's secret police, Major Felder, wears a habit – thus allowing the '60s viewer the perverse thrill of seeing a nun casually flip cigarette butts to the floor, hold people at gunpoint, and repeatedly slap and heap abuse on an elderly Roman Catholic cardinal. Felder's imposture also provides a humorous moment when Rollin enters, disguised as Vatican envoy Cardinal Ottoloni. (Notably, this name is extremely similar to that of the reactionary Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, Secretary of the Vatican's Holy Office, who was famed for his speeches opposing change during the Second Vatican Council. So similar are the names, in fact, that it cannot be a coincidence.) The "nun" forgets to kiss his ring, drawing a glare from the "cardinal," whereupon she sheepishly sinks into a curtsey and does him obeisance. While on the one hand such scenes show the depraved lengths to which communism stoops to achieve its twisted goals, it is also doubtful that in earlier years any character dressed as a nun – even a villain in disguise – would have been permitted to act in so obviously irreligious (not to mention unladylike) a manner. Even on the staunchly pro-Catholic and anti-Communist *Mission: Impossible*, times were beginning to change.[*]

[*] Such change became even more pronounced in subsequent years. *Mission: Impossible* ran from 1966 to 1973; reflecting the changing temper of those times, the program can be neatly divided into two eras. In the episodes which aired from 1966 through 1969, the IMF focused on overthrowing foreign dictators and totalitarian governments; in its later seasons the program abandoned anti-communist themes, and the IMF concentrated solely on battling organized crime.

Such change was also manifested in the portrayal of another defiant priest, this one – like Father Fontana on *The Outer Limits* -- also battling aliens from space; but his defiance, though in some ways in the traditional "heroic" mold of film and television clerics, was also tinged with all-too-human flaws. The series was ABC's *The Invaders*, made by the producer Quinn Martin, who also produced *The Untouchables*, *The Fugitive* and *The F.B.I.* in the 1960s, and would provide numerous detective shows – among them *Barnaby Jones, Cannon,* and *The Streets of San Francisco* – in the 1970s.

Taking as its central conceit the device of space aliens who look identical to human beings subverting Earth societies preparatory to taking over – an idea which had been used extensively in 1950s science-fiction films like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Invaders from Mars*, and *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* – the series followed former architect David Vincent, who had witnessed the landing of an alien spaceship and became privy to their plans, and who now sought to expose them and convince other humans of the existence of the alien plot. *The Invaders* was a downbeat program; given that the whole point of the show was Vincent's one-man battle against a vast alien conspiracy, his efforts were inevitably doomed to fail -- for if they succeeded, the series' premise would be destroyed and the show at an end.[98]

The episode "Storm"[99] finds Vincent investigating a freak hurricane which apparently arose spontaneously. Though most of Florida has been devastated, the tiny town of St. Matthew Beach was completely untouched, arousing Vincent's suspicions. Journeying to the town to find

a famed meteorologist, Vincent is referred to the recently refurbished Catholic church and its pastor, Father Joe Corelli.

Vincent attempts to question Father Joe about the meteorologist's theories, but the priest is unresponsive and skeptical about Vincent, whom he regards as a publicity-seeking crank. Vincent enters the church, where he discovers that both the parish housekeeper Lisa and the church organist are aliens, and have concealed a weather control machine in the church's wall. After killing another alien, Vincent is beaten unconscious by the organist, then is drugged by Lisa. Holding Vincent prisoner, the housekeeper mocks her employer: "We wouldn't hurt Father Joe. He's been very good camouflage for us since he came and started rebuilding the church. Four months ago it was empty and abandoned. Then he rebuilt it. Actually, WE rebuilt it."

When Father Joe returns, Lisa plays on his sympathy by claiming Vincent tried to rape her. The beaten, drugged Vincent is unable to deny her charges, and an enraged Father Joe backhands him in anger, then orders parishioners to take Vincent to the sheriff.

Later, the priest is anguished over striking Vincent, whom he believes to be mentally ill. "I'm a hypocrite. It's been very easy to say 'with all God's children I will return evil with love,' but when I'm confronted with a sick man, I strike him with rage and hate. I wanted to kill him." Father Joe goes to the church to pray for forgiveness – but is stunned to discover a pair of aliens manipulating the weather control machine inside. The priest realizes Vincent was telling the truth about an alien invasion. One alien tells the priest, "We've been looking for an abandoned church.

Lisa was put in your house to make sure you never found anything out. And if you did, she'd kill you." Father Joe attacks the aliens, but they overpower him and force him at gunpoint to sit helplessly in a pew. Father Joe kneels in prayer as Lisa enters. The housekeeper mocks him, asking, "Did you include me in your prayers, Father?" The cleric responds, "Yes, my prayers did include you, for the forgiveness of your eternal soul. Yours and theirs." "What of your own soul? No prayers for that?" Lisa asks, though out of mockery or genuine curiosity is unclear. "Why aren't you afraid to die?" The cleric replies, "When I became a priest, I took upon myself the pall of death.-- that I might gain all for God."

Suddenly, an escaped Vincent enters the church and, instantly sizing up the situation, tackles Lisa. Taking advantage of the surprise, Father Joe wrests the pistol away from the alien covering him. The other alien gulps a suicide pill and leaps on weather machine, destroying all evidence of the aliens' existence in a burst of flame. Breaking free, Lisa and the organist flee. Father Joe aims the pistol at them, telling them to stop or he will fire. But the canny Lisa defiantly replies, "I don't think so. Whatever lives is a child of God. Isn't that what your religion preaches, Father? Priest or hypocrite -- which are you, Father? I know which. You're a priest," Lisa mocks, as she and her accomplice escape, with Father Joe doing nothing to stop them.

In the episode's epilogue, Father Joe apologizes to Vincent for letting the aliens go. "I couldn't kill them...not and remain a priest," the cleric states. Vincent expresses understanding, and Father Joe assures him, "I'll pray for your success, David. I'll pray for us all." Though still a "heroic" priest devoted to freedom and opposed to foreign domination (even though such

domination comes, not from a communist nation, but from outer space), the failure of Father Joe to definitively defeat evil symbolized the changing status of Catholic clergy on entertainment television – and in real life. While Father Joe does the right thing and is upright and courageous, evil escapes and lives to fight another day. Thus, the formerly omnicompetent and triumphant "heroic priest" was "downsized" to that an ordinary, "fully human" man[*] – just as the Catholic Church was increasingly seen as an ordinary, "human" institution, subject to the tides of history and the events happening around it. These trends in the portrayal of clergy and Catholicism in American popular culture would accelerate, ultimately coming into full flourish in the decade of the 1970s.

By 1968, it was increasingly clear that the "triumphant Catholicism" of the past was gone. The Church was led, not by the stern, unbending Pius XII, who uncompromisingly condemned Communist tyranny and opposed its totalitarian regimes, nor even by the jovial, humble, and beloved John XXIII, but by the indecisive Paul VI, whom some had previously nicknamed "the Hamlet cardinal" for his nearly neurotic self-doubt and chronic indecisiveness.

So too with the other standard-bearers of the "heroic age" of 20th century Catholicism. After a clash with the vindictive Cardinal Spellman, Fulton Sheen had been "promoted" to the position of Bishop of Rochester, New York, where that prelate of apparently infinite talent proved conclusively that the "teaching" and "governing" capabilities required of a bishop are not

[*] Unlike Father Pius in *The Loretta Young Show* episode "Enter at Your Own Risk," who allows a ne'er-do-well to run from a minor crime, Father Joe is faced with invaders bent on destroying the human race. Moreover, the ne'er-do-well changes his mind at Father Pius' urging; the invaders do not.

always to be found in equal measure in the same man. Though beginning his tenure spectacularly, Sheen pursued his own "progressive" vision while ignoring the concerns of his increasingly restive and resistant flock -- for example, unilaterally hiring non-Catholics to teach at the diocesan seminary, and deciding to turn over an entire parish to the federal Housing and Urban Development Department without consulting, or even informing, the members of the parish first. As a result, the prelate's popularity plummeted, and after a mere three years in office, Sheen resigned the Rochester see in disgrace.[100]

And Joszef Mindszenty – the heroic cardinal who had endured torture, imprisonment and virtual exile within his own country – came to a tragic and ignominious end. Refusing to either leave the U.S. embassy in Hungary or resign his see, Mindszenty was increasingly seen as an embarrassment, a living reminder of Pius XII's staunch anti-communism, rather than the openness to peace of John XXIII, and a stumbling block to Pope Paul's desire to achieve *detente* with the Soviet Union. Declaring the tragic cardinal a victim, not of Communist oppression, but of "history," Paul annulled the excommunication imposed on Mindszenty's tormentors -- and stripped Mindszenty of his titles, declared his office vacant, and forcibly relocated the prelate to Rome, where he was refused permission to participate in discussions about the future of the Hungarian church. Had Mindszenty been murdered by the Communists in 1956, there is little doubt that today, he would be canonized as a martyr; but because he lived, his sacrifices were ignored and he was cast off, debased, and humiliated.

Neither did the image of the "heroic priest" presented by the Mindszenty-like cardinals on *Mission: Impossible* and elsewhere come true. Rather than being swept aside in one decisive blow by the courageous opposition of the Church, communism lingered on until it collapsed under its own weight, dying not with a bang, but a whimper some thirty years (and millions of victims of oppression) later.

But this had in some ways been the pattern of the entire television era. In every example examined in this chapter, whether of the clergy as "men of piety" or as "heroic priests," in no case were priests on American television depicted as the omnicompetent, two-fisted crusaders common in movies of the 1940s. Instead, in this era's popular culture – at least on the home screen -- Catholic priests tended to use moral suasion and personal sacrifice to embody their virtues. Though possessed of abundant physical and moral courage, the pop-culture priest on American television did battle using his faith, not his fists. Just as Americans increasingly saw ambiguity and shades of gray where once there had been clear perceptions of good and evil, black and white, so too the priest in entertainment was increasingly portrayed as a more human, fallible individual.

But before examining in greater depth the new fallibility and "humanness" of the previously "heroic" priest now being presented on American television, it is necessary to pause for an appraisal of the era's only television series to feature Catholic priests as full-time lead characters: a series which simultaneously served as a "last hurrah" for the archetype of the unambiguously "heroic" priest, set the stage for the more "human" portrayal of the priest which

was to follow, and – perhaps most significantly – reflected the struggles and concerns of an American Church which was casting off its older fortress-cum-ghetto mentality and taking its place in the mainstream of American politics, society, and culture.

## **Chapter 3: The Church in Transition: Catholic Popularity, Vatican II, and TV's *Going My Way***

By the 1950s, Catholicism was firmly ensconced as a part of the American mainstream. Undeniably, many factors contributed to such acceptance: the gradual breakdown of older urban and rural ethnic enclaves, increasing suburbanization, and greater education in the postwar period; the homogenizing experience of military life, both for the millions of men who served during the war, and for those serving in the peacetime draft thereafter; shared experience of the Depression, the unifying spirit of patriotism and sacrifice during World War II, the "Cold War consensus" created among many Americans by the mingled joy of victory, fear of communism, and increased consumerism; these and many other factors played a part in the rejection of the anti-Catholicism which had dominated the pre-1920s period.

But as previous chapters have shown, the rise of mass media and its frequent portrayals of Catholic clergy as "heroic" and "men of piety," as well as its positive depictions of female religious and Catholic laity, had also increased awareness of Catholicism and aided audiences in becoming accustomed to, and then comfortable with, and ultimately accepting and supportive of, the faith. The demonstration of such quintessentially "American" values as Father Coughlin's anti-Wall Street suspicion of big business and finance, and his support of small-town communitarianism (which particularly appealed to traditional American populists), and Fulton Sheen's staunch anti-communism and appeals to what Mark Massa has called the "therapeutic" mentality of the era, combined with the fictional but even more widespread and popular

portrayals of Catholic clergy by performers like Pat O'Brien, Spencer Tracy and Bing Crosby to bring Catholicism, by midcentury, into accepted patterns of American life. But beginning in 1958, events occurred which caused Catholicism to be not merely accepted, but openly embraced -- and to enjoy a widespread interest and popularity unprecedented in American history. The first of these was the election of Angelo Roncalli to the Throne of St. Peter as Pope John XXIII.[1]

The papacy had previously been the subject of little knowledge, attention, or even interest from most non-Catholic Americans. As part of America's traditional anti-Catholicism, during the nineteenth century popes were typically portrayed as symbols of the "foreign monarchy" which claimed Catholics' first loyalty and made impossible any loyalty to America. Several of Thomas Nast's anti-Catholic editorial cartoons portrayed the pope as obese, corrupt, and slavering at the possibility of conquering America; the assertion of the doctrine of papal primacy and infallibility by Pope Pius IX during the First Vatican Council in 1870 caused negative comment, as did Pius X's opposition to the doctrines of Americanism and modernism; and Benedict XV drew scorn from some American journals and editorial cartoonists for his neutrality during World War I, with some accusing him of support of "kaiserism." But with rare exceptions, there had been little if any effort made by the organs of American culture, whether based in entertainment or journalism, to make any differentiation between the various occupants of the papal throne. While the institution of the papacy was condemned, individual pontiffs were rarely characterized beyond a broad stereotype: typically, the pope was portrayed as austere, remote, and monarchial, if not openly autocratic. In an era when popes still wore medieval regalia like the triple tiara of the papacy, such a stereotype was understandable.

Ironically, the occupant of the chair of Peter during World War II and the architect of the Church's staunch anti-Communist policies during the early Cold War, Pope Pius XII, actually fit this stereotype, in both his public image and his private attitudes and behavior. Thus, there was little warmth or affection for, or even widespread awareness of, Pius among non-Catholic Americans.

Such was not the case with Pius' successor. After a career largely spent in the Vatican's diplomatic service, the elderly Roncalli – he was 77 when elected – was chosen as a compromise candidate by the College of Cardinals, most of whom expected him to merely "keep the seat warm" for a few years until a more decisive choice could be made.

To the discomfort of some, the delight of others, and the surprise of all, as Pope John XXIII, Roncalli captured the hearts of the world and soon became wildly popular. Some of this was due to his personal appearance; in contrast with the severe and almost emaciated Pius, John was a fat, jolly individual who clearly enjoyed the pleasures of the table. (When wearing the traditional papal winter headgear, the *camauro* – a red velvet stocking cap with white ermine trim – John bore some resemblance to a beardless Santa Claus.) Even more, however, John's popularity was due to his sincere simplicity and goodness of heart and his down-to-earth nature. Where Pius had been imperious and remote, allegedly requiring even his closest relatives to kneel in his presence, John was jovial and unassuming, treating everyone like an equal. Where Pius had ordered the Vatican gardens cleared of workers before he would walk there, John strode up to gardeners and talked to them man-to-man.[2] Soon, delighted stories began circulating about

John's simplicity and kindness, as well as his sense of humor: John ordered the editor of the official Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* to stop using phrases like "as we gathered from the august lips of the most illuminated Supreme Pontiff," in favor of the simple formulation, "the pope said";[3] when masons and carpenters were making repairs to the Vatican, John told an aide to "get a few bottles of wine to take to those hard-working men upstairs. The dust up there must give them a real thirst;"[4] and, when asked by a visitor how many people work in the Vatican, John supposedly replied, "About half."[5]

The citizenry of the world, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, was taken with John's warm humanity and his deeply felt sense of God's presence and love. For many Catholics, John embodied what they wished the church to be.[6]

Shortly after his election, on Christmas Day, 1958, John made headlines around the world when he departed the Apostolic Palace to visit a children's hospital and a prison. As Peter Hebbletwaite notes:

> This was where his reputation took off and soared. In the otherwise dull Christmas period, the world media saw the visits as another manifestation of the approachably human Pope, who confessed that one of his brothers had been caught poaching, and embraced a murderer who had asked, "Can there be forgiveness for me?"….But his actions were inspired by an instinctive sense of what was right, not by publicity calculations. The long-term importance of these visits was that they illustrated what he meant by saying that he would be first and foremost a "pastor." In such matters, example counts for more than laborious explanations. He had found a lived parable of goodness. And the world responded.[7]

But while John was a genuinely pastoral individual, his pontificate was also characterized by shrewd political measures. At the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, John went on Vatican Radio and said:

> We beg all governments not to remain deaf to this cry of humanity, that they do all that is in their power to save peace. They will thus spare the world from the horrors of a war whose terrifying consequences no one can predict. That they continue discussions, as this loyal and open behavior has great value as a witness of everyone's conscience and before history. Promoting, favoring, accepting conversations, at all levels and in any time, is a rule of wisdom and prudence which attracts the blessings of heaven and earth.

This statement made it possible for Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to avoid a potential nuclear war without losing face. Thanks to John's statement, Khrushchev's withdrawal could be seen not as cowardice, but as the act of a man devoted to peace. Such was underlined by the appearance of John's statement on the front page of *Pravda*, surely the first time a papal declaration had headlined the chief organ of world communism.[8] In contrast with Pius' condemnation of communism and all those who worked with (or were enslaved by) it, John was most of all concerned with the spread of peace, even if achieving it meant making accommodation with communism.

If everything about John – his kindness, his simplicity, his optimism about the world and openness to all people, even his physical appearance – seemed to impress the world, no small part was due to his image in the news media. As repeatedly shown in this study, the manner in which media – entertainment or journalistic – presents a subject, or through which he presents himself, affects the viewer's perceptions. In this, while naturally John himself (or God) was responsible for his genuine greatness of spirit, "Good Pope John" was also very definitely the

beneficiary of the news media's enthusiasm for himself and his reforms, as Peter Hebblethwaite states:

> John had the press on his side from this first meeting. It is not too much to say that he had them eating out of his hand. Some tough-minded journalists admitted, afterwards and in private, to tears. It was not so much what he had to say as his evident friendliness and warmth that won them over….The first favorable impression remained and grew. It is the reason why Pope John had such a good press, especially in the 'honeymoon' period of his pontificate.[9]

Throughout the world, journalistic organs hailed John with enthusiasm. Particularly enthusiastic was *Izvestia*; Nikita Khrushchev's son-in-law was a reporter for the Soviet daily, and he and his wife met personally with John in 1963. In the United States, *Time* magazine became John's patron. A typical story after John's accession to the papacy read:

> John XXIII has been on the throne of St. Peter only four months, but he is already the best-loved Pope of modern times. Rome has rarely known anyone like the stout, bustling, *punchinello*-faced old man, who combines warmth, wit and frankness with a dignity that is free of pomp. He is an able, creative, precedent-breaking administrator with a rare humility and an ever-present concern for people.[10]

Four times in as many years, John received a cover portrait and story in *Time*, including when he was elected Pope, and when he was named *Time*'s Man of the Year for 1962. In addition, John was the subject of no fewer than 27 articles in the same period, an average of about one every two months – far more attention than any previous Pope had received from the American press. Thus, "if *Time* cannot be said to have 'created' Pope John's American image, they certainly did their best to make it widely known."[11] [*]

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[*] While John XXIII and, later, the Council, were favorite subjects in *Time*, in large measure the coverage devoted to them was simply a corollary to the coverage American Catholicism had already been receiving from the *Time-Life* news empire. As documented by Anthony Burke Smith in his *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (University Press of Kansas, 2010), *Life* publisher Henry Luce collaborated with Jesuit John Courtney Murray to revise the portrait of American Catholics from that of

But there was another figure whose media presence served to increase America's acceptance, even embrace, of Catholicism. Pope John's fame – and the attention to, interest in, and popular enthusiasm for Catholicism he brought to mainstream America – were shortly joined by those of another Catholic named John, this one a native-born American who overcame generations of distrust of Catholics and achieve the pinnacle of success in American, and even world-wide, politics.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, scion of two immigrant Irish Catholic families, was elected president of the United States in 1960. Kennedy's election inspired rhapsodic glee in American Catholics, among whom it signaled a new era of acceptance into mainstream American culture and self-esteem[12] As historian of American Catholicism Jay Dolan notes,

> Kennedy did more than prove that a Catholic could be President. The Kennedy style, his poise, sophistication, the modernity worn as casually as his London-tailored clothes; [all] suggested more than any proclamation could that Catholics at long last were comfortably integrated into American society. For Catholics, Kennedy became a symbol of success; wealthy and well educated, he had achieved the dream of every American.[13]

The happy confluence of two figures, both representative of Catholicism, both known worldwide, both icons of modernity, both warm, compassionate, open and urbane,[14] and both named John, was remarked upon by many in the era. Ephemera such as wall hangings and posters displayed pictures of the president and the pope side-by-side;[15] and the death of both men

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superstitious, impoverished immigrants into emblems of America's "moral consensus" and bastions of Luce's postulated "American Century": "After World War II, *Life* turned Catholics into symbols of American consensus, encouraging readers to see Catholicism in recognizable and reassuring terms of family, middle-class success, and corporate leadership...*Life* rendered Catholicism in terms of respectable faith, upward mobility, and popular culture, [and] visualized Catholics as part of the American dream in which ethnicity was consigned to a fading, older generation and Catholic devotionalism was cleansed of its eccentricities," (Smith, 114-115). For more on the significance of *Life* in the changing portrayal of American Catholicism, see Smith, chapter 4.

in 1963 provided a sad and grim reminder of the short-lived optimism engendered by their brief reigns.[16]

Just as Father Charles Coughlin embodied Catholicism for American media consumers in the 1930s, Bing Crosby's Father O'Malley did in the 1940s, and Fulton Sheen and Cardinal Mindszenty did in the 1950s, so "Good Pope John" and JFK did for the early 1960s. Both were telegenic in their way, and both represented and embodied a Catholic embrace of modernity, progress, dynamism, and above all, hope and optimism, to the world.[17]

Pope John presented an image far removed from that to which Americans had become accustomed. In many ways, John XXIII looked precisely like what Americans wanted in a spiritual leader: humble, down-to-earth, and open, not a strict, finger-wagging moralist saying "everything you enjoy doing is forbidden." In the same way, in the new television age, where looks and image counted more than ever, Kennedy embodied what Americans sought in a leader: young, handsome, well-spoken, witty, and cultured, yet a strong and courageous veteran of war and a staunch American. Together, enthusiasm for the youthful and charismatic chief executive and the kind-hearted pontiff spurred an American explosion of interest in all things Catholic.

Yet there was one more factor which combined with popularity of the "two Johns" to capture the imagination of Americans and increase the already vast popularity of Catholicism to its greatest height. The defining action of Pope John's pontificate was his decision, shortly after accession to the papacy, to call a council – an assembly of all the bishops of the Catholic Church,

in what historian of the Council John O'Malley calls "the most important religious event of the twentieth century."[18]

Such a move by John was extremely unusual; in the past, councils had been called only when a major doctrinal or material threat confronted the Church. Typically, in addition to concrete changes and reforms to Church policy and governance, such councils resulted in a fresh wave of denunciations of the evils of the day. John did state his intention that the Second Vatican Council address critical issues like "the dangers of nuclear war, the inequity of wealth in the world and the over-consumption by richer nations, and the need to orient the global economy to serve the poor.[19] Even more, however, John intended the Council to be pastoral, and through faith to "renew the face of the earth."[20]

And rather than being dour about such challenges, John was cheerfully optimistic, stating that the Church should "renew" itself and "open its windows to the world," in the hopes that doing so would ultimately foster increased unity among Christians, nations, and all people, and would demonstrate the Church's optimism, positive nature, and openness to modernity. Indeed, one of the key documents to emerge from the Council was its constitution on the Church in the Modern World, which encapsulated such themes in its title, *Gaudium et Spes* (as is customary, the title was taken from the Latin translation of document's first words: "Joy and Hope.")

While many specific changes in Church practice were introduced by the Council, and while some of the actual changes -- and even more, the culture created by the Church's

newfound apparent enthusiasm for change -- would cause problems in years, and even decades, to come, at the time the Council opened and during its sessions, optimism and the embrace of modernity were perhaps the two most important cultural features of the Council, features which not only affected the interior life of the Church, but the perception of it by outsiders.

It was the Church's embrace of the modern world which attracted the most favorable and enthusiastic comment from Catholics and non-Catholics alike, and which would cause the most difficulties in years to come. The reasons for this are complex, but largely come down to the fact, as explained by Council scholar John O'Malley, that the Council was reacting to

> modernity, or more concretely, "the long nineteenth century," which for the Catholic Church stretches from the French Revolution until the end of the pontificate of Pius XII in 1958. The French Revolution and the philosophy that undergirded it traumatized Catholic officialdom through much of that long century. The Council was an attempt at healing certain aspects of the church's history in that period and at slipping out from under its vestigial weight. Vatican II was the heir, however, to other aspects of the long nineteenth century, such as the developments in biblical, liturgical patristic, and philosophical scholarship, the competition with Protestants in foreign missions, and the rise of socialism and communism.[21]

While obviously such a venture faced tremendous challenges – and it is not surprising in retrospect that a vast upheaval within the Church would accompany such massive change undertaken in so short a period – at the time the Council opened, the prevailing spirit was one of optimism -- indeed, "joy and hope."

The specific events and decrees of the Council[22] are of less moment to this study than are the effects they produced in the wider world, and particularly the successive results on and in American popular culture; but a brief survey of the Council would note the frenzied behind-the-

scenes organizing of the Council sessions' agendas by progressive (largely Western European) prelates and their advisors, the *periti*; the poorly-coordinated response of traditionally conservative (primarily curial) leaders to the many progressive initiatives; the overwhelming demonstration of enthusiasm by the world's diocesan bishops for the various "reform" proposals presented by the progressives; and the Council's ultimate "updating" and alteration of the Church's positions on crucial matters of doctrine and practice in its documents, such as those on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), the liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium)*, the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), the role of the laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), ecumenism between Christian denominations (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), and relations with non-Christians (*Nostra Aetate*) – each of which was to rock Catholicism to its foundations in various ways, and radically shift the perception and practice of the faith for Americans. [23]

One of the most notable of the Council's statements was that on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*), which was inserted largely at the insistence of the American bishops, who had just experienced compelling evidence of the need for an acknowledgement by the Church of such liberty in John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign. During it, Kennedy encountered objections pointing at long-standing Catholic doctrine opposing church-state separation. Protestant critics claimed that a Catholic could not be president, supposedly because any Catholic was required to obey the orders of bishops and the pope, and was even bound by doctrine to suppress all non-Catholic expressions of faith. (In such suppositions, one sees more than a hint of the anti-Catholicism which had dominated Protestantism throughout American history, such as John Adams' previously-mentioned Puritanical view of all Catholics as reduced

by their Church to "sordid ignorance and staring timidity.") This object lesson spurred the American bishops who came to the Council to press for an official Church edict reconciling Catholicism with a religiously pluralistic society.[24]

Thus, the early 1960s were a time of transition in American Catholicism. The Second Vatican Council served as the capstone of trends which had begun in the First World War. Longtime currents for change *ad intra* – liturgical reform, Catholic Action, greater democratic representation of the laity – were coming to fruition.

Simultaneously, the Church *ad extra* was the recipient of an interest, respect, and even popularity from traditionally Protestant America which now reached its pinnacle. The Council was a major action of unparalleled significance which contradicted the previous image of the Catholic Church as rigid, antique, and obsessed with opposing progress and defending its *status quo*. Instead of slavish adherence to the medieval theories and practices of the past, the Catholic Church was not merely acquiescing to unavoidable change, but was taking the lead in openly embracing the modern world. This demonstrated, particularly to the pleasure of the younger, more progressive and mobile postwar generation, that not only was Catholicism now *allowed* a place in the American mainstream as an equal, it was indeed truly *worthy* of having one.

Moreover, the Second Vatican Council was simultaneously the generator and recipient of an unparalleled degree of respectful press coverage, which both greatly increased American awareness of the inner workings of the Church, and presented an image of the Church as modern

and progressive.[25] Unsurprisingly (particularly given the popularity of John XXIII), the Council was seized upon eagerly by the news media:

> Before the Council opened it sparked hopes and fears, curiosity and speculation. During the four years it was in session, it held television audiences rapt with its elegant, elaborate, colorful, and magnificently choreographed public ceremonies, while the unexpected drama of its debates generated front-page news on an almost weekly basis…The mere spectacle of Vatican II made it newsworthy even apart from anything else that happened. The extraordinary popularity of Pope John XXIII among Catholics and non-Catholics alike excited interest in "Pope John's Council."[26]

Given the tremendous interest and enthusiasm for Catholicism sparked first by the jovial Pope John XXIII, then by the handsome, witty, and urbane first Catholic President John F. Kennedy, and finally by a gathering of bishops from all across the world, united in a spirit of "joy and hope" and with the express purpose of "opening the Church to the world," what could be more natural than that the entertainment industry – always keen to mirror and exploit popular fads – would see in the widespread popularity of Catholicism an opportunity for a new television series? And what else could be more natural than that television – already in 1962 noted for plundering other media such as movies, radio programs, and comic strips and books for characters and concepts on which to base new programs[*] -- would turn to one of the best-remembered and most beloved representations of Catholicism as the basis for a Catholic-themed television show? Thus it was that *Going My Way* came to television.

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[*] A complete list of television programming derived from other media would fill pages; but a brief listing of merely a few such "borrowings" would include: from movies – *The Front Page; Lassie; Life with Father; The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin; Topper; Casablanca* (twice); *How to Marry a Millionaire; Naked City; The Third Man; Dr. Kildare; Mr. Smith Goes to Washington;* and *Zorro*; from radio – *Amos 'n' Andy; Abbott and Costello; The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet; Boston Blackie; The Cisco Kid; The Lone Ranger; The Green Hornet; Sergeant Preston of the Yukon; Death Valley Days; Dragnet; Father Knows Best; Gunsmoke; Mr. and Mrs. North*, and *Our Miss Brooks*; from comics – *Dick Tracy; Flash Gordon; Buck Rogers; The Adventures of Superman*; *Batman;* and *Wonder Woman*, among many others. For an exhaustive (though still partial) listing of such shows, see Brooks, Tim, and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows 1946-Present* (Ballantine, 2007), 1710-1719.

The producer of the TV series was Joe Connelly, who with his writing partner Bob Mosher had long been a presence in radio and television.[27] While a copywriter for the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, Connelly met Mosher, and the two formed a writing and production partnership which was to endure for nearly three decades. The duo's first collaboration was the revamping of the long-running radio comedy *Amos 'n' Andy*. Originating in 1928, the program featured blackface performers Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll in serialized, 15-minute daily humorous skits about a pair of impoverished African-Americans. In short order, *Amos 'n' Andy* became by far the most dominant comedy of radio's earliest days; but by 1943, the one-time blockbuster series was suffering from low ratings, a victim of the more polished and sophisticated style of comedy exemplified by Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and others. Connelly and Mosher were tapped to retool *Amos 'n' Andy* into a traditional half-hour weekly situation comedy. As a result of Connelly and Mosher's changes, *Amos 'n' Andy* moved from 60th place in the ratings into the low twenties.[28] So successful were Connelly and Mosher that, when *Amos 'n' Andy* was brought to television in 1950, a script by the duo was used for the series' pilot film.[29] In addition to their work on other radio comedies, the pair continued writing for the *Amos 'n' Andy* TV series during its two-year run, and for the radio program until it ended in 1955.

Despite the resentment and acrimony the television series quickly generated in the African-American community,[30] their work on *Amos 'n' Andy* served as Connelly and Mosher's *entrée* into television. After a disastrous attempt at producing a situation comedy about a highbrow Ivy League professor, *Meet Mr. McNutley* – a failure which Connelly later stated

taught the duo to stick to writing "things we know about"[31] – Connelly and Mosher scored their greatest career success by creating the quintessential 1950s family situation comedy, *Leave It To Beaver*.

*Beaver* revealed several of the writing and production traits which would also dominate the television version of *Going My Way*. The first was an emphasis less on uproarious, laugh-line comedy than on humor arising naturally from incongruous circumstances or character interaction, what one media scholar has called Connelly and Mosher's "reliance on more placid, observational humor."[32] Another was the use of stories which resulted largely from the setting; just as on *Beaver* boyish pranks or curiosity, classroom or domestic misunderstandings, or a simple walk home from school would set the plot in motion, so too in *Going My Way* would events typical of (or at least, not wildly inconsistent with) urban parish life drive the episodes. Again, there was in Connelly and Mosher's writing and production methods a gentle style which today would be called "family-friendly." One writer states that Connelly and Mosher only allowed the juvenile actors on *Leave It To Beaver* to make one publicity jaunt to New York annually, requiring most reporters to interview them on the set and during regular working hours;[33] and actor Tony Dow (who played "Beaver's" older brother, Wally) recalled that "there were drugs and alcohol when we grew up, but we had this tremendous core of support, first from our families, but also from the writers and others who worked on the show...there was this crewman who said 'dammit' or something once. We never saw him again." Dow credited the on-set atmosphere established by Connelly and Mosher with keeping him and *Beaver*'s other

juvenile actors[*] from the misfortune and bad decisions that befell (and would befall) many other child TV stars.[34] This same "niceness" dominated – and, in many ways, doomed – *Going My Way*.

Finally, there was Connelly and Mosher's skill at writing "double acts," comic situations deriving from a relationship between two partners, usually of the same gender, ethnic origin, and profession, but possessing greatly different personalities which provide humor as they play off one another. The most obvious example of Connelly and Mosher's talent for this style of comedy was their twelve-year stint on *Amos 'n' Andy*; but it was also visible in their writing of "double acts" like Phil Harris and Frankie Remley on *The Phil Harris/Alice Faye Show*; Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy on their radio program; the Beaver and Wally, Wally and Eddie Haskell, and various other character combinations on *Leave It To Beaver*; the title characters on Connelly and Mosher's short-lived TV comedy *Ichabod and Me*; and Grandpa and Herman on *The Munsters*, another Connelly/Mosher creation. Given the relationship between Bing Crosby's Father O'Malley and Barry Fitzgerald's Father Fitzgibbon in the original film *Going My Way*, such skill was put to natural use in the TV program.

Unique among the programs originated during the years of the duo's partnership, *Going My Way* was credited to Joe Connelly alone. Connelly was listed as both producer and head writer in the program's credits, with Mosher's name nowhere in evidence. Though such is speculative, it seems likely that his creation of and work on the series was a result of Connelly's

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[*] Even Ken Osmond. The actor who played the unctuous, two-faced "creep" Eddie Haskell was long pursued by rumors that he grew up to become "shock rock" singer Alice Cooper and/or pornographic film star John Holmes, a.k.a. "Johnny Wadd." However, like the rumor that Jerry Mathers, who played "Beaver" Cleaver, died in Vietnam, this is merely an urban legend. In fact, in adulthood Osmond was a motorcycle patrolman with the Los Angeles Police Department.

own background in urban Irish Catholicism. Connelly was born in New York City in 1917, and had seven children. In 1956, the Connelly/Mosher duo was nominated for an Academy Award for their script for the film *The Private War of Major Benson* – a film about a tough career Army officer who takes over a Catholic boys' school and clashes with the nuns running it.[35] The basis for the film was an incident witnessed by Connelly as he took his son to parochial school.[36] Equally likely is that Connelly's fondness for the Bing Crosby movie, shared by millions of Catholics; his own memories of growing up in an Irish Catholic parish in inner-city New York; and the deep pride in the public recognition of and interest in the long-discriminated against Catholic religion characterizing the early 1960s, were all responsible for Connelly's launch of TV's *Going My Way*. It is also likely that the enthusiasm spreading among Catholic laity immediately before and during the Council played a part in Connelly's decision to create the show; certainly, it would have aided him in selling advertisers and television networks on the concept of a prime-time program set in a rectory and featuring two Catholic priests as leads. Again, this is speculation; but it is difficult to imagine that the foregoing did *not* play a part in Connelly's creation and writing of *Going My Way* -- particularly given the near-total absence of his career partner from the program. Mosher contributed the script for only one of the program's 30 episodes, and played no part in the show's production.

As noted above, in 1962 Catholicism was enjoying tremendous popularity. Priests had already been blessed with heroic status by motion pictures; but to Protestant America, and even for many Catholics, the life of a priest was a thing of mystery. What went on inside the rectory? How did priests really live, act, and think? *Going My Way* offered an unparalleled opportunity to

take viewers inside what was previously a mysterious world, and simultaneously to humanize these priests. Given the ethos of the time, and of Joe Connelly personally, the television program presented an opportunity to answer these questions in a positive and gentle manner.

*Going My Way* premiered on perennial third-place network ABC at 8:30 p.m. (Eastern), October 3rd, 1962 – one week before the Second Vatican Council opened. The TV show differed in some details from the movie on which it was based; most notably, while the movie version of *Going My Way* ended with Father O'Malley departing St. Dominic's for a new assignment (which he was shown taking up in the sequel film *The Bells of St. Mary's*), the TV series finds him still firmly in place as Father Fitzgibbon's curate. And the program, rather than focusing solely on the relationship between the elderly Fitzgibbon and the youthful O'Malley, also introduced other characters, and showed the two priests helping a wide variety of individuals cope with the problems of their lives.

The television version of *Going My Way* starred Gene Kelly in the role of Father Charles Francis "Chuck" O'Malley, played by Bing Crosby in the movie. Celebrated for his dancing and choreography skills in such movies as *On the Town* (1949), *An American in Paris* (1951), and, most famously, *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), for which he won an Academy Award for his contribution to film musicals, Kelly was also an accomplished singer, director, producer, and actor, and in earlier years had starred in a number of B-movies in straight dramatic roles. Despite being an occasional guest star on TV variety programs and making several dance-focused specials for television, *Going My Way* was Kelly's only role in a continuing TV series, a

job he accepted largely because it demanded little travel and allowed him to remain in Hollywood during his wife's pregnancy with their first child.[37]

Surprisingly, Kelly's musical and dancing talents received virtually no showcase on *Going My Way*. During an Irish-themed party for Father Fitzgibbon in the first episode,[38] Kelly's Father O'Malley sings "Ballymora Is Calling Me Home" and dances an Irish jig. (A cynical observer might suspect that *Going My Way* offered these token elements in its first episode in order to satisfy the interest of viewers who assumed the TV show would be similar to the beloved film.) This brief scene represented the totality of Kelly's exhibition of his musical and terpsichorean talents on the program. On rare occasions in subsequent episodes, O'Malley briefly sings a snatch of song, but such scenes are hardly musical interludes. They are merely naturalistic moments in which the priest -- just as any person might – sings, hums, or whistles a tune while going about his business. The lack of song and dance was a major disappointment both to fans of Gene Kelly and those of the movie *Going My Way*; some contemporary viewers remember that the absence of such elements in subsequent episodes heavily influenced their decision to stop watching.[39]

In a contemporaneous interview, Kelly stated that he prepared for the role of Father O'Malley by remembering "the young parish priests who had such an influence on us when we were kids in Pittsburgh. Father Tynan for example – a handsome, tough, well-educated fellow, virile and energetic, who played third base like crazy and had a way with kids, tough or otherwise."[40] Kelly recalled that "the priests, who were all Irish, and the nuns were a pretty tough

bunch; they had to be with all the types they had to handle; and if they said you were to sing in the choir, you sang, or else you'd get a kick up the arse."[41]

This background informed the interpretation which Kelly brought to the role of Father O'Malley. Kelly's O'Malley differs in substantial and often significant ways from that of Bing Crosby. While still younger than his superior, if not exactly youthful, and while possessing an optimistic and cheerful demeanor, Kelly's O'Malley also possesses far more *gravitas*, and comes across as much more grounded and serious, than did Crosby. In part, this is explained by the differing nature of the presentation; while Crosby's O'Malley does deal with major problems at the parish and with the elderly, cantankerous Father Fitzgibbon, the movie was largely a showcase for Crosby's talents as a singer and light comedian. But it is unlikely that such an airy confection could have been sustained in a weekly television series. Two hours of a priest crooning away people's troubles is one thing; 26 weeks of it is quite another.

Appropriately, then, Kelly's Father O'Malley is a more serious character than was Crosby's -- less whimsical, if just as compassionate, and even more dedicated to his job as a priest. The movie often leads the viewer to wonder why this light-hearted musician chose to enter the priesthood. (The closest Crosby's O'Malley ever comes to discussing his vocation is the line, "I like making people happy" -- an explanation which could just as easily apply to a comedian, a male prostitute, or a Good Humor man.) In the same part, Kelly comes across as more serious about his vocation. Though usually easygoing in his relations with others, Kelly's O'Malley is a dedicated individual committed to actually doing the hard work of fulfilling a

pastoral role. And while Bing Crosby's O'Malley "helped people" by tickling the ivories and crooning "buh boo buh boo," Kelly's O'Malley is seen counseling married or soon-to-be married couples, working with troubled teens at the parish school and a local community center, and assisting people in all kinds of straits, from financial and employment problems to family crises.

Over the course of the series, more facts emerge about Father O'Malley's background, which serve to humanize him to the viewer. Reminiscing about his family, O'Malley describes his parents thusly:

> My mother was a fine, warm-hearted woman. She ran the house. My father, why, he was a dreamer – an Irish dreamer. Oh, he used to tell us great stories of the guns he'd buy us, and the fishing trips we'd take, the new car, the house we'd have. He was great fun. But after a while, my brothers and sisters started to wish he wouldn't tell us those things anymore. Couldn't stand being disappointed forever…People laughed and they smiled. People cried, too.[42]

Though his reasons choosing a career in the priesthood are not discussed in detail, in various episodes the viewer learns that O'Malley came from a large, fractious, but devout family – "My father used to say if we aren't praying, we're fighting;"[43] that he knows how to dance; and that he had unspecified "problems" as a teenager, but "then I went to the seminary at age 20 and forgot about my problems."[44] However, in a subsequent episode, O'Malley counsels an alcoholic who excuses his addiction by stating that, in his youth, he was betrayed by another. O'Malley tells the man that he also was betrayed by someone when he was 22, and subsequently

"beat the tar out of him." A human, even manly, response – but one hardly likely to have occurred in a seminary![45*]

Interest in physical prowess at sports of all kinds, and even combat, were aspects of Kelly's own personality -- "I felt that I always had to prove myself, and the best way to do this was with my fists. I wasn't going to be pushed around by anyone"[46] – and these aspects were exacerbated by his fame as a terpsichorean. Throughout his career, Kelly was at pains to emphasize that there was nothing effete or "sissy" about being a dancer. Kelly's first work for television was an Emmy-nominated special titled "Dancing: A Man's Game" for a 1958 episode of NBC's educational arts series *Omnibus*, in which he assembled a group of America's most famous athletes, including baseball star Mickey Mantle and boxer Sugar Ray Robinson, and interpreted their movements in choreography.[47] It is likely these traits informed both Kelly's portrayal and the scripting of the character of Father O'Malley.

A physically active and "manly" aspect to O'Malley's character is revealed in various episodes; in addition to coaching the parish school's basketball team (even organizing an inter-denominational tournament for local churches),[48] the viewer learns that Father O'Malley plays baseball,[49] golf,[50] handball,[51] and holds a white belt in judo (which he has learned from

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[*] This discrepancy can most easily be explained by the fact that, particularly at this point in the history of entertainment, nearly all television programs consisted of self-contained episodes created by many different writers. Continuing storylines were rare, and consistency from one episode to another was not a concern – TV episodes were considered ephemera, to be shown once, then forgotten. Only with the rise of the syndication market, the subsequent large fan bases for various television series, and the existence of home video recording and playback technology which made possible repeated viewing and careful analysis of individual episodes in the context of a program as a whole, did the perception of a need for tight "continuity" within TV series arise. As scholar Paul Cantor notes in his *Gilligan Unbound: Pop Culture in the Age of Globalization* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), "It is difficult enough to maintain the aesthetic coherence of individual episodes on television with all the different people having a say in the final product. It is almost impossible to maintain strict continuity from one episode to another." (xxxvi)

Maryknoll Father Yamamoto).[52] This portrayal was greatly aided by Gene Kelly's physical appearance, which is more rugged than Bing Crosby's. Frequent close-ups reveal a small scar on Father O'Malley's cheek (an actual scar received by Gene Kelly in a childhood accident; throughout his screen career, Kelly was adamant that the scar not be concealed, believing it made him a "regular guy" in the eyes of the audience).[53]

The most intriguing clue to Father O'Malley's past life and character occurs when a young girl at the parish school states, "The boys in school say you're real tough. Used to be a prizefighter and everything."[54] This tantalizing hint is never followed up upon, with O'Malley making the ambiguously noncommittal reply, "No wonder I have so many friends in the fifth grade," leaving the viewer to decide whether the statement is true, or merely a schoolyard rumor.

While the veracity of this statement about Father O'Malley's background goes unconfirmed, a key aspect of Kelly's portrayal of the priest is an implicit confidence in his own physical prowess. More than once in the course of the series, Father O'Malley resorts to physical means to achieve his ends, stopping just short of violence. On one occasion, confronted with a snobbish executive secretary who keeps him waiting for an appointment, the frustrated cleric seizes the clerk by the lapels and physically lifts him aside;[55] on another, when abducted by a mob boss' henchmen, O'Malley tells one thug who speaks to him rudely, "Knock it off. You're talking to a priest, not a cellmate." Later in the same episode, the mob boss himself grabs O'Malley's shoulder, prompting a glare and the response, "Don't make me forget I'm a priest,"

clearly implying that the cleric is fully able (and willing) to use physical means to defend his dignity if necessary.[56]

Gene Kelly's acting is fascinating at such moments; his eyes take on a steely glint, leaving the viewer with no doubt that Father O'Malley could make good on his threat. Not infrequently throughout the series, when the priest is confronted with rudeness or backtalk, the viewer sees a flash of instinctive anger in O'Malley's eyes; after a second, the priest blinks and his eyes become gentler, and he responds softly. Throughout *Going My Way*, there is more than a hint in Kelly's O'Malley of a tough, passionate character held under control by a disciplined will. While Crosby's O'Malley accomplishes the seemingly impossible task of getting juvenile delinquents to sing "Ave Maria" in a church choir, judging from what is seen in the movie he apparently does so by bribing the youngsters with tickets to ball games. By contrast, Kelly's O'Malley isn't averse to laying down the law: he throws an insolent star player off the parish school's basketball team for talking back to him,[57] confronts an arrogant, bullying youth suspected of theft and faces down the youth's father, a former pro boxer,[58] and forces a group of Catholic boys to apologize and make restitution when they harass an atheist doctor living near St. Dominic's and vandalize his office.[59]

Interestingly, while the Father O'Malley of TV's *Going My Way* is a throwback to an older media stereotype of Catholic priests, it is not the movie version of *Going My Way* to which the TV version of O'Malley conforms, but rather the Depression-era stereotype of the "two-fisted, fighting priest" popularized by movies of that era. These changes from Bing Crosby's

interpretation allowed the character of TV's Father O'Malley to join the pantheon of other human yet heroic screen priests. In essence, Gene Kelly's Father O'Malley is less a straightforward continuation of the role as initiated by Bing Crosby, than it is a synthesis of the various heroic priests seen in prior decades of cinema: Pat O'Brien's Father Connolly from *Angels With Dirty Faces*, Spencer Tracy's Father Flanagan from *Boys Town*, and Karl Malden's Father Barry from *On the Waterfront*. However, in keeping with the more "family-friendly" version of the "heroic," "manly" priest as a "man of piety" discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to note that, although Kelly's O'Malley affects a tough, forceful demeanor at times, and makes it clear to other characters and the viewer that he *could* defend himself with his fists, nowhere in the course of the series does he actually do so. Though implicitly tempted on occasion, TV's Father O'Malley always stops short of actual violence, unlike the fisticuff-happy clergy of 1930s film. Instead, though clearly rugged and physically capable, on television Father O'Malley typically achieves his goal through patience, humor, and moral suasion.

Yet this was only part of the new characterization; combined with other aspects, it resulted in Gene Kelly's Father O'Malley becoming different from, and richer than, Bing Crosby's in terms of character and temperament. It also served to allow Kelly to make the role his own, just as any actor taking over a part originated by another inevitably does. (For example, over the course of TV's *M*A*S*H*, Alan Alda's Hawkeye Pierce became a very different character than that played by Donald Sutherland in the movie.) Unlike Bing Crosby's perpetually light-hearted crooner, Gene Kelly's portrayal presents a portrait of a more *human* priest. Gene Kelly's Father O'Malley is by nature a passionate and impulsive man who, while generally

positive and optimistic, must also consciously choose to keep a tight rein on his temper and instinctive reactions. Though constantly tested by Father Fitzgibbon's eccentric behavior, Kelly's O'Malley always treats his superior respectfully, though often responding to some remark either with an implied (but unseen) roll of his eyes, or a wry remark which the older man doesn't understand.

With regard to his experience as a priest, indications are that Father O'Malley is a rising star in the Church, a relatively young man climbing the Catholic clerical career ladder with alacrity. Various episodes state that in addition to his time in the seminary, O'Malley spent three years in Rome,[60] and worked at the diocesan chancery for two years, serving on both the building[61] and marriage[62] boards. O'Malley also serves on a local community board concerned with juvenile delinquency -- an endeavor in which he cooperates with a local Protestant minister, the Reverend Doctor Thornton, and with the Jewish Rabbi Adler.[63] Among O'Malley's other accomplishments are a familiarity with authors such as Teilhard de Chardin, Santayana, Dostoyevsky, and Schweitzer,[64] some skill at singing and playing the piano,[65] and the writing and presentation of a paper titled, "Dance: Its Importance in the Rhythmic Development of the Child" to a conference of the state educational association.[66]

By the time the series begins, Father O'Malley has become well-known in his neighborhood, and apparently throughout New York City, though for reasons that remain unspecified. A political party chairman refers to him as a "young firebrand,"[67] and a construction contractor tells his assistant, "O'Malley was sent here from the chancery. He's their

troubleshooter. He calls the shots and lets Father Fitz think he‘s running things," though O'Malley himself denies this is the case, coldly telling the contractor that "Father Fitz is the pastor here."[68] Father O'Malley is also apparently held in high esteem by the members of the Catholic hierarchy: after a meeting with his superior, Father Fitzgibbon reports that "the bishop[*] had some very nice things to say about you. Three times he mentioned how lucky I was to have you here at St. Dominic's."[69]

While the youthful priest is of strong and forthright character and handles various challenges ably, unlike the movie's omnicompetent Father O'Malley, the TV version occasionally demonstrates his inexperience. When Father Fitzgibbon tasks O'Malley with counseling a mismatched middle-aged bachelor and spinster who want to marry, the younger priest ruefully admits that "at the chancery marriage seemed to be a lot of reports and figures. Working with people in a parish is a lot different;"[70] and when a young boy's beloved dog dies, the grief-stricken boy asks why a mass cannot be said in the pet's memory. O'Malley pores over theological texts, but finds no words that would comfort the child. Almost plaintively, O'Malley turns to his older colleague and asks, "What do you tell him, Father?" When the boy comes to

[*] References to members of the Catholic hierarchy in *Going My Way* were so shrouded in ambiguity that it is a virtual certainty that the program's writers were engaging in deliberate obfuscation. Cardinal Francis Spellman was the Archbishop of New York from 1939 until his death in 1967. Despite the fact that *Going My Way* is explicitly set in New York, Spellman was never mentioned by name throughout the entire series – though a huge portrait of the prelate dominates the program's principal set, the rectory's office/study, and is seen in every episode. Only twice in the entire series were references made to "the Cardinal," and even then, Spellman's name was not used. Interestingly, given Spellman's well-known tendencies toward politicking and his emphasis on matters of finance, both such references in the program were made by or about wealthy individuals who had donated substantial sums to the Church and then demanded favors in return. (For an in-depth, if unflattering, discussion of Spellman's proclivity for exchanging favors for money, see John Cooney, *The American Pope: The Life and Times of Francis Cardinal Spellman* (Times Books, 1984).) Instead, the diocesan Father Fitzgibbon refers to a nameless bishop as his superior. Presumably, then, the prelate to whom Father Fitzgibbon reports, and who has jurisdiction over the area in which St. Dominic's is placed, is an auxiliary bishop. In 1962, Spellman had no fewer than nine auxiliaries, but it does not appear that the unnamed and unseen bishop of *Going My Way* was intended to represent any one of them in particular.

the rectory, the elderly Father Fitzgibbon patiently explains the nature of the eternal soul in a comforting, kindly way, as Father O'Malley listens and learns.[71]

While such sincere and gentle moments humanized both priests, unfortunately such were all too rare throughout the series as a whole. Indeed, in its treatment of O'Malley's superior and alleged mentor Father Fitzgibbon, *Going My Way* varied tremendously, lurching from serious moments, to strained attempts at whimsy, to lowbrow humor which barely stopped short of open mockery.

As with Father O'Malley, the television program *Going My Way* offered a different portrayal of the elderly Father Fitzgibbon than the film. Though he chooses to use a tactful, respectful, and gentle approach, it is clear to viewers of the film that Father O'Malley has been sent to St. Dominic's to relieve Father Fitzgibbon of his pastorate, due to falling collections, rising expenses, and other problems in the parish. Fitzgibbon is clearly past the age of retirement, but stubbornly refuses to step aside for a younger man and relinquish control of the parish and church he helped to build. With Fitzgibbon's age has come incompetence and, it is implied, borderline senility; in one of the film's best-remembered scenes, Father O'Malley has to tuck the old man into bed like a helpless invalid. Fitzgibbon is easily befuddled and taken advantage of by neighborhood hoodlums and others; in one scene, the elderly cleric catches a young hood in the very act of fleeing a grocer with a stolen turkey; when the boy gives the turkey to Fitzgibbon as an "offering," the priest releases him, beaming all the while at what a "nice boy" the youthful thug is. The movie's Fitzgibbon is shown to be vain, arrogant, demanding, crotchety, prissy, and

weak, easily taken in by superficial appearances, and obsessed with following trivial rules but ignoring (or not even noticing) genuine problems. It is a testament to the abilities of beloved character actor Barry Fitzgerald that the movie's Father Fitzgibbon emerges as even slightly sympathetic. (Indeed, so great was Fitzgerald's skill in the role that he was nominated for Oscars as both Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor, winning the latter.)

While the television program draws on the same basic outline for its version of Father Fitzgibbon, the character was made somewhat more substantial. The movie's characterization of Fitzgibbon as a whiny, pathetic fool, easily taken in by the simplest of ruses and seemingly totally incapable of performing the most basic functions around his parish, and combining the worst features of a prissy old maid with the cantankerous behavior of an embittered grouch, had to be toned down for a part in a continuing series. If viewers were to see the character every week in the role of a pastor of a major inner-city parish, it was clear he would have to be portrayed as at least marginally capable.

Father John Patrick Fitzgibbon[72], widely known throughout his parish by the nickname "Father Fitz," was born and raised in Ballymore, County Wexford, Ireland[73], where he owned a dog[74] as a boy and was a middleweight wrestling champion in school[75]. While he retains fond memories of and a sentimental attachment to Ireland and an Irish brogue, he loves the U.S.A., and even sacrifices an opportunity to return to "the auld sod" for a visit in order to convince an embittered immigrant of the value of life in America.[76] He takes great pride in his 40-odd years as a priest,[77] and often lords his superior experience over the younger O'Malley. Father

Fitzgibbon is also apparently well-respected (or at least, well-connected) among the Church's hierarchy: he and his unnamed bishop "go all the way back to Ireland together;"[78] he was a seminary classmate of another bishop, this one located in Boston, who invites him to a jubilee celebration;[79] and the nationally famous "Vicar of Video," Bishop George Cagle, was once Father Fitzgibbon's curate -- a fact of which Fitzgibbon is tremendously proud. This fact simultaneously demonstrates Father Fitzgibbon's competence as a mentor, and the favor with which Father O'Malley is viewed; with such a pedigree, being assigned as Fitzgibbon's assistant is an honor, and potentially another step up the New York Church's career ladder for O'Malley. Fitzgibbon himself hints as much when he tells the younger priest, "I'm not saying St. Dominic's is the cradle of the great; but Cagle had your job, and you never know..."[80]

With Barry Fitzgerald having died the year before *Going My Way* came to television, the part of Father Fitzgibbon was played by character actor Leo G. Carroll. Himself a British Catholic (in fact, named by his parents after Pope Leo XIII)[81], Carroll was a longtime player on stage and screen, appearing in more of Alfred Hitchcock's movies than any other actor, including *Strangers on a Train* and *North by Northwest*. When selected to play Father Fitzgibbon, Carroll was best known to American audiences as Cosmo Topper in the eponymous 1953 series about a strait-laced businessman haunted by a pair of light-hearted ghosts. The year after *Going My Way*, Carroll would go on to the part for which he is most remembered today, that of Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin's boss, the avuncular spymaster Alexander Waverly on the espionage series *The Man from UNCLE*.

In his third-billed role on *Going My Way*, Carroll's portrayal of Father Fitzgibbon varies with the individual episode: sometimes the cleric is fairly capable, if crotchety; at other times, he is portrayed as naïve and of only borderline competence. Throughout the series, Father Fitzgibbon's major role was that of comic relief, contrasting with the more serious O'Malley. His most frequent trait is that of giving self-serving, contradictory advice: typically, Father O'Malley suggests a course of action and Fitzgibbon discourages it, stating that it will never work; when O'Malley follows his plan anyway and succeeds, Father Fitzgibbon invariably reacts by saying, "That was a good idea. I'm glad I thought of it." Another source of "humor" is Fitzgibbon's recurring unfamiliarity with modern trends and slang – substituting "going monkey" for "going ape," for example, or disparaging a teenager's interest in 1960s rock music with, "You youngsters and your Rudy Vallee!" The elderly priest's incompatibility with modern life is underlined by his mode of dress; while the younger Father O'Malley wears a clerical collar with a business suit, Father Fitzgibbon is invariably clad in a cassock and biretta, even when away from parish premises.

Occasionally, Father Fitzgibbon role as comic relief undermines the integrity of the character and the program as a whole. For example, in one episode[82] another character has to talk for nearly five minutes to get Fitzgibbon to grasp the idea that there exist magazines containing photographs of naked women. While such elliptical dialogue could perhaps be put down to the previously-mentioned delicacy and desire for decency for which Connelly and Mosher were noted, such could have been achieved without sabotaging a lead character's credibility. That an inner-city pastor with decades of experience hearing confessions and running a high school filled

with adolescent boys would be completely unaware of the existence of pornography strains credulity past the breaking point.

Many episodes tended to portray the elderly cleric as a naive bumbler scarcely capable of even speaking malaprop-free English. Only rarely does Father Fitzgibbon's lengthy pastoral experience allow him to solve a problem without Father O'Malley's help. Thus, while not as exaggerated as that of the movie, the TV's portrayal of "Father Fitz" all too often vacillated between whimsy, comedy, and idiocy.

Although Fathers O'Malley and Fitzgibbon were the key characters in *Going My Way*, there were a number of others. The most notable of these was Tom Colwell, the director of the West Side Community Center, where he works with teens as a sports coach and youth counselor. The Colwell character served various purposes in the structure of the program: As a secular layman, Colwell provided a means of introducing characters who would not otherwise have been involved with Catholic clergy. His position at the youth center served as a springboard for various plots. He provided a token ecumenical presence in a program dominated by Catholic characters and imagery, and served a sounding board for Father O'Malley (whom Colwell called "Chuck"), someone of O'Malley's own age, education, and professional status with whom he could exchange ideas. It also seems likely that Colwell existed to provide the program with a potential for romantic storylines which would have been unthinkable involving a Catholic priest in 1962. (In the event, Colwell's romantic life, if any, was never referenced or shown.) Finally, Colwell spelled the priestly characters and provided the program with a change of pace -- and

actors Gene Kelly and Leo G. Carroll an opportunity for time off. Under the grueling schedule maintained in television production in the early 1960s, the only way for a lead actor to have time away from work was for the program to air an episode in which the lead was not present. Several episodes of *Going My Way* focus on Colwell, with the priest characters glimpsed only in passing or absent entirely.[83]

Colwell was played by actor Dick York, soon to be immortalized as the magical Samantha Stevens' husband Darrin on *Bewitched*. York actually received second billing in the opening credits of *Going My Way*, above Leo G. Carroll. It is tempting to speculate that it was York's work on *Going My Way* which garnered the attention of ABC's executives and led to his casting on *Bewitched* less than a year later; though his character is generally even-tempered, on several occasions during *Going My Way*, York displays the "slow burn," high-pitched yell, and exasperated explosion of temper which would epitomize his character on *Bewitched*.

The show's final continuing character was that of the rectory housekeeper, Mrs. Featherstone. While the series at least tried to present a somewhat nuanced portrayal of its priestly leads, Mrs. Featherstone was pure caricature: a nosy, prejudiced, and ignorant gossip given to Celtic exclamations such as "Saints presarrve us!" When Tom Colwell takes Father O'Malley for a spin in his new convertible, Mrs. Featherstone huffs, "When I was a young girl in Ireland, priests didn't run around in station wagons with Protestants for chauffeurs!" After Father Fitzgibbon placidly remarks that Colwell is "a fine lad," the housekeeper grunts, "He's still a Protestant."[84] In other episodes, Mrs. Featherstone mentions saying a prayer to St. Anthony;

when Father O'Malley asks whether she has lost something, she replies, "No, but I never know when I'm going to, so I say a few prayers anyway. It's like money in the bank, a line of credit as you go along," a strain of devotionalism which renders the priest speechless in amazement.[85] And when she discovers the new parish sexton reading a novel by Dostoyevsky, Mrs. Featherstone immediately suspects him of being an undercover Communist agitator who is plotting to burn down the church.[86] Mrs. Featherstone was played by Nydia Westman, an actress with a long but undistinguished career of bit parts. Westman's only other notable role was as an elderly busybody in the Don Knotts vehicle *The Ghost and Mr. Chicken*.

Other recurring minor characters include Tom Colwell's pastor, the Reverend Doctor Frank Thornton, a Protestant clergyman of unspecified denomination who collaborates with Father O'Malley on various ecumenical boards and projects; Rabbi Adler, a Jewish clergyman who serves a similar function; police lieutenant Joe Harris, who often calls on the fathers for assistance in cases in which local Catholics are involved in petty incidents not rising to the level of serious crimes; and Sister Mary Mathew, the principal of the parish school. Though to the viewer the sister appears kind and gentle, Father O'Malley tells her, presumably with tongue in cheek, "The boys in the fifth grade say you've got a wicked temper and a mean right hook."[87]

The program's primary setting for much of its action is St. Dominic's parish rectory. This set was well-designed to reflect the reality of a major inner-city parish physical plant as constructed in the late 19th or early 20th century. The architecture is Gothic, with vaulted ceilings and heavy wooden beams edged with filigree. Seen most often was the rectory's study/parish

office, containing a large desk, several comfortable chairs, walls lined with bookcases, and a fireplace with a huge portrait of Cardinal Spellman over the mantel. Also in the room is a painting of the Virgin Mary in her aspect as Queen of Heaven. In the hallway outside, connecting to the front door, is a portrait of Pius XII, while the rectory's dining room holds a portrait of John XXIII. Also seen frequently is a small, enclosed, garden-like courtyard dominated by a fountain, in which Father Fitz pursues his hobby of tending roses and Father O'Malley meditates. A surprising element is added when Father Fitz states that the rectory's basement contains a pool table![88]

In some respects, St. Dominic's is shown to be a fairly realistic inner-city parish in the pre-Conciliar era. No fewer than eight masses are said daily (at 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, and 11:00 a.m., 12:15 p.m., and 5:30 p.m. "for those who sleep late.")[89] A briefly-glimpsed parish bulletin reveals that St. Dominic's offers a variety of Catholic spiritual practices, such as Benediction on Wednesday nights, First Friday observances, Stations of the Cross at a nearby Catholic cemetery on Sunday afternoon, and Sunday evening devotions.[90] The parish also has a parochial school, which apparently covers all grades from first through twelfth;[91] the school's motto, appropriate given the parish's patron saint, is "Canis Vigilans Domini."[92] The school has a sizeable gymnasium capable of accommodating fair-sized crowds for basketball games;[93] but its floor has termites, which causes Father Fitzgibbon grief and concern lest the bishop discover the expense to which repairs will put the parish.[94] The school is staffed by an unspecified order of nuns, led by Sister Mary Mathew, who serve as teachers and administrators. Finally, there is the church itself, though the interior is only rarely shown. Given its setting in the inner city, the

church occasionally suffers from crime; in one episode, Father O'Malley groans, "Did they hit the poor box again?"[95]

In other ways, the fictional parish is not as typical. From the mid-19th century to the mid-20th, inner-city Catholic parishes were based around a particular ethnic group – to the point that a small urban neighborhood might contain as many as a dozen Catholic churches, each catering to a different language and ethnicity.[96] While the priests, housekeeper, and vast majority of parishioners shown on *Going My Way* are of Irish descent, also seen living nearby, attending the parish school, and interacting with the clergy (and therefore, implicitly members of St. Dominic's) are individuals of Spanish,[97] Italian,[98] Polish,[99] Russian,[100] and African-American[101] origin. And yet, the series does depict a real-life change accurately. While the elderly Father Fitzgibbon is Irish through and through, having been born and raised in Ireland, and even retaining his Irish brogue into old age, Father O'Malley, though of Irish extraction, is thoroughly Americanized. This reflects the reality of the era; as John McGreevy notes, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, "as pastors who had immigrated with their parishioners in the early part of the twentieth century – and whose sensibilities seemed strangely out of place in mid-century America – retired, their replacements, trained in American seminaries, quietly made the parish 'up to date.'"[102]

As was (and is) typical of the portrayal on television of clergy generally, the lead characters are never seen actually administering the sacraments. Though preparing sermons, celebrating mass, and such Catholic practices as Adoration and Benediction are occasionally

discussed by the fathers, they are never shown. Baptisms and confirmations are never even mentioned; and confession is referenced only as an explanation for the absence of one of the priests from a particular scene ("Father O'Malley's hearing confessions right now"). Five episodes involve weddings, though no part of the ceremony itself is ever seen.[103] Only in one episode is a Catholic sacrament given more than a passing mention; informed that an elderly woman is on her deathbed, Father O'Malley discusses administering Extreme Unction – though in the event, he finds that the woman is not dying but is simply depressed, and the sacrament is not performed.[104]

While sacraments and formal services are given short shrift, both church administrative matters and Catholic folkways are granted more attention. Father Fitzgibbon is frequently seen struggling with budgets, or worrying over reports required by the bishop. Fundraising and problems with the parish's physical plant are also recurring themes. But it is the priests' involvement in the lives of their parishioners, various other individuals, and neighborhood causes and concerns – essentially, "social work" – which forms the content of the majority of the series' episodes. This, too, is in the tradition of the presentation of Catholic clergy in entertainment; movies like *Angels With Dirty Faces, Boys Town,* and *On the Waterfront* (not to mention the original *Going My Way*) also focused on clergy's interface with the exterior world, rather than that of the interior worlds of the Church itself or of the spiritual. The reasons for such a decision on the part of the program's writers is twofold: firstly, just as the films were intended to appeal to a broad audience, not merely one of Catholics – and hence, avoided being too specifically Catholic, thus risking viewer alienation or incomprehension – even more so was television.

Unlike a movie which one had to choose to go to and pay to see, television was considered a "guest in the home." No network (particularly not a third-place one) would risk driving away viewers by too great an emphasis on specific religious doctrines or dogmas. And secondly, stories about the external world are far easier for writers to create, for viewers to understand, and for program producers to represent visually. Interior spiritual struggles with personal faith or sin are almost impossible to show; but stories dealing with romantic difficulties or crime are Hollywood's bread and butter.

Thus, the program lent itself to "human drama" stories, and essentially became a semi-anthology program largely concerned with the problems of that week's guest characters, little different from many other series of the era, from *Wagon Train* to *Dr. Kildare*. In the vast majority of episodes, the fact that the protagonists are *priests* makes little difference; what matters for the drama is that they become involved in the lives of others, whose stories can then be told. And while often the priests help the guest characters resolve their problems, occasionally they do not, with either the characters finding a way out of their difficulties themselves or through circumstance, or (rarely) the episode ending with the problem still unresolved.

Only a few episodes of *Going My Way* focus extensively on the characters of the priests themselves; and in only about half of the total episodes do the Fathers play a clearly decisive role in bringing about the resolution of the guest characters' problems. Interestingly, the three episodes in which a priest character is the clear central focus of the episode all are about the elderly Father Fitzgibbon, not the younger and more progressive Father O'Malley. Two episodes

are clearly intended to invoke nostalgia and whimsy in the viewer, heavily emphasizing Father Fitzgibbon's youth in Ireland and his references to an idealized "old country;"[105] the third is largely devoted to contrasting Father Fitzgibbon's bumbling with the younger Father O'Malley's superior abilities, in the clearest imitation of the original film.[106]

In keeping with Connelly's experiences writing *Leave It To Beaver*, many of the stories centered on guest characters were innocuous tales about "little" problems encountered by individuals: a working-class man who resents his more successful younger brother; a perpetual ne'er-do-well who wins the lottery; a man with a criminal past who wishes to reconcile with his estranged daughter; and an older couple suffering from what today would be called "empty nest syndrome" formed the basis for typical episodes.[107] In the cinematic tradition of *Boys Town*, several episodes also focused on reforming teenage boys teetering on the edge of a life of crime.[108] Only a few episodes dealt with larger issues confronting society – and by extension, the Church – in the early 1960s. It is these episodes, which offer insights into the portrayal of Catholic clergy, the institutional Church, and its reaction to the problems of the era, which will be explored in greater detail.[*]

"The Parish Car," though largely a comedic episode drawing its alleged humor from the incompetence of the elderly Father Fitzgibbon, inadvertently reveals much about the perception (and, presumably, to a large degree the reality) of urban society's attitudes toward the Catholic Church in the years just prior to the Second Vatican Council. The undermining of the older

[*] For a complete index of *Going My Way* episodes, including plot summaries, writers, and guest-stars, see Appendix 1.

Father Fitzgibbon commences immediately in the episode's "teaser" (a short portion of a program shown before the opening credits, meant to induce the audience to stay tuned). In it, a teenage boy has stolen a car in order to resell it to an unsuspecting victim. "I need to find someone who doesn't know much about cars and who trusts people...someone who will fall for a hard luck story," the teen says. His confederate instantly replies, "Father Fitzgibbon at St. Dominic's!"

The confederate's assessment is quickly borne out. Father Fitzgibbon is shown crashing his car into a fire hydrant while driving back from a visit in the country. As water fountains forth, a newspaper photographer snaps a picture of the befuddled cleric gaping at the gusher. Later, back at the parish, Father Fitzgibbon whimpers to O'Malley, "Ye don't by any chance know if the bishop takes the *Examiner*? It's a small picture. I doubt anyone will notice it." Immediately thereafter, Fitzgibbon receives a call from Monsignor Wells, the bishop's secretary, who orders him to report to the bishop's office the next day.

Alone with Father O'Malley, Mrs. Featherstone speculates, "The bishop might be thinking of putting Father Fitzgibbon out to pasture." The housekeeper proves an accurate prophet; the next day, after his visit with the prelate, Fitzgibbon tells O'Malley, "When he [the bishop] says something, there's a reason. Mostly, we talked about old friends. Monsignor Flynn in Yonkers retired last month. He's still around the parish, but his curate is running the whole show. He was a year behind me in the seminary."

Eager to salve his ego and prove his continued competence, Father Fitzgibbon proposes a wager to Father O'Malley: that he can buy a new car before O'Malley can sell the old one. When the younger priest wins the wager, Fitzgibbon complains about the price and grows disdainful of his curate, stating, "The car racket is a tricky business. You couldn't be expected to know all the angles. When it's all said and done, there's no substitute for experience. I'll show you a thing or two!" The elderly cleric then falls for an outrageously phony story spun by the youthful car thief and buys the car, which police lieutenant Harris subsequently informs Father O'Malley is stolen. The parish is allowed to retain the car, however, until its proper owner is located.

Despite his crash into the hydrant, his preemptory summons from the bishop, and his being taken in by a teenage con artist, Father Fitzgibbon's parade of humiliation is just beginning. While puttering in his flower garden in old clothes, the elderly priest is informed by Mrs. Featherstone that the parish receipts must be taken to the bank before it closes, and that Father O'Malley is busy hearing confessions. Without pausing to change clothes, Fitzgibbon rushes to the bank. When a pursuing police car signals him to pull over, he ignores it, as he is not speeding. Eventually coming to a stop, Fitzgibbon is approached by the police officer, who confronts him: a seedily-dressed old man driving a stolen car and who does not have his driver's license with him, is wearing gloves, and has a large bag of cash labeled "St. Dominic's" on the seat beside him. As a crowd gathers around the flustered cleric, the cop mocks him by saying "You do a very good imitation of an Irish accent," then hauls him off to jail.

Father O'Malley obtains his superior's release by manipulating the police precinct captain ("I haven't let the bishop know. What would he think is happening if New York's Finest couldn't recognize a priest?"); but more humiliation is in store for Father Fitzgibbon, as upon his release he is driven to the rectory in a squad car, then turned loose by a glowering cop in front of a group of stunned parish boys. The elderly priest is even denied the satisfaction of seeing the teenage criminal punished: upon the car's return undamaged, the original owner allows the matter to drop, while the boy's mother brings Fitzgibbon the money he paid for the car and begs him not to press charges. "I've prayed so hard. Can you not find it in your heart to be merciful?" the mother sobs, a plea which of course the priest cannot refuse. After agreeing to drop the charges, the elderly priest's humiliation is complete when the boy tells Fitzgibbon why he chose the priest as the victim of his scam: "The fellas said you were the softest touch in the neighborhood," the teenage punk sneers, making a shambles of the priest's self-image as a man experienced in the ways of the world. The incident ends with Father Fitzgibbon telling O'Malley, "The events of the past few days have brought home what the bishop was trying to tell me in a nice way. You don't know how happy it makes me to know St. Dominic's is in good hands. Don't worry. I'll keep out of your way. You'll hardly know I'm around. It'll be your show. I'll stay in the wings." The program then further undermines Fitzgibbon by showing Father O'Malley working behind the scenes to obtain a new car at a low price and get repairs to the church roof made, all done in ways so as to convince the older priest that such events were his own doing.[109]

"The Parish Car" is the episode closest in tone to the film version of *Going My Way*. In it, Father Fitzgibbon is clearly incapable of coping with the modern world, while Father O'Malley is omnicompetent and capable of effortlessly obtaining any desired outcome through a combination of savvy and charm. Even the speech by Father Fitzgibbon late in the episode about "staying out of [O'Malley's] way" is a nearly verbatim copy of a similar speech made in the film.

Of greater significance, however, are the background assumptions made in the episode. That a priest of 40 years' experience would be terrified of being dismissed from his parish as a result of a minor car accident – one in which no one was injured and in which no malfeasance, such as drinking, was involved – shows the much greater rigidity, formality, and concern for appearances which characterized the Church in the era. The dictatorial authority wielded by bishops, against which priests apparently had no form of appeal, is striking when contrasted with the present day.[*] Most incredibly of all, when Father O'Malley worries about Father Fitzgibbon retaining the stolen car until its proper owner is found, he is assured by police lieutenant Harris: "Don't worry, Father. There isn't a cop in New York who would arrest a priest!" – surely proof, if any were needed, of the vast social, political, and cultural influence wielded by the Church in the mid-twentieth century urban North, and of the widespread awareness and acceptance of this influence by society as a whole.

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[*] For example, in the 1990s, several bishops – among them Donald Wuerl, then Bishop of Pittsburgh, and George Pell, Archbishop of Melbourne -- attempted to summarily dismiss priests with proven records of sexually abusing minors, only to be stymied by canonical procedures requiring extensive investigation and trial. Without debating the issue of clerical sex abuse, the point is that by the late 20th century the episcopacy's powers were far less sweeping and arbitrary than they had once been...or had been perceived as being.

Another episode largely concerned with a portrayal of Catholic life and custom – though in this case, involving ethnicity, marriage, and the laity – is "A Saint for Mama." The episode opens with Mrs. Featherstone informing Father O'Malley that the church's statue of St. Anthony has been stolen. After the priest reports the theft to the police (including a brief summary of the saint's life and attributes in Catholic hagiography), money is found on the rectory stoop, along with a note instructing the cleric to "buy yourself a new statue."

O'Malley's bafflement is increased when he is abducted by a carload of Italian hoods, whom he recognizes as henchmen of mob kingpin Tony Laurentino. Informed that Tony's mother is dying, O'Malley arrives at the elderly woman's home, only to find the purloined statue in her room. There, mob boss Tony tells the priest, "I didn't steal it, just borrowed it. And youse got yer money. Okay, maybe I shouldn'ta grabbed the statue. But now, make it work." A bemused Father Chuck replies, " 'Make it work?!' You're joking!" Tony bellows at the priest, "Da doc says if sumptin' don't happen, Mama's just gonna lay dere and die. Turn on da magic and turn it on quick!" Father O'Malley protests, "There's no magic in that statue. It's just paint and plaster. "

But Tony, though admitting he is not a churchgoer and never prays, tells the priest, "I'm Italian. We got miracles in our blood! We believe in them...Mama believed. Every day she brought fresh flowers for him. Every day. She went all the way for you, brudder. Now you deliver! Make it better, fadder. Fix it up. St. Anthony can do anything. I heard Mama say so a

t'ousand times." Father O'Malley agrees to talk with Mama and pray for her, but promises no results and refuses to "play tricks with a statue."

Talking with Mama, Father O'Malley discovers the source of her depression: Tony's unwillingness to marry a "good Italian girl." While the gentle and devout Rosa pines away for Tony running his florist shop front, the mob boss lavishes his attention on blonde moll Marcia (and beats her when she mocks his devotion to Mama). Informed by O'Malley that his mother is not sick, merely disappointed and heartbroken – "What has your mother been hoping and praying for? That you'd be a man she'd be proud of, a modest, decent guy. You've let her down hard" – Tony vows, "You don't sit around waiting for a miracle. You make your own," and proposes to Rosa, over the objections of Marcia. Mama makes a full recovery; and when O'Malley asks Tony whether his actions are sincere, the gangster sanctimoniously replies, "You think I'd lie to my mother? To a priest?"

As Rosa demonstrates that she is indeed a "good Italian girl" by praying before the statue of St. Anthony that she be a good wife and that Tony stay loyal to her, Father Fitzgibbon agrees to an immediate marriage and waives the usual waiting period and posting of the banns. Ultimately, acting on Father O'Malley's advice, Marcia decides to forget about Tony and allows him to move on with his life without protest.[110]

As is obvious, this episode relies heavily on the stereotypes of Italian culture, and specifically Italian Catholicism, as riddled with superstition and crime. Tony and his men are, of

course, *mafiosi* (though never openly referred to as such); when kidnapped, Father O'Malley even jokes that he feels like he is on an episode of the contemporaneous ABC crime series *The Untouchables*. Several times throughout the episode, both priests remark on Tony's attitude toward St. Anthony as being "superstitious;" Father O'Malley tells the hood that he himself must do the work of prayer instead of relying on "magic," while Father Fitzgibbon declares that Tony is "little better than a pagan" (an attitude which mirrored that of many real-life priests of Irish background toward Catholics of other ethnic origins.[111]) Yet interestingly, neither belittles Mama's equally "superstitious" devotion to St. Anthony, with Fitzgibbon even stating that "her faith is an example to us all."

To the modern-day viewer, a more startling element is fact that, while they condemn Tony's lack of faith, neither priest offers even the mildest criticism of his involvement in organized crime...nor any concern about the sweet, innocent Rosa marrying a womanizing, abusive mob boss! This extraordinarily cavalier treatment of Rosa speaks volumes about the cultural assumptions surrounding marriage (not to mention the implicit sexism) of the Catholic Church in the era. "So what if her future husband is a career criminal who beats women -- she's *getting married*, isn't she? What more could a woman want?" seems to be the attitude underlying the episode. Perhaps the presumption on the part of the priests is that being married to the devout Rosa will reform Tony; but if so, at no point does either priest say as much. Instead, the idea that

marriage – ANY marriage, no matter how ill-suited the potential partners may be – is automatically a good thing, is simply assumed to be true.[*]

Such an assumption is in keeping with the traditional understanding of marriage which had dominated the Church for centuries. In a Catholic culture which exalted the clerical state and often took to an extreme the Apostle Paul's admonition that for the unmarried, "it is good for them so to continue, even as I. But if they do not contain themselves, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to be burnt,"[112] marriage was often seen as a "consolation prize," suitable for those without sufficient godliness, virtue, and self-control to enter religious life. Additionally, within the Church's theological understanding, marriage was often valued more because it was fulfilling God's commandment in Eden to "be fruitful and multiply" and served as a source of children. For centuries, in fact, reproduction had been seen by the Church as the "primary purpose" of marriage.

But by the early 1960s, such attitudes were changing, and the Second Vatican Council sought to redress this long-standing imbalance. Late in 1964, the Council debated the contents of a chapter dealing with "The Sanctity of Marriage and the Family," which would eventually be a part of the document *Gaudium et Spes*.[113] The debate considered matters such as the purpose of

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[*] Also notable is the fact that, despite the priests' disdain for Tony as an individual, he is able to trample accepted custom and have an immediate wedding, with no preparatory counseling being considered necessary. While such is not mentioned, the viewer is left to wonder whether the mobster offered a substantial financial inducement to the parish to see his wishes accomplished...or whether the Catholic Church at the time was simply happy to accommodate the wishes of prominent (Catholic) crime bosses. In this, "A Saint for Mama" offers interesting ground for comparison with the *Godfather* film series. The fact that *The Godfather* was released only a decade after *Going My Way* – and that the film's writer/director Francis Ford Coppola was also a product of an inner-city Catholic upbringing -- demonstrates as well as anything the Church's tacit willingness to selectively "look the other way" in regards to criminal immorality among its members, out of a sense of ethnic immigrant and religious solidarity.

marriage, the importance of conjugal love, and the increasing prevalence of divorce.[114] The Church's position on these issues -- in addition to the use of artificial birth control within marriage, affirming the prohibition of which would become Pope Paul VI's most controversial action – were already the source of some friction among Catholic laity, and would become more so in the wake of the Council.[115] Many traditionalists maintained, in keeping with the longtime understanding of the Church, that conceiving offspring and providing an approved outlet for otherwise sinful sexual activity were the "primary" purposes of marriage. But during the debate over marriage at the Council, progressive bishops advocated a perspective which saw love and mutual support between spouses as of equal importance, and ultimately the document embraced marriage as a relationship of love and partnership.[116]

Thus, "A Saint for Mama" demonstrated the first instance of a phenomenon which would recur throughout *Going My Way*: episodes with themes, plots, or both which addressed matters then in ferment within Catholicism. While the Council's debates were unlikely to have influenced the show's writers directly – *Going My Way* began production well before the Council convened, and concluded before the Council's second session met -- nevertheless, the high frequency of such "coincidences" demonstrates that many of the issues then and later addressed by the Council were part of the Catholic *zeitgeist*…and that the intensive media focus on the Church and Vatican II likely stimulated the writers' knowledge of such issues and interest in creating such stories.

While in "A Saint for Mama" marriage was presented as an ideal solution to Mama's depression, Rosa's loneliness, and Tony's concupiscent womanizing, not every treatment of marriage on *Going My Way* was so cavalier – or so optimistic. The episode "Don't Forget to Say Goodbye"[117] dealt with deeper marital problems, including alcoholism and infidelity.

In the episode, actress Jane Wyatt eschewed her famous and established image as the wise, doting, and perfect wife and mother Margaret Anderson on the long-running program *Father Knows Best* (which, after a lengthy run on CBS, was in 1962 running on the same network as *Going My Way*, ABC). Instead, Wyatt plays Kitty, an embittered, cold-hearted, alcoholic wife and business partner to womanizing architect Larry McMullen. With their daughter Sally's nuptials imminent, Kitty approaches Father O'Malley, and demands he help her call off the wedding. "I don't want my daughter to go through the horror I've been through," Kitty proclaims. "The smiling, the friends who whisper behind my back, the trying to pretend I don't know, while trying to guess who the next one would be – my best friend? The elevator girl?" Meeting with the couple for counseling, Father O'Malley blasts McMullen -- "you've betrayed and humiliated her" – but also reveals the implicit chauvinism of the era. After McMullen storms out of the meeting in a rage, O'Malley asks Kitty, "Isn't it possible you were so busy being the perfect business partner that he lost the girl he married, and so he went out looking?"

Meanwhile, Father Fitzgibbon counsels a buxom Southern belle named Gerri, who tells the priest that she is "in love with my boss. The only thing is, he's married." "There's a fine line

between love and lust," the elderly priest cautions. When Gerri responds, "He said he loves me. That's all that matters," Fitzgibbon replies, "He promised someone else his undying love. It didn't last for her. Will it for you?" While she refuses to break off the affair, Gerri is sufficiently troubled by the priest's words that she asks to continue seeing him. Unsurprisingly given the nature of episodic television, the boss with whom Gerri is having an affair is Larry McMullen.

Matters come to a head when daughter Sally innocently drops into her father's office on a whim, and catches McMullen and Gerri in a passionate embrace. She immediately calls off her own wedding, prompting her despairing fiancé to drunkenly berate McMullen. But while she initially gloats at the situation, after a conversation with her husband Kitty tells O'Malley of her realization that "the other girls were just diversions. Sally is where Larry really put his love." Deprived of the unquestioning love, respect, and admiration of his daughter, Larry is devastated. "I can't stand by and watch the two people in the world I care for tear each other apart," Kitty states; and at O'Malley's prompting, she agrees to quit her job and work with her husband to rebuild their marriage, while O'Malley himself arranges a reconciliation between Larry and Sally. And during a counseling session with Father Fitzgibbon, Gerri admits, "I was in love, and I thought that justified everything -- until I saw myself through his daughter's eyes. Then I knew that no matter how sophisticated I pretended to be, I was just another secretary playing around with her boss." An approving Father Fitz tells Gerri not to torture herself, and promises to help her find a new job -- while also covertly arranging for Tom Colwell to take her out to dinner.

Notably, in both episodes dealing with issues surrounding marriage, the onus for resolving the problem is put on the woman. By marrying Tony, Rosa is expected to reform the mobster, cure him of his womanizing, and transform him into "a modest, decent guy," while Kitty is essentially told that it was her desire to hold a job outside the home as her husband's equal which drove him into the beds of other women. Though both episodes are premised on the assumption that being married is desirable (particularly for women), they also implicitly state that women are primarily, if not solely, responsible for the quality of their marriages – so much so that Rosa is expected to be submissive to Tony's desires (and, one presumes, forgiving when the criminal boss strays again), while Kitty must quit her job in order to make amends for "causing" her marriage to fail. That Kitty's employment is seen as the cause of her "insufficiency" as a wife is a concrete example of the sexism which, though gradually being challenged, still largely dominated the era in which *Going My Way* was made.

And it was the era's same sexism which was responsible for the content of the episodes just discussed. While it is likely that younger Catholic viewers of the program were troubled (if not horrified) by the assumptions, attitudes, and moral implications of the show's presentation of marriage, it is equally likely that those creating the program were so steeped in the cultural sexism of their own pasts that they were not even aware of the messages they were sending. Tempting though it is to speculate that Joe Connelly intended to "shake viewers up" and challenge traditional societal views toward women and marriage, such a reading is ultimately unrealistic. While such might be a reasonable conclusion had the elderly, intransigent Father Fitzgibbon been the one advancing such views, it is the young, progressive Father O'Malley who

essentially states that Kitty is at fault for her husband's philandering and the couple's marital problems. This would mean that Joe Connelly deliberately *meant* for his own program's "heroic priest" to look intellectually dishonest and morally obtuse – and thereby, wanted viewers to criticize the Church for its backwards social perspective. While an attitude of "questioning authority" was commonplace on television sitcoms only a decade later, at the time *Going My Way* aired such attitudes were to be found on television exclusively in dramatic or documentary programs.

Nor would such an action have been in keeping with Connelly's gentle world-view and his obvious respect for wise, fatherly authority figures (like Ward Cleaver on *Leave It To Beaver*). Far more likely as an explanation is that the implicit sexism of the episodes in question reflected all too well the overt if unthinking sexism of the era in which the program was made – and even more, the era in which the episode's creators came of age. In 1962, Joe Connelly was 45 years old, while the writer of both episodes, Emmet Lavery, was 60. Such attitudes amply demonstrate why the burgeoning "second wave" of feminism, which would be launched by the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, gained popularity so rapidly throughout American society only a few years later.

With the Church's new attitudes toward marriage being broached by the Second Vatican Council and the beginnings of second-wave feminism churning in the *zeitgeist*, while simultaneously middle-aged and older Americans raised with older attitudes toward marriage struggled to adapt to the changing times, it is unsurprising that the treatment of marriage in these

episodes is confused. At the same time, however, *Going My Way* does acknowledge that marriages can be troubled, sometimes deeply so, while still holding out the possibility that they can be mended.

Additionally, these episodes demonstrate the potential range possible on a program involving priests as protagonists; and "Don't Forget to Say Goodbye" also served to give both priests a share of the spotlight. Rather than his typical role as light comic relief, for once Father Fitzgibbon confronts a serious issue, and assists a parishioner in resolving her problem even without Father O'Malley's help.

In addition to marriage, Catholic tradition also sees another form of "vocation": holy orders. Both vocations were the focus of the episode "Not Good Enough for My Sister," which featured an extensive discussion of the Church's understanding of each – even as both were being given substantial attention by the Second Vatican Council, and such understandings were undergoing change.[118]

The episode opens with Joe Cipollaro, a successful manager of a major baking company, complaining to the priests about his sister Mary, who is approaching middle age and is still single. Mary has fallen in love with one Carl Wyzynski, a "no-good creep of a construction worker. She ain't no Bridget Bardot, but I tried to set her up with lawyers, successful, important people. But no, she hadda flip over this bum," Joe laments. However, Joe's powerful Italian

mother, who rules the family business with an iron hand, disagrees: “I want them to be married. She might not have another chance.”

Counseling the couple, Father O’Malley discovers significant differences between the would-be spouses. Mary is college-educated, while Carl is a high-school dropout. “All marriages have rough spots. It’s not all moonlight and kisses. You both have different educations and backgrounds. It will take effort to understand each other’s needs and point of view. What will you talk about after the honeymoon? What are your mutual interests? Are you really suited to spend the rest of your lives together?” O’Malley asks, in a display of concern over compatibility not demonstrated when the potential spouses were a devout innocent and a brutal mob boss.

Invited to dinner after the counseling session, Father O’Malley is relentlessly grilled by Jim, who says of Carl,” Didn’t you find him stupid? He doesn’t know how to think or talk or eat correctly.” The priest replies, “He can support a wife. He loves Mary, and Mary loves him. They want a good marriage. It’s up to them to build it and make it work.” Jim states that “marriage has to be based on mutual respect,” but immediately belies his statement by bellowing at and humiliating his own wife in front of the guests. But Mama has made up her mind, and announces, “He’s the man Mary chose, and we’re ALL going to welcome him with open arms...you [Jim] are the manager, but I’m the president and legal owner. It’s settled. He’s gonna work in the bakery!”

Despite being given a menial job as a truck driver, Carl is determined to take Father O'Malley's advice to heart, and seeks to improve himself. He tells the priest, "We're going to the opera. She went to the fights with me. Trying to see each other's point of view," and asks the Father to recommend literature he can read, since "Mary needs a guy who can make good conversation on her level." But his interest in reading causes Carl to crash the bakery's truck, which leads to Jim berating his sister: "Dump Carl. Someone else will marry you. You're not that homely." Defending his fiancee's honor, Carl punches Joe, only to be told by Mary, "I've done nothing but make excuses for you since I met you, and I'm sick and tired of it!"

A crestfallen Mary soon regrets her harsh words. After several days apart from Carl, she visits the rectory and pours out her heart to Father O'Malley: "If Carl doesn't come back, what will become of me? I'll have to go back to not liking myself. No matter how interesting a conversationalist I am, or how I dress, or wear my hair, I'm unappealing. Every man I've ever dated has said so indirectly…except Carl. For some reason or another, Carl found me attractive. He cherished me." "So much so that you started to like yourself," the priest responds. "I need him!" Mary sobs. But the conversation is broken up by Carl himself, who enters and announces to Father O'Malley, "Those books you loaned me were great -- and they made me see it's never too late to answer a call. Thanks to your guidance and inspiration, I've decided I'm going to be a priest!" O'Malley replies, "You're too old to become a priest. There's not a seminary in the country that'll accept you;" but Carl declares, "I'll become a Trappist monk. Like St. Benedict said, I'll become a stranger to the ways of the world," as Mary sobs in dismay.

Later, both priests are taken aback by Carl's declaration. "A Trappist? He hasn't the intellectual capacity," Father Fitzgibbon opines, as O'Malley agrees, "His happiness is with Mary, as hers is with him." A visit by Jim resolves one difficulty, when he admits that he opposed Carl because he was threatened by the idea of another man usurping his place. Mary, too, agrees to accept Carl, with all his faults.

But Carl still remains to be convinced. Told he cannot be a Trappist, Carl changes his aim once again, discussing how he has been inspired by St. Ignatius Loyola. "He was a roughneck too, until he reformed and started the Jesuits. Then he became a saint." But Father O'Malley pierces to the heart of the matter: "You knocked yourself out trying to do something good for Mary, you got hurt, and now you want to go someplace and hide. Having a vocation is the greatest thing in the world, but joining a religious order isn't like joining the Foreign Legion. You know what a cassock is? Ordinary cloth. A cassock won't keep you warm in a snowstorm. It won't stop a bullet if somebody shoots at you. And even though it looks nice, you can't hide behind it any longer or more successfully than a child can hide behind his mother's skirts." When Carl protests, "Why are you trying to talk me out of this? Aren't you supposed to talk people into serving the Church?" Father O'Malley replies, "Who says you have to be a priest or a monk or a nun to serve the church? You can serve the Church by being a good man, by being married and raising a family. That's a great vocation. Bringing new souls into the world, new souls capable of love and happiness." Persuaded by this homily by Father O'Malley and reconciliation with Mary, Carl weds her; and, humbled by Mary and Carl's self-effacing love, Jim begins treating his own wife better, and they conceive a child.[119]

Unlike “A Saint for Mama” and “Don’t Forget to Say Goodbye,” “Not Good Enough for My Sister” does not treat marriage as merely an expected routine; nor does it view the woman as solely responsible for the quality of the relationship. Rather, the happiness of each individual and their joint responsibility for building a healthy union are real matters for concern and reflection by both clergy and the couple themselves – a demonstration of the changing view towards marriage then taking place at the Council and in American society. Here, the young, progressive Father O’Malley’s concern about the potential viability of Carl and Mary’s marriage reflects the emerging focus on marriage as a relationship of love and partnership and the use of pre-marital counseling as a means of preparation for potential spouses then being discussed in the Church, while the traditionalist Father Fitzgibbon articulates the Church’s older attitudes toward marriage. These differing views are humorously contrasted when Father O’Malley expresses his concerns about Carl and Mary’s disparate backgrounds to his superior. “They don’t seem to have much in common,” O’Malley laments to Father Fitzgibbon. Back comes the elderly cleric’s reply: “Ye know what’ll fix that? Four or five nice babies!”

Struggles with a vocation – this time, to religious life -- were the subject of another episode, as well. “Blessed Are the Meek” is a dramatic and deeply moving exploration of the power of failure, guilt, and shame to dominate an individual’s life. Arguably *Going My Way*’s finest hour, the episode is surprisingly powerful for a 1960s situation comedy.

The episode opens with Mrs. Featherstone, recently returned from a vacation, vexed to find that the new parish sexton hired in her absence has proven not only a capable handyman but

an able housekeeper and cook as well. Motivated by jealousy, Mrs. Featherstone snoops about sexton Francis Delaney's room, discovering books by Teilhard de Chardin and Albert Schweitzer, revealing that in addition to his practical skills the sexton is learned as well.

But Delaney hides a secret. Informed by a delighted Father Fitzgibbon that George Cagle will be coming for a visit, Delaney plunges into despair. Cagle, once Father Fitzgibbon's curate, subsequently served as chaplain of Sing Sing, where he facilitated a number of high-profile conversions to Catholicism. He then went on to become a heroic and decorated chaplain in World War II, and served as a seminary rector. By the time of the episode, Cagle has been consecrated bishop of a West Coast diocese, and is the nationally known "Vicar of Video," a Sheen-like presence on weekly television. Delaney begins drinking to excess, while poring over a scrapbook he has maintained on Cagle. "I couldn't possibly face you. I haven't got the guts," the drunken Delaney moans, then sobs in prayer, "Forgive me once again for this weakness, all the mistakes of the past."

After his habitual drunkenness endangers Delaney's life and necessitates a daring rescue by Father O'Malley, the sexton unburdens himself to the youthful priest. "Bishop Cagle and I grew up in the same neighborhood, went to same schools, went into seminary together. Now he's a bishop. I was almost a priest. I left the seminary by request, just one year this side of ordination. They threw me out for good and sufficient reason. But almost a priest is no priest at all."

In a flashback, Delaney recounts the seminary's strict regime under the former rector, the Reverend Aloysius Norbert Murphy, whom Delaney nicknamed "King Kong" because of his bushy eyebrows. After scenes showing seminarians frantically concealing their soda pop and potato chips from the stern rector (!), Delaney's narrative continues,

> The rector and I didn't get along. There's no excuse for what I did. It never would've happened if my courage came from character instead of the bottle. One day in dogmatic theology, to a serious question, I gave a rather flip answer. The rector chewed me out in front of George Cagle and my other good friends. I was trying to be funny, I suppose. Which is a form of cruelty when your victim is a good man the Lord chose to fashion without humor of any kind.

Delaney reveals that, after his humiliation by the rector, he went into the city and got drunk, then purchased a gorilla suit at a costume shop and posed it in the rector's chair. "That was the end of me at St. Joseph's. They might've overlooked the funny stuff, but not the bottle too. I haven't seen any of my classmates in the years between. And I certainly couldn't face George Cagle now."

Father O'Malley tries to encourage the disconsolate sexton. "A seminary isn't some exclusive club where if you don't make it you're disgraced for life. Think of the men we both know who left the seminary because the authorities, or themselves, decided it wasn't for them – men who went on to be a great success and lived fine, happy lives."

Delaney replies in a paroxysm of self-loathing and despair, "I went on to other things. Everything I tried I failed at. I've forgotten some of them – most of them. What I can't forget is that first failure, and what I did to George Cagle. I was like a hero to George. I was number one

in his book. He was so upset he almost left the seminary. I let him down. Just as I let down everyone who believed in me – Francis Xavier Delaney, the fair-haired boy. He's done everything right. Bishop, war hero, TV star. I've done everything wrong. I couldn't face him."

O'Malley agrees not to mention Delaney's presence to avoid upsetting him further, but warns that he will not tell an outright lie to shield Delaney; if Cagle learns he is there through other means, Delaney will have to deal with the situation. While Delaney avoids the visiting bishop for a time, ultimately he comes face to face with Cagle – who embraces him.

"I'd never have forgiven either one of us if we'd never met. I meet old classmates here and there, and we always talk about you – you and your jokes…Those laughs from you got us over what at times were very difficult days," the bishop tells his old comrade. "I assumed I was somebody you just never mentioned. Because I failed. I was the big man at the seminary, the one who wasn't supposed to fail. The shining knight...hiding in a bottle," Delaney says.

Cagle responds with compassion. "Did you ever reason why you started drinking, why you took the bottle back to your room? You knew you'd be dropped for that. Did you really, subconsciously, *want* to get kicked out because you knew it wasn't for you -- and you didn't want to drop out because you thought you'd be letting us and your folks down? The drinking took the decision out of your hands."

An expression of mingled relief, gratitude, and awe crosses Delaney's face. "It would take you, after all these years, to put your finger on exactly what I was running away from. No wonder they made you a bishop. All these years, I thought you and the others despised me," the redeemed sexton says. Cagle replies, "We worried about you, Francis. Every night before our ordination, your old nemesis, Aloysius Norbert Murphy, had us pray for you. And I've never missed a night since."[120]

A story of guilt, forgiveness, and redemption, "Blessed Are the Meek" highlights several aspects of perceptions about and within Catholicism in the era. The episode exhibits well the exalted deference and respect the clergy had traditionally been granted in Catholic culture; while the crushing personal devastation Francis Delaney feels at his "failure" in the seminary is far removed from that of the current day, when little social stigma would be attached to such a circumstance. As Cardinal Spellman's biographer John Cooney notes, the societal pressures within Catholic culture of the day were such that for a man to leave the seminary or priesthood "was just about unthinkable. Both he and his family would have been disgraced. In Catholic eyes a priest who left his calling turned his back on God."[121]

"Blessed Are the Meek" is a powerful episode, aided by the intense performance of actor Richard Carlson, who conveys well the self-loathing felt by Delaney. Recalled today for playing the lead in several fondly-remembered 1950s science-fiction films, including *It Came From Outer Space* and *Creature From the Black Lagoon*, at the time *Going My Way* aired Carlson would have been best known to audiences for his starring role as advertising copywriter,

Communist cell member, and secret American counterspy Herbert Philbrick on the Cold War TV series *I Led Three Lives* -- a role which gave Carlson ample practice in exhibiting the nearly psychotic paranoia he brings to the part of Delaney.

Also notable is Kent Smith's Bishop Cagle. While somewhat bland and never a leading star, the deep-voiced, silver-haired Smith was famed especially in his early career for epitomizing Middle-American goodness and decency.[122] Smith brings a quiet dignity and warmth to his role as a Sheen-like bishop successful on television. Throughout the episode, Smith reveals moments of humor quite similar to those employed by the real-life Bishop Sheen; at one point, remarking on his own failures, Cagle notes that "No matter how hard I try, how hard I pray, I never have a rating higher than *Wagon Train*." In keeping with the other mentions of the episcopacy on *Going My Way*, all the characters interacting with Cagle show him a deference bordering on obsequiousness: while Cagle calls Father O'Malley "Chuck," both the young priest and Cagle's own former mentor Father Fitzgibbon constantly address the bishop as "Your Excellency," and Mrs. Featherstone and both the nuns and the girls in St. Dominic's parish school are seen practicing their curtseys.

In addition to its attitudes toward marriage and holy orders, another major change in the Catholic Church's approach to the world in the early 1960s was its increased enthusiasm for ecumenism. Such enthusiasm was something entirely new in Catholicism; as Jeremy Bonner, an eminent scholar of the implementation of Vatican II in the United States, notes, "Until the 1960s, Roman Catholics held resolutely aloof from the rising tide of trans-denominational contacts

throughout worldwide Protestantism...Devout Catholics were expected neither to attend Protestant services nor to participate in non-Catholic religious study groups."[123] So severe had this tendency been in the Church that in the early 1940s the liberal Father George Barry Ford, chaplain of Columbia University, was upbraided by Cardinal Spellman for sending flowers to a sick friend who happened to be an Episcopalian minister.[124] As late as 1948, Harvard University's famed Catholic chaplain, Father Leonard Feeny, S.J., was publicly proclaiming the Church's ancient doctrine *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* ("outside the Church, no salvation").[125]

However, in the post-World War II world, the Church moved away from such rigid doctrine. After refusing to recant his position, Feeny was deprived of his priestly faculties, dismissed from the Jesuits, condemned by Rome and, ultimately, excommunicated.[126] In large part, it was the experience of World War II itself, and the postwar domination of Eastern Europe by atheistic communist regimes, which served as the catalyst for the Church's newfound ecumenical spirit. Under both fascism and communism, Christians of all denominations were persecuted, and thus formed alliances for mutual aid. Growing out of this wartime experience came the Vatican's 1949 "Instruction on the Ecumenical Movement," which urged the world's bishops to promote cooperation between Christian denominations. Other factors contributing to the development of the ecumenical movement were increased Biblical research and scholarship, the results of which crossed denominational lines, and the formation of the World Council of Churches (founded specifically to promote Christian fellowship in 1948).[127]

Given his own life experiences and attitudes, Pope John XXIII enthusiastically embraced ecumenism. After calling the Council, one of John's first steps in preparation was the formation in 1960 of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, which invited representatives of many Christian denominations and even non-Christian religions to the Council. Some of these were seated as observers, from the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury to an American Baptist preacher, and were even informally consulted on occasion.[128] The preface to Council's document on the Church *Sacrosanctum Concilium* urged "union with the separated brethren" [129] (a phrase encountered more than once on *Going My Way*); and, ultimately, an entire document On Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) was debated and promulgated by the Council.

The Council's ecumenical spirit was echoed by American Catholics. Now accepted and proud members of the postwar cultural consensus, Catholics did not possess the same "fortress" mentality of previous generations, whose experiences as immigrant minorities had disposed them toward a more exclusionary ethos. As Jeremy Bonner notes,

> What distinguished the ecumenical dialogue of the 1960s from that of earlier decades was that it was underpinned by genuine lay enthusiasm. A generation of well-educated American Catholics, inspired by the emphasis of the Second Vatican Council on the lay apostolate, joined the ecumenical debate. The ecumenical wave swept through the Americanized dioceses of the Midwest like Chicago and St. Louis.[130]

This "wave" of post-conciliar ecumenism was manifested in actions like Catholic and Protestant denominations sharing church facilities, cooperation on secular concerns, increased instances of interdenominational marriage, joint religious education and worship services, and even (to the scandal of some) participation by non-Catholics in the Eucharist.[131]

Given the enthusiastic emphasis on ecumenism in 1962 Catholic America, it is unsurprising that *Going My Way* devoted some attention to the theme; although, given both the Catholicism of the program's creator and the underlying premises derived from the beloved movie, this was often done in a way which likely found more favor with traditionalist Catholics than with the many ecumenically-minded audience members at which it was presumably aimed. Several of the program's occasionally recurring characters were of varying religious backgrounds. Tom Colwell was a Protestant of undefined denomination, as was his pastor and spiritual director, the Reverend Doctor Thornton. Though appearing less frequently, Rabbi Adler was also mentioned and shown as cooperating with the other clerics. In one episode, Father Fitzgibbon is appalled to learn that a sleazy photographer is taking lewd photos of models at a rented office nearby, intended for pornographic magazines. "That trash we take away from the eighth grade boys? The stuff Doctor Thornton and the Rabbi Adler tried to get off the newsstands? That deplorable filth!" the father bellows. In a rare moment of competence for the character, the enraged Fitzgibbon intimidates the photographer into shutting down his operation by using a mention of his fellow clergymen: "I merely explained that in this neighborhood, we have a progressive Jewish rabbi and a very forceful Protestant minister who might be interested in those pictures," Fitz boasts to Father O'Malley after the photographer agrees to leave town.

Other episodes feature Thornton and Adler in varying degrees of prominence. Viewers learn that, on his day off, Father O'Malley plays handball with Reverend Thornton and Tom Colwell,[132] and that the three also golf together, during which they exchange information on various neighborhood denizens and causes.[133] When Colwell is given an award for his work at

the community center, Reverend Thornton, Father O'Malley, and Rabbi Adler are in attendance. After the presentation, Rabbi Adler jokes to his fellow clergymen, "Let's skip the cafeteria. I hate all those people looking at the three of us, wondering if we're up to no good." Later, when Colwell's visiting father throws a party at the center, the three attend along with Father Fitzgibbon, who predictably makes a *faux pas*. Greeting Reverend Thornton's date, Fitz remarks that he has not seen her since the neighborhood Christmas party, prompting O'Malley to whisper in his ear that Thornton's current date is a different woman.[134]

The priests and Thornton collaborate further when the Protestant clergyman interests them in contributing to a new annex for the community center. Father O'Malley suggests having Tom Colwell and Reverend Thornton to dinner, prompting resistance from the traditionalist Father Fitzgibbon. "I have no objection to serving on committees with Protestants, but having a minister to dinner...it's just never happened at St. Dominic's. That might be rushing things a bit," the elderly priest fusses. Such resistance on the part of Catholic traditionalists was true to reality; in the early 1960s, even with a new ecumenical sensibility gaining hold, most Catholic priests still did not have close relations with clergy from other denominations.[135]

Cannily wedding a sentiment attractive to the traditionalist Fitzgibbon with terminology recently introduced during then-contemporary debates at the Second Vatican Council, Father O'Malley replies, "How are we going to get our separated brethren back to the fold if we don't

talk to them?"[*] Father Fitz approves of the meeting, only to meet with resistance from the staunchly Irish and anti-Protestant Mrs. Featherstone, whereupon Father Fitzgibbon uses the same phrasing to induce her agreement. Over dinner, Fitzgibbon states that his bishop has shown an interest in the annex, and asks Thornton whether he has bishops in his church. The minister replies, "Yes, I guess they're an occupational hazard in most churches, only mine is more of a menace." "No little red beanie to warn you, huh?" Father O'Malley jokes, to which Thornton responds, "No, not even a limousine. He just gets off the bus in front of the parsonage, and…" "Bingo! The bishop!" O'Malley finishes for him, to general laughter. As the evening draws to a close, Father Fitzgibbon gives Reverend Thornton check for the annex fund, adding a quotation in Latin. When Thornton does not understand, Fitzgibbon translates, "Beware of bishops who do not wear little red beanies." After Father Fitzgibbon strolls off, Reverend Thornton whispers to Father O'Malley, "He reminds me of my father. I love him, but he always scares me just a little bit." As the minister moves to depart, Mrs. Featherstone brings him an extra helping of dessert to take with him. After Thornton leaves, Father O'Malley asks the housekeeper, "I thought you didn't approve of Protestants." To his astonishment, the now-enlightened Mrs. Featherstone smugly replies, "How are we going to get our separated brethren back to the fold if we don't talk to them?"[136]

A more substantive demonstration of ecumenical collaboration is shown in the episode "A Matter of Principle," wherein Father O'Malley, Reverend Thornton, and Rabbi Adler attend a community policing committee meeting. There, they are informed that "last Christmas, more

[*] The term "separated brethren" was first formally used by the Roman Catholic Church in reference to Protestants and Orthodox in the Council Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, promulgated in 1964; but the term was in widespread casual use for some time before.

Catholic teenagers got into trouble with the law than did teenagers of any other religion. The Protestants were a bang-up second. And though they were outnumbered pound for pound, the Jewish boys did alright, too." ReverendThornton responds in dismay, "You try hard all year, then Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter comes it's like an explosion," then suggests to his fellow clergy that perhaps there is some activity they can sponsor jointly, to keep the juveniles occupied when not in school. After asking the boys of St. Dominic's for suggestions, Father O'Malley hits on the idea of a basketball tournament, with the Catholic boys playing the youth from Reverend Thornton's Holy Shepherd church, and the winning team challenging the boys of Rabbi Adler's Temple Isaiah.

Predictably, Father Fitzgibbon opposes the idea, though for an unexpected reason: he fears "fanning the flames of best-forgotten hostilities. Christmas is a time to unite, not divide." But Father O'Malley cunningly appeals to his superior's native pride, stating "If we win, how can anybody say Protestants are better than Catholics?" Fitzgibbon promises to mention the idea to the bishop, who enthusiastically agrees.

Unfortunately, Father O'Malley runs into difficulty with St. Dominic's star center, the All-City player Frank Murphy, who rudely tells the priest, "I show up for the game, no practice. Take it or leave it." O'Malley throws the recalcitrant player off the team, but is forced to recant his position and bring Murphy back due to pressure not only from Father Fitzgibbon (who, hearing the bishop will attend the game personally, wants to ensure a Catholic victory at all costs), but also from Tom Colwell. Tom states that Reverend Thornton has asked for Murphy to

be restored to the team, precisely because Murphy's prowess on the court is well-known. "The Protestants have a good team. They've practiced hard. But if we beat you without Frank Murphy, the victory won't have any meaning. The losers will have an alibi, and if sports are supposed to develop character, then no alibi is a good basis," the youth leader explains. Under pressure from every side, Father O'Malley reluctantly capitulates and restores Murphy to the team. In the event, however, O'Malley's moral lesson is delivered; Murphy proves to be the team's undoing, and the Protestants handily defeat the Catholic boys, all of whom turn on Murphy in rage: "He's a ball hog! He never passed to anyone else. He lost us the game by wanting all the glory for himself. They scored because they played like a team!" Proclaiming the hapless Murphy an "all-city slob," the Catholic boys desert their former teammate and exult in a bit of *schadenfreude*, as a glowering six-foot, seven-inch Jewish boy predicts a thrashing for the Protestant team the following week.

In a final bit of dialogue, Father O'Malley explicitly encapsulates the episode's ecumenical lesson. As Murphy's mother worries, "Tonight's the first time Frank wasn't the big hero. In many ways, he's a weak boy," O'Malley tells her, "We're all weak in many ways. That's why we need others and others need us. Fortunately, we're not all weak in the same way, so we have to help each other. Everyone making up in himself the lack in another"[137] – an admirable sentiment perfectly congruent with the American cultural consensus, if not precisely with those of traditionalist Catholics or even the Second Vatican Council in theological terms.

Father O'Malley's ecumenism is further demonstrated in the episode "Mr. Second Chance," wherein con man "Harry the Horse," long estranged from his family, wishes to attend his daughter's wedding and be accepted following his son's death. Blaming his wife's alleged bigotry, and not his own misdeeds, for the estrangement, Harry complains to Father O'Malley, "Maybe I should've taken the easy way out and become a Catholic...My wife may say she resents me because I'm Harry the Horse, but do you know why she turned the kids against me, why she left, why she really hates me? Because I'm a Jew! She didn't resent me at first, but her pious old mother, a real – pardon the expression, Father – a real Mick, said she'd rather see her daughter in a coffin than married to me."

But Father O'Malley will have none of Harry's hypocrisy and blasts his accusations of anti-Semitism. "When did you start hiding behind this theory? I don't deny that kind of resentment exists, not at all. But it's time you found out who you really are. Do you follow the Talmud, read the Torah, observe the holy days, follow the Ten Commandments? When was the last time you went to schul?...I respect sincere belief, and I resent anyone who turns that belief into a lie, or uses it as a cover up."[138]

Another passionate defense of faith was prominently offered in a subsequent episode, which took as its theme the Catholic response to atheism – another matter which was of concern to the Second Vatican Council. As a part of addressing "the Church in the Modern World," *Gaudium et Spes* also devoted attention to atheism. The Church's opposition to atheism – a denial of the existence of God – is, of course, the very essence of a body called by Christ to

"teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."[139]

In addition to its condemnations of disbelief going back to the very origins of Christianity, the rise and domination of atheistic philosophies of government such as communism during the "long nineteenth century" had led to tremendous oppression, suffering, and murder of literally millions of people, and had occasioned ever-harsher words of condemnation from the Church. Documents like Pius XI's 1937 encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*, which characterized atheism as a philosophy "which aims at upsetting the social order and at undermining the very foundations of Christian civilization…because it denies the rights, dignity and liberty of human personality,"[140] were typical; and examples have already been given of the defiance and suffering of the Church under the Soviet Union.

But just as John XXIII set aside the harsh condemnation of communism in order to foster peace, so too did the Council, in the optimistic, positive, and welcoming spirit which characterized the rest of its works, take up the question of the proper response to atheism. Noting that "atheism results not rarely from a violent protest against the evil in this world," the Council noted also that "believers themselves frequently bear some responsibility for this situation…to the extent that they neglect their own training in the faith, or teach erroneous doctrine, or are deficient in their religious, moral, or social life."[141] And instead of simply anathematizing atheism, the Council urged Catholics "to detect in the atheist mind the hidden causes for the denial of God," and to seek to convert them through "sincere and prudent dialogue."[142]

Such attitudes were fully on display in the episode "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven," which opens with St. Dominic's perpetually rowdy teenage boys vandalizing the office of one Ralph Corden, M.D.[143] The enraged physician calls the police and swears out an arrest warrant against Fathers Fitzgibbon and O'Malley: "They're the ones who are behind this persecution!" the physician yells. When a flabbergasted Fitzgibbon asks O'Malley what Doctor Corden has against them, the curate replies, "Everything short of the Inquisition and the Johnstown flood." (Apparently, hatred can be ecumenical too; O'Malley mentions that some of the vandals were Catholic but others "are Rabbi Adler's. Nobody likes Doctor Corden.")

Father O'Malley forces the boys to pay for the damages to Corden's office, but the doctor refuses to accept the money: "Buying forgiveness. That's one of your quaint old customs, isn't it?" the physician sneers. When O'Malley states that "We'd all feel better if you took it," Corden tells him, "I don't want you to feel better. I want you to feel badly. Now get off my steps." The doctor ends his diatribe with an insult aimed at Tom Colwell: "You too, you overgrown Boy Scout!"

But Doctor Corden's vendetta is only beginning. When a St. Dominic's parishioner has a heart attack during Mass, Father O'Malley fetches Corden, only for the doctor to order his patient to "cut down on sweets, starches, and church... This man has a bad heart. I don't want him running in and out of church. All that religious mumbo-jumbo is bad for him emotionally," says Corden, thereby enraging Father Fitzgibbon. The elderly priest's anger is further fueled when he himself falls ill and is attended by Doctor Corden. "I suppose he'll prescribe that I stay

out of church, too," the elderly priest growls. Though he is coldly professional while treating Father Fitzgibbon, Corden goes out of his way to deliberately antagonize O'Malley, refusing to accord him the title "Father."

But even Corden has a softer side, which is manifested in the performance of his profession. Examining a parish boy, Danny Larkin, who has complained of headaches and failing eyesight, Corden learns the boy has a tumor – but that his father places no faith in medicine and refuses to allow his son to be treated. After Father O'Malley tries and fails to persuade Larkin to allow his son to have surgery, an enraged Corden berates the priest: "You failed. You can't pray this kind of immature intellect into things. You've got to tell him hard. He's a believer, isn't he? I thought when you got the golden belief, you were never afraid. What are you going to do now? PRAY that Larkin sees the light?" Holding his temper under steely control, O'Malley replies, "I pray for a lot of people. I might even say one for you."

Still angry at Larkin's ignorance, Corden confronts him, only to be faced with the man's contemptuous condemnation of the entire medical profession – a condemnation which echoes that which Corden has for religion. But Corden is brought up short when Danny is hit by a car, which shifts the tumor so that it requires immediate surgery. "I can't operate. I'm not a neurosurgeon," the doctor says, only to be upbraided by Father O'Malley: "Oh, so you're admitting there's something you don't know? You're just fine when it comes to handing out pills and taking temperatures, but when it comes to something big, you fold? What if you were in the army in a jungle somewhere? Would you just sit down and let your patient die?"

Corden agrees to operate. As he does so, O'Malley takes Danny's father to task for his own narrow-mindedness. "You're not standing up for what you believe in. You're making an excuse for intolerance. How do you feel when you're walking to Mass on Sunday morning and you see Protestants going to church –Episcopalians, Baptists, Lutherans. Do you feel that they're all wrong, that you've got a corner on Heaven? The worst kind of believer is one who only believes halfway...[Corden] believes. He'd deny it, but he believes. In his knowledge, in his hands, but he believes." "You expect me to trust an atheist?" the shocked man asks. "He's an agnostic, and there's a difference. An atheist doesn't believe in heaven. An agnostic will if you show it to him," O'Malley replies. When Larkin confesses that he doesn't understand completely, Father O'Malley urges him, "Then don't condemn completely."

The next day, with Danny out of danger, Doctor Corden is astonished that Larkin refuses to take him to court for operating without the family's permission. "They had me over a barrel. They could've taken me for all I have, could've had me kicked out of profession," Corden marvels. O'Malley tells him, "They realized you were doing what you knew was right, that you have faith. You have faith in yourself, in your ability to know and do what's right. You're going to hate this, but that's a form of religion. And maybe someone was trying to help you, looking over your shoulder, making you better than you were." Corden replies, "I'm not admitting anything, but...if there was, and I thanked Him for Danny, how would He take it?" Assured that God would accept even him, Corden at last calls O'Malley "Father."

Though it is not surprising that a series featuring two priests as lead characters should be concerned with matters of faith, what makes "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven" stand out is its rarity on *Going My Way*. Though in many ways a clichè, the episode did feature substantive (well, substantive for a 1960s TV situation comedy) discussions of agnosticism, as well as condemnation of religious bigotry. Surprisingly, the agnostic Doctor Corden emerges from the episode as more sympathetic than the narrow-minded but staunchly Catholic Larkin. (In part, this may be due to the dynamic performance given by actor James Whitmore as Corden.) Though Corden ultimately capitulates at the episode's end, a surprising amount of screen time is devoted to Corden's passionate and sarcastic denunciations of religious faith. This perhaps represents the series' sharpest demonstration of the Catholic Church's newfound accommodation to the modern world. Far from attacking Corden or his beliefs (or lack thereof), just as the Catholic Church under John XXIII and the Council sought accommodation even with openly atheistic Communist regimes, and the Council's own documents urged dialogue with atheism, so too does the progressive Father O'Malley accept others, whatever the state of their faith, if their intentions are sincere. Ranging from episodes dealing with staunch Catholics, to those involving "separated brethren," to those about even scoffers at religion, *Going My Way* effectively mirrored the trends in larger society toward reaching consensus and "peaceful co-existence" over divisive factionalism and conflict...even as the Council and Church itself was.

But if *Going My Way* was willing to tackle issues of religious faith and unbelief, even in a homogenized fashion, the pre-eminent social conflict of 1960s America – the battle for racial

equality and civil rights for African-Americans -- presented a barrier the program's producers (and popular culture generally) were not yet prepared to address as firmly.

Racism was, of course, encoded in American government and culture since the nation's founding, first with slavery, then with a century of Jim Crow laws.[144] Catholicism's response to American slavery had historically been ambiguous and appeared inconsistent to many. Notes John McGreevy, "Many Catholic intellectuals around the world accepted slavery as a legitimate, if tragic, institution. This acceptance rested upon the pervasive fear of liberal individualism and social disorder that so shaped Catholic thought during the nineteenth century, along with the anti-Catholicism of many abolitionists."[145] But Catholic doctrine did not subscribe to popularly-held "scientific" theories of blacks as innately inferior, or to rigid segregation; rather, the Church, following the principals of natural law, insisted that slaves (and later, emancipated African-Americans) be educated and treated humanely. The Church also saw interracial marriage as valid, and condemned laws against miscegenation.

Over time, American Catholic attitudes and actions toward racial separation began to change among progressive clerics and laity. In 1937, Father John LaFarge, S.J., published the book *Interracial Justice*, which received much positive attention and acclaim in European Catholic circles. LaFarge was invited to the Vatican to assist in the writing of an encyclical opposing racism and anti-Semitism. Though the encyclical was never released, LaFarge's continued efforts laid the groundwork for increased Church action in favor of racial equality. After World War II, a new generation of churchmen and laity embraced the cause. In 1946, the

newly-appointed Archbishop of St. Louis, Joseph Ritter, integrated his diocese's schools, threatening excommunication for any who dared disobey. Bishops Joseph Rummel of New Orleans, Robert Lucey of San Antonio, Albert Meyer of Chicago, and Patrick O'Boyle of Washington, D.C., among others, acted similarly. By 1958, the National Council of Catholic Bishops had issued a pastoral letter, "Discrimination and the Christian Conscience," condemning segregation and prejudice.

The pinnacle of moral suasion in opposition to racial discrimination by Catholic bishops was reached in 1964 when O'Boyle, speaking on behalf of the bishops of the United States, urged the Second Vatican Council to condemn racial discrimination. Speaking during the Council's debates, O'Boyle called racism "one of the most deplorable and repugnant crimes of mankind today."[146]

In the wake of the Council's declaration condemning racism in *Gaudium et Spes*, some individual clergy, religious, and laity became involved in assisting the cause of civil rights. [147] Catholic involvement in the Selma-to-Montgomery march in late 1965 in particular drew much press attention; however, it did so largely because of its novelty. As a whole, Catholics were largely latecomers to the civil rights movement. While progressive elements in American Catholicism had early and eagerly pressed for reform, the majority of average Catholics in the pew – and of older, more traditionalist bishops and priests – felt very differently. Many bishops had refused their clergy permission to attend the March on Washington in 1963, and similarly refused to endorse participation in local demonstrations.

Correspondingly, the American church's newly-stated doctrine was upheld by most Catholics more often in theory than in practice. Catholics in the South, where Jim Crow laws predominated, dragged their feet in implementing measures of equality. In the North, while lip service was given to the ideal of racial equality, many individual parishioners -- and their (usually older and ethnic) pastors -- virulently opposed the integration of their neighborhoods, along with "open housing" legislation. Opposition to African-Americans among especially Catholic immigrants had been incessant since the 19th century;[148] but by the mid-20th, it was centered largely on concern over declining property values and the erosion of tradition-oriented ethnic neighborhoods.[149] When large numbers of African-Americans moved north during and after World War II, more affluent (largely Protestant and Jewish) city dwellers moved to the suburbs in response, while working-class Catholics – who had invested heavily in their neighborhoods and largely owned their homes – felt their parochial and ethnic communal identities and institutions threatened by the newcomers.

Despite the disparate roles Catholics played in the struggle for civil rights – from the nuns, priests, and laypeople who organized, worked, and protested in favor of equality and integration, to those Catholics who opposed and resisted parish and neighborhood integration, sometimes by violent means – civil rights issues were not reflected on *Going My Way*. This is hardly surprising, as African-Americans in general were rarely shown on early television.[150] Apart from occasional performances by black musicians on variety shows, African-Americans were seen rarely, and then almost exclusively in roles as domestic servants or background characters. Due to opposition from Southern audiences and TV stations, even the widely popular

singer Nat "King" Cole's own variety program was cancelled after a single season.[151] It was only in the mid-1960s -- once the civil rights movement was well underway -- that African-Americans began to appear in starring roles on prime-time programs, such as Bill Cosby's wise-cracking intelligence agent on *I Spy*, Greg Morris' technological wizard on *Mission: Impossible*, and Diahann Carroll's widowed single mother and nurse on *Julia*. The lack of African-Americans on *Going My Way* is particularly odd given Joe Connelly's prior experience writing *Amos 'n Andy* -- though given the virulent opposition that program stirred at the height of the civil rights movement, perhaps it is not surprising that Connelly did not wish anyone reminded of his links with the show.

Nevertheless, one episode of *Going My Way* did focus on an individual African-American's difficulties. Though little attention was paid in the episode to the events then occurring in real life surrounding issues of integration, equality, and opposition by Catholics, the very fact that an African-American and his problems were mentioned at all marks *Going My Way* as marginally more progressive than its television brethren.

"Run, Robin, Run" opens with Father O'Malley arriving at a police station, where he proceeds to post bail for Robin Green. "What was it this time?" the priest wearily asks. "Assault and battery with a clarinet on top of some customer's head," replies the Irish-accented desk sergeant (played by Stafford Repp, later to be better known as Police Chief O'Hara on ABC's *Batman*). The sergeant continues, "The record shows that last time, Father Fitz bailed him out. How come you and Father Fitzgibbon keep going to bat for this Green' seein' as how he's a --"

”A Negro?” O’Malley asks, with a steely glint in his eyes. “Uh, yeah. That’s what I was gonna say,” mumbles the flustered cop. “Should it make any difference?” O’Malley replies, but receives only a shrug from the policeman.

Later, after Father O’Malley has left on a trip, Robin – under terms of his release – reports to Father Fitz, who has been appointed his supervisor. Dialogue establishes that Robin was an altar boy and student at St. Dominic’s, and in fact was valedictorian. However, rather than making something of himself, Robin chooses to pursue his dream of being a jazz musician, working for little pay. He also resents the success of other African-Americans and the oppression he feels he is subjected to by whites, and is embittered against his ex-wife, whom he feels walked out on him “the first time things went against” him.

After this self-pitying litany, the practical Father Fitz advises Robin to control his temper, whereupon the angry black man replies, “Yeah, close your ears and your eyes. We’re real good at that, Father. I’m sick of being good at it!” “So you work off your bitterness by going around belting people?” Fitzgibbon responds. “Robin, you can’t change the world with your fists. You must have patience.” Since as a result of his arrest Robin’s entertainment license has been revoked, Father Fitzgibbon offers to help Robin find work. When Fitz urges him to go to a department store where the priest knows a manager, Robin responds sarcastically, “Yassuh, Father, yassuh. Another box boy job. They’re not gonna make me vice president, y’know. First, they’d have to let me into the building.”

The embittered Robin departs. Soon thereafter, Father Fitzgibbon and Tom Colwell learn that local jewelry store owner Frank Bennett has been attacked and viciously beaten, and that Bennett identifies Robin as his attacker. Pleading with the police, Father Fitz gets them to agree to allow Fitz and Tom to search for Robin and persuade him to surrender himself peacefully. The two split up, and Fitz talks to Robin's mother, now a successful caterer, who tells the elderly priest, "The very things I've accomplished are the things [Robin] hates. I'm bourgeois. Middle-class. We don't have dignity of being poor, nor the glamour of being rich...Robin kept right on playing in dives while his wife pounded typewriters to play the bills." Colwell hears a similar story from Robin's ex-wife: "He had big dreams. He was gonna be the biggest, bigger than Belafonte, Sinatra, so big nobody could touch him. I can dream as big as the next person, but dreams don't pay the rent...He cherishes his freedom – meaning no responsibility – and I cramped his style. With Robin there's no in between. You're either for him or against him."

Eventually, the duo track Robin down in a seedy coffeehouse, and try to persuade him to come peacefully and explain himself to the police. After a bystander's insult touches off Robin's hair-trigger temper, a brawl ensues, and Robin is hospitalized. When they visit and attempt to talk with him, Robin harshly berates both his ex-wife and his mother; but his mother responds in kind:

"You're just a sensitive artist lost amongst all the Philistines who don't know what art is. And to top it off you're a Negro, so that makes you DOUBLY persecuted! The Negro Artist! Let me tell you something boy, if you got the guts to listen. I should've told you a long time ago. The

truth is, you aren't good enough...The problem isn't your color, it's you. All the people who've cared about you – me, your wife, your friends – have handled you with kid gloves, because if we said something you disagreed with, you'd just shout us down or run away. You ran from marriage, the police, the truth about your music." Thanks to his mother's "tough love," Robin vows to reform himself, and once released obtains an office job in the same firm where his ex-wife works, and begins to reconcile with her.

Meanwhile, Father Fitzgibbon approaches jeweler Bennett, and applies some "tough love" of his own. After cannily leading Bennett to contradict his own prior testimony that Robin was responsible for beating Bennett, Fitz demands, "What do you have against Robin Green?" "His was the first Negro family. After them more moved in, and after that, this neighborhood and my business was never the same. I should've moved out of this neighborhood years ago. But I was born here. Why should I have to move?" Bennett replies. "Don't make Robin Green a scapegoat because you're a poor businessman. A lot of people have done very well in this neighborhood. Maybe you should meet them halfway. Don't you think they know how you feel? Don't hide your feelings -- CHANGE them!" the priest orders his bigoted parishioner. When Bennett whimpers, "Easier said than done," Father Fitzgibbon states coldly, "Who said anything about it being easy?"[152]

Though "Run, Robin, Run" does feature African-American characters and discussion of issues of racial discrimination, the episode handles such issues gingerly. The central character, Robin, is an angry, disgruntled child-man who refuses to take on responsibility. Such a character

– indeed, the entire story -- could just as easily have been performed by whites, with only a few lines of dialogue changed. The episode is focuses much more on Robin's character flaws than on his justified outrage at discrimination or on a powerful condemnation of racism.

In keeping with the tenor of *Going My Way*, Connelly and Mosher's approach to writing television, and indeed, in that of the television industry of the time itself, no attempt was made to overtly challenge the status quo or condemn racial injustice. Robin's problems are presented as largely the result of his own attitude, and the other characters challenge him to change himself and his view toward society, rather than encouraging him to devote his energy to reforming society itself. This conveys the message that blacks should strive to succeed in spite of discrimination, rather than opposing it. Indeed, the relative success achieved by Robin's mother and ex-wife may seem a token sop emerging from the post-World War II cultural consensus: if they work hard, no matter how discriminated against they may be, anyone can succeed.

At the same time, however, no one in the episode contradicts Robin's assertions that racial discrimination exists. Rather – as on *Leave It To Beaver* – the program does not advocate action, but gently and subtly inserts the idea that discrimination against blacks is wrong. While the episode does not feature any discussion of equality, civil rights, or the various movements millions of Americans were at that moment supporting, yet Father Fitzgibbon – obviously the moral center of the episode – tells Bennett his bigotry is wrong, and orders him to change. Considering that many older, traditionalist Catholic clergy in real life opposed integration, Father

Fitzgibbon's enlightened attitude toward race is a definite if subtle means of pointing out the "correct" attitude the program's viewers were meant to emulate.

If, in retrospect, *Going My Way*'s approach to the issue of race appears timid and feeble, it is important to remember that given the era in which the program was first transmitted, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect anything else. Twenty-first century television analysis is shaped and informed by a popular culture which has dissected the issue of race far more forthrightly, from *All in the Family* through *The Cosby Show* to *In Living Color* and beyond. Though a product of its time and a captive of the prejudices of the era in which it was created, *Going My Way* should be acknowledged for portraying an African-American (even a selfish, embittered one) who is aggrieved with the system. And the episode can be appreciated for its other small triumphs. Actor Ivan Dixon renders a vivid and dynamic portrayal of Robin Green. (The next year, Dixon starred in *Nothing But a Man*, a landmark film about America's African-American underclass and its quest for a meaningful place in American society; later, Dixon went on to be a noted director, though today he is best remembered for his part as radioman Kinchloe on *Hogan's Heroes*.) Alternately, the episode's scene of the staunchly traditionalist Father Fitzgibbon – clad as always in cassock and biretta – entering a jazz coffeehouse and debating philosophy with a group of beatniks is positively surreal.

But if "Run, Robin, Run" offered even an ambivalent acknowledgement of the changing times, another episode of *Going My Way* presented the viewer with an uncompromisingly nostalgic – and enthusiastic -- embrace of the political structures of the past.

In the Eastern urban *milieu*, there had always existed extensive cooperation between the Democratic party (and, when that party was in power, the civil government), the institutional structures established by the party, and the Catholic Church. Throughout the nineteenth and into the mid-twentieth centuries, Catholics comprised a major portion of the immigrants to the United States; but without roots in this country, the new immigrants sought institutions which would replicate those of the "old country" and offer them assistance and advice. The Democratic party was willing to exchange such support and government aid for the votes of the immigrants, and the political power such votes would give them. Writing of New York's Democratic political machine, Cardinal Spellman biographer John Cooney notes:

> The Church and Tammany Hall were the sources of social welfare for immigrants. Because of the willingness of Tammany to provide them with food, clothing, and fuel in emergencies and to aid those who ran afoul of the law, these new Americans became devoted to the machine. The Church, as often as not, was willing to ignore the graft, corruption, and fraudulent voting practices because Tammany Hall was so effective in helping people. Also, politics in New York as in Boston was a path of upward mobility for the economically blocked Catholics. Tammany Hall became dominated by men who were usually Catholic and Irish, and the Church, as did many citizens, benefited from their favors.[153]

Such cooperation between party and Church was manifested in ways large and small, though the latter predominated. Often, mutual "back-scratching" was engaged in by party functionaries and Catholic clergy: "the Democratic party rented parish halls for meetings, city contractors paved the occasional parochial school playground free of charge, and ward officers found employment for parishioners recommended by the local priest."[154]

As European and Catholic immigration tapered off, and (in the wake of the New Deal) federal agencies began to assume responsibility for social welfare programs which had

previously been the province of local government or political parties, so too did Catholic political influence begin to diminish. In the late 1950s and early '60s, though the Church still retained some of its prior leverage, clearly the situation was changing. By midcentury, federal government programs were taking over the social welfare programs which had previously been the province of the Church. Simultaneously, civil service reforms were eliminating the ability of machine politics to dispense patronage in the form of jobs. Even so, in New York Irish Catholicism retained its power into the 1960s; many of those in local politics, labor unions, and the police department were Irish Catholics, and they continued to give a degree of deference to Church leaders.[155] It would only be with a generational change of newly-affluent young Catholics abandoning urban neighborhoods for suburbia, the move of churches and urban life away from such overt partisanship, and the subsequent decline of political parties as providers of services, that the situation would truly change.

And yet, by the late 1950s, that change was occurring was undeniable, and apparent to everyone. Along with the overt cronyism and open partisanship, an entire way and style of "doing politics" was disappearing, as its adherents died, retired, or were forced out by a younger generation with different ideas of appropriate behavior. One example on the national scene was the sharp contrast in image between the young, modern John F. Kennedy, and the older, more openly partisan style of his vice-president, Lyndon Johnson.. -- a difference which in small part contributed to the contempt many of the supporters of the former felt for the latter.

Not surprisingly, those accustomed to the older ways mourned their passing. One notable example was Edwin O'Connor's 1956 novel *The Last Hurrah*.[156] Inspired by and based heavily upon Boston's political boss James Michael Curley, who served as the city's mayor off and on from the 1910s through the late 1940s and who served one term as the governor of Massachusetts, *The Last Hurrah* tells the story of Frank Skeffington, long-time "boss" of an unnamed Eastern city with a heavily Irish Catholic population. Skeffington, though elderly, is once again running for mayor, but is opposed by the youthful and charismatic World War II veteran Kevin McCluskey. Skeffington declares that the campaign will be his "last hurrah," and sets about using all of the familiar devices of machine politics, from campaign rallies to appearances at wakes to outright blackmail, to win the election. Along the way, Skeffington battles both the "reform" forces of McCluskey, and the city's anti-Catholic bankers and businessmen, most of whom are brahminesque Protestants. However, the world has changed, and ultimately, Skeffington loses the election, suffers a massive heart attack, and dies.

While O'Connor's novel was forthright about the seamier aspects of machine politics, it was also an elegy for a way of political life then coming to a close in American history. This elegiac tone was underlined when *The Last Hurrah* was filmed by Irish-American director John Ford in 1958. Starring Spencer Tracy as Skeffington (and, of course, Pat O'Brien, though for once as a politician and not as a priest), the movie presented a nostalgic view of the era of the political machine, particularly the way it served as a means of advancement for the Irish. It also presented political boss Skeffington more sympathetically, transforming O'Connor's complex blend of corrupt manipulator and populist hero into an Irish charmer, whose charisma makes

even blatant corruption seem humorous, as he blackmails his political opponents with an Irish twinkle firmly in his eye.

Given its setting in the urban Catholic world, its then-recent success and popularity, and above all its sympathetic portrayal of the Irish, it is unsurprising that *The Last Hurrah* also served as the inspiration for an episode of *Going My Way*. "The Boss of the Ward" opens with elderly ward boss Frank McAfee greeting parishioners after mass, while performing acts stereotypical of a politician –shaking hands, slapping backs, slipping poor people money, kissing babies, and the like – as Mrs. Featherstone looks on approvingly. "A grand man," the housekeeper beams, but Father O'Malley appears ambivalent. "The last of the old-school politicians," the young curate states, not quite approvingly. "And more's the pity," Mrs. Featherstone huffs. O'Malley replies, "I wouldn't say that exactly, but Frank's alright. Shame about what's happening to him. We're going to miss him. The new regime's replaced him as ward leader. It may only be a rumor, but don't tell Father Fitz. They're old friends, and it may upset him to learn they're putting another old firehorse out to pasture."

Meanwhile, county chairman Tony Alonzo tells the youthful, handsome Tommy Noonan, "It's all set Tommy. You're in, McAfee is out. You run the ward." Tommy complains that McAfee is still "going around acting the high and mighty," but Alonzo reassures him that soon, Frank will learn his place. "Do you expect any trouble from the priests at St Dominic's? Father Fitzgibbon is an old friend of Frank's," Noonan asks next. Alonzo replies, "I picked an

opportune time to dump Frank. Father Fitzgibbon doesn't get around like he used to, and that young firebrand O'Malley's out of town for a while."

With Father O'Malley away at an educational conference, Father Fitzgibbon makes his "parish rounds," dropping in at Frank McAfee's Neighborhood Association office. Bypassing a long line of elderly individuals waiting to appeal to McAfee for aid, Fitzgibbon talks privately with Frank, praising the methods of the past as he does so. "To many people, the word 'ward heeler' has a bad name. But to me it's always been a benevolent sort of place, where people who wanted a favor, or a month's rent, or, in the old days, a bucket of coal, could come and see a man they know, one of their own kind, who understood them...not some officious clerk in the welfare office with a title and a smirk." He then hands McAfee a list of "one or two little things you might turn your hand to," such as getting a young immigrant who assaulted a police officer out of jail, and giving an alcoholic panhandler a handout. While promising to help, McAfee commiserates with the elderly priest, telling him about his impending replacement, but vowing that he will keep his position.

Shortly thereafter, Fitzgibbon counsels a young couple, Joe and Nora, who reveal that they wish to get married "as soon as possible." When Fitz glares and says disapprovingly, "Why as soon as possible?" the two reveal that they have already been married by a justice of the peace and wish to regularize their relationship with a church wedding, but fear parental disapproval: "I'm in college. They'd never have stood for it until I graduated, and I didn't have a job. We couldn't live together, so we just thought we'd keep it quiet for a while," Joe reveals. However,

Joe has been promised a city job by Frank McAfee, so that Joe can maintain his studies and their parents will approve. Fitzgibbon promises to talk with their parents, telling the young man, “In the meantime you may call on Nora at her home. But leave by ten o’clock -- and no hanky-panky in the meantime!”

But Frank McAfee is learning that his influence no longer exists. “I’ve been making promises all over the world,” the ward heeler laments to his wife. “I’ve never broken my word, now I’m making promises I can’t keep, I can’t say no.” “Do they need you, or do you need them? You’ve been a big man for a long time, Frank. It’s hard to settle down to being a little one,” his wife gently replies. “I’ve never been a little man, and I’m never going to be one!” the prideful ward boss booms. “I’m going to keep every promise!”

Suiting his action to his word, McAfee calls on county chairman Alonzo, who bluntly tells Frank, “You’re out for good. It’s a new image in politics, a new face to the public. Young men, men in the business community – they’re the future.” Alonzo tells Frank to go through Tommy Noonan, who delights in humiliating the elderly boss, telling him, “You’ve got nothing!” Departing in disgrace, McAfee begs the new boss to at least make certain that Joe receives the job Frank has promised him.

Meanwhile, Father Fitzgibbon is also having difficulties with younger people. Joe and Nora’s parents firmly oppose their marriage, with Nora’s parents threatening to have Joe arrested, and Joe’s mother stating she’ll have their relationship annulled. “I’m not letting him

give up his education," Joe's mother says; but Father Fitzgibbon lays down the law to the parents: "You have nothing to say about it. I'm through wearing a velvet glove. Joseph and Nora want to get married in the church, and in the circumstances I agree with them," the priest tells the startled parents.

But all their plans are thrown into jeopardy with the announcement that Frank McAfee has collapsed with a heart attack, brought on by stress and the shame of having lost his status and power. As Father Fitzgibbon comforts Frank's wife, the newly-returned Father O'Malley calls on county chairman Alonzo. "Ours isn't a rich ward, but it's a politically zealous one. But what if those solid majorities you've had for 35 years started going the other way? I don't have a Univac, but I'd like to predict your political future. You're going to lose a ward. Frank McAfee is the friend of every priest, minister and rabbi in that area." When Alonzo complains that O'Malley is "introducing religion into politics," the cleric replies, "There's nothing to say that a man of the cloth – a priest, a minister, a rabbi – can't express a personal opinion...and you'd be surprised how many people respect our opinion. You'd also be surprised how we get around."

Alonzo defends the party's actions: "We want to give a new face to politics. We want to attract the young men, the able men, men who can add honor and luster to politics. I don't want to destroy Frank McAfee, but Frank is of the old school. He won't go along with what we're trying to accomplish." But Father O'Malley speaks harshly to the party chairman. "Survey that ward. See how many young people are there, and how many old-timers. Our people aren't interested in the party's plans for the future, the 'big picture.' Most of our people are poor, and

they need help, and they need favors: admission to the hospital, increase in a welfare allotment, a job for deserving relative. That's what Frank did for them. They remember that, and they remember Frank. When the word gets out how you kicked Frank around, broke his heart, put him in his deathbed, I doubt you'll have one party member left in the ward." A humbled Alonzo asks Father O'Malley what he should do. "If I were you, I'd put the will to live back in Frank McAfee," the curate replies. Alonzo acts with alacrity, calling in Noonan and berating him for being "a stupid, half-witted, incompetent jackass!" and ordering him to set things right.

The episode ends with the news that McAfee and Noonan will run the ward in partnership – "sort of a coadjutor," Father Fitzgibbon notes – and, with his city job now secured, Joe and Nora get married, a wedding attended by the now-recovered McAfee. "May they be blessed with many fine children," Father Fitzgibbon states. Back comes the once-again sprightly ward heeler's reply: "And every one of them a vote for the party! I'm off. I haven't missed a wedding, a wake, a christening, a bar mitzvah, or a shindig in this ward for 25 years...and I'm too old to start missing them now!" as he moves off with a spring in his step and an Irish twinkle in his eye.[157]

This episode of *Going My Way* offers a sharp contrast with its obvious inspiration. Where the book and movie adaptation of *The Last Hurrah* are tinged with nostalgia for the era of Irish domination and mourn the loss of some elements of the old way of politics – such as its communitarian ethos, under which the machine did provide some services to disadvantaged citizens in return for their votes – they also depict the corruption, blatant fraud, and cronyism

which existed under the old system; and while Frank Skeffington personally is presented as a sentimental charmer, his assistants are shown to be scheming manipulators, con men, sycophants, or buffoons.

In contrast, "The Boss of the Ward" is nothing less than an unabashed glorification of the era of Irish Catholic-dominated urban machine politics. The episode lacks the elegiac tone of *The Last Hurrah*'s acknowledgement that the world has moved on, and no condemnation is made or even implied of the vast corruption which existed. Instead, the episode treats such incidents as a ward heeler using his influence to get a thug who assaults police released from jail as an innocent, beneficial act. "The Boss of the Ward" openly applauds the machine system, and presents a world in which it is not only alive and thriving, but fully deserves to be.

Furthermore, unlike *The Last Hurrah*'s Skeffington, who despite some positive accomplishments and his personal charm is also a hard-headed political boss not above using blackmail to get his way, Frank McAfee is portrayed as an honest, hard-working man of the people, who has spent his career selflessly helping others, and who is now cruelly and vindictively being turned out into the harsh world after being thoroughly humiliated by a scheming party functionary and his brainless stooge. The episode presents McAfee as an object of pity, wronged after a career of representing the "little guy's" interests. (Inevitably, McAfee is played by Pat O'Brien, fresh from his role as Skeffington's Irish flunky in *The Last Hurrah* – and a career of playing stereotypical Irish priests.)

The episode is rife with other flaws. It is realistic that the elderly, traditionalist Father Fitzgibbon would be sympathetic to McAfee and the system he represents, and that the two would be fast friends. Indeed, such arrangements were common prior to 1960, as John McGreevy notes:

> Catholics habitually asked the local Democratic club for assistance with problems. In turn, when a politician wanted to verify his notion of what people were thinking about, he would check with the priest...Since the late nineteenth century, priest and politician had created a well-worn path between parish rectory and ward office, using ties formed in one place to assist in problems encountered in another. Geographical boundaries, an all-male hierarchy, and organizational discipline were characteristic of both the Catholic parish system and the Democratic party wards. "There is hardly a corner of the city," wrote one Chicago analyst, "that does not boast in its neighborhood lore of a monsignor who in days gone by was a political power in his own right.[158]

However, the episode poorly reflects the reality of the early 1960s by having Father O'Malley – a rising, progressive curate described as a "young firebrand" – uncritically accept a corrupt political system that younger Catholic clergy and laity in the early 1960s were in the midst of abandoning and even stridently opposing, with the episode even going so far as to show O'Malley using his influence to *restore* the longtime "boss" to power. This presents a contradiction with reality, especially given the number of young Catholic clergy in the era sympathetic to civil rights and other political reform causes in the early 1960s.[159] It also fails to address (save obliquely) the changing demographics of the era – the move of young, middle-class Catholics from the inner city to the suburbs, and the decay of old ward-style politics and urban parish life as a result. In this – as in several other episodes – the program demonstrates the internal contradiction which marked *Going My Way*.

As a result of this recurrent contradiction and the program's tendency toward nostalgia, *Going My Way* was hampered at its outset. Contemporaneous television critics disdained the show. In a negative preview of the fall 1962's prime-time offerings, *Time* magazine said of *Going My Way*, "In other seasons, a cassock opera like this one might have stood out like a High Mass in the Copacabana. But many of the new season's heroes are so strong on dynamic positivism that these men in black seem almost sinister by comparison."[160] *Commonweal*'s editor James O'Gara, a representative of the youthful, progressive wing of the American Church eager for change, displayed mingled contempt and rage toward the series in his review, sneering that the program's "unabashedly pietistic" attitude "constitutes a reasonable index of the level of religious literacy that prevails." Apparently, an intellectual highbrow of O'Gara's caliber could not appreciate the necessity for a television program to be aimed at a mass audience; O'Gara laments that the writing on a 1960's TV sitcom does not equal that of the obscure 19th century French novelist Leon Bloy.[161]

Other critical and trade press reaction to the series was limited. *New York Times* reviewer Jack Gould dismissed the program as "a lackluster variation on the film that starred Bing Crosby and Barry Fitzgerald;"[162] *TV Radio Mirror* carried an article which was overtly a publicity puff-piece about Gene Kelly and barely mentioned *Going My Way*,[163] while *Variety* featured no review of the program at all.[164]

Advertising trade magazine *Sponsor* noted that *Going My Way*'s principal backer, Breck Shampoo, had high hopes for the program,[165] spending $3.2 million on the show, "the largest

broadcast buy Breck has ever made."[166] Calling the series "human, believable, lively, and heartwarming," Breck representatives based their purchase on audience familiarity with the original movie, the popularity of Gene Kelly, the show's presumed family appeal, and the fact that *Going My Way* would have the popular (and more expensive) Western *Wagon Train* as a lead-in, thus attracting more viewers.[167] Subsequent issues of *Sponsor* noted that, while the program ranked in the top ten imported U.S. series by British viewers,[168] and Breck planned to sponsor broadcasts of the series in Central America,[169] a poll of American TV editors and columnists found that *Going My Way* was the "most disappointing" series of the 1962-63 season.[170]

*Television Magazine*'s annual "Forecast" issue devoted to upcoming fall shows featured a prediction by analyst James Cornell that *Going My Way* would win its timeslot due to the carry-over audience from *Wagon Train* and its lackluster competition in its first half-hour; but Cornell "question[ed] the likelihood of a religious morality story laced with humor ever scoring big."[171] Though the latter part of his comment was accurate, Cornell's prediction of *Going My Way* winning its timeslot was in error; as noted by *Television*'s follow-up "Hindsight" article several months later, "a good part of the ABC *Wagon Train* audience switched over to catch the closing half-hour of *The Virginian*." Cornell also predicted that *The Beverly Hillbillies* would win the later part of *Going My Way*'s timeslot, though even he was surprised by the degree of that show's success – a success noted by *Television*'s Deborah Haber in an article dubbing *Hillbillies* "Television's First Family": "At ABC, big movie draw Gene Kelly seemed a promising starter in *Going My Way*, from the Academy Award picture by the same name. *The Hillbillies* took aim

and – Pow! Right in the ratings. *Going My Way* was mortally wounded; it goes off the air next season."[172]

Like *The Beverly Hillbillies* (if far less manic, cornball, and slapstick), *Going My Way* was an early 1960's prime-time drama/situation comedy, and as such, operated under and possessed all the limitations and defects of the form. Yet, one need not exhibit the level of snobbish disdain for mainstream entertainment held by James O'Gara and the many journalists who found *Going My Way* the "most disappointing" series on TV to note that the program could have been more overtly ambitious. As with *Leave It To Beaver*, harsh events or influences were rarely encountered and, when they were, were often downplayed or handled delicately on the TV version of *Going My Way*. Often on the program, not much "happens;" there is little excitement in the priestly show which, like *Beaver*, was largely a gentle, slow-paced slice of life.

Unfortunately, there was far less potential for even mild amusement on *Going My Way*. Unlike *Leave It To Beaver, Going My Way* dealt with two mature priests, instead of a pair of mischievous boys. The desire to turn Fathers O'Malley and Fitzgibbon into a "double act" similar to Amos and Andy or Wally and the Beaver often misfired badly on *Going My Way*, with the elderly Father Fitzgibbon coming across as hopelessly bumbling and incompetent at some times, and Father O'Malley acting almost childish at others (in one episode, O'Malley incongruously gives a boyish Indian "war whoop" in the rectory for no apparent reason). Connelly may have been trying to recreate the comic dynamics with which his prior experiences had familiarized him; but if so, his attempt largely failed.

In terms of story the program also fell short. A few episodes focused entirely on one or the other of the priests; but unfortunately, these tended to be the most humorous and openly comedic episodes. Others introduced a parishioner or other outsider with a problem, and the priests either helped resolve it (Father O'Malley), or, with well-meaning interference, made it worse (Father Fitzgibbon). And some episodes revolved almost completely around outsiders, with the priests appearing only at the beginning to introduce the scenario. A very few episodes were serious dramas. Others – like "The Parish Car" and "Keep an Eye on Santa Claus" – were outright comedies. The vast majority were somewhere in between, mild tales of mild people with mild problems told mildly, like -- well, like an episode of *Leave It To Beaver*. Despite some few episodes that flirted with social critique and which featured riveting guest performances – Ivan Dixon's rebellious African-American youth in "Run, Robin, Run" and James Whitmore's agnostic doctor in "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven" -- most stories were largely "nice" tales, which failed not only to take advantage of the opportunity for social comment, but which often almost completely ignored the show's lead characters.

The lack of characterization was another major flaw in the show. Failing to use anything but bland, episodic storylines, the program could at least have offered some interesting mentor/pupil character interaction, à la contemporaneous programs like *Ben Casey* or *Dr. Kildare*. Had Leo G. Carroll's Father Fitzgibbon been given consistent characterization as either a wise, fatherly mentor, or as a genuinely irascible and inflexible superior firmly rooted in the past, he could have presented a sharp contrast to O'Malley, and the resulting character

interaction would have made for an involving relationship for viewers; but as a malaprop-spouting, comic relief bumbler, Father Fitzgibbon generated neither tension nor sympathy.

Similarly, Father O'Malley was not allowed by the show's writers (or, more likely, ABC's network overseers) to be a firebrand reformer. Had the courage and pugnacity Gene Kelly wanted to bring to the character of Father O'Malley consistently been tapped and occasionally allowed to burst forth, rather than implicitly bubbling beneath the surface, a much richer and more exciting character (and program) would have resulted. Indeed, had the show's lead character been a passionate, progressive, socially involved priest, plots practically would have written themselves – especially given the events of 1962!

Much of Gene Kelly's portrayal of Father O'Malley was an attempt to imitate the human but noble priests he himself had known in his youth. Yet Kelly's ambitions for the part were undercut by the series' writers and producers' reluctance to put their lead characters front and center in the program, and by a network "standards and practices" department which discouraged anything which smacked of controversy. As Kelly himself said:

> I was hemmed in by the strict censorship then in effect, which allowed a Catholic priest to do nothing untoward. Our idea was that he be a two-fisted character and a social crusader, but the censors cut us down. It would have been interesting to have made the series years later when the medium and the public were more mature.[173]

Kelly's growing disenchantment with the content of the role combined with the grueling shooting schedule of a television program, to which Kelly was unaccustomed. Kelly's biographer Clive Hirshhorn states that

> As it was the first TV series in which he had appeared, Gene found the pace and the weight of the lines he was expected to learn sheer drudgery. The shooting schedule was extremely tight (each story had to be completed in four days, leaving a fifth day free for reading the next script and the weekend to commit lines to memory), and when it came to an end, he was glad to move onto something which did not invite the same rigid routine.[174]

As the series progressed, Gene Kelly was increasingly absent. Several episodes in the latter half of the series feature only a cameo appearance by Kelly, with Father O'Malley shown making a brief phone call to the rectory before the main plot continues without him. In several others, O'Malley is not present at all, with the mismatched duo of Father Fitzgibbon and Tom Colwell awkwardly left to carry the action. This absence of the program's main attraction likely further discouraged even the show's few remaining viewers.

It is clear that at the production level, the show was to some degree directionless, without a firm grasp of its storytelling potential. It is possible that producer Joe Connelly did not possess such a vision (though *Leave It To Beaver* maintained a consistent tone and perspective throughout). Far more likely, the fear of interference from both Church officials and network executives may have undercut much of what Connelly planned. As a result, the program's inconsistency was a major flaw.

Given these difficulties, one possible attraction *Going My Way* could have had for viewers was superior storytelling. Coming off of the "Golden Age" of relevant television drama, and given its semi-anthology format, *Going My Way* could have provided a powerful venue for social commentary and moral parable. But series producer Joe Connelly was no Rod Serling, just

as *Leave It To Beaver* was hardly *The Twilight Zone.* Nevertheless, given the fascinating events both in Catholicism and broader society occurring at the time, the program must be mourned as a lost opportunity -- if not for evangelization, then simply for compelling drama.

This in fact was the kind of program that Gene Kelly would have preferred. According to Clive Hirshhorn:

> Gene wanted to make the role more relevant, dealing with controversial subjects and including social comment, but the restrictions placed on him by the Church and the censors made for a "watered down" version of what the program could have been....Once the writers tried to introduce some red corpuscles into the series by devising a story in which a young girl, seeking an abortion, comes to Father O'Malley for advice. The network balked in terror and scotched it completely.[175]

While it is hardly surprising that in 1963 ABC rejected a storyline about abortion (even today, the subject remains one of the few taboos on network television, only rarely referenced even in serious dramas), there was a program airing at the same time which demonstrates the kind of themes *Going My Way* could have tackled, had its creators been more ambitious and its networks and advertisers less squeamish.

The CBS legal drama *The Defenders* starred E.G. Marshall as Lawrence Preston, a seasoned, traditionalist defense attorney with 20 years' experience, and Robert Reed as his passionate son and legal partner Kenneth, a recent law school graduate. Created and written by Reginald Rose, one of the famed "angry young men" of TV's "Golden Age," *The Defenders* was notable for eschewing bland, "safe" plots in favor of a serious treatment of various social issues. In contrast to the "play-it-safe" attitude of nearly all television programming at the time, *The*

*Defenders* frequently dealt with topical and controversial subjects. [176] Among the issues examined in the series were government restrictions on visiting unfriendly nations, blacklisting, euthanasia, and even, in its February 1st, 1964 episode "All the Silent Voices," artificial contraception. In the episode, a female doctor is arrested and charged with violating laws against the dissemination of birth control literature. Though at the time of the broadcast most of the U.S. had wrought changes in laws regulating contraception, in a few localities it was still illegal to possess contraceptives and for doctors to provide them, suggest the use of them, or pass out medical pamphlets discussing birth control. The episode revolves not only around the Prestons' framing of the doctor's legal defense (a task made more difficult in that the doctor admits that she did break the law as written), but also a discussion of the morality of the law, and of individual rights to contraception versus those of the babies who never would be born because of birth control -- the "silent voices" of the episode's title.[177]

*The Defenders* demonstrated that it was possible to air drama with serious social commentary; indeed, the program won an Emmy award for writing every season it was on television. Given the moral authority possessed by the Catholic Church, the tremendous popularity possessed by the Church at the time, the historic events then taking place both within the Church and outside it, and a prime-time television series centered on Catholic clergy, the refusal of *Going My Way* to confront serious subjects openly and dramatically must be viewed as the program's most damning failure.

True, other top-rated and critically-acclaimed series of the era now considered classics, like *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and *The Andy Griffith Show,* rarely went in for searing social critique; but both of those programs were straight situation comedies which never pretended to be anything else. Nor were a fictional TV comedy writer or small-town sheriff expected to possess the moral authority and dynamism of a Catholic priest – especially given the pop-culture heritage of actors like Spencer Tracy, Karl Malden, and Pat O'Brien.

But if the series could have been more dynamic and dramatic, this still begs the question of why it failed at the time (though a lack of plots, characters, and theme is surely one clue). Another major reason for the failure of TV's *Going My Way* to gain an audience during its original airing in prime time was the program's competition. In the early 1960s there were only three television networks, and often ABC's fare was the weakest of the three. This was borne out by Nielsen ratings; from its inception until the 1970s, ABC was the perennial third-place network. Due to its placement on the prime-time schedule (Wednesday nights at 8:30 p.m. Eastern), *Going My Way* was in direct competition with the last half-hour of the 90-minute Western drama *The Virginian* on NBC, and two half-hour situation comedies on CBS: the popular *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis,* and the premiere season of *The Beverly Hillbillies*. *Hillbillies* became a breakout hit; in its second season, it was the #1-rated program on all of television[178], and it remained in the Top Ten for a decade. *Going My Way* series regular Dick York attributed the failure of the series to its competing timeslot with *The Beverly Hillbillies*, though he noted that "in the summer when the reruns began, the ratings went through the roof." [179] (This reflected the fact that in that era, most viewers typically watched their preferred

programming in its "first run" during the traditional September-May television season; in the summer, when reruns aired, viewers often chose to watch one of the programs they had not earlier.) Two of the program's four major sponsors – William Morris cigarettes and Breck shampoo – were willing to fund a second season; but by the time reruns demonstrated some success, the studio had already released *Going My Way*'s actors and production crew from their contracts to seek other work.[180]

Furthermore, there is the massive cultural footprint of the original movie *Going My Way* to consider. The movie had become a touchstone for generations of viewers – particularly Catholics, who might have been most expected to tune in to the TV show. Given the various disappointing departures of the TV series from the movie – no Bing Crosby, no Barry Fitzgerald, no music, no singing, and despite the presence of Gene Kelly, not even any dancing – many audience members may have felt there was nothing to make the television program worth watching, especially when contrasted with the humorous antics of Granny, Jed, and Jethro. (The cassock-clad clerics of *Going My Way* also failed to offer male viewers the sight of voluptuous blonde Ellie Mae Clampett in tight jeans and a tighter shirt.)

So *Going My Way* was cancelled after its only season -- which explains in large part why the program is forgotten today. After initially airing on prime-time network TV, many programs enter the syndication market, where they are rerun by local stations, often once or more every day, for years. (It was their constant exposure in reruns, not their relative failure in prime time, which made programs like *Star Trek* and *Gilligan's Island* into pop-culture institutions.) But for

many years it was considered necessary for a series to have had a run of about 100 episodes, or four full seasons, for syndication to be financially viable.[181] Having run for only one season of 30 episodes, *Going My Way* was rarely if ever syndicated domestically. As a result, it did not obtain the same decades-long familiarity as other series, and so has been forgotten. Reruns of *Going My Way* did enjoy some success overseas, particularly in Catholic countries; the program ran in Venezuela under the title *El Buen Pastor,* and in West Germany as *St. Dominic und Seine Schäfchen* [loosely translated, "The Little Flock of St. Dominic's"];[182] but this did not and has not given the program greater awareness in its country of origin. The television program *Going My Way* remains a genuine television obscurity, often reduced to a footnote – if even that – in standard histories and indices of television programming.[183]

In fact, so obscure is *Going My Way* that the only prior scholarly work which has devoted attention to the television series Richard Wolff's *The Church on TV*. As such, Wolff's critique deserves analysis and response.[184] Wolff's primary thesis is that "successful [church-set] programs avoid focusing on contentious social issues and personal vices faced by church leaders, and instead take a cheerful, inoffensive approach to ecclesial subject matter,"[185] while "those focusing on controversy – no matter how realistic or relevant – fare poorly by television's standards of success, such as ratings or longevity."[186] This is so, Wolff says, because "fictional faith is a reflection of actual believers' faith in the church and what it represents…it presents the world with a popular image of an institution they consider sacred."[187]

While Wolff's assertion generally is sound enough in broad strokes – it is only logical that devoutly religious viewers would prefer their faith be presented in an upbeat, positive fashion, rather than portrayed as riddled with controversy, doubt, and hypocrisy – when it comes to the television series *Going My Way*, Wolff grossly overstates his case, demonstrating both a want of nuance and a lack of knowledge regarding trends and movements in American Catholic history of the period.[188]

Throughout his analysis of *Going My Way*, Wolff peppers his description of the series with words like "sappy," "slapstick," and "sentimental."[189] As already admitted, *Going My Way* was not a hard-boiled, controversy-ridden drama a la *The Defenders*. But neither was it exclusively the vapid exercise in banality Wolff implies. Wolff fails to acknowledge the dramatic tension (even – dare one say it? -- *controversy*) present in episodes like "Run, Robin, Run" and "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven." If such controversy was not presented in quite as confrontational and overtly dramatic a fashion as that on *The Defenders* or *The Twilight Zone*, that is largely attributable to the fact that *Going My Way* was intended as a gentle comedy, and was produced by a man with no prior experience in writing drama.

Indeed, if *Going My Way* in fact solely comprised "simplistic stories," "exaggerated emotions," and "formulaic plots" as Wolff claims,[190] then by his own thesis the program should have been wildly successful, renewed for multiple seasons and popular with Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and atheists alike. Yet the program was little remarked-upon or reviewed in its

own day, was cancelled after a single season, was rarely if ever shown in syndication, and retains practically no footprint even in standard television reference works.

Wolff attributes *Going My Way*'s failure solely to its placement against *The Beverly Hillbillies* on the broadcast schedule. As we have seen, such placement was one major factor in the failure of *Going My Way*; but it was only one. It is going too far to assert, as Wolff does, that such competition was the ONLY reason for the program's failure. As noted, there were numerous other factors which contributed to the program's lack of success, from its failure to provide the songs and musical interludes of the movie, to the frequent absence of the show's star Gene Kelly from the latter episodes of the season. But perhaps the greatest reason for *Going My Way*'s failure was the show's unwillingness to acknowledge the changing demographics of the American Catholic viewing audience, and its refusal to mirror the rapidly-changing religious world which younger Catholic viewers inhabited.

As we have seen, in theme and choice of plot, under their "surface" elements, many episodes obliquely dealt with concerns which were being discussed throughout the Church, and even at the Second Vatican Council itself. Yet on the "surface" and in its basic concept, *Going My Way* was a warm, cozy nostalgia piece which idealized an urban Irish parish life seemingly frozen in amber circa 1930, a period when the Catholic parish was "the locus of life and work and play for pious Catholics and renegades, for prospective converts and hardened sinners," as Father Joseph H. Fichter, S.J., wrote in his 1951 examination of parochial life *Dynamics of a City Church.*[191] In that earlier era, the Church, the clergy, and the parish community had a much

greater – even overriding – influence in the lives of its congregants. This is accurately reflected on *Going My Way*. On the program, parishioners readily turn to priests for help or advice in solving their problems; in some episodes, it seems as though (particularly older) individuals essentially wait for the priests to "tell them what to do." The character of Father Fitzgibbon not infrequently takes an iron-fisted approach in dealing with his parishioners, such as telling the parents in "The Boss of the Ward" that they have "nothing to say" about their own children being married, adding "I agree with them," as though that settles the issue – as indeed it does, and possibly did in an earlier era in real life.

Similarly, the priests are heavily involved in their parishioners' lives. In "A Man for Mary,"[192] the clergy are instrumental in aiding a woman when a fight with her sister leaves her homeless. The priests find her new lodgings, assist her in getting a job, and even give her singing lessons and help her in her attempts to begin an acting career. In other episodes, the priests settle a disagreement between two feuding brothers,[193] help a struggling deaf couple when the wife regains her hearing,[194] and take sides in a custody battle between a young widow and her domineering mother-in-law.[195]

In other ways, the series also mirrors an earlier era. Father O'Malley is clearly intended to be a youthful, forward-thinking and even somewhat liberal clergyman; yet at times he wears a cassock (usually immediately after he has left the church building proper), and speaks fluent Latin; and while he is clearly open to some degree of ecumenism and is friendly toward clergy of other denominations, he also treats them with a degree of distance and formality, at least in

public gatherings, always calling them "Rabbi Adler" and "Doctor Thornton" rather than by their first names, even though these men are professional colleagues of the same age, in the same line of work, and sitting with him on the same civic committee. Similarly, while on very rare occasions his older pastor calls him "Chuck," O'Malley never fails to address his superior as "Father Fitzgibbon."

The same standard applies to the various laypeople seen in the program. When offered a flower for his lapel, O'Malley refuses, as it's "against regulations;" an altar boy apologizes for "sloppy serving" as mass (short of dropping the wine, it's hard to know what he could've done wrong); hardened teenage gang members address O'Malley respectfully as "Father," and fall silent when he tells them to (indeed, *not* addressing a priest as "Father" appears to be an insult of the first water); police officers are constantly shown tipping their caps whenever Fitzgibbon or O'Malley appear on the scene; and the recurring character of police lieutenant Joe Harris consistently forgoes arresting suspects just on O'Malley's say-so. Furthermore, a strain of cultural Catholicism common to the earlier era of the "Catholic ghetto" dominates particularly the episodes written by Joe Connelly. Connelly's episodes are steeped in Catholic folk tradition and parish life – references to various saints and the Fourteen Holy Helpers, snatches of Irish song, and "parish chatter" between Fitzgibbon and O'Malley over meals (on such subjects as which parishioners were at mass, how expectant mothers are feeling, and the like) are frequent.

A comparison and contrast with Connelly's work on *Leave It To Beaver* is particularly apt. *Beaver*, at the time it aired (1957-63) was somewhat idealized, yet it fairly accurately

reflected the lives of young suburban professionals and their children. By contrast, in its overt text, *Going My Way* was archaic. The program reflected parish life, not as it largely was in 1962, but as it had been thirty years earlier (or, perhaps more accurately, as popular culture had portrayed and Connelly and his contemporaries likely *imagined* it had been thirty years earlier). While in part this approach may have been a deliberate attempt by Connelly to imitate the film *Going My Way*, it may also have been because Connelly and the show's other writers were drawing on their own rose-tinted memories of growing up in a heavily Irish, inner-city parish in New York – or on the stereotypes of such.

Indeed, it is the old-fashioned stereotypes present in the televised *Going My Way* which contributed in large part to the show's failure. Young professionals who had themselves grown up in such surroundings had now chosen to move to suburbia in part to distance themselves from their origins.[196] Along with increased prosperity and social status naturally came a desire for greater acceptance as regular middle-class Americans, not as members of an Irish or Italian enclave. Having in their own lives rejected, outgrown, or moved beyond such categorizations, and as members of a Church which had after centuries of prejudice finally gained acceptance as part of the American cultural mainstream, Catholic viewers may have been nettled to see the same old Catholic stereotypes – grouchy priests with Irish brogues, stern nuns, and credulous, superstitious housekeepers – still being put forth on TV. Such viewers may have rejected the show because they were tired of such imagery: their lives in suburbia differed from those of their parents' generation in the inner city, and they may have wished to see television programming which reflected that. Suburban Catholics increasingly rejected anything that smacked of the

"Catholic ghetto" of their youth, and joined new parishes which manifested new methods of involving Catholics with the world,[197] such as the movement for liturgical reform, Catholic Action, Marriage Encounter, the Christian Family Movement, the Association for Christian Development and the like.[198]Assuredly, such inner-city parishes as those portrayed on *Going My Way* did still exist in 1962;[199] but "the flight of the best and the brightest to the suburbs denuded inner-city parishes of much of their human capital (and the money they brought in)."[200]

During a time of momentous change in the Church, young Catholics likely wanted more than the same tired old stereotypes which had been popular in their parents' day. It was *Going My Way*'s failure to provide such which played the largest role in the program's low ratings and rapid demise. Even secular media analyst James Cornell noted in his review in *Television Magazine* that *Going My Way*'s "appeal is to older people, definitely not children."[201]

Far from "ultimately suggesting that while the church's present lay in the hands of older traditionalists on their way out, its future lay in the hands of those more young and progressive and capable of adapting to the modern world,"[202] on the surface *Going My Way* in fact encouraged the opposite view. Mired in an openly traditionalist view of the Church and overtly unwilling to adapt to change, *Going My Way* aired at a unique moment in American Catholicism, one in which the Church was "opening its windows to the world." The specific circumstances of the Catholic Church in 1962, especially the opening of the Second Vatican Council, represented a crucial moment in American Catholicism, one in which younger Catholics welcomed, even

demanded, a more accurate and realistic – even "controversial" – reflection of the tremendous changes then taking place in the Church, and in their own lives and faith communities.

Thus, despite Wolff's assertion that religiously-themed programs "focusing on controversy – no matter how realistic or relevant – fare poorly by television's standards of success, such as ratings or longevity,"[203] in fact *Going My Way* failed because, *at the specific historical moment it aired in 1962*, it was not "controversial" *enough*…particularly not enough to appeal to the audience of young, suburban Catholics who were most likely to be watching TV. Having experienced the tremendous shift from the "ghetto Catholicism" enshrined by the show to the mainstream American life they themselves were enjoying; with the young, dynamic John F. Kennedy as president; and with accomodation to "the world" bring preached and the Second Vatican Council unfolding before their very eyes, younger, assimilated Catholics tuning in to *Going My Way* wanted to see characters, stories, and situations reflecting the Catholic Church they were reading about in *Time* magazine and experiencing for themselves, not warmed-over Bing Crosby -- or *Leave It To Beaver*.

Similarly, Wolff asserts that the less specific and detailed a television program is about a given denomination's faith practices, the greater the acceptance the program will achieve among a broad range of viewers.[204] This is logical, since most viewers are disinterested in and even discomfited by specific religious practices with which they are not familiar or to which they do not themselves subscribe. Because television – particularly in the pre-cable era – sought to appeal to the broadest possible audience, most programs dealing with religion eschewed

denomination-specific material. However, while not ignoring a larger mass audience, *Going My Way* also deliberately sought to appeal to a specifically Catholic audience. As noted, Joe Connelly was himself a life-long Catholic, and undoubtedly brought much of his own knowledge, memory, and experience to the creation and production of the show. The episodes written by Connelly personally contain a subtle but undeniably richer Catholic atmosphere than do those written by others. In Connelly's episodes, the relationship between Fathers Fitzgibbon and O'Malley seems more relaxed and genuine. The priests frequently discuss (and Mrs. Featherstone gossips about) unseen parishioners' lives, and make frequent references to the causes of specific patron saints and to the Fourteen Holy Helpers, and to specifically Catholic devotions, many of which were soon to be deemphasized or even abandoned in the less devotionally-centered post-Vatican II Church.

This tendency by Connelly, intended to provide Catholic verisimilitude invoke cherished memories in Catholics, likely alienated non-Catholic viewers. While generations of Catholics were familiar with such practices, Protestants and others would have found unexplained references to such purely Catholic practices as "adoration" or "novenas" baffling at best, off-putting at worst. Thus while *Going My Way* may well have been "too Catholic" for non-Catholic viewers, the program wasn't "Catholic enough" – or rather, was "the wrong kind of Catholic" -- to gain a solid core of younger, assimilated Catholic viewers.

Finally, Wolff states that televisual depictions of religion encourage viewers to identify with younger, more progressive clergy, who are more willing to adapt to modern, changing

circumstances.[205] Yet here again, when Wolff applies his thesis to *Going My Way*, he overstates his case and elides the contradictory evidence present in the episodes themselves in favor of his preferred thesis. Wolff claims that *Going My Way* "ultimately suggest[ed] that while the church's present lay in the hands of older traditionalists on their way out, its future lay in the hands of those more young and progressive and capable of adapting to the modern world."[206] In fact, the message of *Going My Way* is not that the young progressives are the future of the church. While more comedic episodes like "The Parish Car" do depict the youthful Father O'Malley as more "capable of adapting to the modern world," this is less due to O'Malley's adaptability than to Father Fitzgibbon's maladroit incompetence. But the entire ethos of the series is that of cassock-clad, domesticated clerics comfortably ensconced in an inner-city "Catholic ghetto". While earlier episodes in *Going My Way* might appear to bear out Wolff's thesis, in the episodes which aired the end of the series, very nearly the opposite is the case.

While Wolff maintains that Father O'Malley is "more progressive" than his traditionalist colleague Father Fitzgibbon,[207] in "The Boss of the Ward," the allegedly progressive Father O'Malley joins Father Fitzgibbon in siding with the forces of tradition in helping to elevate a corrupt political machine over a young, progressive "reform" politician, while in "A Statue for Mama," he espouses a traditional view of marriage – even if it means marrying a gentle innocent to a woman-beating gangster. Further, it is the "traditionalist" Father Fitzgibbon, not the allegedly "progressive" Father O'Malley who aids the beleaguered African-American Robin Green, and who orders a bigoted parishioner to abandon his prejudice in "Run, Robin, Run."

The entire series *Going My Way* glorifies an older style of Catholicism. Thus, in his major thesis (at least, as it regards *Going My Way*), Wolff is wrong; *Going My Way* failed precisely because it WASN'T sufficiently "modern" and "progressive." Such was hardly likely to appeal to the young, modern, assimilated Catholics in the audience who were themselves deliberately turning away from the "ghetto Catholicism" of their parents and assimilating into the American mainstream of John F. Kennedy.

At a time when the Catholic Church was, in John XXIII's words, "throwing open its windows to the world," why did Joe Connelly choose so retrograde and blatantly nostalgic a portrayal of a 1960s inner-city parish? Most obviously, it was through a desire to capitalize on the ambiance and reputation of the film *Going My Way*, beloved by many Catholics (and likely by Connelly himself), and reinforced by other older films. In part it may have been a fear of the burgeoning changes which were confronting Catholicism in the early 1960s – a fear which resulted in a retreat into nostalgia, an idealized portrait of a world which once existed (or as Connelly and other Catholics wished to imagine it had existed).[208]

This nostalgic desire for an idealized past, even as the Church was beginning to accommodate itself to modernity, is a crucial facet of *Going My Way,* and represents much of the program's value to the scholar of American Catholicism. As the only series depicting Catholic parish life on American television in the early 1960s (and one of the few to depict Catholicism, period), the program offers historians a resource for the way in which Catholicism – clergy, laity, and the faith itself – were portrayed and perceived in American mass culture on the still-new

medium of television, during the years the Church was beginning to undergo its emergence from the "long nineteenth century" to embrace modernity.

But while on the surface, *Going My Way* was a placid reflection of the 1930s, the program's undercurrents often told a very different story. The tensions present in the Church in the 1960s were not the central narrative of the series, but were a constant, unacknowledged, and likely unconscious subtext. Aired opposite two of the most popular programs on television, and with a creator/producer mired in old Irish Catholic stereotypes, an audience dominated by memories of the classic movie, and perhaps most of all, saddled with skittish network executives and censors who shied away from anything smacking of either controversy or too much Catholic verisimilitude, the program failed.

For that is perhaps the most notable and salient fact about the TV program *Going My Way*: it failed. Not only did it fail in its own time and on its own terms, coming in third place in the ratings, and failing to win a second season; it has also failed to make even the slightest impression on either Catholic scholars or media historians.[209]

*Going My Way* is the classic example of a project killed by compromise. It tried too hard to be all things to all people while offending none. The result was an anemic and directionless program. At times, it was a comedy – but it could not be too comedic, for fear of being perceived as mocking the Church, alienating Catholic viewers, and (worst of all) driving away advertisers. At times, it was a drama – but it could not be too dramatic or address truly controversial issues

too openly, again for fear of giving offense to a broad swath of viewers and drawing the condemnation of networks standards (not to mention the fact that producer Joe Connelly had no prior experience writing straight drama). It was a "slice of life" program – but unlike the contemporaneous *Leave It To Beaver*, the "slice of life" on which it focused depicted not the lives of the rapidly-growing ranks of middle-class suburbanites and their children (the groups most likely to watch and make a success of a new TV program); rather, it dwelt on a rapidly fading past image of Catholicism, one of which children watching had no experience, and which their parents were choosing in large numbers to abandon. It had priests as lead characters and was set in a Catholic parish – but the characters were not permitted to act *too* authentically Catholic, or to refer too frequently to Catholic beliefs or practices. It had a young Protestant as a lead character, and occasionally featured individuals of other faiths – but did next to nothing meaningful with either. It sometimes centered on genuine social problems – but only for one episode at a time, and such problems were inevitably dealt with only superficially. It sometimes centered on fantastic and humorous characters with a softer, gentler side – but again only for one episode, and such episodes often came across as cloying and insincere. Its name and premise were drawn directly from a beloved musical, and its star was famed for his skill at dance – but the show did not feature any singing or dancing.

Thus, in the final analysis, *Going My Way* was not humorous enough, or serious enough, or Catholic enough, or ecumenical enough, or realistic enough, or whimsical enough, or musical enough, or ANYTHING enough to attract and keep an audience. Little wonder it failed.

And yet, as we have seen, if *Going My Way* almost assiduously avoided open and rigorous discussion of the changes then occurring in the Church, as a product of the time in which it was made such issues DID form the subtext of many episodes. Even while deliberately avoiding open debate on contemporary issues and eschewing overt social critique, and while stubbornly clinging to the externals of an older American Catholicism – close-knit, urban ethnic parishes, cassocks, and exaggerated deference to authoritarian clergy -- *Going My Way* could not help being shaped by and obliquely displaying the uneasy tensions that existed in the Church in the early 1960s, and the pressures being brought to bear by changing attitudes toward marriage, feminism, atheism, ecumenism, and race. Even as Catholicism reached the pinnacle of enthusiastic acceptance into the American mainstream, and was turning away from its centuries-old opposition to "the world" and embracing modernity, *Going My Way* exhibited both the Church's newfound optimism, and its cultural reliance on tradition and reluctance to change. Thus, even in its apparent lack of clear direction and seeming ambiguity, the series serves as a valuable and eloquent, if unwitting, reflection of the state of the American Church on the eve of the Council – and presaged the seismic shifts which would succeed it. In retrospect, the television program *Going My Way* can be seen as a bridge from the older urban, ethnic, traditionalist ethos of American Catholicism, to the modern, forward-looking Church it was shortly to become.

*Going My Way* was both an elegy to an American Catholic way of life that, even as the show aired, was disappearing, and a subtly prophetic vision of the Church that was coming into being. Yet if the lead characters on *Going My Way* were largely the unrealistically virtuous

"heroic priests" of an earlier era, and the program itself a throwback to the portrayals of Catholic clergy of the past, the situation would soon be rectified by an entertainment industry which – like all of American culture and the Catholic Church itself – would very shortly undergo a cataclysmic decade which would change perceptions and portrayals of everything...including priests.

## Chapter 4: "Radical and Human": The Modern Priest on TV, 1968-1980

The early 1960s were a high-water mark in spread of freedom and democracy.[1] In the wake of World War II, the flourishing of democracy proceeded apace. Western European imperialism was ended, and former colonies in Africa and Asia underwent a process of decolonization, while in America, African-Americans were making their case for full equal treatment under the law during the Civil Rights movement, and feminism and other "equal rights" movements were also going forward. Emphasis on issues such as peace, racial integration, environmentalism, and feminism, reflected a new concern for equality and justice, and began to fundamentally change American society and culture.[2]

These social and cultural shifts were accompanied by rapid material and technological progress, as well as changes in seemingly almost every area of human endeavor. Historian Arthur Marwick has identified many major trends which characterized the 1960s, among them: greater democracy, which in turn effectively meant racial, class, and family upheaval, which served to subvert the traditional power and influence of white males, husbands and fathers, and the upper and middle classes; increased permissiveness in the guise of sexual "liberation"; advances in technology, such as television, transistor radios, the "jet age," and the invention of the birth control pill; the rising influence of new subcultures and movements critical of or in opposition to established society; and the increased importance of media – especially films and television -- in influencing culture, particularly by showcasing and thus popularizing the various new subcultures, instances of youth rebellion, and the like, which led to an increased questioning

and defiance of traditional authority. As Marwick notes, "Extreme positions led on to yet more extreme ones, [and] daring films ratified daring behavior."[3]

Such philosophical and cultural shifts, begun in the 1950s, built throughout the '60s, and culminated in the extremely rapid changes which overtook America and the rest of the West in the period 1958-1974. Marwick's theoretical framework of a "long sixties" broken into three distinctive sub-periods, 1958-63, 1964-8/9, and 1969-74, each exhibiting a different phase and accelerating pace of cultural change, is a useful one.[4] Marwick characterizes each phase as follows:

1958-63 – During this period, the impetus and need for moderate reform was recognized, primarily in intellectual circles. (Though the fact is not mentioned by Marwick,[5] this period corresponds to that of the preparation for and first and second sessions of Second Vatican Council, and also coincides perfectly with the papacy of John XXIII.) Marwick also sees this period as attended by a burgeoning youth subculture, and an increasing influence of television and technology.

1964-68 – What Marwick calls the "High Sixties" saw the implementation of rapid change, which in turn triggered even more radical and rapid change later. Especially notable in areas involving mass and popular culture such as novels, film, and music (though not, as yet, television), the implementation included such political and cultural movements as the Great

Society, pop art, the beginnings of the "hippie" and Free Speech movements at colleges, and the rise of the Beatles.

1969-74 – The late 1960s explode in chaos, as numerous trends which had been building for decades and accelerating in the "High Sixties" culminate in a radical push for, and intense reaction against, the societal changes then blossoming into full flower. In the half-decade between 1966 and 1972, Americans were confronted with a vast cultural upheaval resulting from changes occurring in American society, characterized by a rapid shift from moderate reform to radical revolution in the name of "action now." Progress toward democracy and autonomy spurred the desire for more of the same; and when further progress did not occur with the rapidity with which particularly passionate advocates of progress desired, such advocates often became frustrated and dismayed, and turned to disruptive agitation and sometimes even violence, in an attempt to produce the results they desired. Such violence was met in turn with violence by reactionary factions opposed to change.

The rapid changes occurring in society were mirrored by changes in the Catholic Church. Most such changes grew out of the attitudes fomented by the debates surrounding, and the implementation of the decrees of, the Second Vatican Council.[6] This is unsurprising, since Pope John XXIII convened the Council precisely for the purpose of "opening the Church to the world." But just as throughout the 1960s change in the secular world shifted rapidly from gradual adoption of moderate reform to demand for rapid and radical revolution, so too did such shifts occur within the Church. It has often been remarked that the Catholic Church "thinks in

centuries" and "is not built for speed." If secular society was sometimes slow to embrace rapid change, then how much more so an institution which for nearly its entire 2000-year existence was built on tradition and obedience to hierarchical authority? In the space of a mere half-decade, the Council articulated a more democratic understanding of the entire Church as "the people of God," rooted in the consciences and charisms of the laity. Little wonder change in behaviors was slow in coming; for often, understanding must precede acceptance, which in turn must precede action. With progressive reformers pressing for ever-more rapid change, while many of the laity and even the clergy were still attempting to digest the changes which had already occurred, the stage was set for misunderstanding, confusion, and frustration by traditionalists and progressives, whether lay, clerical, or episcopal, alike.

Various Council documents stressed a new spirit of collaboration between clergy and laity. The Declaration on Religious Liberty,[7] the chapter "The People of God" in *Lumen Gentium*,[8] and the Decree On the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*)[9] together articulated a vision of the laity as called to follow the will of God and share in the work of evangelization in their secular lives as manifested to them through their consciences, and stated plainly that the laity possess distinct charisms allowing them to "share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ."[10] And some Council Fathers went even further, with the progressive Cardinal Suenens dismissing the hierarchy as merely the "administrative apparatus" of the Church, implying that the true gifts of the Holy Spirit rested with the laity.[11] By their attention to the "equality" and "special charisms" of the laity, the Council Fathers seemed to be instituting genuine democracy in the Church; and some bishops, such as Oklahoma's Victor Reed, suited

their action to their word, and set up diocesan "councils" similar to the one in Rome, or allowed laity more say in parochial administration. Soon, as Jeremy Bonner points out, "the sentiment was abroad among the laity that the days when a priest ran his parish solely according to his own sense of what was appropriate were over."[12] However, the changes which had taken place raised the expectation of further rapid change – change which the Church was under increasing pressure to fulfill.

With an altered view of the laity inevitably came a differing view of the clergy. Two primary perspectives on the clergy had been visible in the Council's debates. The more traditional of these continued to view priests as "men set apart," *alter Christi* who administered the sacraments, consecrated the Eucharist and forgave sins, and who led and governed the laity. The newer, more progressive understanding saw priests as not only ministers of the sacraments, but also as men who, in collegial relationship both with their bishops and the laity, assumed a more activist role in society at large[13] and began interacting with the world outside the parish in a variety of ways,[14] such as the so-called "hyphenated priests," clergy who also held additional professional specializations such as doctor or lawyer, [15] and by working in the world endeavored bring God closer to people in their everyday lives. Others became social and political leaders, challenging entrenched political elements and assisting causes such as the civil rights or anti-Vietnam war movements. [16] Often, such activities brought them into conflict with their bishops; "across the nation, Catholic priests and sisters challenged the right of their clerical superiors to demand absolute obedience and employed the discourse of social responsibility and civil rights to vindicate their increasingly independent stance on a variety of issues," notes Jeremy Bonner.[17]

And while some few bishops, such as Victor Reed, did make some accommodation to the opinions of clergy in their "priest senates" and "little councils," far more did not. Church leaders like Cardinals Spellman of New York and McIntyre of Los Angeles were prelates of the old school: in their minds, a cardinal was a Prince of the Church, and priests and religious were to be his obedient lackeys.[18] Even those bishops, such as Fulton Sheen, who genuinely espoused and desired to grant their clergy greater freedom and autonomy, found that democracy in theory was often incompatible with the assertion of the bishop's own vision in practice, which only served to exacerbate clerical frustration.[19]

In addition to difficulties with their bishops, clergy also were forced to deal with unhappy and rebellious laity, who assailed them from two sides. Traditionalists were dismayed by the various modernizing tendencies set in motion by the Council, such as the replacement in 1964 of the Tridentine Latin Mass with a vernacular liturgy which, while more accessible, some considered less evocative and majestic. The new Mass also required more overt participation by the congregation, many of whom were accustomed to using the occasion of Mass attendance for private devotion and prayer. Additional changes to longstanding Catholic practice, such as the abolition of Friday abstinence from meat, and the alteration of the Church's calendar to eliminate feast days for various popular saints (St. Christopher, St. Philomena, St. Catherine of Alexandria), proved upsetting to traditionalist laity – with clergy in the position of having to defend the changes. Simultaneously, some progressive laity pressed for even more modernizing change; and when it was not forthcoming with sufficient rapidity, they too were disgruntled. In addition to demanding involvement in matters of parochial governance which had previously

been the exclusive prerogative of clergy,[20] some laity even attempted to apply the principles of democracy so far as to subject to popular vote matters of Catholic doctrine like altering canon law on mixed marriages and instituting optional celibacy for the clergy.[21] But the sharpest dissatisfaction among progressive lay people – a dissatisfaction shared by progressive clergy – was the 1968 promulgation by Pope Paul VI of the encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*,[22] which reaffirmed the Church's long-standing and traditional ban on artificial contraception. *Humanae Vitae* was controversial both for its content and the circumstances of its issuance. In the wake of the Council's acknowledgement of the charisms and special competence of the laity, many Catholics expected a relaxation in the Church's prohibition against artificial birth control. Indeed, a commission of theologians and others favored the change, and another panel of prelates endorsed it; but Pope Paul reaffirmed the full traditional teaching, solely on his own authority as Supreme Pontiff of the Church. Priests questioned where their true duty lay: were they to continue to champion what many considered the demands of the Council against the explicit word of the Holy Father? Or were they to support the encyclical's exercise of papal authority, ignoring the demands of their own conscience?[23]

A final difficulty confronting priests was the fact that many changes made by the Council had the unforeseen and unintended side effect of subtly diminishing the status and deference previously accorded priests. The Council encouraged laypeople to study the Bible themselves or as part of lay groups, where previously expounding on the Bible had been entrusted solely to the clergy. The vernacular Mass required no knowledge of Latin to say or understand – which meant that priests were no longer automatically thought of as more intelligent and erudite than their lay

brethren. Such changes implied that priests were no longer needed to intercede before God on behalf of the laity, an implication which contributed to declines in mass attendance and use of the sacrament of confession. [24] Writing of his own years in seminary and the priesthood just before and during the Council, Father Donald Cozzens recalled how the initial enthusiasm for change among his fellow priests was gradually replaced with feelings of confusion and loss:

> Even as seminarians we felt the shaking of the priesthood's foundations. The priesthood we anticipated with such clarity now seemed somewhat out of focus. The very face of the priesthood ---the external cues and customs, the internal hallmarks of identity and function – seemed to be changing….As the vision of the Council became ever clearer, the cultic, pre-conciliar model of priesthood entered into a creative balance with the servant-leader model. The clear identity, the unquestioned status, the exalted privilege – features that helped priests deal with the sacrifices and crosses inherent to their vocation – began to blur.[25]

Even though many progressive clergy welcomed the new democracy in the Church, such changes could not help but lead to confusion about their appropriate role, the meaning of their vocation, and their identity as priests. What exactly, in 1968, did it mean to be a Catholic priest? With the Council's call to the laity to participate in what Protestants had long called the "priesthood of all believers," was there any longer any value to a separate – and celibate – vocation of priests? And if so, how should it be lived out?

Assailed by an authoritarian episcopacy and restive laity, beset by changed expectations and disappointed hopes, and surrounded by a secular culture which no longer esteemed them as exemplars of heroism and virtue, many priests left the priesthood. According to Jay Dolan, 3,413 American men resigned from the priesthood between 1966 and 1969, and thousands more left seminaries or preparatory programs,[26] with a lack of new vocations to the priesthood continuing

for several decades. But some progressive priests – spurred on particularly by their opposition to *Humanae Vitae* (and no doubt stirred by similar political movements in the secular world) -- were radicalized, moving from public criticism of the encyclical to dissent on a wider range of moral issues.[27]

Throughout the decade, Father James Groppi, advisor to Milwaukee's NAACP Youth Council, spoke out on racial issues in defiance of church authority.[28] In 1968, Catholic University theologian Father Charles Curran led opposition to *Humanae Vitae* by organizing a press conference of theologians who publicly disagreed with the pope.[29] The resignation and subsequent marriage in 1969 of Auxiliary Bishop James P. Shannon of St. Paul-Minneapolis deprived American progressives of their leading spokesman in the hierarchy,[30] while Father James Kavanaugh, speaking before an audience at the University of Notre Dame in 1967, publicly renounced his priesthood over what he perceived as the bishops' failure to fully implement the decrees of the Council. Kavanaugh concluded his statement by bellowing, "Your institution can go to hell!"[31] But the most prominent "radical priests" were the Berrigan brothers. Beginning in 1965, Phillip Berrigan, a Josephite priest, and his brother Daniel, a Jesuit, became major players in the anti-war movement, publicly pouring blood on and burning Selective Service records.[32] After the war, Philip left the priesthood, married, and founded the anti-war Plowshares Movement before his death in 2002, while Daniel remained a Jesuit and is active in anti-war movements to the present day.

The impact the Berrigans and others had on the American public's perception of the Catholic priesthood were substantial, as Jay Dolan explains:

> The high visibility of the clerical crusader in a media age altered the image of the Roman Catholic priest in the mind of the American public….[their] action, calculated for dramatic impact, symbolized effectively for many socially conscious men and women the *raison d'etre* of their religious commitment. It also broke, at least temporarily, Bing Crosby's hold on the popular imagination concerning the personality and style of the Catholic priest.[33]

While relatively few in number, these priests set a new paradigm for the understanding of Catholic priests in American culture, and for their portrayal in entertainment. Though not precisely comparable to Father Coughlin or Bishop Sheen – none were "media figures" with their own radio or television programs, or used the electronic media in any organized way to convey their messages to the general public -- yet these "activist priests" came to be representatives of, and templates for, the portrayal of Catholic priests in the entertainment of the day. In popular culture, priests were subtly reduced in stature – shown as devoted to helping others perhaps, but no longer the omnicompetent, self-sacrificing "men of piety" and tyranny-defying "heroic priests" of the past. Instead, priests began to be imaged as "fully human" ordinary men, beset by the same petty flaws as everyone else, and who succeeded in doing the right thing in spite of themselves, not because of some superior virtue or ability conferred by their status as a priest.

Several characteristics were typical in the popular culture portrayal of priests as "fully human."[34] Instead of being possessed of saintly moral qualities, superhuman devotion to duty, and fierce dedication to dogma, priests now were prone to being portrayed as torn by all manner

of human temptation to sin (particularly in terms of sexual or romantic entanglements – a development which presumably gratified Hollywood scriptwriters, who could now feature priests in romantic subplots). These priests frequently questioned their own vocation to the clerical life, whether because of romantic temptation, desire to live a less ethereal, more "meaningful" life, or from sheer exhaustion and burnout with their duties. From being the ones who helped others suffering from spiritual confusion, in the 1970s the priest often became the one searching for spiritual enlightenment himself.

Nearly always,[*] in the new portrayal priests were shown as passionate crusaders for liberal causes, and typically affected some overtly "anti-authority" look, such as wearing street clothes, leather jackets or turtleneck sweaters rather than clerical garb. Another typical ploy was for a given film or program to show two clerics, one older and more traditional in garb and attitude, and a younger one more openly "rebellious" – a trope in some ways as old as *Going My Way*, but now modified to make the younger clergyman truly rebellious, rather than merely misunderstood by a cantankerous superior. Soon, another stereotype was created: that of the hip, rebellious, radical priest-activist.

The experiences of one dissident priest in particular were reflected in television. Though little remembered today, in the mid-1960s Father William DuBay was lionized by radical Catholics for his defiance of the traditionalist archbishop of Los Angeles, Cardinal James Francis

[*] For a rare example of rebellious, anti-authority priests on the conservative/traditionalist side of the political spectrum, see the 1973 drama *Catholics: A Fable of the Future*, discussed in Appendix 2.

McIntyre.[35] One of the new generation of progressive "reform" priests, William DuBay was particularly concerned with social justice and civil rights, and was a devotee of radical theology. DuBay was dismayed at McIntyre's refusal to publicly advocate racial equality,[*] and his disciplining of priests who did. On June 11th, 1964, DuBay held a press conference during which he publicized a telegram he had sent to Pope Paul VI, demanding that the pontiff remove Cardinal McIntyre from his see due to the cardinal's "abuse of authority" and "vicious program of intimidation" against priests and seminarians. DuBay also charged his bishop with "gross malfeasance" for refusing to exert what he considered sufficient moral leadership against racial discrimination.

While many Catholics – even those sympathetic to the cause of civil rights -- were scandalized by a priest publicly defying his own bishop, progressive Catholics were exhilarated. The liberal Catholic magazine *Commonweal* devoted an entire issue to glorifying DuBay's excoriation of his superior. In an article filled with over-the-top references to a "catalogue of

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[*] Though historians have characterized his actions as motivated purely by racism, McIntyre's actual attitudes toward race remain unclear. In *Parish Boundaries*, John McGreevy claims that "based on his experience in New York City, McIntyre privately maintained that segregated churches were simply 'natural groupings,'" (220); but McGreevy's sources reveal no direct quotation of McIntyre, relying instead on private correspondence between (obviously biased) radical activists. McIntyre's reputation for bigotry rests largely on one remark allegedly made to DuBay; the priest claimed that while discussing the integration of Los Angeles' parochial schools, McIntyre told him that "white parents have the right to defend their daughters." (*Commonweal*, July 10, 1964, 481). John Cooney, in *The American Pope: The Life and Times of Francis Cardinal Spellman* (Times Books, 1984), says McIntyre "never hid his prejudice" (283), but provides no substantive evidence for the accusation. Massa, in *The American Catholic Revolution*, repeats the canard, but cites only Cooney as a source. Conversely, Monsignor Francis J. Weber's glowing biography of McIntyre, *His Eminence of Los Angeles*, rehearses the many charitable works the archdiocese undertook to help Mexicans and African-Americans, but nowhere offers a definitive refutation of the charge, nor ever addresses the Cardinal's personal feelings about race. McIntyre himself never spoke publicly about issues of racial equality, and actively discouraged his clergy from doing so; but whether this was due to active hostility toward minorities, indifference to racial issues, or a desire not to alienate wealthy (and racist) donors, is unclear. While it seems likely that as a man of his generation McIntyre harbored some racist attitudes, judging from the evidence the fair-minded historian at most can say that such assumptions cannot be definitively proven or disproven.

horrors" and "atrocity stories about life under Cardinal McIntyre" (implying the prelate had ordered his priests beaten with lead-filled rubber hoses and their fingernails torn out with pliers), John Leo lauded DuBay as a heroic figure "passionately concerned with the racial issue."[36]

But while DuBay's actions made him a darling of the Left, they engendered a different response from McIntyre and much of the Catholic public. DuBay was removed as assistant pastor of St. Boniface parish and reassigned as a hospital chaplain. (Ironically for this champion of "democracy in the Church," the move was taken at the explicit request of St. Boniface's parishioners, who complained that DuBay's civil rights activism left him little time for and less interest in his parochial duties.)[37] This situation persisted until March of 1966, when DuBay published his book *The Human Church*. In the book, which contained what *Time* magazine characterized as "a program of reform that makes the ideas of Luther seem positively papalist by comparison,"[38] the cleric stated that "the Hebrews had abolished religion, that '[God] has no use for churches,' [and] that 'what Christ was after, really, was a group of people that would be an anti-Church.'"[39] DuBay's proposals for "reform" included bishops and priests being elected by their congregations for limited terms, each individual congregation creating its own liturgy and creed, and a requirement that all statements issued by bishops or the pope reflect the opinions of Catholic laity.[40] Shortly after his book's publication, DuBay announced his plan to form a labor union for Catholic priests.

The combination of his radical labor activities, the publication of his book, and the complaints of hospital superiors for his neglect of his chaplaincy duties resulted in DuBay being

suspended from the priesthood, and ordered to submit all future writings to Cardinal McIntyre for an *imprimatur*. During his suspension, DuBay worked with the "alternative community" Synanon, already infamous for treating drug addiction with its psychologically abusive "Game," during which the cult's leader Chuck Dederich humiliated members and encouraged the exposure of their innermost weaknesses.[*] DuBay set up a headquarters for his "priest's union" and began publication of a union newspaper; but the failure of both prompted him to walk away from the Church and find work as a forest ranger. In 1968, DuBay married a Presbyterian divorcee and discussed founding an "institute for ecological consciousness;"[41] by 1972, DuBay was divorced and had come out as homosexual. Thereafter, he became a columnist for the national gay newspaper *The Advocate*, and joined with fellow gay rights activists in establishing "Stonewall," a Synanon-style clinic for homosexuals.[42] Still later, DuBay fled to Alaska, where he dropped out of progressive circles entirely and became a technical writer. [43]

Because Father DuBay's conflicts with Cardinal McIntyre took place in Los Angeles -- the center of television production and the entertainment industry – they drew the attention of those in entertainment, and were reflected on television as representative of the new norms in Catholicism. Specific parallels with the DuBay/McIntyre case were seen on television in a 1969 episode of ABC's crime drama *The Mod Squad*.[44]

Advertised with the motto, "First they got busted – then they got badges!" *The Mod Squad* was a new twist on the traditional police drama. One of the first major contributions to

[*] In addition, female Synanon members were required to shave their heads, couples were ordered to engage in group sex, men were told they must be vasectomized, and pregnant women members underwent forced abortions. After its leadership was convicted for murdering several former members, the cult disbanded in 1989.

American television of TV impressario Aaron Spelling (who would go on to create and/or produce, among other series, *Charlie's Angels, Starsky and Hutch, The Love Boat, Fantasy Island, Dynasty,* and *Beverly Hills 90210*, along with literally dozens of made-for-TV movies), the program featured, in the words of one of the show's memorable taglines, "One black, one white, one blonde!" The Squad was composed of three young, disaffected teens: Pete Cochran, scion of a wealthy Beverly Hills family, whose radical politics caused him to drop out of upper-class society; Linc Hayes, a brooding black rebel and veteran of the Watts riots; and teenage runaway Julie Barnes, daughter of an alcoholic prostitute. Arrested for a variety of minor infractions, the trio is offered a unique deal by police Captain Greer: in exchange for their freedom, the three will work undercover in counterculture circles, helping to expose criminal plots. The teens agree, on two conditions: they will never use guns, and they refuse to "rat out" members of their own generation – they will only help the police catch adult criminals who prey on youth.[45]

*The Mod Squad* was cunningly conceived to appeal to the broadest possible audience. The "hippie" personas of the three Mod Squad members attracted the growing youth market, as did the trio's pledge not to turn against their own ideals or generation. At the same time, the fact that these young "rebels" were actually working for the Establishment mollified older viewers; and both groups could enjoy the action-filled conventions of crime drama (though they eschewed firearms, the trio frequently engaged in car chases and fistfights). Running from 1968 to 1973, *The Mod Squad* showcased its three "Hip Cops On A Soul Beat," using as story fodder all of the familiar trappings of the troubled late 1960s: the Squad confronted Vietnam War protesters and

Vietnam War veterans, neo-Communist Weathermen and neo-Nazi Klansmen, drug pushers and drug addicts, authoritarian parents and misunderstood flower children, as well as doing constant soul-searching regarding the purity of their own motivations and pondering questions of feminism, class, and race. Because of its emphasis on the 1960s and its often heavy-handed quest to appear "relevant," *The Mod Squad* has not fared well in reruns, and is rarely seen today. (One reviewer states that "these days, viewers of all ages find the smarmy pseudo-hipness awfully hard to take. If it weren't for some old-fashioned violence in the stories, this series might be totally a period piece.")[46] Yet – as noted by media scholar Aniko Bodroghkozy -- the program "served as the prototype for a wave of 'socially relevant' television programming that would follow it in the years ahead."[47]

Given the program's proclivity for dealing with 1960s concerns, it is unsurprising that the highly-publicized incidents concerning "radical priests" within Catholicism in general, and the events surrounding William DuBay in particular, would receive attention from the program's scriptwriters. Such incidents found their way into a 1969 *Mod Squad* episode titled "Keep the Faith, Baby."[48]

The episode opens with Linc playing sandlot basketball with a group of African-American boys at the Frederick Douglass Community Center. The game is coached by a black man wearing a Nehru jacket. After the game, the coach and Linc retire to the locker room, where Linc is astonished to see the coach change from his mod clothing into a clerical collar. "Ain't you never seen no black priest before?" the coach jokes. Linc replies, "You're Father Banks,

right? You've made the headlines. They call you a troublemaker -- the 'militant priest'!" Banks replies, "That's their title, not mine. Do your thing, baby," as the two soul brothers lay some skin on each other and exchange Black Power salutes. Linc offers the priest a ride back to his church; but neither notice that Banks is being furtively observed by men in a nearby car. [At this juncture, it should be noted that Father Banks is played by top '60s celebrity singer Sammy Davis Jr.!]

Meanwhile, Captain Greer like makes the scene with Pete and Julie in their groovy pad (complete with beaded curtains in the doorway). He tells them about Matt Jenkins, a murderer whose conviction was later overturned on a technicality, and who is now on the loose. While serving as a prison chaplain, Father Banks had heard Jenkins' confession; Greer worries that, due to the knowledge he possesses, Banks could be targeted by the killer or his cronies.

Linc drives Father Banks to Christ the King parish in the wealthy, white Rivercrest neighborhood, where the priest serves as a curate. *En route*, Father Banks discusses his founding of the Interfaith Clergymen for Change, which is holding a press conference the next night. Linc notes the car which has followed them, but Banks dismisses his concerns.

As Linc bids the Father farewell (the priest flashing a peace sign as he does so), Father Banks finds the parish council waiting outside the church, along with his pastor (played by the ever-reliable TV stalwart William Schallert, perhaps best known as Patty Duke's father on her

eponymous 1950s sitcom). The pastor, Father Hughes, resplendent in a traditional cassock, sighs in resignation as Banks approaches.

"Where was it today, John? The Job Corps symposium? Prison chapel? No, that's on Wednesday. Then it must've been the community center. Or the TV station. Or just about anywhere other than where you're supposed to be, which is here," Pastor Hughes says. The two priests adjourn to the rectory, where Pastor Hughes expresses his concerns to his curate. "We get a lot of mail protesting your activities," the pastor tells his radical priest, as he hands over a letter. "N-I-G-E-R," Banks reads aloud. "He doesn't even know how to spell." "John, be serious," the pastor says. "That man is threatening your life!" "Not the first time," Banks responds. "I've had a dozen calls since I became the head of the committee."

"Give it up, John," Father Hughes begs. "Work for change inside the church, not outside. You're risking your life – and you're jeopardizing your future." "Is that what the parish council thinks?" Banks asks. "Yes -- and others," Hughes tells his protégé. "I was called to the chancery today by the bishop. He wants you to resign from the committee, and he doesn't want you to attend that press conference tomorrow. The bishop has given you every freedom. He wants change too. But he sees a different way, and you're challenging him publicly. You just don't give him any choice." "Ain't that too bad," the African-American priest replies. "We disagree. What's he gonna do – banish me to a monastery?" "His exact words were, 'On pain of suspension,'" Father Hughes says grimly.

Father Banks is shocked. “Bob, help me. I don’t understand. The highest doctrine of our Church is the principle of the individual conscience. A man is in a state of grace if he believes -- I mean, really believes – that what he’s doing is right in the eyes of God. I am right. You know I’m right. You know it!” But Father Hughes gently replies, “It’s not between you and me. It’s not even between you and the bishop.” In despair, John bends head before a crucifix and sobs, “You’re right. It’s between me and Jesus.”

Despondent, Father Banks goes for a walk in the park, where the priest kneels before a statue of Christ, and prays, “I know I have to do this, and I’m scared, Jesus. I don’t know if I’ve got the guts to do it. Don’t misunderstand me. It’s not that I don’t want to do it, it’s just that all my people, they need so much help, Jesus. Help me. Help me to help them! Sweet Jesus, help me to be strong!”

The next day finds Father Banks, not in clerical garb but in a suit and necktie, at a local TV station. On the stage are the Interfaith Clergymen for Change: two other Catholic priests in full clericals (one of them Hispanic), a man in clerical collar but wearing a gray suit (often in this era, television shorthand for Episcopalian clergy), and an assortment of Protestant ministers in suit and tie, two white and two black. A poster behind them reads, “Good Neighbors Come in All Colors.” The stereotypical late 1960s are well-represented in the studio audience: in addition to the members of the Mod Squad, present are a Hell’s Angel, a woman in Marxist army cap, military blouse, and miniskirt, and an African-American dressed like a pimp. Stepping before the cameras, Father Banks addresses the audience:

> These demands you've just heard are the platform we intend to carry to the Establishment's churches in the black ghetto…It is no longer enough for churches to change. They must be a crucible from which change comes. Churches must attack racist attitudes. The racism of indifference, the racism of paternalism. If God is to be meaningful He must be alive – and we must strip the church of the mask of mystery that separates the church from the people. I say, let the church become an arm of its people.

A reporter asks Father Banks, "Is it true you've been suspended for being here tonight?" Banks replies, "Yes. The fact is that Fathers O'Boyle, Cooper and I had our faculties suspended by the diocese — which is a clergyman's way of saying 'Baby, you've had it. You've been fired,'" as the crowd responds in dismay.

But the murderer Jenkins has also watched the press conference. Believing that, as a "fired" priest, Banks will no longer keep silent about his confession, Jenkins dispatches a lackey to kill the priest. Leaving the TV station, Linc, Pete and Julie are stunned when a gunshot barely misses Father Banks. Captain Greer assigns the Mod Squad to protect Banks, over the radical priest's protests. A phone call from Jenkins lures Banks to a park, where another murder attempt is made on him. Linc foils the attack, but is injured. After a brief confrontation, Jenkins is convinced that Banks will keep his confession confidential and lets the priest live, while Banks allows the repentant Jenkins to escape the police.

Later, Banks visits the injured Linc in the hospital. Stating that he is "trying to adjust to my new life," Banks calls out, "Keep the faith, baby." Outside the hospital, Banks meets Pete and Julie. Embracing them, the radical ex-cleric states, "Come on, my children – there is a great new world waiting!" as the trio walks off into the sunrise.

"Keep the Faith, Baby" is remarkable for a number of reasons. Most obviously, the episode clearly parallels the conflict between William DuBay and Cardinal McIntyre. Though McIntyre is not named, the fact that the program is explicitly set in Los Angeles underlines the personalities involved. (The program's setting was an important part of many stories on *The Mod Squad*, from Linc's history in the Watts riots, to Pete's Beverly Hills background, to many scenes of the local counterculture.) Moreover, the conflict between the priest and the bishop is overtly about activism in the cause of civil rights and racial justice. The fact that the priest is himself now black, and a member of the oppressed minority for which he fights, makes the point even more clearly. While the nameless bishop is never said to be a racist, and some lip service is given to the notion that he also "wants change," in fact, the situation is clear: a member of the Catholic hierarchy suspends a reform-minded priest because he defies orders and makes a public speech endorsing the civil rights movement. Suffice it to say, any Catholic who had followed the DuBay conflict several years earlier would have had no problem "decoding" the episode's point or recalling its antecedents.

Even more importantly, the program sides squarely with the rebellious priest. The viewer sees Banks' agonized conflict, his commitment to his Church and his vows, and his sincere concern for the poor and underprivileged. By contrast, the bishop's perspective is barely represented at all, and his reason for banning Banks' participation in the Interfaith Council essentially amounts to "because I say so." The fact that the bishop is never seen, that the fatherly William Schallert presents the bishop's views while clearly disagreeing with them personally, and that Father Banks is played by the tremendously charismatic Sammy Davis Jr., all contrive

to cast the audience's sympathies with the rebellious clergyman, and make him the hero of the episode. Banks does what is right in spite of personal consequences, and is forced by the demands of conscience to rebel in the face of opposition from a tyrannical Establishment. This represents a tremendous seismic shift in the portrayal of priests, the hierarchy, and the Catholic Church itself on the television programming of the era.

Also worthy of mention, however, are the ways in which the episode's situation does *not* echo the real-life DuBay case. Father Banks participates in an interfaith press conference, but does not call on the pope to fire his own bishop; he does not attempt to start so inflammatory an organization as a "priest's union;" and he presumably has not published a book of radical theology calling for the overthrow of everything traditional in the Church. And in another "first" for television's portrayal of Catholicism, the episode does not end with the rebellious priest reconciled to his Church and welcomed back into the fold with his old job back. Rather -- like many real-life radical priests – Banks is faced with the prospect of making a life for himself in social activism, outside the clerical Establishment.

Instead of a tidy, Hollywood-style "happy ending," both the characters and the audience are confronted with a perspective that states that sometimes the Catholic Church is not enlightened, is not on the right side of issues, and even deserves to be rebelled against. The priest is presented for the first time as a troubled, flawed, conflicted individual, if nevertheless one who ultimately does what is right -- even though "doing what is right" means defying the Church. It is a lesson which would be frequently repeated in subsequent entertainment.

Other television programs of the era demonstrated that radical priests could exhibit a concern and passion for social justice without abandoning their vows. Indeed, during this time priest characters were often shown as social activists or counselors, possessed of a passion for social justice, yet who devoted themselves so entirely to their mission that they suffered bitterness and exhaustion. This view of the compassionate, devoutly activist, but borderline "burned-out" priest was showcased in an unusual but effective bit of casting in the 1973 *ABC Movie of the Week,* "Go Ask Alice."[49]

Based on the highly influential 1971 teen cautionary novel (which was promoted at the time as a true-life diary of a teenage drug addict's experiences), *Go Ask Alice* tells the story of Alice, a shy teenage girl, and her descent into drug abuse. Originally trying marijuana as a way to be popular, Alice moves to speed, then cocaine, and in short order finds herself a dropout, a runaway, an addict, and a teenage prostitute living on the streets. Alice is finally jolted out of her drug-induced complacency when she and a friend are picked up by a sadistic couple who drug Alice, then rape, torture, and murder her friend. Finally realizing that she has hit bottom and needs help, Alice goes to a building where, it is rumored, she can find assistance. There, a middle-aged man dressed casually in a blue work shirt and dungarees approaches Alice, and gruffly says, "We're just about booked up. You coming or going?" Alice replies, "Someone at the café said there was a priest here who knew about kids." The man replies, "I think he knew more about winos and drunks, but they're kind of outnumbered now. Well, I'm the priest. C'mon," and shows her a place to sleep.

After Alice is awakened by another teen screaming and "freaking out" in a drug flashback, the priest approaches holding her diary, which Alice has continued to keep throughout her descent into prostitution and drugs. Alice moans, "I gotta stop. But I can't. I can't stay off of it. I like it. I don't wanna live without it." The priest gives Alice her diary back, and notes scornfully, "Then you'll have to live with this. It's your choice." He then turns his back on the girl and starts to walk away. Alice breaks down sobbing, to which the priest snarls, "Let the priest put it all together again, with a little help from the big head-setter in the sky. Well, don't count on it. You're looking for magic." "I'm looking for help!" Alice pleads. The priest's voice becomes gentler:

> Then look inside. Look at the part of you that won't give up. The part of you that stays alive through a blackout. The part of you that won't let you lie to yourself -- or to your diary. I didn't have to read much of it. I've heard it all. The thing that makes you different from a lot of others is this: "At last, I have something worthwhile to say." God knows you do. Maybe it isn't what you thought you were saying, but it's enough to break your heart. Or your habit.

The part of the priest is small but crucial; it is due to his persistence that Alice begins her road to recovery. The priest is played by Andy Griffith, who brings considerable *gravitas* to the role; except for a slight hint of his own genuine North Carolina accent, there is nothing about Andy the priest that suggests the sheriff of Mayberry.

Griffith's priest is no product of *Going My Way*. Where the movie's Father O'Malley coped with the "troubled youth" of his day by taking them to baseball games, buying them hot dogs, and persuading them to join a boys choir singing "Ave Maria" at Mass on Sundays, Griffith's unnamed priest has neither humor nor patience. Instead, he is harsh with Alice. From

his statements about previously dealing with "winos," it is clear he is long accustomed to the more sordid aspects of urban ministry; yet he is sickened and even embittered by the overwhelming flood of youthful drug addicts and runaways with whom he must cope. The priest's "human" side manifests itself in an all-too-human impatience, even seeming indifference, to the suffering of his teenage charges: "If they want to dope themselves up, let them" is almost the tenor of the priest's remarks, at least at first. Indeed, Griffith's priest is nearly as disgruntled, alienated from, and contemptuous of his own "family" (the Church), and as burned-out as the teens with whom he is forced to deal.

This "alienation" is underlined by the priest's lack of clerical garb or associated regalia. While the teens are alienated from and have symbolically "dropped out" of traditional family, so too has the priest. Dressed like a janitor and at first mistaken for one by Alice (and the viewer), Griffith's priest has apparently rejected the trappings, if not the mission, of his clerical state. Whether this is done out of a desire to make himself more accessible to teens, or from dissatisfaction with tradition is not stated; but when the lack of obvious clerical symbols is combined with his harsh, angry attitude, it is clear that this is a priest no longer satisfied with his lot, if still unwilling to abandon his young charges and responsibilities.

Although moved to anger by a world in which mere children are being degraded by addiction, the priest has not entirely given up hope. His brand of "tough love" challenges Alice, in a bid to see whether or not she genuinely wants to change, or merely wants another "fix." Yet once Alice herself states that she "needs help" and is willing to make the necessary changes in

her life, he does his all to assist and encourage her. Even though beset by a world-weariness and rage that would never have been seen in a Bing Crosby, Andy Griffith's priest does precisely what so many "reform" priests claimed they set out to do: helped individual people through an emphasis on social action and urban concerns. Thus, the priest played by Andy Griffith is a sterling example of the flawed, "human," yet still ultimately good-hearted priest, whose concern with those "in the world" does make a positive difference.

This troubled and human "social activist priest" recurred in television throughout the 1970s, often taking on some unusual forms. Originally spun off from the crime drama *Ironside*, the short-lived 1971 NBC series *Sarge* featured George Kennedy as Father Samuel "Sarge" Cavanaugh. A homicide detective of nine years' experience, Cavanaugh leaves the police department after his wife is murdered and enters the priesthood. Several years later he is assigned to St. Aloysius Parish in San Diego – the same area where he had worked as a detective. He is nicknamed "Sarge" because of his police background, which "helped him provide guidance to his parishioners in their struggle to cope with the problems of a metropolitan environment."[50] Tackling problems both criminal and personal, including pornography, parishioners' love affairs, and even his own wife's murder, "Sarge" frequently cooperated with his old friend the police chief. "As a priest with a background in police work, [Sarge] can fight crime two ways, both as a detective and as spiritual advisor."[51] *Sarge* aired opposite the vastly more popular crime drama *Hawaii 5-0* and the *ABC Movie of the Week*, and ran for only half a season as a result.[52]

Younger priests with "social consciences" also turned up as continuing characters on the short-lived 1975 series *Kate McShane* and *The Montefuscos;* on both programs, the priests in question were relatives of the series' protagonists. NBC's *The Montefuscos* revolved around "a boisterous, middle-class Italian who had his entire family over for dinner every Sunday night,"[53] where "all issues, both family and national, were discussed but rarely resolved."[54] Son Joseph was a priest, his brothers a dentist and an actor. *Kate McShane*, "the first network dramatic series to feature a woman lawyer in a lead role,"[55] focused on the title character, a passionate young defense attorney who tended to become emotionally involved and identify with her clients. Kate often relied on the assistance of her brother Ed, a Jesuit law professor, who provided both legal support and moral clarity. (The intellectual Father Ed was played by Charles Haid, who would later become famous as redneck cop Renko on *Hill Street Blues*.) In the episode "The Best Possible Defense,"[56] Kate defends 1960s radical Barbara Einerson, who is accused of a bombing and murder of a police officer. After learning that Barbara was in fact involved in the bomb plot (but not the actual bombing itself), Kate seeks out Ed for advice. She finds the Jesuit priest at a local Jewish temple and community center, where he is "brushing up on his Hebrew" with his friend, the rabbi. Informed of Barbara's statement, Ed advises Kate to track down the two men Barbara had collaborated with, and whom she claims were guilty of the bombing. "They are witnesses, and can testify that she just walked away." When Kate complains that she could never get immunity for two wanted terrorists, the liberal Ed urges Kate to have Barbara contact the men, and then get depositions from them in another country like Cuba, which is beyond the reach of the U.S. court system.

On a subsequent episode,[57] Ed repeats his role as confidant and advisor to Kate. After a police officer's daughter is brutally raped, the officer's partner Phil shoots down the handcuffed rapist in cold blood. Though he initially advises Kate that, having witnessed what happened to little girl, Phil may be suffering from "diminished capacity," when he learns that Phil shot a man who was not actually involved in the rape, Ed revises his opinion and remarks in disgust, "that's some client you've got there." The other appearances of Jesuit priest Ed in the series are equally minor; but even his limited screen time allows the viewer to perceive that here again, a priest is alternately a "regular guy" who drinks beer and plays pool, and a "hyphenated priest," seeking to improve the world by engaging in a career other than traditional parish ministry. It is even implied that Ed is or has been sympathetic to various radical causes himself. Despite these intriguing hints, little more was seen of Ed or his sister; *Kate McShane* was cancelled after two months, with most viewers preferring the more action-filled cops 'n robbers antics of *Starsky and Hutch*, which aired simultaneously on ABC.

Even though the entertainment industry increasingly portrayed priests as radical and "human," with all manner of foibles, it had resisted suggestions of romantic or sexual involvement with women. This was a firm part of the post-1928 consensus, during which Catholics became part of the American mainstream. In reaction against the 19th century stereotype of priests as sexually lascivious monsters, and as a result both of Catholic beliefs gaining respect in the public sphere generally, and of the pressure brought by the Legion of Decency and the Production Code, the entertainment industry had presented priests as perfectly chaste and celibate, untainted by any thought of sexual or romantic temptation. But as part of the

understanding of priests as "fully human" (and with the real-life example of thousands of priests abandoning their vows and leaving the priesthood to marry), even this final taboo crumbled during the 1970s. In one presentation in particular, the taboo did not so much "crumble," as it was shattered to pieces. A full demonstration of the true "humanness" and fallibility of Catholic priests was astonishingly showcased in a 1976 episode of the crime drama *The Streets of San Francisco* titled "Requiem for Murder."[58]

The Edgar Award-winning episode begins when police detective Mike Stone is summoned to the side of his longtime friend, Bishop Tim Farrell, who has been shot in an apparent murder attempt. At the hospital, Stone and his fellow detective Keller meet the bishop's inner circle: Farrell's secretary, Monsignor Carruthers; social worker Ellen Sims; elderly housekeeper Mrs. Costello; and "street-priest" Father Wilson. Displaying all the characterization tags of the "radical priest," Wilson is portrayed as a troublemaker: while all the other clergy wear clerical collars or cassocks, upon his arrival at the hospital Wilson is initially denied entry to the bishop's room due to his long hair, leather jacket, and blue jeans. When Monsignor Carruthers permits Wilson to enter, a nurse exclaims, "Excuse me, Father. You just didn't look like a priest." Wilson replies, "That's the idea."

It emerges that Wilson had a harsh and argumentative relationship with Bishop Farrell, who removed him from his parish and assigned him against his will to the chancery, though Wilson was also allowed to continue working in a street mission, which he vastly prefers. When Detective Stone asks, "What's a street priest like him doing here on the staff?" Monsignor

Carruthers replies, “Frankly, it was an effort to tame him down. All those arrests for civil disobedience, protest marches and all. The bishop felt it might help to rein him in...They don’t have conversations exactly yet, but they do have nose-to-nose discussions.” Carruthers also mentions Father Wilson’s efforts to organize a rent strike against slum landlords.

Due to their antagonistic relationship, Father Wilson quickly becomes the prime suspect Bishop Farrell’s shooting. Investigating, Stone and Keller learn that a neighbor claims to have seen a woman running from the chancery around the time of the shooting. When it is learned that only those on staff had a key to the chancery, Stone is shocked to consider that the assailant must have been someone on the bishop’s own staff. Reminded by Keller of his own maxim that “with the proper motive, anyone is capable of murder,” Stone ruefully admits, “I guess my religious background is starting to show.” Learning that everyone had an alibi except Ellen Sims, Keller speculates that the woman seen leaving the scene could have been Ellen: “What if Ellen Sims came back to see someone – like Father Wilson...He’s the one with the juvenile record two inches thick. He’s been resisting authority all his life.” Keller goes to question the radical priest, and Wilson reveals that Ellen Sims is coming to work for him at the street mission. “You and the bishop argue a lot. Over her?” Keller demands. Wilson angrily replies, “I break a lot of rules, but that’s not one of them. We argue over money and that’s all. You think I shot him?” “He canned you, took you out of your parish,” notes Keller. “He did me a big favor,” replies the activist priest. “This is where I belong.”

Meanwhile, Stone is frustrated when the now-recovered Bishop Farrell refuses to name his assailant or do anything to protect himself. “The man who shot me won’t try again,” Farrell maintains. “And he’s already been punished.” The strong-willed bishop maintains silence when asked by Stone who the woman seen leaving the rectory was. But once Stone departs, Bishop Farrell speaks cryptically to Monsignor Carruthers: “I’ve come through the crisis. I’m truly off the critical list.” Farrell then informs Monsignor Carruthers that he plans to resign his position as bishop and return to parish work. A shocked Mrs. Costello sobs, “You can’t resign! Not if you ever want to wear the cardinal’s hat!...It’s God’s will! You mustn’t turn against Him!” Stating that he can still serve as a priest, Farrell goes into the cathedral and kneels before the altar. As Farrell prays, “Thank you for restoring my faith, and for sustaining me during the long night. Forgive me for the pain I have caused to others,” a shot rings out, and Bishop Farrell drops to the floor, murdered.

An enraged Stone demands answers from Carruthers, who tells him, “Bishop Farrell was going through a crisis of faith. Ellen Sims was involved. Two good people in a terrible situation.” During questioning, Ellen tells Stone, “I loved [Farrell] and he loved me!” “Is that why you shot him?” Stone asks. Ellen replies,

> “You don’t understand. Neither did we at first – at least, I didn’t. I just wanted to help him, be close to him…Tim didn’t see it coming, either. One day it was just business as usual. The next, we were in love. We had nowhere to go. He began to doubt his belief in God, in the Church he’d served all his life. It was tearing him apart, and me. That night, I went to the rectory to ask him to marry me. He had tears in his eyes, said he couldn’t. I was hurt and angry, and shouted at him -- all the things a woman says when she’s lost.”

When Keller learns that $10,000 is missing from the rectory accounts and that there is no record of any withdrawal, suspicion focuses even more on Father Wilson, who now apparently had multiple motives for murdering Farrell: money for his rent strike, revenge for being fired, and jealousy over Ellen Sims. The case seems conclusive when ownership of the murder weapon is traced to a junkie who tells Keller that he gave the gun to Father Wilson. Wilson claims that Bishop Farrell found the gun and took it away from him, a claim disbelieved by the police.

But Stone and Farrell's carefully-built case against the radical Father Wilson is destroyed when Monsignor Carruthers brings them a draft of the sermon Bishop Farrell was preparing. In it, Farrell not only confesses to his illicit love for Ellen and his plans to resign -- but also to his own attempted suicide! It is revealed that Farrell, torn between his love for Ellen and for the Church, shot *himself* the first time, using the gun he took from Father Wilson. It was his love for Ellen, his despondent action, and his subsequent miraculous recovery that "humanized" Farrell, reconfirming for him his love for the Church and his desire to serve God's people, not as a member of the hierarchy, but as a simple parish priest. Monsignor Carruthers states that he is going to read Farrell's sermon at mass: "Every line speaks eloquently of hope and rekindled faith – in God and in man."

Rather anticlimactically, it is revealed that it was the elderly Mrs. Costello, enraged by Farrell's plan to resign, who murdered the bishop out of disappointment. "He was going to be a cardinal! I devoted my every waking moment to making that happen! All the years of

preparation, sacrifice, work – it would all have been wasted!" the deranged housekeeper shrieks in dismay.

Disappointing ending aside, this episode encapsulates just how much popular culture's portrayal of Catholic clergy had changed by the mid-1970s. Far from showing priests solely as crusading, two-fisted defenders of justice, heroic anti-Communists, or genial, light-hearted parish pastors, by the 1970s priests were depicted as possessed of all the frailties and temptations of being fully human – willing to challenge both societal conventions and beliefs and ecclesiastical authority, on fire with radical political passion, but just as often embittered or doubting of their own vocation, prey to all manner of temptation, and themselves thrown into disarray by the changes to the Church since the Second Vatican Council…even susceptible to illicit love affairs and attempted suicide. The very fact that priests could be portrayed as capable of such human failings demonstrates that by the mid-1970s, the image of the priest – and with it, that of the Catholic Church -- had been inexorably altered in American popular culture by the events of the late 1960s.

As a further reflection of the shattering of taboos, which previously demanded that priests be "taken seriously," another result of the newfound freedom to portray priests as "fully human" was the increasing use in the 1970s of priests as figures of fun, who played substantial roles in comedy. While in the past such had not been entirely unknown, for the priest himself to be portrayed humorously or even satirized, was unheard of. (As noted in chapter 2, in *The Dick Van Dyke Show* episode "The Life and Love of Joe Coogan," the situation of mistaken identity

involving a priest is the center of the plot – but the characters of Rob, Laura, and Sally are the butts of the jokes, with Father Coogan himself portrayed in a straightforward and respectful manner.) Unsurprisingly given the changes to the Catholic Church, the entertainment industry, and the rest of society in the 1970s, this respectful deference for the Church was gradually elided. Equally unsurprisingly, the first show to do so in a major way was the decade's champion at confronting TV taboos, the CBS situation comedy *All in the Family*.

Inspired by (and imitative of) the British BBC series *Till Death Us Do Part*, *All in the Family* adapted that program's premise of a reactionary, bigoted, blue-collar worker clashing with a radical, hippie son-in-law, while both (with their spouses) live under the same roof. Under producer Norman Lear, the program became one of the first comedy series to regularly depict issues previously considered unsuitable for U.S. network television comedy. Racism, the Vietnam War, abortion, women's liberation, homosexuality, rape, breast cancer, menopause, and impotence were only a few of the subject tackled through the program's lens of contentious bickering between bigot Bunker and his family and friends. By discussing such issues, *All in the Family* opened the door for television comedy to treat controversial subjects in a manner guaranteed to offend some viewers' sensibilities. With its success, *All in the Family* had an impact on American television beyond that of nearly any other comedy series.

Along with minorities like African-Americans, Hispanics, Jews, and various other ethnic and religious groups, Catholics were also occasionally treated in Archie Bunker's bigoted, malaprop-ridden tirades. In later seasons, such targets were provided by recurring characters

Frank and Irene Lorenzo, a Catholic couple (he an Italian homemaker, she an Irish "handywoman" and forklift operator) whose faith, ethnicity, and reverse-gender employment provided Archie with fodder for prejudiced comments.

In three episodes of the show's earlier seasons, however, a Catholic antagonist for Archie was provided by the priest of a local parish, Father Majeski, played by actor Barnard Hughes.[*] As was typical of the program, the presence of a minority provided an opportunity for Archie to display his bigotry, but by episode's end receive his comeuppance by being exposed as narrow-minded and ignorant.

Archie's clash with Father Majeski begins when Archie's wife Edith returns home from shopping and reports that she dented a car, then left a note giving her contact information. Archie berates his "dingbat" wife for her honesty, then calls the garage to determine how much the repairs will cost him, certain that the car's owner, one John Majeski, will attempt to swindle him by inflating the cost of the repairs.

When "John Majeski" calls at the door in his Roman collar, Archie is temporarily nonplussed; but he soon reverts to type, confiding in Mike that "Dis priest here ain't kosher…Did

[*] Likely due to the prominence of his occasional role on *All in the Family*, Hughes later played the part of Father Brown in the 1979 made-for-TV movie "Sanctuary of Fear." In a truly cringe-worthy "adaptation" of the popular short stories about the mystery-solving priest, G.K. Chesterton's genteel, deeply spiritual British cleric was transformed into a hip, middle-aged Brooklyn busybody of a priest who ogles women and jogs. Thankfully, this horrific "backdoor pilot" never resulted in a subsequent spin-off series. (*NBC Monday Night at the Movies,* "Sanctuary of Fear," NBC, April 23, 1979, Paley Center for Media catalogue # T80:0156, viewed July 23, 2010.)

you see da lousy-lookin' suit he's wearing dere? Da Catholic Church owns half of da property in New York, including some of yer finest clothing stores."

Eventually, Archie is satisfied as to Father Majeski's credentials (he asks the priest to recite a Psalm in Latin), but still refuses to pay for the car's repairs. "I'm not donating no money to Catholic Charities here!" Archie gripes. But when the cleric reveals that the majority of the bill was for an engine overhaul – which he had no intention of asking Archie to pay for -- and that Edith's dent only cost $14 to fix, Archie is humiliated, and offers Father Majeski the rightful payment. But the priest initially stands on his dignity, proclaims "I don't want your money, Mr. Bunker," and marches out -- only to return moments later and tell Archie he WILL accept the damages as a donation to Catholic Charities.[59]

In addition to allowing Archie jibes at the wealth of the Catholic Church (and the large number of "unflocked" priests in the wake of the 1960s), the episode also provides a humanized portrait of Father Majeski, a middle-aged cleric who is clearly wearied by the burdens of his job. Finding Edith a sympathetic listener, the priest pours out his troubles:

> We're a very poor parish. We have to make every penny count. What with the painting, and the fixing, and the paperwork, I hardly have time for God, much less my parishioners. Lately, sitting in the confessional, when I should be listening with patience and understanding, I find myself thinking, "Come on, come on, just get on with it!"

While in his initial appearance on *All in the Family* Father Majeski is a humanized "regular guy," he did not display the wit that he would subsequently. The priest reappeared in the program's third season[60] when Edith is arrested for shoplifting, after absent-mindedly leaving a

store while still wearing the necklace she was trying on. Fearing she is losing her mental faculties, Edith nevertheless resists seeing a psychiatrist, as Mike and Gloria recommend. Instead, she chooses to go to Father Majeski for counseling:

Edith: “You don’t mind if I ain’t Catholic?”

Majeski: “No. I have a sinking feeling most of my congregation isn’t.”

Edith appears shocked.

Majeski: “Protestant ministers say that too. It’s a religious joke.”

Edith: “I thought about going to see Pastor Felcher, but I’m too ashamed. And I heard in your church you don’t talk about nothin’.” [Edith’s reference to the seal of the confessional.]

Majeski: “That’s the hardest part of the job for me. I’m a born gossip.”

Edith again looks shocked.

Majeski: “Don’t worry. We never talk.”

Edith explains her dilemma, and worries that she has broken the Eighth Commandment (causing Father Majeski to stammer – it is clear the priest cannot remember which is the *Eighth* Commandment). Eventually, Father Majeski helps Edith realize that she is neither a thief nor losing her mind, but was just daydreaming. "There's nothing wrong with daydreaming," the priest assures her.

Edith: "Priests daydream?"

Majeski: "Yes. Priests daydream about being bishops or cardinals. Cardinals dream about being pope."

Edith: "What do you daydream about?"

Majeski: "Retirement."

While he is once again shown as "fully human," in this episode Father Majeski begins to show an alternately trenchant and impish wit, and even pokes a bit of fun at the institutional Church…a sign that, as with all contemporary issues, religion was no "sacred cow" on *All in the Family*.

Father Majeski's last appearance occurred in an episode which was most riddled with Catholic stereotype – and which came closest to replicating the offensive bigotry which Archie

typically dispensed toward African-Americans and ethnics. (At one point in the episode, Archie refers to receiving the Eucharist as "eatin' a cookie.") In "Edith's Conversion,"[61] Edith becomes increasingly interested in Catholicism when she is introduced to Irene Lorenzo's sister, a nun. The three women attend mass and various parish functions together, leading Archie to become apprehensive at the prospect of Edith converting to Catholicism. Angrily, Archie goes to the parish to browbeat Father Majeski. He encounters the priest (who is on his way to a theater to see the movie *Dillinger*), and berates him angrily:

Archie: **"**We don't need another religion in the family. I'm afraid my wife is gonna turn into a Catholic."

Majeski: "You make it sound like some kind of a horror movie. When does it happen? At midnight under a full moon?"

Archie: "I just don't want no one makin' my wife change from a Christian into a Catholic."

Majeski: "No, we can't let that happen, can we?"

After complaining that Edith has been reading a papal encyclical – "as if anybody cares what he rides around on" – Archie demands Father Majeski talk Edith out of being Catholic. In

response, Majeski tells Archie to communicate with his wife, and urges them to talk to their own pastor.

Archie: "Why should I talk to that dumbbell? He's turned more Protestants into Catholics than you have."

Majeski: "After talking to you, *Dillinger* is going to be a letdown."

Ultimately, both Father Majeski and Irene's nun sister have the last word against Archie; but in so doing, *All in the Family* both further humanized Catholic clerics, and made them mild figures of fun, all while also making them subject to the argumentative, "controversial" approach beloved by the series. This was a trend which producer Norman Lear followed even more firmly in his short-lived 1978 sitcom *In the Beginning*.[62]

One of a number of attempted starring vehicles for comic actor McLean Stevenson -- best-known for his third-billed role as the 4077th's bumbling commander, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Blake, on *M*A*S*H* -- *In the Beginning* featured Stevenson in the role of Baltimore priest Father Daniel Cleary. Hearkening back to the familiar setting of *Going My Way*, *In the Beginning* played the "young/progressive vs. old/traditional," "inner-city parish," and "radical clergy" concepts for laughs, and added a "women's lib" component into the bargain. Cleary was a "pompous, traditionalist, and continually exasperated" pastor recently reassigned from a comfortable suburban parish to inner-city work, who clashed continually with the hip, streetwise

radical social worker, Sister Agnes (played by singer Priscilla Lopez). In addition to focusing on such Lear staples as an all-knowing young radical and a stuffy, uptight right-wing older white man, the program also dealt with the urban mission's job of "catering to the needs of hookers, drunks, gang members and runaways, a situation Sister Aggie loved and Father Cleary hated." The program also delved into the controversy so beloved by Lear, with episodes focused on Cleary's embittered disappointment at failing to be promoted to monsignor, and Sister Aggie's sexual attraction to a male parishioner and her efforts to teach sex education classes. All the while, Cleary plotted to be reassigned to another parish, thus escaping the sister he consistently referred to as "Attila the Nun."[63] However, the program's mix of a *Going My Way*-style setting with strident liberal bickering, 1970's gender politics, and poor, humor-free writing inspired few to watch. Within two months, *In the Beginning* was cancelled, and its film banished to studio vaults where it has remained since. As one critic said of the show, "nothing unexpected occurs [in this] tired rehash of the 1970s social sitcom."[64]

Increasingly, as the 1970s wore on, priests were not merely portrayed as "fully human," but increasingly were allowed to be figures of fun. While such were still somewhat circumscribed – even at the height of the "relevant sitcom" era, network executives and sponsors feared alienating believers by airing openly disrespectful portrayals of religion – yet still, even a modest move away from a rigid solemnity about clergy to a more flexible, light-hearted one was something new. No character better exemplified this new approach to the presentation of the Catholic priest than that of Korean War Army chaplain Francis Mulcahy on the television

program *M*A*S*H*, centering on the surgeons and staff of the 4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital.

Loosely based on the novel *M*A*S*H: A Story of Three Army Doctors*, written by former Korean War Army surgeon Richard Hornberger, *M*A*S*H* was originally adapted into an anti-Vietnam polemic for the big screen in 1970. The screenplay of the film *M*A*S*H* was written by Communist party member Ring Lardner, Jr. (one of the infamous "Hollywood Ten," who had refused to testify before Congress about Soviet infiltration of the entertainment industry in 1947)[65]. The picture was directed by Robert Altman, a former industrial filmmaker and long-time television director. *M*A*S*H*'s anarchic comedy and anti-authority mindset, and its use of nudity and sex-obsessed storylines, graphic and bloody surgery, and frequent profanity, were intended by Lardner and Altman to excoriate patriotism, the military, and traditional values. (After his experience before Congress Lardner had little love for such verities, while Altman was driven by his loathing both for his own military service and his Jesuit-school upbringing.)[66] In the words of one critic, the film was "a distillate of angry, sadistic, anti-institutional humor;"[67] but given the temper of the times, such attitudes made the film wildly popular with young, anti-war audiences.

In addition to its other irreverent elements, the film *M*A*S*H*'s anti-religious bias was notable. In the words of *New York Times* film critic Roger Greenspun, *M*A*S*H* was "the first major American movie openly to ridicule belief in God —not phony belief; real belief,"[68] while Les and Barbara Keyser add that *M*A*S*H* was "especially hard on Catholics; it pictured their

chaplains as totally ineffectual and bumbling, mocked their sacraments as silly charades, and transformed the miracle of the Last Supper into a prolonged smutty joke."[69] Such irreverence carried over into the film's portrayal of the 4077th's unit's chaplain. Though in the film his name is technically Father John P. Mulcahy, throughout the movie the chaplain is referred to as "Dago Red," an ethnic slur combined with a reference to his hair color (and also common slang for cheap Italian table wine). As played by actor Rene Auberjonois, Mulcahy offers a direct contrast to the heroic Catholic chaplains of movies like *The Fighting 69th*, with "Red" portrayed as an inept, idiotic incompetent. Informed during sacramental confession by the camp dentist "the Painless Pole" that he was unable to consummate an attempted affair, "Red" immediately breaks the seal of the confessional and gossips about the Pole's impotence. This leads the doctors to set up the tableaux reminiscent of the Last Supper referred to above, which ends with them drugging the Pole into unconsciousness while tricking "Red" into believing he has committed suicide. The doctors urge "Red" to administer the last rites, after which the Pole is slipped into bed with an attractive nurse – leading to a "resurrection" when the dentist revives to discover he has an erection.

Nor is this the end of the movie's humiliation of its priest character. When the doctors conceal a microphone beneath head nurse "Hot Lips" Houlihan's bunk and broadcast her sexual encounter with her lover, Major Frank Burns, to the entire camp, "Red" listens innocuously, in the belief that their graphic sexual dialogue is an episode of the radio situation comedy *The Bickersons*. Even when he tries to administer last rites to a casualty in the operating room, "Red" is bullied by the doctors, who demand he ignore his sacramental duties in order to hold

their surgical instruments. Note the Keysers, "Dago Red's religion gives him no sense of purpose whatsoever and no resolve; Altman has Rene Auberjonois constantly look befuddled, stare vacantly [and] wander aimlessly...In *M*A*S*H*, the priest suffers the ultimate insult: he's so incompetent and irrelevant that the soldiers have to humor him and show him what to do."[70] Such pandering to the bigotry of the radical '60s generation made the film *M*A*S*H* a success both among left-leaning critics and the youthful box-office audience, and an instant star of director Altman. *M*A*S*H* also garnered five Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture and Best Director, winning for Best Screenplay.

The film's critical acclaim, financial success, and popularity among the 18-34 demographic drew the attention of Twentieth-Century Fox President William Self, who proposed "spinning off" the film into a television series. (Self was also motivated by the fact that the film's sets were still standing, which would save tremendously on costs for the TV production.)[71] To organize the series, Self recruited television producer Gene Reynolds, who had previously worked on *Room 222,* a light drama which had explored many of the social questions confronting American youth of the era, and Tony-award winning comedy writer Larry Gelbart, who had co-created the stage musical *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and had previously written for comedy legends Danny Thomas, Sid Caesar, and Bob Hope.

Like the movie, though it was set in the Korean War, Vietnam was the series' true point of departure. The show's creative staff admitted as much: Gelbart, who had been in England during the anti-Vietnam protests, said that "*M*A*S*H* was "the contribution I know I would

have made if I had been able;" Reynolds stated that the show was "literally in Korea but figuratively in Vietnam." [72 *]

However, the film's visual, thematic, and moral excesses, acceptable in a movie which viewers had to deliberately choose to leave their homes, drive to a theater, and pay to see, obviously could never be replicated on a television program sponsored by skittish advertisers, subject to network Standards and Practices, and beamed over the publicly-owned airwaves into every living room in America. Thus, while *M*A*S*H* was part of the wave of 1970s situation comedies, such as *All in the Family* and *Maude*, which utilized both humor and drama to push their creators' liberal agenda and appeal to younger viewers, it did so gently and tastefully. Gone were the nudity, racial and ethnic slurs, and profanity of the film. Blatant sexual references were replaced with innuendo; and while scenes of gory operating-room surgery were not entirely eliminated, they were toned down sufficiently to avoid disturbing viewers at home.

Also abandoned was most of the mean-spiritedness of the film. While the program's lead character, Dr. Benjamin Franklin "Hawkeye" Pierce, and his fellow physician "Trapper" John McIntyre (a reversal from the book, in which Trapper was the lead character and Hawkeye his sidekick) remained staunchly opposed to the war, thumbed their noses at military regulations, and were inveterate drinkers and skirt-chasers, in the series such activities were clearly portrayed

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[*] Richard Hornberger held different opinions. Referring to his own experience as a M*A*S*H surgeon, the staunchly conservative Hornberger said of the series' anti-war perspective, "I think we should have been in Korea....I operated on a thousand or so wounded kids, and I know more about war than a bunch of ignorant actors." (Kalter, 22)

as those of intelligent professionals trying desperately to cope with a horrific and inescapable situation, rather than defiance and anarchy for its own sake.

Because it could no longer rely on the film's nudity, profanity, and cruelty for shock value, the TV series *M*A*S*H* rapidly grew from simply another "service comedy" incorporating anti-war themes into a far more nuanced and sophisticated program. Though in its earliest seasons *M*A*S*H* attempted to replicate the "madcap comedy" and acerbic tone of the film, such an approach was less successful with television audiences, who represented a greater diversity of age groups and political persuasions than had the viewers of the film. As a result, drama and characterization soon began to play a larger role. In time, these aspects came to dominate the series, transforming *M*A*S*H* from a comedy which occasionally dabbled in drama into a character-based drama with a sideline in comedy. (In the show's last years, comedy was expressed solely through quips and sardonic dialogue, rather than overtly humorous situations.)

This transition became most notable during the program's fourth and fifth seasons, and was aided and exemplified by changes in casting. In season four, Hawkeye's co-conspirator in womanizing Trapper John was replaced by B.J. Hunnicutt, a happily-married family man; and the 4077th's bumbling commander Henry Blake – written out of the show as receiving his transfer home only to die when his plane was shot down, in one of the program's strongest dramatic statements against war – was succeeded by Colonel Sherman Potter, a career Army

officer and veteran of World Wars I and II.[*] The transformation was completed in season five, with the departure of the buffoonish right-wing caricature Frank Burns, replaced by Boston Brahmin Charles Emerson Winchester III. Like Burns, Winchester served as a foil to Hawkeye; but he was also a well-rounded character, being intelligent, cultured (if snobbish), and an excellent surgeon. Other changes moving the program to a more serious, dramatic footing included the transformation of head nurse Margaret "Hot Lips" Houlihan from a military fanatic and hypocrite not averse to using sex to advance her career, into a serious, competent career woman (the show's writers also dispensed with the character's disparaging nickname); and the change of orderly Klinger from a zany cross-dresser into a responsible company clerk.

While the end of the Vietnam War, the demands of federal broadcast decency regulations, and the intellectual growth of the show's writers and their increasing reliance on characterization over comedy all played their part in rendering *M*A*S*H* a more "domesticated" product, so too did the simple fact of its existence on prime-time network television, a form of entertainment whose lineage featured other shows with similar settings and character types, which could not help but influence both *M*A*S*H*'s viewers and its production staff.

Though based on the movie, the television series *M*A*S*H* also drew its success from the familiarity of its various genre antecedents. Military life had been depicted on television

[*] Perhaps not coincidentally, *M*A*S*H*'s third season concluded in March of 1975; Saigon fell to communist forces in April. With the war over, anti-war sentiment was no longer a guarantee of viewership; and having indisputably "won" America's cultural conflict over Vietnam, the show's writers could afford to be magnanimous in victory. Thereafter, though opposition to war remained a keystone of *M*A*S*H*'s philosophy, the program also began to show career military personnel who were not uniformly mindless jingoists or violence-loving fanatics.

almost since its beginning, in documentary programs like *Victory at Sea* and *The Twentieth Century*; dramas like *Combat!, The Rat Patrol,* and *12 O'Clock High*; and "service comedies" like *You'll Never Get Rich* (better known by the name of its lead character, Sergeant Bilko), *McHale's Navy,* and *Hogan's Heroes*.

Doctors, too, had long been staples of television. Beginning with the well-regarded 1954 series *Medic*, many programs featuring doctors confronting medical problems followed, from *Ben Casey* and *Dr. Kildare* to *Marcus Welby, M.D.* and the surgeons of *Medical Center*. Interestingly, just as priests had previously been portrayed as heroic, almost superhuman, in virtue and skill, so too were doctors in these earlier shows; and just as 1970s television was to present doctors as "fully human," even eventually treating them as figures of fun, so too it did with priests. This was especially true of *M*A*S*H*'s chaplain character, indisputably the single most widely-known representative of Catholic clergy ever to feature on American television -- Father Francis Mulcahy.

Portrayed in the series pilot by actor George Morgan, the part of Mulcahy was immediately recast by the show's producers, who sought a quirkier and more eccentric personality – one they found in actor William Christopher. Christopher's acting career had run the gamut from stock, off-Broadway and Broadway stage work, most notably as a comic clergyman in the 1963 satirical Broadway revue *Beyond the Fringe*. After Broadway, Christopher went on to various parts on television, including a three-year stint as Private Lester Hummel on *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.* Possessed of a wry wit, and a genuine scholar of classical

Greek, the bookish Christopher's real-life personality was gradually integrated by the show's writers into the character of Father Mulcahy, a process the writers also used with the program's other principal actors and characters. "The adaptability, cheerfulness, and quiet soul-searching of Father Mulcahy over the eleven years of the series [became] a perfect foil – and antidote – to all the noise"[73] brought to *M*A*S*H* by the more blatant and histrionic comedic antics of the other characters.

The evolution of Father Mulcahy from innocuous busybody to concerned team member to moral center of the 4077th mirrored that of William Christopher's gradual move from bit player to background actor to member of the show's main ensemble. Yet even from the outset, the character of Mulcahy was treated far more respectfully than it was in the movie. In all likelihood, this was due to the fact that, like every other program on television, *M*A*S*H* was intended to appeal to – or at least, not openly offend – as many viewers as possible. While subjects such as feminism, race, and politics were considered fair game in the 1970s both by the brash young producers of television programming and (rather more reluctantly) their network superiors, religion was still an area of tremendous sensitivity and concern. While in the early years in particular Father Mulcahy was placed in some humorous situations, and while even to the end of the series the writers continued their proclivity to place religion-themed jokes in the character's mouth, with time Father Mulcahy came to be a well-rounded, fully "human" individual, while also remaining an exemplary priest.

Both facts were due in no small measure to Christopher himself. "I always thought that *M*A*S*H* was about a chaplain in the Korean War, and Burt [Metcalfe, one of the show's producers] had to keep reminding me that it wasn't," Christopher said, then detailed the thought and preparation he put into accurately portraying his role:

> I went to see a number of priests, particularly the Irish priests at St. Timothy's down the road from Fox. I wanted to feel comfortable playing a priest. The show had a medical adviser, but not a religious one. I learned how to cross myself, give a benediction, learned Latin prayers, and how to give last rites. I went to the library to read government records on the chaplain corps. I found that priests are very human and that I should avoid doing any stereotyping of a saintly nature. I wanted to play away from making Father Mulcahy too innocent. He acted as kind of a balance, a sane balance, to the wackiness of the doctors....[Father Mulcahy] began and ended a dedicated priest. He is a simple man, well-meaning but intuitive.[74]

The fruits of Christopher's research were visible on-screen, though in all likelihood only Catholic viewers who remembered the years before Vatican II would have noticed. When the Father was shown saying Mass,[75] granting absolution,[76] or administering Extreme Unction,[77] the correct gestures and accurate Latin were used by the actor. Similarly, when Father Mulcahy was called upon to quote Scripture, he did so from the Douay translation of the Bible,[78] as a pre-conciliar Catholic would have done.

However, much of the study and thought William Christopher put into his role would not be seen for several seasons. At the outset of the program, Father Mulcahy is a decidedly minor part of life at the 4077th, clearly taking a back seat to the hijinks of the doctors. In most early episodes, Father Mulcahy's major purpose seems to be to utter religiously-themed jokes and one-liners. When he offers to help with a problem, the person with whom he is speaking generally

states that they are not Catholic, leading to a Mulcahy riposte along the lines of, "Nobody's perfect," "All in good time," "It's not too late," or "Do you want to be?"

And yet, even in the first season that the seeds of the larger character Mulcahy would become were being sown. In the first season (though generally through background scenes or instances where he helps the doctors with their latest scheme), the viewer learns that prior to the war, Mulcahy coached boxing for the Catholic Youth Organization, and is a boxer of no mean talent himself;[79] knows Hebrew and is comfortable performing Jewish prayers and rituals,[80] as well as ministering to soldiers belonging to various Protestant denominations[81] (as was standard practice among Catholic military chaplains in this era);[82] is well-read, owning copies of both *War and Peace* and *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*;[83] is a sports enthusiast (though, in a humorous nod both to stereotype and to the parochialism of real-life pre-conciliar Catholics,[84] he is unable to comprehend why anyone would care about a football game in which Notre Dame is not playing);[85] plays ragtime piano,[86] is deeply concerned about Korean war orphans, and helps to raise money for their support[87] (a particularly realistic reflection of real-life Korean War chaplains);[88] and worries that he is ineffective and unnecessary, feeling as though he is not useful to the 4077th: "Sometimes – most of the time – I honestly don't know whether I'm doing any good or not," Mulcahy laments.[89] But he is comforted by Hawkeye who, though a professed agnostic, reveals in letters to his father an immense respect for the clergyman: "Father Mulcahy is a terrific guy, our priest. But I never tell him, because I don't want to foul up his humility,"[90] Hawkeye notes in one letter, while in another he calls Mulcahy "the sanest guy in the outfit."[91] Even the priest's substantial physical courage is seen early on, when he forcibly

prevents an enraged Klinger from fragging Major Burns.[92] Thus, the major aspects of Father Mulcahy's character – though at this point little more than an outline in embryonic form – were established in first season, to be expanded upon in later seasons.

For most of the show's first three seasons, the Mulcahy character continued to be the mouthpiece for religiously-themed one-liners, only rarely performing priestly function such as offering a blessing or prayer of deliverance or thanksgiving,[93] or performing weddings for soldiers,[94] generally in the background or glimpsed only briefly. Even in the few major scenes the character is given, he is the butt of humor. When Henry Blake comes to the priest with concerns that his wife may be having an affair, Mulcahy is so distracted by his own problems (his sister, a nun, has written that she plans to leave her order) that he does not even listen to the distraught husband, let alone offer him comfort or advice.[95] When the latrine is bombed while Father Mulcahy is inside, he emerges physically unharmed but babbling nonsensically about a pie his sister once baked.[96] And when Major Burns, temporarily in command, bans liquor in the camp, Hawkeye and Trapper John attend the Father's inter-denominational service, solely out of a desire to drink the sacramental wine...and Mulcahy is so delighted to have someone at his service that he overlooks their blatantly-stated reason for attending. Even worse, when Burns demands he preach a sermon on temperance, the Father has a drink to soothe his nerves beforehand, and offers only incoherent rambling.[97] In both its portrayal of Mulcahy as incompetent and its mockery of religion and traditional values, the episode "Alcoholics Unanimous" is the closest the television program *M*A*S*H* ever came to the irreverence and disrespect of the movie; but this can best be explained by the program's attempts early in its

existence to recapture some of the "madcap" comedy of the film. (Also not to be overlooked is the fact that "drunken preacher" stories have been a staple of American humor for generations, and that utilizing Father Mulcahy in such a way may merely have been an attempt by the show's writers to give the priest character something to do.)

As noted above, *M*A*S*H*'s fourth season saw the beginning of the program's transition from a comedy to a drama. As with the other characters, Father Mulcahy begins to show a more human side, demonstrating both his devotion to duty and helping others, and a whimsical sense of humor (even in areas not involving religion). The latter is seen when Hawkeye teases the priest, remarking, "Y'know, Father, standing there, the light hitting you like that, you look just like a B girl I knew in San Diego." Mulcahy straight-facedly replies, "It's quite possible. I worked my way through divinity school as a B girl in San Diego," causing Hawkeye and BJ to erupt in surprised and delighted laughter.[98] On another occasion, after the film the 4077th is watching breaks, Mulcahy and a nurse give an impromptu rendition of a song to entertain them.[99] And Mulcahy's devotion to duty is revealed frequently, such as when the bigoted Major Burns refuses to operate on wounded Korean orphans, causing an offended and stern Mulcahy to grab the reluctant doctor in an armlock, wrestle him bodily into the scrub room, and forcibly wash his hands for him.[100] And when divisional chaplain Colonel Hollister inspects the camp, Mulcahy is crushed after the superior officer berates him for his ineffective preaching. Hollister also orders the Father to write a letter to a wounded soldier's family stating he will recover. Though it is against his better judgment, the Father does so when Hollister directly orders him to. When the

patient then takes a turn for the worse, Mulcahy is devastated, but offers up a sincere and heartfelt prayer. To Mulcahy's grateful astonishment and relief, the patient recovers.[101]

But it is in the last episode of season four that the Mulcahy character truly achieves its potential, and assumes its role as moral center of the 4077th. This episode, "The Interview," even today stands as the high point of *M*A*S*H,* and as one of the greatest achievements of American television. Perfectly melding the show's humor, characterization, and dramatic potential, the episode also demonstrates the brilliant writing of Larry Gelbart and the skill and devotion to their characters of the cast.

As is so often the case in the creative arts, "The Interview" began as a happy accident. Informed at the last minute by CBS that one more episode was required to round out the season, Gelbart, Reynolds, and Metcalfe considered the research they had done in preparing to produce *M*A*S*H*, and recalled viewing the December 28, 1952 episode of Edward R. Murrow's *See It Now* titled "Christmas in Korea," in which Murrow had interviewed real-life American GIs serving in the war. Hiring journalist Clete Roberts (who had actually been a correspondent in Korea) to pose as an interviewer, the producers had Roberts "interview" each cast member about their reactions to Korea, with the cast ad-libbing answers in character. Gelbart then took the recorded answers and re-worked them into a script for the episode, which was shot in black-and-white and broadcast as a "wartime documentary" about the 4077th in Korea.

Never was the cast's grasp of their characters so apparent. Colonel Potter reminisced about the pomp and romance of the cavalry in World War I, contrasting it with the horror of Korea. BJ expressed awe at the unit's nurses, who excellently performed what he had previously regarded as "man's work." Hawkeye confessed that, despite a previous admiration for the author, he could no longer read Hemingway because of his glorification of battle.

But it was Father Mulcahy who offered the most memorable sentiment. Asked whether his experiences in Korea had changed him, the chaplain replies:

> When the doctors cut into a patient – and its cold, y'know, the way it is now, today – steam rises from the body. And the doctor will...will warm himself over the open wound. Could anyone look on that and not feel changed?

In capturing this truth – in language journalist Noel Murray calls "so matter-of-fact, and melancholy, and not in the least bit attractive or soft"[102] -- Father Mulcahy crystallized both the program's creative brilliance and its horror of war. Producer Burt Metcalfe called this "the most memorable one line and one image that is a kind of metaphor for the entire series;"[103] and on the *M*A*S*H* 30th Anniversary Special,* writer Larry Gelbart stated that this line (which was a quote from an actual Korean War surgeon that Gelbart had worked into the script) was "the finest speech in any episode of *M*A*S*H*."[104]

Nor is this single line the extent of Mulcahy's personification of the feelings of an intelligent and sensitive yet strong individual in such a situation. Asked by the reporter, "After

the war, what, Father?" Mulcahy pauses to wipe tears from his eyes, and huskily replies "I'd like to be warm and clean. Uh...and hear confessions, and maybe run a C.Y.O."[105]

In addition to brilliantly and sensitively capturing the theme of the program, William Christopher's masterful delivery, gentle and firm while bordering on tears, also made Father Mulcahy both a character to be taken seriously, and a substantial and important part of *M*A*S*H*. When season five began, William Christopher's name appeared in the program's opening credits as part of the show's major ensemble, rather than in the end credits where he had previously been listed.

Thereafter, *M*A*S*H*'s writers seemed to be aware that the character of Father Mulcahy was one to be carefully handled and utilized. Though he retained his propensity for religiously-themed humor, Mulcahy thereafter tended to be featured in one or two serious episodes each season. Such episodes increasingly revealed a well-rounded, multi-faceted, and "fully human" character, which fascinatingly combined many of the older characteristics of the "heroic priest" stereotype with those of a flawed and fallible ordinary man.

In incorporating various "heroic priest" motifs into the character of Father Mulcahy, the show's writers demonstrated an awareness of the prior media stereotypes of the "heroic priest," and in fact deliberately highlighted that awareness through characters' dialogue. In a process

which would now be called "meta-commentary" or "lampshade hanging,"[*] Hawkeye and others frequently refer to famed movie priests: when Hawkeye and Trapper are about to set off on a perilous journey, Father Mulcahy blesses them, leading Hawkeye to remark, "He's really very good, isn't he? I feel guilty. We tried to get Pat O'Brien."[106] On another occasion, Hawkeye donates a sum to the local Korean orphanage, causing Father Mulcahy to thank him. "It makes me go Spencer Tracy all over," Hawkeye replies.[107] Most humorously, the insanely right-wing intelligence officer Colonel Flagg , who suspects everyone of being a Communist sympathizer, determines that Mulcahy is actually a loyal, patriotic Catholic priest by barking, "Who sang 'Too Ra Loo Ra Loora' in *Going My Way*?" The father instantly replies, "Bing and Barry," leading Flagg to grudgingly concede, "You're clean. For now."[108]

Though the use of such reminders is humorous, they are also appropriate; for Mulcahy in fact does possess many of the virtues of the "heroic priest" as seen in the films of the 1930's and '40s. Father Mulcahy is an athlete with pronounced prowess at boxing (visiting Army psychiatrist Sidney Freedman states that he has "a left hook that could stop a truck"[109]). Such prowess is similar to that possessed by the "manly" and "heroic" priests played by Spencer Tracy in *San Francisco* and *Boys Town*, Pat O'Brien in *Angels with Dirty Faces*, and Bing Crosby in *Going My Way*.

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[*] "Lampshade Hanging is the writers' trick of dealing with any element of the story that threatens the audience's willing suspension of disbelief, [such as] a particularly blatant use of a trope, by calling attention to it and then moving on....[The writer is] using the tactic of self-deprecatingly pointing out their own flaws themselves, thus depriving critics and opponents of their ammunition." (*TV Tropes*, "Lampshade Hanging," http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/LampshadeHanging, retrieved February 15, 2012.)

Father Mulcahy also frequently demonstrates tremendous courage under fire and in other life-threatening situations. Attempting to counsel a young soldier who shot himself in the foot to escape the stress of combat, Mulcahy discovers that the boy's parish priest was his own mentor at the seminary, Father Marty "Boom Boom" Gallagher, a legendary and heroic chaplain in World War II. But when the soldier discovers that, unlike "Boom Boom," Mulcahy has never seen combat, he scornfully dismisses the chaplain: "We don't have anything to talk about. Let's face it: you have no idea what it's like up there."

Crestfallen, Father Mulcahy begs Colonel Potter for permission to visit the front (apparently not the first time he has asked for such duty – Mulcahy prefaces his request with, "I know we've talked about this before"), but the commanding officer refuses...then inadvertently makes his chaplain feel even more cowardly by reminiscing about the heroic "Boom Boom," of whom Potter had heard while serving in World War II. But Mulcahy refuses to give up:

Father: "Up front is where I want to be."

Potter: "This is a different war. Line officers don't want chaplains up at the front. Just another unarmed man they have to be responsible for. You don't belong up there, you belong here. We need you. You're doing a fine job, but try to understand, you're a chaplain, not a soldier."

Father: "I think I am a soldier. I certainly look like one."

Potter: "I once saw a picture of Calvin Coolidge in a war bonnet, but that didn't make him an Indian. Sorry, Father."

The priest sees his opportunity when word comes of a wounded soldier at an aid station, in desperate need of surgery but stranded without transportation. Defying orders, Father Mulcahy commandeers a jeep and retrieves the man himself. On the way back to the 4077th, however, he notices the wounded man beginning to choke. Frantically radioing his base for help, the priest has Hawkeye talk him through an emergency tracheotomy, which the priest performs even as artillery shells begin falling around him. In a wonderfully human (and realistic)[110] moment, the father pauses to pray before he begins operating, but the only words he can think of are those of the prayer Grace Before Meals. Having saved the man's life, Father Mulcahy drives back to the base with his patient. Later, at the 4077th's officer's club, the father is gently chided by his commander:

Potter: "I could've sworn I told you not to go up to the front."

Father:" Yes, sir, you did. And in spite of the fact that I saved a man's life, I now feel that I was wrong to disobey you."

Potter [winking]: "Cleverly put. Boom Boom would be proud of you."

Hawkeye also offers his congratulations. “The first time I operated, I was scared stiff – and there weren’t any bombs going off. I can imagine what it was like for you.” Father Mulcahy replies pensively, “No Hawkeye, you can’t. You had to be there.” Having thus proven his courage, both to himself and others, the chaplain approaches the now awestruck soldier who spurned him earlier. ”Everybody’s talking about it. You cut a hole in a guy’s throat while under fire. Were you scared?” the soldier asks. The father replies, “Terrified. I think it gave me a little taste of what it was like for you. Maybe it almost gives me the right to talk to you,” as the two begin to converse.[111]

Nor is this the only demonstration of Father Mulcahy’s courage. In subsequent episodes, he negotiates with a murderous gang of black marketeers to obtain much-needed anesthetic;[112] serves as ballast on a helicopter’s external stretcher, so that the pilot may rescue a wounded soldier;[113] retrieves the camp’s stolen penicillin from a burned-out village while under sniper fire;[114] faces down a mentally-disturbed soldier who points a rifle directly at his chest;[115] retrieves and reinserts the pin for a live grenade pulled by a wounded and panicked North Korean in the 4077th’s operating room (telling Hawkeye to “move your damn feet!” as he does so);[116] and runs to free trapped North Korean prisoners of war during an artillery barrage.[117] The chaplain’s courage occasions impressed remarks of admiration from his fellows: BJ tells Mulcahy on one occasion that “you must have ice water in your veins,”[118] and, when their tour of duty together is at an end, he says, “Y’know, Father, the first time I met you, I thought: here’s this nice, decent guy, kind of sweet and gentle. How’s he ever going to last out here? I’ve got to tell you, you’re just about the toughest bird I know.”[119] Such a record would be enough to

impress even Pat O'Brien's heroic chaplain in *The Fighting 69th* – a fact "lampshaded" by Mulcahy himself when he and Klinger return with the stolen penicillin. Klinger boasts that their feat is "the greatest act of bravery since Audie Murphy!" "Or Father Duffy," Mulcahy adds wryly.[120]

Yet, for all his courage, Father Mulcahy never allows his pride in his military accomplishments to blind him to the fear that attends combat, or the horror and misery of war. In addition to his notable observation from "The Interview" quoted above, on another occasion the chaplain conceives the idea of writing a "wartime ballad" similar to those popularized in previous conflicts. But after attempting and rejecting several martially-themed songs, he produces the following, accompanied by a melancholy tune:[121]

> There's no one singing war songs now
> Like people used to do;
> No "Over There," no "Praise the Lord,"
> No "Glory Hallelu;"
> Perhaps at last we've asked ourselves
> What we should've asked before
> With the pain and death this madness brings
> What were we ever singing for?[122]

Also like the stereotypical "heroic priest," Father Mulcahy, though of course a devout Catholic, demonstrates an intelligent open-mindedness and even appreciation for other religions and forms of spiritual practice. In addition to the aforementioned comfort with Jewish and Protestant forms of worship, he is familiar enough with Buddhism to explain a Buddhist wedding ceremony to the staff of the 4077th;[123] and when local Koreans, distraught over the destruction of their "spirit post," call in a priestess to perform an exorcism on the area, Mulcahy is thrilled by

the opportunity to observe the ritual. "I wouldn't miss this for the world!" he exclaims in excitement. "'Wondrous is man, and mysterious the ways of God.' And I would have no one shield my eyes from the glory of His works. There's more than one way to skin a spirit."[124]

Historically speaking, such an embrace of non-Catholic, non-Christian, and even non-Western religion would have been unlikely and even discouraged in most American Catholic priests during the 1950s – particularly given the attitudes of Cardinal Francis Spellman, Archbishop of New York and also, at the time, head of the Military Vicariate and thus in ultimate command of all Catholic chaplains in the U.S. armed forces. Spellman's contempt for even other Christian groups was notable, and he strongly discouraged the priests of his own archdiocese from having anything to do with clergy of other denominations. For example, Spellman dressed down Father George Barry Ford, the Catholic chaplain of Columbia University, for sending a floral arrangement to an Episcopalian minister friend for use in his church. Spellman threatened Ford with a canonical charge of *communicatio in sacris*, the sinful act of participating in worship with non-Catholics.[125]

Conversely, an enthusiastic scholarly interest in other faiths would have been in keeping with the theology and practice of some religious orders; but such an explanation in the case of Father Mulcahy can only be described as dubious. In one early episode, Mulcahy mentions that he gained his experience in boxing "before I joined the Jesuits;"[126] and the fact that throughout the series, whenever he is engaged in athletic pursuits, the father wears a sweatshirt emblazoned "Loyola" might seem to confirm that he is indeed a priest of the Society of Jesus. But in other

episodes, Mulcahy speaks of "my bishop" (not "my superior" or "the general," as a Jesuit would be more likely to do); affirms that he attended Philadelphia's diocesan seminary;[127] and states that, prior to becoming a chaplain, he was engaged in parochial work and youth ministry with the C.Y.O.[128] Additionally, there is a time factor; it is difficult to reconcile extensive parochial experience and the Jesuits' traditional ten or twelve-year formation period after graduating from college with Mulcahy's relative youth (which actor William Christopher states he intended to be about thirty years of age).[129] Mulcahy is clearly a contemporary of Hawkeye and BJ, both of whom were sent to Korea immediately after completing their residency, thus placing their ages near 28 or 30. Thus, there is no consistent evidence regarding Father Mulcahy's status as either a secular or regular priest. But given *M*A*S*H*'s notoriously poor internal continuity in other areas – Hawkeye writes a letter to his mother and sister in one episode, but states he is an only child and his father a widower in another; Colonel Potter is explicitly shown arriving at the 4077th in September of 1952, but is subsequently portrayed as celebrating New Year's Eve 1951 with the unit; and so forth – that the program's writers were inconsistent about such Catholic *minutiae* is scarcely surprising.

Whatever his precise clerical background, Father Mulcahy also demonstrates another "heroic" priestly trait: the ability to successfully counsel those requiring such. Army psychiatrist Sidney Freedman states that "with absolutely no training, [Mulcahy] seems to be a complete natural as a therapist;"[130] and the priest demonstrates it by his compassionate and clever counseling throughout the series, even going so far as to counsel Freedman himself, after the psychiatrist is helpless to prevent a wounded soldier's descent into insanity. Approaching the

therapist, Mulcahy cannily opens the discussion with, "A friend of mine has a problem. Things aren't going so well for him and he's feeling a little low." When Freedman asks who the "friend" is, the priest replies, "You. It hurts to think you might lose one, doesn't it?" "When Pierce or Hunnicutt lose one, he's out of his misery. When I lose one, I've lost a mind," the psychiatrist laments. Father Mulcahy gently responds, "When I lose one, I've lost a soul. I guess it's all in how you look at it. I wonder if a good antidote might be to think about all the successes you've had. I think you've had a few, no?"[131]

In other episodes, Mulcahy demonstrates his skill at counseling when he assists a soldier – who protests when BJ wants to remove and transplant his brain-dead comrade's aorta into another critically-wounded patient – in coming to terms with the loss of his friend;[132] helps a guilt-stricken Major Winchester discover how to express concern for his patient – a concert pianist who has lost the use of his hand – through a mutual love of music;[133] refuses to relieve Hawkeye of the painful burden of answering an enraged letter from a boy whose brother died in combat when he was sent back to the front after surgery, telling the doctor, "This letter has stirred up some very deep feelings in you, and you're going to have to deal with these feelings, whether you answer the letter or not. The problem isn't what you tell the kid – it's what you tell yourself;"[134] talks a nearly berserk soldier, who has discovered his stateside wife is pregnant by another man, out of his plan to desert;[135] helps a leukemia-stricken soldier come to terms with his impending death;[136] and inspires a soldier despairing over the unjust death of his upright friend while morally reprehensible individuals still live, by quoting the book of Job: "'Why then do the wicked live? Why are they advanced and strengthened with riches?' That was Job's question to

God. How can the wicked flourish when the good are allowed to die? And you know what the answer was? God spoke to Job out of a whirlwind and He said, 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Did you create the whales or the wild goats?' The answer is in the vastness and grandeur of the universe, not in bitterness."[137]

Perhaps the greatest demonstration of his sensitivity, cleverness and skill at dealing with unusual and complex counseling problems is seen in the episode "Identity Crisis." Wounded soldier Joshua Levin asks the father to hear his confession. Though the priest is surprised that the self-professed Orthodox Jew Levin would make such a request, he acquiesces; but Mulcahy is astonished when "Levin" crosses himself and recites the standard ritual formula for confession and requests absolution. "Levin" confesses that his name is actually Gerald Mullen. The now-dead Levin was at the end of his enlistment, and Mullen has stolen his identification, with the intention of using it to escape being sent back to combat and dishonestly return home. Though sympathizing with Mullen's fears, Father Mulcahy both condemns his lie and expresses concern for Mullen's future life with another man's identity, and urges him to abandon his deception. Mullen angrily states that he is not hurting anyone, and demands absolution, but Father Mulcahy refuses: "My son, I wish I could give it. But how can I? You're virtually unrepentant." Mullen asks if the priest will reveal his crime; Father Mulcahy replies, "Oh, no. I would never violate the sanctity of the confessional." As a result, the priest is left to grapple with his dilemma -- but finds a solution the next day, when he brings "Levin" a gift:

Father: “I had your mail forwarded. It would be a shame for you to go home without it.”

Mullen: “This is Levin’s mail.”

Father: “You’re Corporal Levin, aren’t you? There’s one here from your father, and one from your sister, and this one that says SWAK is probably from your girlfriend... Why don’t I read them to you?”

The priest reads an affecting letter from Corporal Levin’s father, which ends with the words, “What a blessing you’re coming home to us alive.” The gentle but determined priest soberly tells the duplicitous soldier, “You said once that your actions were affecting no one but yourself. These people are waiting for Joshua Levin to come down the gangplank. But he won’t – and they’ll never know what became of him.” Thus chastened, the recovered Mullen asks Father Mulcahy to write to Levin’s family, and rejoins his unit.[138]

Father Mulcahy also shares with his “heroic” media brethren the characteristic of being utterly devoted and iron-willed when it comes to the performance of his spiritual duties. When a hepatitis epidemic sweeps the 4077th, Mulcahy’s first concern is for the souls entrusted to his care. Informed that he must be isolated and have no contact with others, the priest becomes nearly frantic with the effect such isolation will have on his flock. “How can I administer the sacraments? How can I give Holy Communion? I can’t place the Eucharist on their tongues, I’ll infect them! What if somebody needs last rites in OR? People are depending on me! These souls

are in my charge!" The father demands that a special tent be rigged so that he will still be able to hear confessions, but he is berated by Hawkeye: "You have to rest. You're sick!" "SO ARE YOU!" an enraged Mulcahy shoots back. "That's not stopping you from doing your job! I'm hearing confessions and that's it!"[139] Similarly, when BJ labors one Christmas to keep a brain-dead patient's heart beating until after midnight – so that his children will not have to ever after remember Christmas as the day their father died – Mulcahy blesses the patient in preparation for the last rites. "You're not pulling a shroud over him. You can't have him!" a distraught and exhausted BJ snarls. Gently but forcefully, Father Mulcahy replies, "Listen to me, BJ. I try to stay out of the way because what you people do is so important. But at this moment, what I do is just as important. And no one – not you or anyone else – is going to stand between me and the performance of my sacred office." Faced with the Father's steely resolve, BJ relents and stands aside, allowing the priest to administer Extreme Unction.[140] Even when faced with the loss of his own hearing in the series' final episode, the father refuses to abandon his charges at the orphanage and swears BJ to silence so that he will not be sent back to America: "There are 40 children at St. Theresa's orphanage. I bring them food and clothing and medicine. They depend on me...I'm not leaving here if it means leaving them in the lurch."[141]

And although a proud and dedicated Army officer and affectionately loyal to Colonel Potter, Father Mulcahy is willing to stand against both when he believes religious principle takes precedence. In the aforementioned case of the berserk soldier with the adulterous wife, the would-be deserter enters the mess tent where the father is saying mass and demands sanctuary. When MPs arrive to arrest the soldier, Father Mulcahy turns to Colonel Potter: "Colonel, I

realize I have no military authority. Nevertheless, as a man of God, I believe there's a religious principle here which takes precedence. This is a place of worship, be it a cathedral or mess hall. If the boy chooses to take refuge here, then I must grant it to him." When the colonel returns from calling the Judge Advocate General's office and states that Mulcahy is legally in the wrong, the priest nevertheless persists. "I'm afraid I can't accept the Judge Advocate General's decision. I don't feel bound by military law in this matter, but by sacred principles. The only person I'd answer to is the Command Chaplain at I Corps. Until I hear from him to the contrary, Private Gillis will remain in sanctuary here." "This is a crock!" the MP officer sneers. "You gonna let this mess tent monk run your camp?" But Colonel Potter verbally slaps down the belligerent provost: "Watch your mouth, lieutenant. I've known this man long enough to give him the benefit of a couple hundred doubts." Even when orders come from the command chaplain to give up the prisoner, Mulcahy is willing to continue his defiance; but when the soldier seizes and fires a rifle at the MPs, the father erupts in righteous rage. "How DARE you! You seek refuge in the house of the Lord when it serves your purpose. Then, when it's no longer convenient, you desecrate it by point a deadly weapon at another human being? Private, a faith of convenience is a hollow faith." Then he walks slowly toward the soldier and demands he surrender the gun. The soldier refuses, whereupon Mulcahy grabs the rifle and throws it across the room. The overwhelmed soldier collapses into his arms, sobbing, "I'm sorry, Father." Mulcahy, holding no grudge, embraces him and says, "I know." When he learns the soldier will be sent to Sidney Freedman for treatment, Mulcahy states, "It's comforting to know he's going to be treated as a casualty, not a criminal."[142]

Finally, there is Father Mulcahy's gentleness of spirit and kindness to others, from the Korean orphans and North Korean prisoners of war, to the members of the 4077th themselves. One such example comes with Major Winchester's first Christmas with the unit; the Brahmin refuses to join in the camp's festivities, preferring to sulk at his absence from Boston. But Father Mulcahy has written to Winchester's mother and had her send his cherished childhood toboggan cap, which brings effusive thanks from the snobbish officer.[143] Indeed, it is the devotion that Father Mulcahy inspires in others that is the best tribute to his greatness of spirit; in addition to the praise from Hawkeye and BJ quoted above, in the series' final episode, Colonel Potter says farewell with the words, "So long, Francis. You've been a godsend;" and even the recalcitrant Winchester grudgingly admits, "I must say, you've made this hellhole a trifle less unbearable."[144] And on the occasion of the aforementioned Christmas party, Hawkeye leads the entire camp in toasting the father by singing the traditional Catholic hymn *Dona Nobis Pacem.*[145]

But the "heroic priest" elements of Father Mulcahy's character were balanced – particularly in the later years, after the writers made him a larger part of the show's main ensemble – by several significant character flaws which would have been unthinkable in the portrayal of a Catholic priest before 1968. A minor example is the Father's love of gambling. While it was certainly realistic to show a military chaplain engaged in all-night card games with his fellow officers, in an earlier era any mention of a priest engaging in such a vice (other than bingo) would have been met with disapproval. But not only does Mulcahy participate in such games; he positively relishes them, and is not averse to keeping the winnings for himself. When asked by a reporter what he does to relax, the father replies, "Poker. I know that may sound very

strange, but poker relaxes me. There's nothing more satisfying than shearing the flock, as it were. Of course, it all goes to the orphans. Well, almost all of it."[146] When he is asked to run in a Klinger-organized fraudulent race, which will cheat the members of another unit and put money into the pockets of the 4077th, Mulcahy initially refuses on the grounds that such activity is unseemly for a priest; but his refusal is greeted with howls of derision from his fellows. "Aren't you the same Father Francis Mulcahy who just last week laid down a king-high straight and said, 'Read 'em and weep'?" Hawkeye asks, while Margaret Houlihan is even more direct: "Cut the excuses, Mr. Holier-Than-Thou!" In the event, Mulcahy does agree to run, but simultaneously persuades his opponent to throw the race, and cons the members of the 4077th into surrendering all their winnings to him. The father assures both his opponent and his fellows that the winnings will be used to build a new roof for Sister Theresa's orphanage;[147] but given his mild duplicity cited above, the viewer might be forgiven for wondering whether *all* of the money made its way into the orphanage's coffers.

A more serious flaw is the father's deep-seated insecurity. Father Mulcahy worries incessantly that he is nearly worthless at the 4077th. In a letter to his sister, he laments:

> Dear Sis: As I write this, no one has shown up for my 10 o'clock ecumenical service. But I'm not disappointed yet; it's only 11:30. I guess my sermon is not exactly a hot ticket...When you're faced with such overwhelming physical misery, it just doesn't seem enough to offer spiritual comfort. I keep wanting to do more, but more is never enough. I'm almost desperate to be useful. No one comes for confession. I have no one to grant absolution to, no one to give comfort to. No one even wants to bend my ear for ten minutes...I don't seem to make a difference here. I hang around on the edge of effectiveness.[148]

Indeed, throughout the series, Mulcahy is shown desperately trying to be of help to the doctors in their duties. He is despondent when he attempts a task and fails, and is delighted when he is allocated even the simplest and most minor job and does it successfully. When all the nurses are ill with the flu, Mulcahy attempts to assist Hawkeye in the OR by passing him instruments. But the priest becomes confused by the multiplicity and unfamiliar names of the surgical tools, and makes repeated blunders. Frantic to save a patient, Hawkeye demands the father don gloves and put his hands into a wound, to hold the patient's gallbladder in place. The priest nearly faints and must leave the OR. Later, he asks plaintively, "Hawkeye, was I alright?"[149] On another occasion, the nurses are evacuated from the camp and Mulcahy again attempts to assist Hawkeye – only to bungle and mix up the instruments again.[150] Mulcahy even admits to a visiting officer, "After my first time in OR, I couldn't eat liver for a year."[151] But, through determination and constant practice, the priest gradually improves, earning Colonel Potter's plaudit, "You're pretty good with your hands."[152] By the end of his tour of duty, Mulcahy has become confident and skilled enough to successfully assist Hawkeye in surgery.[153]

In contrast to his gloom at his medical shortcomings, Mulcahy is overjoyed when doing something useful, no matter how minor it might be. When Mulcahy returns to the 4077th to find the entire camp stricken with food poisoning, he assumes all the nursing duties -- putting patients to bed, taking and recording their temperature and pulse, washing sheets, and changing bedpans – until head nurse Houlihan and Major Winchester return. "There's nothing like the feeling of being useful," the cleric joyfully exclaims; and when Margaret and Winchester nearly come to blows arguing about who is in charge, the priest breaks up the fight: "There are sick people here,

and we can't afford to fight among ourselves."[154] Similarly, when British officers visit the 4077th's Christmas party and suggest the unit follow the British army's Boxing Day custom – during which officers and enlisted men exchange duties for the day – Mulcahy is the only one to greet the idea with enthusiasm. "Trading places could be fun, and a Christian gesture at that. Not unlike Christ washing the feet of the Apostles," the priest exclaims. When assigned the job of orderlies, the father joins Hawkeye in mopping the hospital floor, singing as he does so and quipping, "Godliness will be next to cleanliness." "It does a man good to do manual labor," he tells Hawkeye, to which the disgruntled surgeon groans, "Is it sacreligious to beat up a priest with a mop?"[155]

Related to, caused by – and perhaps even a greater flaw than – Mulcahy's insecurity is his ambition, quite unseemly in a priest (especially so if the father is, in fact, a Jesuit, given that order's motto of producing "men for others"). This ambition takes several forms. Most obviously, in a plot spanning two seasons of *M*A*S*H*, Father Mulcahy is eager for promotion from the rank of first lieutenant to that of captain (the lowest rank held by doctors; thus, for most of his time with the 4077th, Mulcahy has found himself technically subordinate to all his fellow male officers, and even to Margaret Houlihan and many of her nurses). His lack of success in gaining what he believes to be his due rankles the priest; and, as with any truly human vice, the father is able on occasion to subdue his pride and overcome his ambition, only for it to resurface even more strongly later.

The first demonstration of Mulcahy's ambition comes after Colonel Potter compliments him for his assistance in the OR. "I'd like the promotion board to see you in here, working your butt off," the commander exclaims. Mulcahy responds to the colonel with expressions of modesty; but his ire is piqued when he meets the youthful but heroic helicopter pilot Toby Hill, famed for evacuating wounded soldiers from combat zones. Hill pours out his guilt to the priest: "Lately, I've been getting the feeling I'm not doing my job for the sake of the men, so much as I am for the glory that goes with it. The promotions, the medals, the fame." Slightly taken aback, the priest tells Hill, "My son, you deserve the glory, the promotions, the medals," then asks with a hint of jealousy in his voice, "How many promotions?" "Two in the last six months," Hill admits. "From second looie to captain in SIX MONTHS?!" yells the flabbergasted priest. "Isn't that awful?" Hill asks. The envious Mulcahy bellows, "YES!" Then, realizing how ungracious he sounds, the priest babbles, "Uh, I mean, no. I mean –" before muttering a lame excuse and running out of the room. Mulcahy then bursts into Colonel Potter's office and declaims, "Colonel, while it is true the meek shall inherit the Earth, it is equally true that the Lord helps those who help themselves. I feel I deserve a promotion. Lord help me, I want it! And I want YOU to help me get it!"

But despite Potter's efforts, no promotion is forthcoming. "I spoke to everyone I know. No dice. Every string I pulled broke. I don't blame you for being disappointed," the commander says. However, Father Mulcahy has regained his usual equanimity – or so it appears. "If I have any disappointment, it's with myself. I'm afraid ambition kind of made me forget why I'm here...It's the job that's important, not the rank. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to apologize to

another commander," he tells Potter. Yet when Hill is unable to pilot his helicopter to rescue another wounded soldier because his aircraft lacks ballast, the father immediately volunteers to take on the hazardous role – usually filled by a sandbag or weighted dummy – himself. Though he claims he is motivated by the fact that "every wasted second is a drop of blood," upon his successful return Colonel Potter promises to put him in for a commendation, "and the next time that promotion list comes out, your name better be on it" -- just as Father Mulcahy likely anticipated.[156]

In the show's next season, Klinger covertly reveals to the father the contents of Mulcahy's performance review. "His work in his own field is outstanding. Also outstanding is his frequent assistance with medical duties. And his leadership can best be described as outstanding. As his commanding officer, I have found him to be an outstanding man, an outstanding cleric, and an outstanding stand-out," reads the report. "Kind words for me. But isn't it a lot of 'outstandings'?" Mulcahy asks. "Army talk. That just means you're top of the heap. You're a shoo-in," Klinger replies.

But when the next promotion list is published, once again Mulcahy's name is nowhere to be found. "This is the FOURTH TIME!" the infuriated chaplain exclaims, as he slams his fists on his desk. "Why me? You can't imagine how many nerds I knew at chaplain's school who are now majors! My own sister's about to become Mother Superior! I think maybe somebody up there doesn't like me. This isn't directed at you," he hastily assures Potter, but then continues, "I'm angry with the fools, dolts and dodos at the Pentagon. I've had it with the Army and their

stupid promotions!" Only when Potter phones the Pentagon's Chief of Chaplains directly does the priest's promotion finally come through. As his fellows in the 4077th congratulate him on his new rank, Father Mulcahy exclaims, "This experience has taught me a lesson: the meek may inherit the Earth, but it's the grumpy who get promoted!"[157]

Both Father Mulcahy's ambition and his feelings of inferiority are manifested in another character flaw: his desire to be praised by his superiors. In addition to comparing himself unfavorably to – and wanting to be as esteemed as – the famed chaplain "Boom Boom" Gallagher, and aching for the approbation of divisional chaplain Colonel Hollister, Mulcahy rather pathetically seeks Hawkeye's approval, both as a medical aide and a "nice guy." But all the father's insecurities and desire for recognition are forcefully brought to the surface when Colonel Potter tells him that the 4077th is about to receive a visit from Cardinal James Reardon -- "the honcho padre himself," as Potter describes him.[*] Upon receiving word of the exalted prelate's imminent arrival, Mulcahy goes berserk, demanding that all personnel cease drinking, gambling, and swearing for the entire duration of the cardinal's visit. Worried that his sermon will not be adequate, the priest moans, "Sunday service will be a shambles! Everyone hung over, reeking of liquor, unshaven, unkempt."

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[*] Throughout the period of the Korean War, the head of America's Military Vicariate was Cardinal Francis Spellman. Though there were numerous auxiliary bishops in the armed forces assisting him, none of them was of so exalted a rank as cardinal. It is uncertain whether *M*A*S*H*'s writers were aware of this fact; but even if they were, in all likelihood they considered it more politic to create a purely fictional prelate to fill the necessary role in this episode, rather than using the name of Cardinal Spellman – who, by the episode's 1981 airdate, was less than fondly remembered by many, due to his unstinting support for America's military intervention in Vietnam.

When he arrives, Cardinal Reardon proves to be far from a stickler for such details, even suggesting a drink at the officer's club himself; but Mulcahy is so rabid for praise that he does not even notice the cardinal's relaxed attitude. Instead, the priest is barely able to contain his rage when a drunken soldier passes the prelate, and several others are found playing craps in the tent reserved for the cardinal's use. Instead of praying with the cardinal, or preparing his sermon for the next morning, Mulcahy wallows in self-pity, muttering darkly to Hawkeye, "I'm sure the Cardinal must think I'm doing a rotten job."

But Hawkeye has other things on his mind. "I just had to tell a patient he has leukemia," the doctor states. Instantly forgetting his own problems, Father Mulcahy gives Hawkeye his full attention and replies softly, "That must have been very difficult for you." He goes on to urge Hawkeye not to blame himself, either for the patient's condition or for being unable to do anything to help him. Subsequently, the father spends all night at the patient's bedside, counseling him and listening to his desire not to go to Tokyo for treatment, as Hawkeye wants, but to stay at the 4077th until a comatose comrade revives. When Hawkeye tries to push the cancer-stricken patient into going, Mulcahy stands up for him: "Sending that boy to Tokyo is only going to make YOU feel better, not him. He's not the only one who has to accept this. He has the right to make up his own mind."

The next morning finds Mulcahy still talking with the patient, when Klinger reminds him it is time for mass. The father arrives, unshaven and still in his bathrobe, to find the entire staff of the 4077$^{th}$ assembled and waiting – with Cardinal Reardon, resplendent in his scarlet cassock and

pectoral cross, sitting in the front row. Still overcome with his experience of talking with the leukemia patient who thought only of his friend, Mulcahy stammers out an impromptu homily:

> I'm sure you've all come expecting to hear a sermon. Well, I have to admit I'm not as prepared as I'd like to be. I'm not even dressed as I'd like to be. You see, I was working on my sermon – which I hoped would be a particularly inspirational one, in honor of Cardinal Reardon – but I was called away. I never got back to it. I'd like to share with you the reason why.
>
> Two men, each facing a crisis. The first, you know rather well. The second is a patient here. The first man thought he was facing a crisis; but really, what he was doing was trying to impress someone. He was looking for recognition, encouragement, a pat on the back. And whenever that recognition seemed threatened, he reacted childishly. Blamed everyone else for his problems but himself, because he was thinking only of himself.
>
> But the second man was confronted by the greatest crisis mortal man can face – the loss of his life. I think you'll agree that the second man had every right to be selfish. But instead, he chose to think not of himself, but of a brother. A brother!

Sobbing, Mulcahy continues,

> And when the first man saw the dignity and selflessness of the second man, he realized how selfish and petty he – I – ***I!*** – ***I*** had been... it made me see something more clearly than I'd ever seen it before. God didn't put us here for that pat on the back. He created us so He could be here Himself – so that He could exist in the lives of those He created in His image.

Finally regaining control of his emotions, Father Mulcahy introduces the Cardinal and steps aside so that he can speak. But upon rising, the prince of the church embraces the chaplain and literally pats him on the back while gazing into his eyes and saying, "If I do say so, Father, you're a tough act to follow." The next day, as he prepares to depart, the cardinal reiterates that his stay has been "very inspirational," and tells Mulcahy to "keep up the good work."[158]

Yet even "Blood Brothers" may not have plumbed the true depths of Father Mulcahy's ambition – ambition hidden even from his conscious self. Twice in the course of *M*A*S*H*, Father Mulcahy's dreams reveal his secret desire -- to be pope! On one occasion, he tells Sidney Freedman, "I had the most extraordinary dream. I was a cardinal in Rome, and the pope had a bad cold;"[159] while on another, the viewer actually sees inside Mulcahy's dream, where the priest, wearing a huge, jewel-encrusted mitre and swathed in robes of gold, is borne on a *sedia gestoria*, to the wild cheers of his compatriots in the 4077th[160]. How great must the outwardly humble cleric's insecurities and ambitions be, that in his subconscious only elevation to the chair of St. Peter could slake them?

A final flaw of Father Mulcahy's is the possession of a stereotypical "Irish temper." Though generally placid and able to navigate life through a combination of a philosophical temperament and a wry sense of humor, on occasion the father's temper flares, and he gives expression to his rage. Often, the target (and instigator) of his attacks of bad temper is the snobbish, Anglophilic, upper-class Bostonian, Major Winchester. On one occasion, Winchester comes to Mulcahy seeking solace from his fears that he may not be a biological heir to the Winchester family genes. "As you know, I'm not a religious man. But since nobody here would be any better, I've brought my problem to you," Winchester tactlessly begins his digression. A clearly irked Mulcahy sarcastically replies, "Why, thank you, Major. Your confidence in me is an inspiration. What courage it took to admit that." But the pompous Brahmin has only begun to alienate the priest. "What if I'm not really a Winchester?" he asks, then gives his view of the most horrible existence imaginable. "What if I really am just like everybody else – a factory

worker who gulps a brew while watching roller derby?" Mulcahy – son of a working-class Irish Catholic family – icily responds, "This shows me a dimension of you I never fully appreciated. Speaking as one whose ancestors were factory workers and who likes roller derby and a good brew, do I understand you to say that if you can't be better than me, there's no point in living? The fact of the matter is, you're not superior to any of us. And at times like this, I'm not even sure you're equal!"[161]

More often, Mulcahy's temper causes him to explode in a fierce bout of yelling. When he learns his poker winnings have been stolen from his tent, he commandeers the public address system and berates the entire camp: "I am shocked! I am appalled at the venal breach of one of God's commandments. As ye sow, so shall ye reap. Robbery, itself, is a sin, but robbery of your comrades is an abomination before the Lord. And a really dirty trick! Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord. Ye generation of vipers! And he that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit, better that man had never been born!"[162]Similarly, when he learns he has been denied his promotion, he vents his frustrations on Colonel Potter:

Potter: "If I were you I'd be hot under the collar, too."

Mulcahy: "And if I were YOU, I'd be on that horn raising a royal rhubarb all over I Corps!"

Potter [taken aback]: "I think I'll put a call through."

Mulcahy [shouting]: "YOU DO THAT!"[163]

At other times, Mulcahy's anger combines with his boxing prowess, causing him to threaten violence. On bringing orange juice into the OR for the doctors, the father is confronted by Winchester's sarcasm, as the doctor shows his contempt for religion by saying, "Why don't you wave your hand over it and turn it into wine?" Father Mulcahy replies, "Major, do you box? I'm tempted to teach you."[164] While shooting craps with a group of Koreans, Mulcahy is mocked for his "white collar," and threatens to "flatten" all of them;[165] and he makes the same threat to Hawkeye when the hung-over doctor loudly denigrates the wounded, hospitalized Radar.[166] And asked by Klinger to break up an impending fight between a Greek and a Turkish patient, the priest first attempts reason; but when both parties insult his manhood, he erupts in rage with, "Don't let my saintly demeanor fool you. I happen to be pretty handy with my dukes. I could flatten both of you without working up a sweat. So I suggest you remember what it says in the Good Book: 'Love your neighbor – or I'll punch your lights out!'"[167]

On only one occasion, however, does the father make good on such threats. While performing triage, Margaret is shoved aside by a newly-arrived patient, who demands a doctor attend him immediately. Father Mulcahy attempts to calm the patient, who responds by clipping the priest on the chin. In response, the father punches the wounded man in the jaw so hard that he is knocked off his stretcher and sprawls across the ground. Horrified at his actions, Mulcahy is

instantly remorseful; and when he inquires about the patient, he is in no mood for Hawkeye's usual wisecracks, testily telling the doctor, "I am deeply troubled about this incident, and I'd appreciate it if you didn't speak about it with the jawbone of an ass." But later, after the soldier rejects his apology and mocks him, the man of God privately dissolves into tears of penance, telling Hawkeye, "I used to coach boxing at the CYO. I told my boys it built character. I'm Christ's representative. 'Suffer the little children to come unto me.' 'Do unto others.' I'm not just supposed to say that stuff, I'm supposed to DO it!" he sobs, as Hawkeye urges him to forgive himself.[168]

As is amply demonstrated by such examples, the writers of *M*A*S*H* – along with actor William Christopher – were at pains to endow the character of Father Mulcahy with a gamut of personality quirks and flaws. And while Mulcahy ultimately conquers and triumphs over his temper, his inferiority complex, his ambition, and his desire for praise, these triumphs come not from superhuman virtue or wisdom, nor from some courageous action. Instead, they are brought about by shame – shame at his own pettiness and weakness; shame at striking a wounded man; shame that a man of God should be less concerned about others than a man who is literally dying.

The notion that a priest could find his redemption through shame at his own weaknesses and flaws stands as a stark contrast to Hollywood's traditional "heroic priests" like Pat O'Brien, Spencer Tracy, and Bing Crosby. One cannot even imagine Tracy's Father Flanagan or Crosby's Father O'Malley having self-centered thoughts to begin with, let alone being outdone in virtue

by a common layman, or losing control of themselves to the point of hitting someone who was no threat to them. Certainly they would never fall victim to shame, nor the temper or ambition or weakness of character which engender it. Yet, the writers of *M*A*S*H* did not feel the need to turn their clerical characters into political rebels or suicidal adulterers, as other programs of the era did. Ultimately, thanks to the skill of *M*A*S*H*'s creative staff and the talent of William Christopher, the character of Father Mulcahy proves simultaneously more "heroic" than such iconic screen priests as Jerry Connolly or Chuck O'Malley, and more "human" than the melodramatically overdrawn clerics of *The Mod Squad* or *The Streets of San Francisco*. In Father Mulcahy – as in Catholicism itself – the truth is made manifest: being "truly human" means both possessing flaws, and overcoming them through grace.

But perhaps the series' finest interweaving of Mulcahy's flaws, heroism, and humanity came in the tenth season episode "Heroes"[169] – an episode which revealed much, and implied more, about the priest's background and inner psychology. The episode opens with Father Mulcahy's delight at the news that former boxing champion "Gentleman Joe" Cavanaugh, who is on a good-will tour of Korea, will be stopping at the 4077th to visit with wounded soldiers.

On the boxer's arrival, the priest greets him, his eyes shining with palpable glee. "You have no idea how long I've dreamt of this occasion. It's an honor and a privilege," the father states, then recalls seeing Cavanaugh fight 20 years earlier, when Mulcahy was just a boy.

Unfortunately, the retired champ is demanding, obnoxious, and rude to all around him, Mulcahy included; yet the father defends him. When Margaret wonders why the priest would defend a man who "beats people up for a living," Mulcahy testily rebukes the nurse: "Oh yeah? Well, I heard that Florence Nightingale messed around!"

But the champ's behavior is due to more than ill temper. Later that night, he suffers a massive stroke. As he lies on deathbed, Father Mulcahy administers the Last Rites. Then, in a masterfully written and delivered homily, Mulcahy speaks softly to the comatose boxer, revealing to him – and to the viewer – precisely why a man of God would idolize someone who lives by his fists:

> I'm sure people tell you this all the time, but you've always been quite a hero to me. Actually, when I was growing up, I had two heroes: you, and Plato. I know that sounds strange. I loved Plato's notion of an ideal plane. I could even picture it – rambling fields and trees, sort of like the suburbs, but in the sky. I wished I could live there myself. I suppose that's because my real life was less than ideal. I was small and wore thick glasses, probably from reading too much Plato, and I was an easy target for the neighborhood kids. I didn't even try to fight back. I didn't think fisticuffs were very Platonic. But when I was 12, my father dragged me to see my first fight. It was you, versus Tony Viagenetti. By the ninth round, you were punching him at will, and the crowd was yelling, 'Put him away!' My father was one of the loudest. All of a sudden, you stopped punching. You stepped back, and you told the ref to stop the fight, because the man had been hurt enough. And I realized for the first time: it was possible to defend myself and still maintain my principles. If Plato had been a boxer, I suspect he'd have fought like you. That was when I made up my mind to keep one foot in the ideal plane, and the other foot in the real world.

As the priest tearfully blesses the dying champ, the viewer is left to contemplate the multi-faceted complexity of the clergyman's character. From a worthless "sissy priest" in the movie, to a mere opportunity for one-liners in the TV show's early years, by the end of the TV

program Father Mulcahy had been built into a genuinely human individual; an event which both reflected and was made possible by the events of the Second Vatican Council and the changes in society which paralleled them.

But although they succeeded in creating what was (and frankly, what remains) the most nuanced and well-rounded portrait of a Catholic clergyman ever to grace American television, it must be admitted that there were a few areas in which *M*A*S*H* 's writers fell short when it came to characterizing Father Mulcahy; and many of these errors were obvious to William Christopher himself.

As previously noted, an area frequently mishandled was the religious -- and specifically Catholic -- aspect of Mulcahy's vocation. Apart from Confession, Extreme Unction, and the (very rare) Marriage, viewers never see Mulcahy celebrating the sacraments, most notably the Mass. The one time this is shown, the viewer only sees the father reciting the very last words of the Tridentine service; the scene then continues as the priest banters with the just-entered Klinger.[170] In all other cases involving or implying worship, a generic Protestant-style service is seen. Father Mulcahy states that he spends much of his time writing sermons (the word "homily" is never used), apparently for use at his Protestant/inter-denominational service; but no mention of a lectionary, or a prescribed set of readings, is ever made. The father is never shown bringing the reserved Eucharist to wounded soldiers in the hospital, or encouraging anyone to attend Adoration and Benediction, or come to Matins or Vespers. He is occasionally shown consulting a Bible, but never a catechism, code of canon law, encyclical, or other form of Church decree, and

he never refers to the Pope or the Vatican. His leisure-time reading material apparently consists of *Life* magazine and secular newspapers, but never *Our Sunday Visitor* or other Catholic publications. Most astonishing given the devotionalism of the era, throughout the entire series Father Mulcahy makes not one reference to either the Blessed Virgin or any of the saints -- something that even the priests on TV's *Going My Way* did.

But then, the television program *Going My Way* was created and written by Joe Connelly, a devout Catholic who had grown up immersed in the inner-city "Catholic ghetto" of the 1930s; the television program *M*A*S*H* was created and written by secular Hollywood Jews Larry Gelbart and Gene Reynolds (born Eugene Blumenthal). Such is mentioned not to deprecate *M*A*S*H*'s creators, but only to state that they would have had no contact with the folkways of American Catholic culture -- and likely had little familiarity with religion in general, as William Christopher himself pointed out:

> Among writers and actors, you don't find as many religious people as you do in the country as a whole, and that makes the writers unsure of how to write for a religious person. [Mulcahy's] activities were kept to what writers thought the public would accept – the orphanage, for example. There were a good number of foxhole conversions in the war, but we never dealt with that. Chaplains spent a lot of time in post-op, but Mulcahy rarely went. A lot of the time, he drinks coffee in the mess tent as if there were nothing else to do.[171]

Likely, this combination of disinterest and ignorance was the reason Father Mulcahy was used (especially in the show's earliest years) as a dispenser of innocuous religion-themed jokes. This situation was also not to William Christopher's liking:

> I personally wanted to get away from religious jokes. I thought [Mulcahy] could be amusing without having to turn on a religious joke....If every time Mulcahy came into

> the room he made a remark that turned on his being a priest, that gives a terrible burden to the character, and the writer, and probably the viewer. I wanted him to be more human.[172]

Though the precise reasons can be disputed, the fact remains that *M*A*S*H* featured several situations which fairly cried out for Father Mulcahy's involvement, but which ignored the chaplain's presence. On one such occasion, a nurse receives a letter informing her that her husband is ending their marriage. Instead of discussing the situation with the chaplain, the nurse turns to BJ for comfort. As a result, BJ and the nurse have a brief, intense affair. Afterwards, BJ is wracked with guilt for being disloyal to his wife -- but he does not consult the priest, either. (BJ instead seeks advice from Hawkeye. Consistent with that character's incessant womanizing, Hawkeye's advice amounts to "So what?", a response hardly likely to soothe BJ's conscience.)[173] When Margaret Houlihan fears she may be pregnant, she discusses the potential effects on her life and career with Hawkeye, instead of the priest;[174] and when her short-lived marriage falls apart, she never consults Mulcahy, and he apparently remains oblivious to the entire situation -- in spite of the fact that he sees her multiple times every day and even officiated at her wedding![175] "Father Mulcahy should have been more involved in the disintegration of [Houlihan's] marriage...I thought there was a great scene there for him, to ask if there was something he could do to save her marriage," opined William Christopher.[176]

In fact, one of the oddest *lacunae* in the entire *M*A*S*H* canon is the utter lack of interaction between Margaret Houlihan and Father Mulcahy. Such an omission is puzzling on several levels: as an "Army brat" who moved from base to base as a child, Margaret would

surely be familiar with and comfortable around Army chaplains, and accustomed to relying on them for help. While not "regular Army," Mulcahy is respectful of the rules and regulations so dear to Margaret; he attends morning formation without complaint, performs calisthenics with the men, is always properly uniformed on the occasions when high-ranking officers come to inspect the camp, and on occasion expresses an interest in making military chaplaincy his career.[177] Finally and most obviously, "Houlihan" is an Irish name, making it likely, if not certain, that her family is Catholic. (The other member of the 4077th with an Irish surname, "Radar" O'Reilly, explicitly states that his Midwestern family is Methodist.)[178]

But the most blatant example of the show's disregard for the religious character of Father Mulcahy occurs when a shell-shocked soldier is brought for treatment at the 4077th – and claims he is Jesus Christ! After Hawkeye and BJ make numerous wisecracks at the man's expense, they introduce him to Father Mulcahy; but the priest makes absolutely no progress (or, apparently, attempt) in showing "Christ" his error. A fascinating conversation would surely result in such a situation; but instead, Mulcahy is hustled off-camera, and the ubiquitous Army psychiatrist Sidney Freedman is brought in to resolve the situation.[179]

The use of Freedman as a combination counselor/confessor/*deus ex machina* in resolving whatever problem was faced by the show's protagonists appears particularly obvious in hindsight. While actor Allan Arbus brought a low-key intelligence and humor to the character, he essentially usurped a role that could just as easily have been filled by Father Mulcahy – and William Christopher, as the latter noted:

> Sidney Freedman would come in and do a lot of talking to patients that I think Father Mulcahy could have done. I never really knew why that character was invented. Mulcahy could have expanded to handle all that.[180]

Of course, there are real-life, behind-the-scenes reasons for each of these decisions. Mulcahy's Catholicism was ignored because the show's writers either feared such content would be too controversial, or were ignorant of its details. BJ and Margaret turned to Hawkeye, not Father Mulcahy, for advice because Hawkeye was the show's leading character (and Alan Alda, who played him, was the show's top-billed star, creative consultant, producer, and sometime writer and director). Sidney Freeman was used to resolve problems because the program was broadcast in the 1970s – an era when receiving psychotherapy was no longer stigmatized to most Americans (indeed, doing so was downright trendy in Hollywood); and in the "Me Decade" of the 1970's, psychotherapy was believed to produce more positive results than "rigid" and "oppressive" traditional religion.

But in retrospect, by far the most obvious error the show's creators made in regard to the character of Father Mulcahy was his attitude toward sex. While of course a priest character could not be shown engaging in sexual contact himself (both because of the scandal and trouble such would create with advertisers, the network, and the viewing public, and because it simply would not be logical or realistic – in reality the vast majority of priests did not contravene their vows, but attended to the care of souls), consider: Father Mulcahy was an experienced priest even before he became an Army chaplain. He would have learned all the generalities and many specifics about human romantic and sexual interaction in the confessional. Add to that that he is

serving as a chaplain and hearing confessions in the wartime Army, and is located near both a combat zone and Rosie's Bar, which was always shown with prostitutes nearby attempting to pick up men. Then add the blatant womanizing and constant sexual innuendo indulged in by Hawkeye, Trapper John, and Henry Blake. Obviously, it would be well-nigh impossible to shock Father Mulcahy, or tell him something he did not know about sex. While as a 1950s cleric, the father would maintain a dignified silence on matters of sex (both to avoid inducing in others scandal and the near occasion of sin, and for reasons of simple good manners), there is absolutely no doubt that he would know as much or more about the subject as the doctors by whom he was surrounded.

And yet, throughout at least the first half of the series, Father Mulcahy acts embarrassed at the slightest mention of anything sexual. For example, when Henry Blake prepares to give a lecture on reproduction, complete with diagrams, Mulcahy hastily departs, saying, "I think I'll go check my candle shipment."[181] While using the shower room at the same time as Father Mulcahy, Frank Burns fantasizes about the nurses "soaping every inch of their precious bodies." Mulcahy interrupts with an embarrassed, "Yes. Well. This cold water is a blessing!"[182] He conducts multiple Bible studies with Burns and Houlihan, who at that point were passionate lovers, yet never lets on that he suspects anything – even though their affair was the butt of endless jokes and references by Hawkeye, Trapper, and BJ. Such ignorance and naivete goes beyond the ludicrous. That an otherwise observant, intelligent, and insightful man could be so utterly ignorant of any and every fact about a fundamental aspect of human relationship – including an affair carried on under his very nose -- boggles belief. While perhaps this was

intended by *M*A*S*H*'s writers to be a callback to the ignorant, buffoonish movie version of Mulcahy, it fell horribly flat. The nadir was reached with the first episode of the show's sixth year, when Hawkeye and Father Mulcahy exchange the following dialogue:

Father: "I never wanted to bring this up before, but I have a suspicion that Majors Burns and Houlihan were somewhat attached."

Hawkeye: "They knew each other in the Biblical sense."

Father: "Oh, dear. Oh, DEAR. He's a married man. My worst fears are confirmed!"[183]

The scene is ridiculous – as William Christopher observed.

> I had to make some reference to Major Burns and Hot Lips, and was supposed to act as if I had never known that they were having an affair, and I had a problem. I thought, 'How naive can I play that?' I decided to [play] the line as if it were a joke, because people assume priests don't think about sex. But it was silly for me that Mulcahy be that naive.[184]

Thereafter – while the character's scripted dialogue continues to indicate that Mulcahy is ignorant about sex -- thanks to the determination and skillful acting of William Christopher, a different picture begins to emerge. The careful viewer comes to understand that Father Mulcahy is not unknowledgable about sex – but that, as a private joke, he wryly *acts* as though he is, with tongue all the while firmly in cheek. William Christopher is tremendously successful in his effort, with the result that Father Mulcahy no longer appears to be an idiot; rather, he is slyly

countering Hawkeye's non-stop barrage of adolescent sex humor, by deliberately *pretending* not to see, or even understand, anything relating to sex.

The end result is far more amusing than trying to imagine that an adult man is completely oblivious to, disinterested in, and ignorant about sex. Mulcahy as scripted by *M*A*S*H*'s writers is an insult to the viewer's intelligence; Mulcahy as acted by William Christopher (though utilizing the same dialogue) is a whimsical delight.

For example, when Hawkeye leers that he wants meet an attractive operating room aide that night in a dark room to discuss "doctor-nurse relations," Mulcahy rolls his eyes and says, "Always the professional."[185] On another occasion, Hawkeye fails to seduce a visiting woman doctor – and is humiliated when the entire camp witnesses the woman rejecting him. While everyone else in camp jeers loudly, Mulcahy contents himself with a single sentence murmured in Hawkeye's ear: "My only advice would be that you avoid the occasion of sin...but you seem to be avoiding it just fine."[186] And Mulcahy takes his mock strait-laced attitude and tongue-in-cheek humor to outrageous lengths when Margaret Houlihan – startled to find a young Korean boy hiding in the women's shower – runs into the compound wearing only a towel. Mulcahy plays deftly off both Margaret's obvious display of skin, and Hawkeye and BJ's even more obvious leers:

Margaret: "What was he doing in my shower?!"

Hawkeye: “Isn’t it obvious?”

Father: “Not to me.”

Margaret: “I’m only wearing a towel!”

Father: “I hadn’t noticed.”

BJ: “If the boy took any pictures, we’ll make sure everyone gets some.”

Father: “None for me, thanks.”[187]

Just as the character of Father Mulcahy continued to grow and become more nuanced as *M*A*S*H* went on, so too the humorous contrast between a naive clergyman and a sex-obsessed camp narrowed to the point that, in the eighth season, Father Mulcahy even experienced a “romantic entanglement” of sorts.

Newly-arrived nurse Gail Harris is working toward being a doctor; and Father Mulcahy, with his own interest in learning medicine so as to be a more effective helper in the OR, happily assists her with her studies. Gail and the Father share a breezy companionship, born of mutual interest in medicine, the Father’s desire to help Gail achieve her dream, and -- on Gail’s side --

something more. Feeling like an outcast among the other nurses, who do not understand or share her desire to be a doctor, Gail shares her feelings with the priest, who replies:

Father: "You're just different. I have the same problem myself. It's always, 'Excuse the language, *Father*,' or 'Present company excepted, *Father*.' No one ever calls me by my given name – John Patrick Francis Mulcahy."

Gail: "I'll call you Johnny."

Father: "My mother used to call me Johnny."

Gail hugs the father – and as the innocent hug becomes an ardent embrace, Mulcahy nervously pulls away.

Gail: "I guess I care more than I thought."

Father: "Maybe it's best if you study with one of the doctors, Gail. I think you may be expecting more from me than I'm able to give."

Crying tears of mingled heartbreak, humiliation, and rage, Gail bangs out of the room, while sobbing: "I'm sorry – *Father*!"

Later, saddened and perplexed by the pain he has inflicted, Mulcahy asks Hawkeye for romantic advice, "an area where you're much better qualified than I. Last night I had to give a girl the brush-off….I fear I've handled the whole affair badly. Ordinarily, I provide the comfort, not cause the pain."

After enduring a barrage of mocking wisecracks, Mulcahy finally obtains Hawkeye's promise to talk to Gail for him. However, Gail is humiliated to learn that Hawkeye knows of the scene with Mulcahy; and her troubles increase even more when she is dressed down for inattention to her work by Margaret. The entire situation comes to a head when the three officers are summoned to Colonel Potter's office. Potter tells them that Gail has asked for a transfer, and recounts his conversation with the distraught nurse, addressing Hawkeye, Margaret, and Mulcahy in turn:

> I said, "What is the reason?" And she said, "I made a damn fool of myself and the whole camp knows it." So I said, "Well, I don't know it." And she said, "I'm surprised Pierce didn't tell you." So I said, "Why are you dropping this in my lap? You should be talking to your head nurse." She said, "The head nurse hates me." So I said, "Back up. What is it you did that's got everybody's tongue wagging except mine?" She said, "I had an unhappy love affair." I said, "Was it one of my doctors?" She said, "No, it was your *priest*." She was so upset she said she was giving up on med school. I didn't even know she was going to med school. So here's what you're going to do: You stop baiting her; you stop hating her; and *you* stop DATING her!

After this dose of common sense, all three officers apologize to Gail and vow to help her get admitted to medical school, and she and Father Mulcahy part as friends.[188*]

By the end of the series, the Mulcahy character's approach to sex has evolved from that of an oblivious idiot, through a period of humorously pretended ignorance, to emerge as a well-rounded, "fully human" individual who, though a celibate priest, is able to admit to BJ that he had a "sweetheart" while in school: "At the age of 12, I was a champion at spin-the-bottle," the priest reminisces. "No matter where she sat, I could always put just the right English on the bottle to make it point right at Patricia Dugan. She has six children now," Mulcahy says pensively. "I wonder if I put ideas in her head?"[189]

Finally, in the program's last season, the writers treat Father Mulcahy's knowledge of sex with the straightforwardness and respect it should have had all along. An enraged Colonel Potter learns that his son-in-law is having an affair, and declares that he is going to tell his daughter about her husband's infidelity. Sensitively but forthrightly, Father Mulcahy counsels restraint: "I'm not condoning what he did," the priest tells the colonel. "But I've lived in a war zone for a long time now, and I've seen the Sixth Commandment take quite a beating. It doesn't necessarily mean the end of a good marriage."[190] Thus, the program offered yet one more demonstration of

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[*] This "romance" fell far short of what actor William Christopher had hoped. Christopher had suggested an episode in which Mulcahy would become romantically and sexually attracted to a woman, and seriously question his commitment to the priesthood and the celibate life; but in the event, *M*A*S*H*'s writers shied away from the idea, rendering it into the innocuous tale described above. For more information, see Appendix 3.

why Father Mulcahy was – and remains – the most well-rounded and "human" priest yet seen on American television. *

But not the most comedic. As the ironic and mildly humorous characters of Fathers Cleary, Majeski, and Mulcahy demonstrate, with priests now accepted as being fully human, it also became acceptable to portray them with something less than the traditional reverence and deference Hollywood had shown. The acceptance of this irreverence by society at large encouraged more of the same; and it was only a short step to Catholic clergy – and the Catholic Church itself – being openly portrayed as figures of fun, sometimes used as tools to satirize trends in society or religion, and sometimes with priests themselves becoming the butt of humor. No better example of this exists than the media exposure and popularity given to satirist Don Novello's comic character, Father Guido Sarducci.[191]

Novello created his comic alter-ego in 1973, drawing on memories of his own Irish-Italian Catholic upbringing and various media stereotypes of Italian clergy. A stand-up comedian in San Francisco, Novello conceived the character when he found the priestly garb -- floppy black hat, white clerical collar, and a long, red-trimmed black coat with cape -- for $7.50 at a St. Vincent de Paul thrift store sale. Adding sunglasses, a mustache, and a thick Italian accent,

* The end of the series *M*A*S*H* was not the end of the Mulcahy character. The 1983 spin-off series *AfterMASH* depicted Father Mulcahy, along with Colonel Potter, Klinger, and Klinger's Korean war bride Soon-Lee, working together in a post-war veteran's hospital. However, while the other characters were given interesting and realistic story arcs – Klinger seeks to adjust to civilian life, his wife to America, and Potter to retirement – Mulcahy was increasingly irrelevant, with the series' writers clearly struggling to find something for the character to do. Soon, the point became moot; after a marginally successful first season, in its second *AfterMASH*'s ratings plummeted, and the program was cancelled. For an analysis of *AfterMASH* and William Christopher's ambitions for the program and Mulcahy, see Appendix 3.

Novello depicted a caricature of the "hip, with-it" priest then current in popular culture. Under Novello, the chain-smoking Father Sarducci was billed as "gossip columnist and rock music critic for the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*." (In later years, Sarducci was "promoted" to the post of Assistant Managing Editor for *The Vatican Enquirer*.) Novello's satire cut both ways: while it was patently ridiculous to imagine the staid, reverent *L'Osservatore Romano* -- long considered the unofficial voice of the Vatican – having either a rock critic or a gossip column, Sarducci also poked gentle fun at the notion of the "hyphenated priest," and at the incongruous difference between the Bing Crosby/Pat O'Brien stereotype of the priest in older American popular culture and the post-Conciliar "modern" priests then current, both in reality and in the entertainment programming of the day.

The Sarducci characterization also drew on the trend in comedy, beginning in the early 1960s, of poking irreverent fun at formerly sacrosanct individuals and institutions. Originating with such comedians as Vaughn Meader (with his popular comedy album *The First Family* and its sequel, *Welcome to the LBJ Ranch*) and Mort Sahl, the trend encapsulated the "hip" humor of the era, with affectionate parodies of President Kennedy and other political figures. As the events of the late 1960s increasingly demonstrated genuine conflict between institutions and the young, such humor became harder edged, and cast a wider net. Inevitably, given the changes accompanying the Second Vatican Council and the proclivities of the times, the Catholic Church soon found itself in the crosshairs of comedians and satirists. Such comedy ranged from mild parody (Tom Lehrer's song "The Vatican Rag") to vicious slander (Lenny Bruce: "Spellman does it with the nuns.") By the early 1970s, Catholicism was yet one more area of fertile ground

for comedians like George Carlin and others. With jokes about the Church commonplace, what could be more natural than an openly comic priest?

First appearing as Father Sarducci in the San Francisco stand-up and nightclub scene, Novello was introduced to anti-establishment comics Tom and Dick Smothers. The duo's 1967 program, *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* was one of the most popular – and most controversial – programs ever aired.[192] The program's blatant left-wing politics, pro-drug comedy, mockery of President Johnson, and anti-Vietnam polemics, combined with irreverent humor bordering on the tasteless (one sketch filled with innuendo about Moses and the "burning bush" provoked such outrage that clergy across America demanded an on-air apology) and the duo's refusal to allow CBS to edit the program before broadcast, caused the network so many headaches that, despite the Smothers' tremendous popularity with younger viewers, CBS cancelled the program in 1969.[193]

In 1975, the Smothers returned to prime time in a short-lived and notably less controversial summer replacement series for NBC, with Novello as one of the occasionally-appearing supporting players. However, though supposedly playing Father Sarducci, in his appearances on this series Novello indulged in no Catholic satire; while dressed in his typical Sarducci costume and introduced as "Father Guido Sarducci," Novello's sketches on *The Smothers Brothers Show* were innocuous bits of typical observational humor, such as a bogus rumor about an alleged reunion of the Beatles.[194] While Novello was also a contributing writer to the program, it is possible he was still developing the comic possibilities of the character.

Alternately, it is equally possible that, wary of their cancellation a few years earlier, the Smothers chose to take a more careful tack with the humor on their replacement show, and deliberately avoided anything that might smack of controversy. (The other content in the episodes of the program reviewed for this dissertation makes the latter supposition likely.) Novello's turn as Father Sarducci was to find its greatest fame and popularity some years later, as a featured part of the long-running series *Saturday Night Live*.

Premiering in October 1975, *Saturday Night Live* was a weekly series which showcased fresh, new talent, at times outrageous comedy, and the excitement of live TV to late-night viewers. Created by Lorne Michaels, formerly a writer for *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In, SNL* adopted much of that program's liberal sensibility and anarchic style in its combination of music, comedy, and topical satire.[195] Given his own history with such anti-establishment comedians as the Smothers Brothers, Don Novello was a natural for the show's writing staff. By 1978, he brought his act as Father Sarducci to the program; and a fortuitous coincidence enabled him to make an immense public impression with his brand of Catholic comedy – one which his character as a "hip, with-it" priest was ideally positioned to exploit. Novello's second appearance on *SNL* as Father Sarducci occurred on October 21, 1978 – less than a week after the conclusion of the conclave that elected Pope John Paul II. Such circumstances were ideal for a comedian playing the part of a priest and a supposed Vatican correspondent to remark on the election of the new pope, and Novello made the most of the opportunity. Speaking as a "special correspondent" on *SNL*'s parody newscast "Weekend Update," Father Guido addressed the alleged "behind-the-scenes gossip" of the papal election:[196]

> Everybody thought it would be Cardinal Felonio. He had a great campaign button, with his picture and the slogan 'Felonio Unum Est,' meaning 'Felonio's the One.' It's hard to come up with good election slogans in Latin, because there's no slang…They say too that he had a lot of money behind him. But then rumors started to circulate that it was Episcopalian money, and that really hurt his chances.

Sarducci also detailed the candidacy of Cardinal Dario Fungii, whose campaign button sported a picture of a mushroom (fungi) and the slogan "Inconstitutus? Cogitate Fungii," or "Deadlocked? Consider Fungii." Explained Sarducci:

> This button was put out by Cardinal Fungii's friends, who felt bad for him. [*] He's 106 years old, and of course after age 80 you're not allowed to vote. The last conclave, they didn't even invite him to the dinner dance. The idea was that if the voting deadlocks for like a month or so and the cardinals want to get out of there and go home, take a shower, and get a good night's sleep, they could elect Fungii. Because how long can you last when you're 106? A few months, maybe a year. Then he'll die, and they can come back and vote for someone they really want.

Sarducci concluded his monologue with the statement that the new pope will be wonderful, but added, "In a million years, I never would have guessed that they'd have stabbed us Italians in the back like that."

While Novello's parody of papal elections as being similar to American political ones – complete with electoral slogans, campaign buttons, and dinner dances – is amusing in itself, for those with a degree of familiarity with the history of papal conclaves, the satire is even sharper, because like all good satire, it contains much that is objectively true.

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[*] Amazingly, Novello didn't hit on the obvious pun that the other cardinals like Fungii because he is such a "fun guy."

The notion that the College of Cardinals might grow impatient with their confinement in conclave and "want to get out of there, go home, and take a shower and get a good night's sleep," accurately reflected the conditions that prevailed in conclave at the time of the broadcast. Until the papal election of 2005, the cardinal electors were housed during conclave in tiny, hastily-built plywood cubicles in the Apostolic Palace, where they had to sleep on cots until they chose a new pope. As journalist John Allen reports, these were

> extremely Spartan accommodations for men ranging from middle-aged to elderly and generally accustomed to something more refined… Bathrooms numbered one for every ten electors. Italian cardinal Silvio Oddi, whose cell was near one of the bathrooms in 1978, reported awakening in the middle of the night to the groans of elderly cardinals who had shuffled down marble hallways for more than seventy meters only to find their assigned toilet occupied.[197] *

Equally accurate is Sarducci's speculation that the cardinals might elect a "placeholder" or "interim" pope, only to await the pope's death and then "come back and vote for someone they really want." This was essentially the tactic the College of Cardinals intended to employ in 1958, when they selected the elderly and ailing Angelo Roncalli – only to receive a rude shock when Roncalli, as Pope John XXIII, called the Second Vatican Council, which "opened the windows to the world" and threw the Catholic Church into turmoil.[198] Finally, his remark about "stabbing the Italians in the back" was a reference to the fact that, prior to the election of John Paul II, Italians exclusively had been elected to the papacy for nearly 500 years. Though

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* As a result of his own experiences at the two conclaves of 1978, during his time as pope John Paul II ordered the construction on Vatican grounds of the *Sanctae Marthae Dominus*, or St. Martha's Hostel, a hotel-like building with modern facilities. During the conclaves of 2005 and 2013, the cardinal electors cast their votes in the Sistine Chapel, but every evening retired to small but comfortable individual apartments – each with its own bathroom.

humorously-stated, Sarducci reflected the feelings many real-life Italians may have had of "betrayal," or losing something that was expected and believed deservedly one's own.

With the perspective of thirty-plus years, Novello's monologue is worthy of attention as much for what it did NOT include as for what it did. Considering *SNL*'s deserved reputation for slaughtering sacred cows (consider Chevy Chase's portrayal of President Gerald Ford as a bumbling clod, or of Jane Curtin's exaggeratedly strident and mean-spirited representation of feminism), from today's perspective the sketch was remarkably restrained, even gentle. Much of the humor was directed more at media perceptions and American electoral traditions than papal ones. But it is surprising that (for example) not a single "polack" joke was made about the new pope – something that Archie Bunker would not have refrained from, even a few years earlier. "Edgy" for its time though *SNL* was, did NBC still shy away from the possibility of offending millions of devout Catholic viewers? Did the fact that John Paul II's election was the result of the death, two months earlier, of Pope Paul VI, and then only one month earlier, the tragic and totally unexpected death of the wildly popular John Paul I, give NBC pause? Or was Catholicism still so generally respected that NBC, its sponsors, and perhaps even the "Not Ready for Prime Time Players" themselves, shied away from it?

Perhaps the true answer lies within Don Novello's own comic styling choices and the manner in which he preferred to portray Sarducci. Part of the reason the priest character is funny is that it is not strident or overtly laboring either to be "cool" and "edgy," nor to demand laughs. Instead, Sarducci comes across as a genuine individual – mildly eccentric, and a parody of the

"young, modern" priest, to be sure, but not wildly over-the-top or unbelievable. Instead, he appears to be a "progressive" priest, perhaps more interested in gratifying his own interests than in humble service to the Church; but that, too, is a traditional portrayal of Italian clergy in particular. Sarducci's pride in his Italian heritage, his interest in secular matters, his mildly "hip" and affected dress, his casual smoking -- all combined to render an amusing but more or less accurate reflection of the liberal priest which had already become current in popular culture.

His commentary on John Paul II's election greatly boosted Novello's visibility and popularity; thereafter for several years, while not one of the show's "regulars," Father Guido Sarducci was a frequently recurring performer on the "Weekend Update" segment of *Saturday Night Live*. Several of these appearances also tapped specifically Catholic themes; in one, the proudly Italian Sarducci complained about the attention devoted to St. Patrick's Day in America:

> St. Patrick, he was a good saint, but he wasn't a great saint, like St. Joseph, the patron saint of Italy. St. Joseph's name day is coming up – March 19th, only two days away – but there won't be no parades, no parties, not even a song for St. Joseph. And it's because of St. Patrick. It's like having a birthday two days after Christmas. You just don't pay the same attention, y'know. And it just breaks my heart. He was a great saint, and this mediocre saint gets all the glory.[199]

Similar Catholic-themed comedy involved American saints,[200] a plan to create "shrinemobiles" – "the take at the shrines in Italy is off 55%, and the reason is because of the price of gasoline. It's so expensive, people can't afford to drive to the shrines. So I says to 'em, 'if people can't drive to the shrines, you drive the shrines to the people'"[201] – and recurring references to the Father's impending but never received promotion to monsignor ("Nothin' brings out the good veal in Italian restaurants like that red stripe.")

However, similar to his appearances on *The Smothers Brothers Show*, the vast majority of Novello's appearances as Father Sarducci on *Saturday Night Live* involved no specifically "Catholic" humor, tending more toward whimsically observational humor on subjects such as UFOs,[202] Paul McCartney's arrest for marijuana possession,[203] and a bizarre real-life attempt by Novello to interview former president Richard Nixon, who had recently moved to New York.[204] With the departure of the SNL's original cast at the end of the 1980 season, Novello also ceased being a featured performer on the program, though in his guise as Father Sarducci he has appeared as a guest occasionally. He also went on to use the Sarducci character for outside comedy, such as appearing in radio commercials for *High Times* magazine in which he offered to perform blessings for a fee, and even, in the early 1980s, ads promoting the priesthood.[205]

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When dealing with the subject of Catholicism (particularly through its portrayal of the Church's prime representatives, Catholic priests), entertainment television in the 1970s addressed the issues of a changing Catholic culture by integrating the traditional portrayal of church priests with the post-Vatican II sensibilities of accepting the "humanness," joys and hopes of everyday life.

And so, from radical, rebellious post-Vatican II reformers, to gentler, more well-rounded characters displaying a variety of characteristics, priests were finally accepted as being neither Bing Crosby-perfect nor necessarily always "heroic," but rather, as "fully human." And just as

the Second Vatican Council's documents encouraged Catholicism to embrace the world not as it should be, but as it actually is in all its complexity, so too did popular culture's portrayal of priests in this period reflect the changes in the Church and in the wider culture.

# CONCLUSION

This dissertation has endeavored to make an original contribution to the scholarship of American Catholicism by examining the portrayal of Catholic clergy in popular entertainment between the 1930s and the late 1970s, and in so doing demonstrate both that the image of the Catholic priesthood in mass entertainment has been influenced by the highly-publicized actions of real-life priests, and that the images shown in popular culture itself have influenced the imagery used in later entertainment products – and thereby, the attitudes and perceptions of the American public.

From the earliest days of the American experiment until the 1930s, the overwhelming majority of non-Catholic Americans had no personal experience, nor many if any unbiased images, of the Catholic priesthood. This began to change in the early 1930s. A decade earlier, liberal Americans had already begun to dispense with intellectual biases against Catholicism, motivated both by Catholic demonstrations of patriotism during the First World War (which proved that traditional Protestant concerns about alleged Catholic allegiance to a "foreign despot" in the person of the pope were misplaced), and by the adoption by America's bishops and the National Catholic Welfare Conference of a progressive social program. This perception of a new "Catholic social conscience" was intensified by the participation of various "labor priests" in the collaboration between religion, government, and organized labor which attended the New Deal.

This progressive, "reform"-based social activism on the part of Catholic priests was reflected in many of the popular films of the 1930s, such as *Angels with Dirty Faces* and *Boys Town*; but the most powerful influence on American perceptions of the Catholic priesthood in this period were the sermons of the famed Depression-era "radio priest," Father Charles E. Coughlin. While consensus across academic disciplines has consistently portrayed Coughlin almost exclusively as a fascist, anti-Semitic hatemonger, such a characterization was accurate only for the latest and least influential period of his radio career. Accordingly, this dissertation maintains that in his earlier – and far *more* influential – period, Coughlin's broadcasts served as a vast but heretofore little-recognized influence on the perception of the Catholic priest, and his subsequent portrayal in other media.

Throughout the wartime cooperation of the 1940s and the anti-Communist postwar consensus of the 1950s, Catholicism moved from toleration to acceptance to enthusiastic embrace in both entertainment and American culture generally. From the portrayal of the priesthood in such popular and beloved movies as *Going My Way* to the erudition and charisma of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, Catholicism quickly became an established part of the American mainstream – aided in large part by the Church's (and individual clerics') staunch opposition to the international tyranny of communism, as represented by the Soviet Union and its domination of Eastern Europe. Together, such real-life figures as Coughlin, Sheen, and the Hungarian victim of Soviet oppression, Cardinal Joszef Mindszenty, combined with popular fictional portrayals in radio, film, and television to form a media image of the "heroic priest."

Such portrayals continued as America's acceptance of Catholicism culminated in the early 1960s with the elevation to the papacy of the jolly John XXIII – promoted in American media as "Good Pope John" – and the equally consequential elevation to the presidency of the youthful and charismatic Catholic John F. Kennedy. The outpouring of optimism which characterized the perception of Catholicism in this period was confirmed by the convening by Pope John of the Second Vatican Council – the first such council in nearly a century, and the first in the Church's history to convene, not for the purpose of denouncing errors in doctrine or practice, but to "throw open the windows of the Church" and embrace both the world and modernity. The Council further demonstrated such optimism in its decrees, promoting such causes as ecumenism, religious freedom, modernization of the liturgy, and a greater degree of democracy in the Church. The tremendous popularity of Catholicism in popular culture in this period was reflected by the premiere of the television program *Going My Way*. Based loosely on the earlier movie, the program demonstrated the mainstream acceptance of and enthusiasm for Catholicism, by devoting an hour of prime time to a comedy/drama about two Catholic priests and their life in a rectory; while the program itself exhibited both nostalgia for an older way of life, and the then-contemporaneous embrace of the modern world. The tension between these two elements present in the program reflected the ambiguity caused by the rapid changes in both the Church and society – changes which would soon explode into open conflict with the Church and American culture as a whole.

The late 1960s were attended by vast upheavals in American (and global) culture. Increasingly widespread material wealth, rapid technological progress, reaction against the

events of the First and Second World Wars, the influence of humanistic psychology, and many others, shaped the era. As a result, a desire for greater freedom and lessening of traditional societal, legal, and moral strictures grew particularly among youth. These impulses were resisted and opposed by concern and fear of the new direction and a desire for order, often by older generations. These patterns, broadly present in the culture as a whole, were reflected in Catholicism by reactions in favor of – and against – the changes introduced by Vatican II.

Just as the authority structure and assumptions of traditional American life were challenged by the events and philosophies of the late 1960s, so too were those of the Catholic Church. And just as traditional definitions of patriotism, good citizenship, and morality were challenged in American life, so too were the traditional assumptions of Catholicism.

To some, this represented the culmination of the very reform impulses begun at Vatican II – people freed of repressive church leaders and structures, freed to form their own consciences, explore the unique "charisms" of the laity, and bring to full realization the church as being "the people of God," not merely a small group of elderly, narrow-minded, authoritarian clergy. To others, baffled by the rapid radicalization of society and apparent erosion of moral values, it seemed that the Church, which for centuries had stood for freedom and order against the tyranny of murderous radical philosophies from the French Revolution to the Soviet gulag, chose this precise moment in America and Western Europe to capitulate to the very forces against which it had stood as a bulwark in Eastern Europe and Asia. These changes in the Church

– and in American culture as a whole – were reflected in the entertainment programming on prime-time television.

As these two perspectives clashed and fought for dominance in America's political and cultural landscape, popular entertainment did what it always does -- presented and reflected both. Created less by monolithic corporations than by a wide variety of individuals, and always desirous of appealing to the widest possible audience, entertainment television in particular reflected the gamut of cultural philosophies then competing for attention.

But television often did more than merely reflect the wide spectrum of political and cultural feeling; frequently, it adopted a "mix and match" approach to various, sometimes wildly disparate, elements to create new products and perspectives. And as it did with politics, so television did with religion. Inspired by such real-life radical "reform priests" as anti-war activists Daniel and Philip Berrigan, as well as shaped by prior portrayals of priests in past television programming and other forms of popular culture such as radio broadcasting and film, television in the 1970s melded previous stereotypes and portrayals with then-current cultural trends to promulgate a new understanding of the Catholic priest as "fully human," and, in time, led to Catholic clergy – formerly portrayed exclusively noble and heroic – being portrayed as flawed individuals and even figures of fun.

Through a cycle of popular representation of priests as suspect in the years before 1920, to being portrayed as superhuman in the late 1930s through the 1950s, and then all-too-human in

the latter years of the 1960s and the '70s, in the middle years of the 20th century the Catholic Church in America moved from being considered wholly alien and "other," to being admired, to, despite its manifold flaws, ultimately being accepted as a part of America's cultural matrix. With the advent of "fully human," and even humorously caricatured, portrayals, the portrait of the Catholic priest in American popular culture had come nearly full circle: from being considered alien and antithetical to American mores, to being accepted, then idealized, then accepted again as human, and finally, gently parodied. And ahead lay yet further changes in the portrayal of the priest, due to such disparate causes as further changes in the American Catholic Church, changes in American culture, the rise of more explicit and confrontational programming on cable television -- and, perhaps most of all, revelations of priestly sexual misconduct.

For the forty years between 1928 and 1968, Catholicism enjoyed a level of popularity and influence previously unknown to Catholics in America. But both popularity and influence have sharply decreased in recent years. With the revelations of clergy sex abuse in the 1990s and 2000s, the image of Catholic clergy today is at a low ebb unequalled since the days of Maria Monk – though all the worse since the stories of abusive priests then were the products of demented fiction, while today they are soberingly true. Such revelations, together with increasingly anti-Catholic attitudes – not least, on the part of many of those who create today's television programming and popular culture – threaten to restore to Catholicism the image of a repressive and authoritarian institution alien to American culture; though the "American culture" is not the fiercely Protestant Christianity of the past, but the secularist hedonism of the present. Despite the positive portrayal of Catholicism in the middle of the 20th century chronicled in this

dissertation, it is clear that the Church's greatest struggle for acceptance and approval in American popular culture still lies ahead.

## APPENDIX 1

### *Going My Way* Episode Guide

*As it has rarely been shown in reruns and is little-documented in standard sources about television programming, the episode storylines on* Going My Way *are summarized here, along with original airdates, writer(s), and guest-stars who were either well-known at the time or who later became famous in other roles.*

***Going My Way***

ABC (Wednesdays, 8:30 pm ET)

Produced by Joe Connelly: Revue Studios /MCA

30 episodes of 60 minutes; black-and-white

**1. BACK TO BALLYMORA**

Original airdate: October 3, 1962

Writer: Emmet Lavery

Story by: Juanita Vaughn

The parish plans a surprise trip back to Ireland for Father Fitzgibbon. The priest sacrifices it to convince an embittered Russian immigrant that America is a good country.

[This is the only episode that features singing and dancing by the cast.]

**2. THE CROOKED ANGEL**

Original airdate: October 10, 1962

Writer: William Fay

A boy shows a gift for music, but his ex-boxer father won't allow him to join the parish choir – until Father O'Malley takes a hand.

**3. THE PARISH CAR**

Original airdate: October 17, 1962

Writers: Mark Weingart & Joe Connelly

Story by: Joe Connelly

Father Fitzgibbon buys a stolen car.

**4. THE FATHER**

Original airdate: October 24, 1962

Writers: Mark Weingart & Joe Connelly

Based on a story by Caryll Houselander

Father O'Malley persuades a strict immigrant to break with his traditions and allow his daughter to attend a dance…but the daughter doesn't return home.

**5. A MAN FOR MARY**

Original airdate: October 31, 1962

Writer: George Tibbles

Story by John Fante

Guest Cast: Anne Francis, George Kennedy

Beautiful ingénue Mary Dunne wreaks havoc among the male residents of her boarding house.

**6. LIKE MY OWN BROTHER**

Original airdate: November 7, 1962

Writer: Richard Baer

Guest Cast: Harry Morgan

A postal clerk is jealous of his younger brother's success.

**7. NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR MY SISTER**

Original airdate: November 14, 1962

Writer: Richard Baer

A construction worker wants to marry a college-educated woman, but her domineering brother disapproves of the match. When she turns him down, the construction worker plans to become a priest.

**8. A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE**

Original airdate: November 21, 1962

Writer: Richard Baer

A Catholic vs. Protestant basketball game is jeopardized by an arrogant star player.

**9. MR. SECOND CHANCE**

Original airdate: November 28, 1962

Writers: Mark Weingart & Joe Connelly

Story by Robert Hardy Andrews

A con man who deserted his family years ago wants to attend his daughter's wedding.

**10. ASK ME NO QUESTIONS**

Original airdate: December 7, 1962

Writers: Mark Weingart & Joe Connelly

Guest cast: Kevin McCarthy, Joanne Linville

A young boy tries to reunite his separated parents.

**11. KEEP AN EYE ON SANTA CLAUS**

Original airdate: December 12, 1962

Writer: Richard Baer

Guest Cast: Cloris Leachman, Billy Mumy

In this comedy, Father O'Malley and Tom Colwell try to prevent an elderly ex-con from burglarizing a department store at Christmas.

**12. A DOG FOR FATHER FITZ**

Original airdate: December 19, 1962

Writers: Emmet Lavery & Joe Connelly

A lonely young boy is devastated when his beloved dog dies.

**13. A SAINT FOR MAMA**

Original airdate: December 26, 1962

Writer: Emmet Lavery

Guest Cast: Beverly Garland

Mobster Tony Laurentino steals the parish's statue of St. Anthony, believing its "magic" will heal his sick mother.

**14. TELL ME WHEN YOU GET TO HEAVEN**

Original airdate: January 2, 1963

Writer: Lewis Reed

Guest Cast: James Whitmore

An agnostic doctor sneers at religion -- until he must operate on a critically-ill boy.

**15. MY SON THE SOCIAL WORKER**

Original airdate: January 9, 1963

Writer: Richard Baer

Guest Cast: Ed Begley

Tom Colwell's interfering father comes for a visit.

**16. A MEMORIAL FOR FINNEGAN**

Original airdate: January 16, 1963

Writer: Malcolm Stuart Boylan

An impoverished artist tries to collect a long-standing debt from a wealthy executive.

**17. DON'T FORGET TO SAY GOODBYE**

Original airdate: January 23, 1963

Writers: Emmet Lavery & Mark Weingart

Guest Cast: Jane Wyatt, Richard Denning

Crushed by her husband's womanizing, an alcoholic asks Father O'Malley to prevent her daughter's wedding.

**18. THE SHOEMAKER'S CHILD**

Original airdate: January 30, 1963

Writer: Bob Mosher

A famed child psychologist's son is a delinquent.

**19. THE SLASHER**

Original airdate: February 6, 1963

Writer: Lewis Reed

Story by Eric Peters

A former pro wrestler gets a job as an athletic coach at Tom Colwell's community center.

**20. ONE SMALL UNHAPPY FAMILY**

Original airdate: February 13, 1963

Writer: Richard Baer

Guest Cast: Keir Dullea

A newly-married couple learns they cannot have children.

**21. HAS ANYBODY HERE SEEN EDDIE?**

Original airdate: February 20, 1963

Writer: Richard Baer

Tom Colwell tries to prevent a teenage delinquent's marriage to an older woman.

**22. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK**

Original airdate: February 27, 1963

Writer: William Fay

Guest Cast: Richard Carlson, Kent Smith

An alcoholic seminary dropout is ashamed to face his former classmate, now a famous bishop.

**23. CORNELIUS, COME HOME**

Original airdate: March 6, 1963

Writer: James O'Hanlon

A ne'er-do-well believes he has won the lottery.

**24. THE BOSS OF THE WARD**

Original airdate: March 13, 1963

Writer: Carey Wilber

Guest Cast: Pat O'Brien

In this imitation of *The Last Hurrah*, an elderly ward heeler is replaced by a younger man.

**25. RUN, ROBIN, RUN**

Original airdate: March 20, 1963

Teleplay by: Emmet Lavery & Mark Weingart

Guest Cast: Ivan Dixon

Father Fitzgibbon and Tom Colwell team up to help a rebellious African-American musician.

**26. REFORMATION OF WILLIE**

Original airdate: March 27, 1963

Writers: Dale & Katherine Eunson

Story by Joe Connelly

Guest Cast: Ray Walston

Father O'Malley tries to reform the neighborhood drunk.

**27. CUSTODY OF THE CHILD**

Original airdate: April 3, 1963

Writers: Mark Weingart & Mel Goldberg

Story by Mel Goldberg

A wealthy but cold and unscrupulous woman gains custody of her granddaughter.

**28. FLORENCE, COME HOME**

Original airdate: April 10, 1963

Writer: Richard Baer

A middle-aged couple suffers from empty nest syndrome.

**29. HEAR NO EVIL**

Original airdate: April 17, 1963

Writer: Richard Baer

A deaf couple's relationship is jeopardized when the wife regains her hearing.

**30. A TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW**

Original airdate: April 24, 1963

Writer: Mark Weingart

When Tom Colwell quits his job the neighborhood boys are dismayed by his replacement, a high-handed feminist.

**Summer 1963 reruns:**

| | |
|---|---|
| May 1 | "The Crooked Angel" |
| May 8 | "The Parish Car" |
| May 15 | "The Father" |
| May 22 | unknown |
| May 29 | unknown |
| June 5 | "Not Good Enough for My Sister" |
| June 12 | unknown |
| June 19 | unknown |
| June 26 | "Ask Me No Questions" |
| July 03 | "The Slasher" |
| July 10 | "A Dog for Father Fitz" |
| July 17 | "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven" |
| July 24 | "Don't Forget to Say Goodbye" |
| July 31 | "The Shoemaker's Child" |
| August 7 | “One Small Unhappy Family” |
| August 14 | unknown |

August 21 "Custody of the Child"

August 28 “The Boss of the Ward”

September 3 “Run, Robin, Run”

September 11 "Hear No Evil"

## APPENDIX 2

### *CATHOLICS: A FABLE OF THE FUTURE*

While the overwhelming majority of popular culture portrayals of Catholic clergy in the 1970s, from *The Mod Squad* through *M*A*S*H* and later, posited the triumph of a "reformed," progressive, post-Conciliar Church over that of the past, one production of a notably more traditionalist bent questioned just how far such revolutionary changes in the Church would go, and what their ultimate effects might be.

The drama *Catholics: A Fable of the Future* is a remarkable footnote to the general trend which presumed the triumph of progressive "reform" in the portrayal of Catholicism, especially clergy, in popular culture during the 1970s. Approaching the trends of the era from a traditionalist prospective, *Catholics* presents a sharp picture of the doubt and confusion which racked the Church in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the often radical changes the Council prompted, and the resistance to them which many average Catholics felt during the period. Aired by CBS in 1973[1] as a special under CBS' prestigious *Playhouse 90* title, *Catholics* was made and originally shown in Britain for the *ITV Saturday Night Theatre*, and was based on the 1972 novel *Catholics* by British Catholic writer Brian Moore.

Introduced with the words, "This story takes place at some distant time in the future. It is a fable about the changes that overtake men and their institutions. The changes depicted in this particular fable may or may not come true," the drama is set in a hypothetical future wherein the

changes inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council were merely the mildest precursor to a radical institutional abandonment of tradition throughout the Church, from the uppermost reaches of its hierarchy to the smallest details of parochial practice.

The film opens on a barren, rocky seaside cliff in Ireland, where a priest is performing the Tridentine Mass in Latin. His congregation bears placards reading, "We Demand Immediate Return to the True Faith," "La Misa en Latin," "Nigeria: Maka Idowe Mass Na Latin", and "We Will Fight for Our Catholic Heritage." The ceremony is disapprovingly observed by a young man in a black turtleneck and jean jacket.

The scene shifts to the Abbey Isle of Mork, where a helicopter descends to disgorge the same young man who, in greeting the Abbot, reveals himself as Father Kinsella, a special envoy from the monastic order's headquarters in Rome. He presents the Abbott with an "ecumenical order of mission" from the Father-General of the order. Reading it, the Abbot sighs, "I've been a monk for 45 years, yet this is the first time I've ever had a letter signed by our Father-General. A pity it has to be a letter of censure. 'While Father Kinsella is with you to hear explanations, be assured his decision is mine and as such irrevocable,'" the Abbot reads. "Now, that sounds like I'm in hot water!"

The Abbot takes Kinsella to meet various priests and monks of the abbey. He is introduced to Father Manners, who offered the Mass Kinsella was watching on the mainland. Manners speaks sharply to the visitor from Rome, revealing the perspective of the monks of Mork Abbey:

> We did nothing to start all this. We've been going over to the mainland and saying Mass every Sunday the way we always did, in Latin. The way we were brought up to say it, with the priest and the people facing the altar. Facing God, you could say. Changing the bread and the wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, the way Jesus told His disciples at the Last Supper. 'This is my Body, this is my Blood. Do ye this in commemoration of me.' Y'see, God sent His Son on this earth and He died for us, He died for our sins. And that's what the Mass is all about. It's just that, a commemoration of His death. And it was always in Latin, because Latin is the language of the Church and the Church is universal. I mean, a fella could drop into a Church anywhere in the world, anywhere, and hear the very selfsame mass, the Latin mass, the only mass there ever was. And the fact that that mass was in Latin, well, that was part of the mystery. You weren't just talking to your neighbor, you were talking to Almighty God. Anyway, that's the way we've been doing it for the past 2000 years. It's a mystery. Of course it's a mystery.
>
> What you're giving us now, there's no mystery about that. It's just a mockery, as far as I'm concerned. A sing-song. You're not talking to Almighty God, you're talking to your neighbor. That's why it's in English, or German, or Chinese or whatever kind of language you want to use in the Church. It's an entertainment, that's all it is. And the people see through it. Of course they do. And that's what has them coming here. If you could only see those people bareheaded, with the rain pelting off their faces, when they see that piece of bread that becomes the Body and Blood of Christ, through the mystery and the miracle of the Mass. You wouldn't want to sweep all that away, would you? To put in its place -- what? Well, what you have put in its place. All this guitar playing, and singing and turning around and touching your neighbor, all that sort of codology, for no other reason than to bring people into the church the way we used to bring them into the parish hall for a game of Bingo.

The Abbot asks Kinsella whether he is an "Inquisitor," sent to act against the monks. Kinsella scoffs, "Oh look, this is the end of the twentieth century, not the beginning of the thirteenth. I mean, how would you even define a case of heresy today?" The Abbot grimly replies:

> I'll define it for you. Yesterday's orthodoxy is today's heresy. Did you know Ireland was the only country in the world once upon a time where every Catholic went to mass on Sunday? EVERY one. Even the men. Until the time of Pope John that was, and the new Mass came in. Well, we were like everybody else. We obeyed the orders. We went over to the mainland and said the new Mass in English. And the people stopped coming to church...I said to the monks, 'What on earth are we doing, if we cannot persuade the people to come back into the Church?' It's the priest's job to preserve their

> faith in Almighty God, and I don't want to tamper with their faith. So I decided we'd go back and say the old Mass in the old way, and that's the whole story.

"Well, hardly," a skeptical Kinsella interrupts. "This spring you had twenty charter flights from Europe alone, plus pilgrimage groups from the United States and Canada. So large, in fact, that no church could hold the crowds. So you set up shop on a big scale up on Kune Mountain – which, in Cromwell's time, was associated with rebellion. Mass was said in secret by outlawed priests, with some member of the congregation as lookout." When the Abbot protests that he was merely making accommodation for the crowds, Kinsella reveals the extent of changes to Catholicism:

> Private confessions, Father Abbot? You know as well as I that private confessions are no longer permitted. The idea of Catholics confessing their sins to a priest in private is very distasteful to other groups within our ecumenical brotherhood. And now that the new and easier form has been sanctioned by Vatican IV, the individual conscience is very important. Things are much more free. The Vatican maintains that it is no longer obligatory for Catholics to believe that the bread and wine on the altar are actually changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, except symbolically. It's no longer necessary to think of God as actually being present there in the tabernacle....Mount Kune has become a place of international religious pilgrimage. As Lourdes was before it was closed down.

Kinsella reveals that the hierarchy fears the monks' actions are "the first stirrings of a Catholic counter-revolution," and expresses further concerns:

> Next month, the First World Congress of Christian and Buddhist Faiths will meet in Bangkok, and the Father-General has been chosen as president of that meeting. Any scandal about our order at this time could be fatal to the success that meeting. A powerful faction is already in opposition. The Punji demonstrations in Singapore last month were the beginnings of that opposition. Now do you see what I'm talking about?

But Kinsella has reckoned without the cunning of his older adversary, who clearly has followed developments in the outside world, despite his remote surroundings. "You don't seem to be well up on the new ecumenical rule of the World Council of Churches," he tells Kinsella.

“If I choose to appeal to the Amsterdam Council, I cannot be transferred until the appeal is heard. That might take several months. In the meantime there’d be a lot of publicity. I might even become the first martyr in that counter-revolution you were talking about!”

Stymied, Kinsella stalks out of the Abbot’s office, where he is accosted by Father Manners, who debates him on the revolutionary social justice movements in South America, which are also a product of the Church’s new regime. When Kinsella declares that “in South America, young priests are dying for the cause of social justice. The Church can be a powerful instrument of change. It can lead a revolution the people will follow,” Manners responds, “That’s tripe. What are they doing being priests? If I want to join the IRA, I’d do that. Look at the people over there on the mainland. They don’t want your social justice. They want the old Mass. They want to believe in something – something more than this world can offer them....You and the likes of you are destroying the Church!” The frustrated Kinsella retreats to his guest room, where he seats himself in the lotus position and begins transcendental meditation.

But among the monks, all is not as it appears. The Abbot berates Manners and the other monks for holding an all-night prayer vigil in defiance of his instructions. When Manners states that he is being true to his own conscience, the Abbot can no longer conceal his rage. “I’ve had enough of you all these years -- insolence and insubordination against every vow you took as a monk!”

The next morning, the Abbot offers to vacate his office and requests transfer to another monastery, not as an abbot but just as another monk. Asked why he wants to resign, the Abbot

says, “Remember Martin Luther? Insubordination is the beginning of the breakdown of the Church, and I have been insubordinate.” But there is an even deeper reason for the Abbot’s action, as he confesses to Kinsella:

> I did not do this for holy reasons. I did it because I lack conviction. There’s a file on me in Rome, about my visit to Lourdes. You’ve read it, but it doesn’t explain. I will now.
>
> We stopped at Lourdes, the place where God’s mother appeared to an ignorant peasant girl, where people come from all over the world because they believe God’s mother will ask Him to cure them. Those poor, sick people. Blind children, men without arms or legs, women dying on stretchers. Every deformity, every mortal ill, and all of them praying for a miracle, spending their life’s savings to get there. It’s a sad, miserable sight.
>
> I tried to pray, and failed. Sometimes I’ve gone to Church and started to say the Our Father, but then I’ve looked at the altar and known there is no father in heaven. That’s a pitiful thought, a man who became a monk, with most of his life gone, kneeling in church and staring at the altar, and knowing there’s nothing on the altar except wafers of bread. Not God. Just pieces of bread. When that would happen, when the words were just words, I’d begin to tremble and shake. I suppose you’d call it depression. I call it Hell -- the Hell of a priest deprived of God. When I get into that state, its weeks or months, I never know when I’ll come out. After Lourdes it was over a year. Now I’m afraid to pray. I don’t know if I’ll ever come out again.

Touched by the Abbot’s confession of his lack of faith and “fully human” frailty, Kinsella tears up the Abbot’s resignation, then departs. Submitting in obedience to Kinsella’s choice, the Abbot later addresses the monks, telling them that henceforth they will celebrate the Mass in the vernacular, with all contemporary rubrics, as they have been ordered by Rome. Despite the rage of some monks and the abject sobs of others, the Abbot is forceful as he leads them into their chapel to pray, telling them, “Prayer is the only miracle. We try to pray. If our words become prayer, God will come.” Yet even as he leads them in the Our Father, the look of anguish on the Abbot’s face displays the truth – he himself does not believe.

*Catholics* is a brilliant, powerful, and deeply moving meditation both on the state of the Church and on the private faith of the clergy in the post-Vatican II world. First and most obviously, it served as a projection of the anxieties many Catholics may have had about the direction of the Church. With the rapid and radical changes which had taken place in less than a decade, at the time *Catholics* aired it seemed possible such vast and rapid changes might continue. The Council's emphasis on ecumenism, alterations of Catholic practice, and changes to the liturgy may have seemed to presage further unpredictable change. The notion of a "World Ecumenical Council," a dogmatic statement on the symbolic, rather than literal, meaning of the Eucharist, the replacement of private auricular confession with group confessions, and the other changes presented in *Catholics* seemed entirely possible to many traditionalist Catholics in the early 1970s, given the changes they had already seen.

The often ill-explained changes brought about by the Council which had the greatest impact on those in the pews were not dogmatic constitutions of the rule of religious orders or even on ecumenism or religious freedom, but rather the changes to their everyday, traditional Catholic practice; and the most dramatic change was the replacement of the Latin Mass with the vernacular liturgy – as Catholic historian Jay Dolan explains:

> In 1960, Mass was said in Latin, the priest faced the wall and prayed the prayers of the Mass silently and alone; occasionally the tinkle of a bell or the sound of the organ would break the spell of silence; the sanctuary, where the altar stood, was the holy of holies, and only clergy and authorized lay people would dare to enter; people knelt in reverent silence, separated from the altar by an imposing guardrail; they prayed the rosary, recited prayers, or followed the Mass in an English-language hand missal; no one except the priest was supposed to talk in church. This was the way Catholics had always worshipped, and in 1960 no one dreamed that it would ever be any different.[2]

Scholar of 1960s Catholicism Mark Massa defines the liturgical "reforms" of the era as

> the most shaking changes experienced by Catholics on the parish level in modern times...Catholics were now asked to do things against which elaborate inhibitions had been built up all their lives. The sound of guitars, the sudden appearance of banners, and an easy familiarity with the "bread of celebration" left a number of Catholics reeling between confusion and a feeling of betrayal.[3]

Though acknowledging the widespread "frustration, disaffection, and wistful yearning for the old Mass," Massa contends that "most North American Catholics… came to support what would come to be known as the new Mass."[4] But Council Father Phillip Hannan, at the time Archbishop of New Orleans, recalled, "Those favoring the changes were rhapsodic: 'Now you'll see all those empty pews in the church filled at the Masses.' Unfortunately, the prediction that Mass in English would bring many more people to church was way off target. It was the greatest surprise – or disappointment – to find that it emptied many pews in our churches." Hannan's recollections are supported by both statistical analyses of Mass attendance rates[5] and the anecdotal recollections of those who lived through the period.[6] In fact, a small number of traditionalists were so deeply disturbed by the abrupt and radical removal of the Latin Mass that they created a minor American following for the reactionary (and later, schismatic) Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, whose Priestly Society of St. Pius X continued to celebrate the Tridentine rite and openly rejected most of the reforms instituted in the wake of the Council.

For many, who had grown up being taught that the Church was "the same yesterday, today, and forever," and who utilized a liturgy unchanged in 400 years or more, a traditionalist – even anti-modern -- understanding of Catholicism at was the root of their spiritual existence. Particularly in an era which saw such rapid change in nearly every dimension of secular life, the Catholic Church had seemed the one thing safe from change, a bulwark of morality and tradition

unshakeable by modernity. To see the Church also changing, adapting to new ideas, and "opening itself to the world" was devastating to many. To some traditionalist Catholics distraught about change in reality, *Catholics*' fictional presentation of further such changes may have seemed all too likely to occur.

But if it gave vent to traditionalist Catholic frustrations and fears in an era largely dominated by progressive change, *Catholics* also utilized new pop-culture tropes engendered by the very changes it opposed. Like the other 1970s presentations of priests in entertainment which this dissertation has analyzed, *Catholics*' rebellious priests "question authority" and "do things their own way," even going so far as to dress in an unconventional and disapproved-of manner; and they are faced with the disapproval of their superiors and the hierarchy for doing so.

The difference, of course, is the direction of the "rebellion." Far from being progressive, the priests on the Abbey Isle of Mork are reactionaries: "doing things their own way" means reverting to use of the Tridentine Mass, and "dressing differently" means they wear traditional vestments as Mass (in the movie's opening scene, the celebrant is even seen wearing a maniple!), and cowled hoods and robes outside it, as contrasted with Father Kinsella's blue jeans. The point is further underlined by the differing groups' modes of prayer; while the monks hold a novena service featuring prayers in Latin, Kinsella engages in transcendental meditation and yoga.

Even as it subverts the then-common tropes of the "rebellious priest," *Catholics* also plays on older themes to advance its message. The fact that Father Kinsella is a theological and doctrinal liberal, who nevertheless uses Vatican authority to crush a conservative movement, is a

cunning inversion of standard tropes about Vatican "inquisitors" enforcing orthodoxy. But as was shown by Fulton Sheen's attempts to implement the "spirit of the Council" when he was appointed Bishop of Rochester, New York, and the actions of others like Monsignor Don Kanaly in Oklahoma, when traditionalist laity proved intransigent, it was not unknown for "progressive" clergy to enforce their "reforms" by fiat. In 1967, in a move intended to alleviate poverty, Sheen decided to donate the physical plant of an inner-city parish to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development – without bothering to consult, or even inform, the pastor and parishioners beforehand; while Kanaly, faced with parishioners who objected to his plan to close a parish school, went so far as to announce publicly that he intended to act like a "dictator priest."[7] In the wake of the Council, many traditionalists did believe that the Church's hierarchy had been usurped by radical forces, and was deliberately engaged in the active elimination of traditional Catholic worship and practice that had been familiar only a few years before.

Perhaps of greatest significance, *Catholics* also incorporates the then-current theme of the priest as "fully human." While it might be expected that a film which gives seemingly positive attention to traditionalist notions of Catholic liturgy and practice would also utilize older tropes of clergy as "heroic priests" and "men of faith," such is not the case. While the Abbot appears ready to stand heroically for his traditionalist beliefs, and the other monks appear to be pious (even pietistic), in fact *Catholics* reveals both the Abbot's courage and the monks' faith to be brittle and born of desperation. Unlike the staunch possessors of unshakable faith to be found in past media portrayals, the Abbot and monks of Mork Isle are fragmented, torn, and on the edge of losing their vocations – a loss which the Abbot has already suffered in all but name. Racked with disobedience and doubt, and even using appeals to personal conscience to avoid obeying the

commands of their superiors, in the alternate future of *Catholics,* the monks of Mork are every bit as troubled and "fully human" as were the radical priests shown in other media presentations of the era. Thus, *Catholics* serves as a statement both about faith and frailty. Even as it voices traditionalist arguments against the changes then gripping the Church, it serves as an example of the deeper shadings Catholic priests were taking on in popular entertainment: even traditionalist priests, it was shown, could question their vocations -- and lose their faith.

## APPENDIX 3

## WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER INTERVIEW

*Interview of actor William Christopher by Christopher Gildemeister*

*Pasadena, California, Saturday, August 18, 2012.*

### BACKGROUND AND EARLY CAREER

**Christopher Gildemeister:** Could you talk about your background?

**William Christopher:** I'm from the suburbs north of Chicago, north of Evanston. Glencoe. My father's father died when my father was very young, and my father came up to Chicago – he was born in Moline, Illinois – and met my mother and settled there. My father's mother lived with us for a while, but the rest of that family had not immigrated, or not very many of them, and my father's family wasn't present.

My mother came from a large family of staunch Methodists. My great-great-grandfather, who came to this country from England around 1820 as a young man – he was about 20 years old, I think -- had heard speeches from the rabble-rousing Methodists in England, and he felt he had to come and save the Indians and baptize as many as he could, because they were all headed for damnation. He ended up in the Chicago area, and became a circuit rider and rode around preaching. That was the beginning of the family's heavy Methodist ties.

My grandmother wanted to see me in the clergy, I think. She always said, if I wanted to get up and speak to people, maybe I'd be inspired and drawn towards the clergy. Well, I wasn't.

**CG:** How did you get into acting?

**WC:** My feeling about being an actor really does go back to my earliest years. As a young person in grammar school, I was fascinated by the idea of being an actor. I was in the third grade play, playing a groundhog, and that was very exciting. I just always wanted to dress up. My birthday came close to Halloween, and I always had birthday parties with costumes, and I liked that time of year best, because you could put on a costume and not be laughed at. For kids to put on a costume, it was expected. When I was a little kid, my mother would take me to plays, local amateur community theater. And I just thought that I wanted to be up there so much, on that stage. And when I got to high school, it was a fairly large high school and they did a lot of plays, and I was in as many plays as I could be.

By the time I finished high school, I'd decided that although I wanted a liberal arts education, I wanted one that offered a strong theater program. I went to Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. That had nothing to do with my family's Methodism, because although Wesleyan had Methodist ties in 1830 or 1840 when it was founded, it didn't remain a Methodist institution. It split off from the Methodists. I went to Wesleyan because they had a strong theater department. I got to do a lot of interesting, experimental work. In the academic

theater, you do get a chance to do a lot of things that you wouldn't ever get to do in the commercial theater.

So when I graduated from Wesleyan, I wanted to go to New York to become an actor. I was definitely decided on a career in acting by that time. My father said, "You don't have to worry. You're smart enough that if you can't make a living as an actor, you can do something else. You can just work in business, advertising, or something else." But I was set on spending as many years as it took to get into the profession.

When I graduated from college, I knew that I was going to be drafted fairly soon. This was 1954. The Korean War was over, but there was a peacetime draft, and they were still drafting people. I hadn't gone to Korea because I had a deferment for college.

So after college was over, I knew that my number would be coming up, but they hadn't made any overtures that I would be called right away, so I got a job in summer theater. My first professional theater work was at a company called the Barnstormers, in New Hampshire.

Now, the man who gave me my first break, who ran the Barnstormers, was a very interesting fellow. His name was Francis Grover Cleveland, and he was President Grover Cleveland's youngest son. He was born after Cleveland was out of the White House. His father died when Francis was quite young, and he used to say that all he could remember of his father was a mustache that kissed him when he was a little boy. Well, Francis wanted to be an actor, but because of the Cleveland family name and reputation, his mother wasn't too keen on the idea.

But he went to New York, and he was in the original production of *Our Town*. I've always felt a warmth for the play *Our Town*, because of Francis.

Anyway, I was very fortunate to be contracted by Francis to be a stage manager. Actually, there was a stage manager who was working for him who was going to leave. So Francis said, "You come, and I'll put you on stage and you can do some roles, and when we get to the time the stage manager leaves, I'll put you under contract, and you'll get $30 a week and join the union, Actor's Equity." That appealed to me a lot, so I did it. It did make me a union member, and that gave me a big boost, and I started doing things on stage. I didn't get paid for the first four weeks, but it was an eight-show season, a show a week, and I was in, probably, six of them. I don't think I was a very good stage manager, but they liked me well enough. I went back and worked at that theater several times other summers.

Well, Francis ran this theater, the Barnstormers, and he was the first one to hire me, and he gave me my start, my first big break. He lived to be nearly 100. I saw him in Tamworth around 1996 or 1997. He was very old and almost totally blind then. He's been dead a number of years now, but he was just a wonderful man. And the Barnstormers is still going. I send them a little money once in a while, because they were so important to me.

That first job I had in New Hampshire was quite an unusual occurrence. But when the summer was over, I was drafted. So I did two years in the army.

**CG:** What did you do in the army?

**WC:** I was in the infantry. I was just a soldier carrying a weapon, soldiering. I was stationed in Germany, and even learned a little German. It was a fun experience, considering I was in the army. My plan, of course, had been that when I got out of Wesleyan, I was going to go to New York and try for an acting career, but being in the army kind of pushed it off a couple years.

Though actually, when I was in the army, I had this wonderful experience. I was in Germany and I met this fellow who was running Special Services. When he found out I had acting experience and was even a union member, he was impressed with that. So he put me in a Special Services play. Well, I was doing the regular light weapons company soldiering, and I got permission to get out of a lot of details and a lot of maneuvers to go rehearse and be in the play. We did *Charley's Aunt*. I played Fancourt Babberly, the person who dresses up as the aunt. We had a wonderful time. We toured around to a number of bases in Bavaria. It was a very cushy experience.

**CG:** Better than the infantry?

**WC:** Oh, yes. (laughs) My sergeants were a little piqued that I was getting out of all this detail. But it just broke for me exactly right. And then when I came back to this country, I was sent to Fort Ord, California, and I worked at the War Theater, which was a local theater there. So again, I had a chance to perform, and get more acting experience. So I was continually working at my craft as much as I could.

**CG:** What do you think of your army experience in retrospect?

**WC:** I think I'm thankful for it. I didn't love the army, but I didn't hate it, either. I had a chance to grow up a little bit. It was a broadening and maturing experience, and I met a lot of people very different from myself.

I really think that national service would be a wonderful thing for young people coming out of school -- to have those couple of years of experience and maturing, to give time to the country, to grow. I don't recommend the army right now; I think it's horrible that we're fighting a war. But in those times, of course, there wasn't any fighting going on, so life in the military wasn't really very onerous. But it was interesting.

**CG:** And after the army?

**WC:** Well, I was cut loose, and I went to New York, to try for the big time. I thought about coming down to Los Angeles, but New York seemed a little more comfortable to me. I'd gone to college in the East, and maybe the East appealed to me for that reason. Los Angeles seemed a little daunting, so I decided not to come here. Those were pretty much the only two places where you could have a career in acting then. In those days there wasn't as much theater done throughout the country as there is today, in places like Minneapolis and Dallas and Chicago. Back then, it was either New York or LA, and I opted for New York. So I went to New York and threw myself in the big pond there.

**CG:** And how was that?

**WC:** It was a little scary. Hell, it was very scary.

But then I had the very good fortune to find Barbara there. I had actually met her earlier, in my undergraduate days in college, when she was also a theater student. Actually, the first time she saw me on stage, she was in high school. She came to a Wesleyan University production, and she was a senior in high school.

**CG:** Did she go to Wesleyan?

**WC:** No, she didn't. Wesleyan was a men's school at that time. It was small, only about 800 people. Barbara went to Northwestern, in the school of speech. She was in training to be an actress. As a high-school kid she was in plays, and sort of thought about that being a career, and at Northwestern she was in a lot of plays, and was successful. But she's told me, looking back, that she got to this point in her senior year where she loved the business of a play being staged, and rehearsing was interesting and fun, and she enjoyed working it out and putting it together, but she thought of herself as a better director. When it came to actually being on stage, she didn't like it. She didn't enjoy performing.

Barbara had also gone to New York, and she tried out for a very prestigious production of *Romeo and Juliet* for Shakespeare in the Park, and she was cast as Lady Montague, who has one line: "Where is Romeo? Saw I him today?" Barbara got the part and they called her up, and she

said, “Well, I don’t really want to do it.” And they said, “Are you crazy? This is Shakespeare in the Park!” She said, “You’ll able to find someone else to do one line. Why should I do it when I don’t really care about it, and there’s someone else who wants to do it much more?” So, she didn’t. That was before we were married.

**CG:** Had you been corresponding while you were in the army?

**WC:** A little bit. I was a terrible letter-writer. She used to write me. I think she has saved one letter from me that I wrote her from the army days. I didn’t write to my parents, either.

Well, I was in New York, and her family lived in Connecticut, and she came to New York to work and was living there, and we ran into each other. We were very pleased with each other’s company, and we fell in love, we became inseparable, and we got married. That was in 1958, so we’ve had – and still have -- a wonderful marriage.

Barbara was raised Catholic, but at the time of our marriage, she wasn’t really a practicing Catholic. During her college days, she sort of fell away. So we decided to get married, and we didn’t think of it as needing a religious ceremony, but Barbara’s parents, the O’Connor’s, were Catholic, and they had many friends in Connecticut who were Catholic, and they really wanted a wedding in the church. Of course we said we’d do that, and so I had to go for instruction, because I couldn’t be married in the Catholic Church, not being Catholic, without instruction. So I went to see a chaplain at NYU. I called him up and I said, “Listen, I live in New York, and would you have time to give me instruction, because I’m getting married on such-and-

such a date, and I have to have so many meetings with you, and you have to sign that you've done this." And he said, "Okay."

I was actually looking forward to the instruction. I really felt I was ripe for conversion. I thought, if I found out enough about Catholicism, it really might appeal to me. Well, the chaplain wasn't interested in spending any time with me at all, and I didn't learn anything. I would come back and say to Barbara, "I don't know, I'm not finding out much," but I guess it was enough for him to sign the paper. When it was over, we got married. But I'm afraid I didn't learn very much about the Catholic faith.

**CG:** Did Barbara ever do any acting?

**WC:** I went back to the Barnstormers one summer after we were married, and Barbara went with me. She wasn't cast in any plays, but it came to the end of the season and we were doing a play called *Mrs. Temple's Telegram*, which is a silly play from about 1912. They decided to make a musical of it. Barbara and I had a lot of songs we would do, English music-hall songs we'd sing together for fun. We sang some of these songs, and they loved it. This one guy who was writing the lyrics liked the songs a lot, so he had us sing for him, and he wrote some new lyrics for the songs. I actually did one of those songs in the show, a very silly song, which I used as an audition piece later on. And Francis Cleveland said, "Barbara, could we convince you to be in the play? We're short one lady." And she said yes. She only did a week's worth of plays, six performances, but she hated it. Every night when it was time to go on, she'd say, "Bill, why am I doing this? Why did you let me do this? I hate it." Well, I used to watch her,

because she was in the first act and the third act, and I was only in the second act, so we were never on stage together. And she was wonderful in the part! She kicked her heels up and sang, and she was very funny. We were both big hits. So *Mrs. Temple's Telegram* at the Barnstormers the only time we were ever on stage together – except we weren't actually on stage together. That's the only role she's done. With one exception, but maybe we'll get to that later…

**CG:** What were your early days in New York like?

**WC:** Barbara worked in New York at Lord and Taylor, and then for an ad agency. She wasn't part time, but most of her jobs she considered rather temporary, although at the advertising job, they wanted to keep her. She's smart as a whip and really impressed people.

I was feeling pretty overwhelmed by the New York scene. During those New York years, Barbara encouraged me a lot. She was very supportive of the idea that I should stick to my goals and pursue my dream of being an actor. She was such a great support to me and gave me such courage and strength. Barbara was a great help. She calmed me down, and helped me see things in focus, and helped me try figure out my path, what I should do, to try and get work. And I did. I did some off-Broadway…and then I had a wonderful chance to step forward, because I was cast in a very important comic show called *Beyond the Fringe*.

**CG:** What was that about?

**WC:** *Beyond the Fringe* was a very pointed and satirical four-man revue, written by the four fellows that originally performed it, Alan Bennett and Peter Cook and Dudley Moore and Jonathan Miller. They all had outstanding, brilliant careers, although some of them were rather short, because they didn't live long. But Jonathan Miller is still going strong, and so is Alan Bennett, who was very brilliant and has written a lot of things for the theater. The show contained a lot of political comment and satire, and it was done originally for the Edinburgh Festival, then was in the West End in London, then it came to New York, to Broadway, where it was a big hit.

Well, the company decided to do a national tour. They called in a huge number of actors for the touring production, and I read for them, and they cast me to be in the national company. And even better than that, the four people who were playing it on Broadway wanted to take a break and stopped doing the show. So we four, who were going to do the national tour, took their places. So I played on Broadway for a month, and then went on the road.

**CG:** Which part did you play?

**WC:** I played Alan Bennett's material. The show is a revue, so there are a bunch of little vignettes. And as one of his pieces, Alan wrote this sermon, a take-off of an Anglican cleric with a collar, doing a sermon. And the sermon just wanders about – it's terribly silly, and very funny. The stage was all black curtains, nothing representational, and this little pulpit appears, and I stand in it with my collar and preach my silly sermon to the audience. I got to sing, too; we each

had two solos apiece. I was the one who had the last solo, and my solo was from the pulpit. It's hilarious, and it went over awfully well, and I had a wonderful time doing it.

That that was the first time I put on a clerical collar. Well, actually, not the first time; I had played a clergyman during my college days. But this was much more important, this was Broadway. I did it on Broadway, then I did the national tour, and then back to Broadway, doing that sermon every night.

**CG:** When were you in *Beyond the Fringe*?

**WC:** I started on Broadway in 1963. Then we did the national tour. We opened on the road in Hollywood, and a couple of agents saw me and said, "Come out to Hollywood when the tour's over, and we'll sign you." Well, I didn't have an agent, and I thought that would be great. So I toured with the show, and came back to Broadway, and the show closed in the fall of 1964.

Then Barbara and I said, "Well, we have these offers from agents. Let's go to LA!" So we packed up and went. We didn't have children, and didn't have many possessions, and were pretty carefree, so we bought a car and drove across the country, and found a place to stay, and I saw these agents, and I started working in television. That was really the first time I was making a living in acting. Barbara didn't have to get a job when we got here. So *Beyond the Fringe* really was our bridge from New York to Los Angeles.

**CG:** What was the first job you had in television?

**WC:** The first thing I did was *Gomer Pyle, USMC*. I wasn't a regular, but I had a recurring role as PFC Lester Hummel, and I was in three or four seasons. I don't know how many episodes I did.

**CG:** Do you think that your own military background helped you on *Gomer Pyle*, and then on *M*A*S*H*?

**WC:** I'm sure it did. An actor's often cast in something they don't know, so what they do is sort of research it and talk to people. You say, "It would be nice if I had this experience, but I don't," so you do it anyway. But in my case, it did come back to me. I can't say I called on my military experience exactly, but I did know what it was like to be in the army. I felt comfortable when I started doing *Gomer Pyle*. I put on those boots, and walked into the Quonset huts, and it really brought me back.

It was enjoyable doing that show, and they were very nice people, but of course it wasn't nearly as exciting as doing *M*A*S*H* was later, and it wasn't meant to be. *Gomer Pyle* was a one-man show, and Jim Nabors was it. Well, Jim Nabors and Frank Sutton, and the work they did between them. They were brilliant, they could do it so well.

**CG:** What were some of the other parts you had early on television?

**WC:** I was on *The Andy Griffith Show* a couple times, and a number of times I was on *Hogan's Heroes*, and a number of other shows, half-hour comedies…mostly on CBS, it seems. And, you know, they actually asked me to come in and read for *All in the Family*.

**CG:** Which part?

**WC:** The part of the son-in-law, "Meathead." I wasn't really right for it, but my agent said, "I want you to get a try in. It might lead to something else. Go read for them." And it was a great honor to be asked to read for Norman Lear. They never used me, but that's all right. And then, of course, it wasn't long before I was cast in *M*A*S*H*.

***M*A*S*H***

**CG:** How did you come to do *M*A*S*H*?

**WC:** Rene Auberjonois played the part of Father Mulcahy in the movie version of *M*A*S*H*. Rene is a very good actor, but when I saw the movie, I thought I could've been good in that part, after having played the humorous clergyman in *Beyond the Fringe*, you know, and I thought, "It's too bad my agent didn't have me up for that part in the film."

Then they shot the TV pilot, and I had no inkling they were doing that. My agent didn't say anything about it, and the pilot was shot, and I didn't even know it had been shot. They made the pilot in…I suppose it was the winter of 1971. And it had been sold, and they decided to do the regular shooting in the summer of 1972, to put the regular series into production. The fellow

who'd played the Father Mulcahy character in the pilot was an actor named George Morgan, and they decided to replace him.

**CG:** Do you know why?

**WC:** No, I don't. I thought it seemed they wanted a change of a quality. Anyway, my agent called me in maybe April or May, and he said, "You know, *M*A*S*H* is going to be a series." By then I knew they were going to make it into a series. I guess I'd read that in the trade press somewhere. I said, "Yes, they've made a pilot," and he said, "It's been sold, but they don't want to use Father Mulcahy. Go out to Fox next Monday, and see Burt Metcalfe. He wants you to read for him." So I did, and I got the part.

**CG:** What do you think there was about you –your reading, or your background, or whatever -- that made them decide that they wanted you?

**WC:** I think there were two things. I think they felt that somehow there was something in me that would work as a priest. They didn't want to make Father Mulcahy too much of a caricature, but I think they wanted to use some of the potential of a chaplain and his spiritual calling, and I think they thought I could do that. I'm not sure why I say that.

I think they also saw that I had something in me that was sort of offbeat that would work in comedy. The first show where I did something funny was a scene where Mulcahy is trying to be serious with Hawkeye, and he is going to open the Bible, and he had the wrong book. He has a dictionary or something, and Hawkeye points that out to him, and Father Mulcahy is a little befuddled. It just makes a little comic twist. And they thought I could handle that kind of

comedy well, bring a sort of offbeat quality to the character. One of the reasons I can say they thought that is, Larry Gelbart told me so himself.

Larry Gelbart, who was senior producer, had seen me in *Beyond the Fringe*, and he remembered that he had thought that the people in *Beyond the Fringe* were great. And, of course, I'd played the humorous clergyman in *Beyond the Fringe*, so that helped in trying for the part of Mulcahy.

It actually all worked out quite nicely for me, because the other senior producer of *M*A*S*H* was Gene Reynolds, and Gene had directed some *Hogan's Heroes* episodes that I'd been in, so I knew him, too. Burt Metcalfe had called me in, but he had never seen me in anything – personally, I mean. He might have seen my work on film in things like *Gomer Pyle*. In fact, he probably had. They probably looked at that. But with Gene and Larry both knowing and liking my work…it was a fortuitous circumstance. So I was cast in 1972, just a couple of weeks before *M*A*S*H* went into production.

**CG:** What were the first couple years of *M*A*S*H* like?

**WC:** When I first got the part, they said, "Okay, you're going to be in the first episode," and they gave me the date -- it was in June -- and I had a very small part, just a few lines in the operating room. And I had a mask over my face, and you never see me without the mask! But I'm not wearing glasses. And after I did that show, they gave me these wire-rim glasses to wear

and said, “Here, we’re going to have you wear these.” They didn’t have any refraction. They were fake glasses. I wore those all the years I worked on *M*A*S*H*.

When I started on *M*A*S*H*, I jobbed in for the first couple years. They did 24 shows the first season, and I was sixteen of them, I think. So although I was in the cast, and wasn’t a regular, and wasn’t guaranteed a certain number of shows, I figured Father Mulcahy would be a useful character to them.

Actually, I did the first couple of shows, and somebody offered me a play in Boston. It was a friend of mine, and he was directing a Feydeau play, and I really wanted to be in it, and he wanted me to be in it. So I told my agent, “I think I’ll go to Boston to be in this play. It won’t pay anything, but I’m not worried about the money.” I wasn’t asking him to negotiate for me, because I knew they weren’t offering any money. I just wanted to do it. And my agent said, “You can’t do it, because of *M*A*S*H*. This is a great series, and they’re going to want you.” So he talked to the people on *M*A*S*H* and used some leverage: “Bill’s got other offers. Do you want him or not?” And they said, “Oh yes, we want him! We have definite shows coming up. He can’t go away!” So my agent got back to me and said, “Don’t think about going anywhere. *M*A*S*H* is going to use you a lot.” So I told my friend I couldn’t come to Boston.

**CG:** You mentioned that you were a “day-player,” without a contract. Did you feel a difference on the set between your early years and when you moved up to a regular?

**WC:** No, not at all. Even though I wasn't a regular, I always felt accepted as one. Everyone was so warm to me. The first day, I came in, and all the regulars had chairs with their names on them. Typically, the people who are jobbed in like I was and who aren't regulars, don't get a chair. There is usually quite a difference in status between the day-players and the regulars. But they gave me a chair and put me right with the regular cast, and I sat with them. So I was always a part of it, and they always talked to me like an equal. And they seemed to like Mulcahy, and liked the idea that Mulcahy would be used. And it was the same way with Jamie [Farr, who played Klinger]. Jamie wasn't a regular either the first couple of years, but was one of those extra characters who was eventually worked into the main cast. I think he became a regular the third year, and I became a regular the fourth year. There were a lot of other part-time characters that fell by the wayside that they didn't keep using, so I really felt fortunate. But they always made me feel a part of it all.

When the first season of *M*A*S*H* was over, Barbara and I went to the *M*A*S*H* party at the end of the year. We were leaving and I'd said goodbye to other people, and we were walking off the sound stage, and Alan Alda was close by the door. So I said, "So long, Alan, we're leaving the party now," and Alan said, "Oh, we've had such a good time together." Well, there again, he was embracing me as though I was a regular, and he really was making me feel like one.

**CG:** Did you have any sense early on that *M*A*S*H* was going to be so successful?

**WC:** Well, it looked to me like *M*A*S*H* had potential for a good run, but of course nobody thought then that it would run for eleven years.

*M*A*S*H* had seemed successful, and everybody felt good about it, and I thought we'd be back, but we hadn't been renewed at that time, and we didn't really know for sure. At that same party, Alan got kind of melodramatic and said something like, "What if we're not renewed? We'll never see each other again!" and it wasn't exactly a joke. That first year, I don't know what we on against, but the ratings weren't as fabulous as people now might think. They weren't bad, but they weren't great, either.

Then *M*A*S*H* got moved in the second year, and they put it Saturday night. CBS had this real powerhouse lineup on Saturday nights.[1] That was when *M*A*S*H* became very strong. After the second year, there wasn't any doubt that it would be renewed.

**CG:** When did you become a regular?

**WC:** In the fourth season.

**CG:** Your name does not show up in the opening credits until the beginning of the fifth season.[2]

**WC:** Yes, that was a mistake. And there's a funny story about that, too. The first couple years, I wasn't in all the shows, and then I became a regular. They had the regulars' names on cards in the opening credits, of course. When I first saw that, I was delighted, because now I was a regular and got my credit on the front of the show. They made my name on the card, "William

Christopher," in the fat, stencil-like letters they used for everyone else; but because my name was so long, they made it smaller than everyone else's. I was really surprised. I was watching all of the names come up, and mine was the last one, and it was small. And I thought, "This looks like I'm not getting big billing. I don't like that. I don't mind coming at the end, but I don't want it in small type, too!" So I complained about that. Well, then they did redo it and made it the letters the same height, but they had to squeeze them a little bit. But they did manage to solve the problem.

**CG:** How did you prepare for the role of Father Mulcahy? You've mentioned you weren't Catholic.

**WC:** Well, I wanted to know more about the Catholic Church at the time, so I visited with a number of the priests at Loyola. I ran into one priest who said he was the technical advisor for Rene Auberjonois, who played Mulcahy in the movie. Now, I don't know how much technical advice he had to give. In the movie – and on the TV show, for that matter -- Father Mulcahy didn't do much in the way of the sacraments. I know that the movie character was a little further from the straight. The way the movie was made was right out of the book *M*A*S*H*, which I had read. Father Mulcahy in the book is a sloppy priest. He writes letters of condolence to the wrong people, and he drinks the sacramental wine and gets drunk a lot, and he smokes during the Mass. And the movie had him doing that. Rene Auberjonois was smoking during Mass. I think they felt that with a regular character on the television show, they wanted to tone it down. On TV, Father Mulcahy was much more of a straight arrow, much more conservative as far as playing that craziness. He gets a little befuddled sometimes and he doesn't

always do things right, but he doesn't get drunk on the sacramental wine and he doesn't smoke during Mass!

Barbara was raised Catholic, so she was sort of my technical advisor and would help me with things. Her mother came out to live with us for a while, and we used to go to Mass, with her, so I did become a bit familiar with that part of things – not that I got confirmed or anything.

But I did try to learn more when I was cast as Father Mulcahy. I thought the least I could do was talk to some priests about various things. And then there were some times on the show when I had to do sacraments. I had to give absolution, so I'd say, "*Misereatur tui omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis tuis, perducat te ad vitam æternam. In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.*"

**CG:** That was very well done! Did you know Latin from school?

**WC:** No, I'd never gotten much Latin under my belt. I'd studied Greek, which I like a lot. I still work at my Greek, but it's Homeric Greek. I've never read the Bible in Greek. I have a copy, but I enjoy reading Homeric Greek. Not that it's so different from the *Koine*. People get along without other languages, but I enjoy language, and these languages are all related. Indo-European languages are fun!

Anyway, yes, I prepared some by talking to priests. I could've done more, I suppose, but I just wanted to make sure that the major things were done right. *M*A*S*H* had a lot of focus on

the operating room, and it was a hospital, and it was a story about saving lives through medicine. The show had technical medical advice. We had two technical advisors, a doctor and a nurse, who watched and read the scripts and made sure that the right instruments were used, and the right language was used, and the right procedures were used. Not that you could really tell, because the camera wouldn't show what they were doing; but they didn't want people who knew medicine and watched *M*A*S*H* to say, "Oh, this is a lot of nonsense. This is not the way it would really be." And I guess they brought it off pretty well. But I always felt it was amazing that they didn't have a technical advisor for me. If Father Mulcahy was supposed to give absolution to someone, it just said that in the script. How was I supposed to know what to do? So I had to go see a priest, and I would have to do that on my own. And I would say, "Now, how do I do this? And what am I supposed to be saying? What are the gestures I'm supposed to be making?"

**CG:** So all the religious things that we see Father Mulcahy do – whether it's giving absolution or performing the last rites or reading something from the Bible – are all things you learned on your own initiative?

**WC:** Yes.

**CG:** The scripts didn't give you any guidance?

**WC:** No. The scripts were mostly written by Jewish writers. They were great writers, but they weren't necessarily familiar with Catholicism.

**CG:** In general, what did you think of the writing on *M*A*S*H*?

**WC:** Oh, we had incredible writers. They wrote just wonderful stuff. Very deep, some of it. I remember talking to one of the writers, and after I talked to him a while, I said, "I see your point. I didn't really understand the feeling that you wanted. I'll do that line just the way you wrote it." That was Dan Wilcox. Now, there was a writer with range! He wrote for *M*A*S*H* and *Newhart*, but do you know what he won an Emmy for writing? *Sesame Street*. I don't know what he's doing now, but he was a very successful writer, and still is.

Carl Kleinschmitt wrote the first show where someone dies on the operating table.[3] It was someone that Hawkeye knew, and it was a show that really did have quite a bit of serious content. It had some funny stuff too, but it showed that we could use comic actors to do serious things. McLean Stevenson had a very serious line at the end that you wouldn't expect from his character, Henry Blake: "All I know is what they taught me at command school. There are certain rules about a war. Rule number one is young men die. And rule number two is doctors can't change rule number one." He says that and tears are sort of in his eyes. The network got a lot of mail about that episode, because it was one of the first quite serious ones.

And Larry Gelbart, I admired tremendously. He was a brilliant writer, and could be quite serious in the underlying content, but couch his thoughts in an amusing way. He was always that way in interviews. He had a lot to say about life and about the world and strong views. He wrote a lot of a lot of silly stuff, wonderful, funny, humorous lines, but underneath it he had a serious point. And doing a half hour, he crammed a lot into that half hour. It could've been maybe an hour-long show. But then, when Larry Gelbart quit, I said to him, "*M*A*S*H* is so great, don't

you want to write it anymore?" And he said, "Look, I've been writing a movie a week. And I've done it for four years! That's a lot. I'll still be around, I'll still be giving ideas, but I'm not going to have the job of producer anymore." He needed a break, and he deserved one, certainly. And Alan carried on that tradition. Alan wrote good comedy, and wrote some serious shows, too.

Of course, *M*A*S*H* did have this underlying theme about the war, which was never anything but serious. You know, originally they intended not to have a laugh track for *M*A*S*H*. But when they first proposed that to CBS, the network didn't think the public would understand it. A situation comedy without an audience sounding off in the background? Impossible! But then the writers said, "We're going to do scenes in the operating room, and you can't use a laugh track there. You can't have someone bleeding to death in surgery with this raucous laughter going on!" The network saw the point, so they made a deal: there would be no laugh track during the scenes in the operating room. And so naturally, the writers did an episode that was set *entirely* in the operating room, so they wouldn't have any laugh track at all.[4]

But *M*A*S*H* had a lot of different elements, a lot of things going on. And it did deal with a lot of serious things in its half-hour format. They originally called it a comedy, but it got so they stopped calling it a comedy by the third or fourth year, and I don't know what they called it after that. I think *M*A*S*H* broke some new ground, and there were a number of series after it that mixed humor and drama.

**CG:** Were there any of the writers you were especially close to?

**WC:** Jim Fritzell. Well, Jim Fritzell and Everett Greenbaum were a team, so I shouldn't mention just one of them, but I knew Jim better. They were a team, and wrote together. Fritzell was not Jewish and Greenbaum was, but their humor was very light and Midwestern. They went back a long ways in television. They got their start writing for *Mr. Peepers*, that's how far back they went.[5] That was a long time ago. Neither one is living now.

When Barbara and I first came to California, we met Jim Fritzell through a friend, and we sort of got to know him. And, I guess, the first time I did anything he ever wrote…I don't think he wrote for *Hogan's Heroes* or *Gomer Pyle*. But he – they -- wrote for *Andy Griffith*, I think.[6] He knew all the people on that show very well.

We would go to the same parties, and Jim heard Barbara and I do some of our music-hall songs, and he loved it. His favorite song that we used to sing was, "When You're All Dressed Up With No Place To Go," so he wrote it into a script. He wanted that song, and I told him, "That's not our best number," and he said, "That's the song I want. Would you do it?" I said "Well, sure, but I'm not sure about Barbara." And Barbara said, "Oh well, I'll do it." She didn't really want to do it. But Jim got Barbara to do it with me. She hadn't worked, hadn't done anything in acting for a long, long time, because she hated it, but Jim Fritzell got her to do it. And then she chided me about it. "How did you get me to do this?" So Father Mulcahy and a nurse sing together when the projector breaks during a movie, I think. Nurse O'Connor, she's called in the script, which is her maiden name. So we sang it together and it was in the episode,[7] and there we are together, singing. Afterward, we looked at it and we said, "We're not very good. We do it better at parties." Well, we did it anyway. In the episode, there was no harmony in it; we just sang it all in unison. We did better when we had harmony, where Barbara would sing the melody and I

would harmonize with her. But this song didn't lend itself to that. It just happened to be the one Jim Fritzell liked, so we sang that.

I remember, Jim Fritzell liked to write for Father Mulcahy. There was one scene[8] where somebody wasn't bathing, and Father Mulcahy made some remark about it. I think BJ says to him, "You should be able to surmount this problem. After all, Jesus washed the Apostles' dirty feet." And Father Mulcahy says, "Well, he was a very good sport." And that sort of gently amusing, wry response – "Jesus was a good sport" – was very much the kind of thing Jim liked to write.

It's too bad I didn't get to work with him more, but they didn't write too much *M*A*S*H*. But he always wrote some nice lines for Father Mulcahy, Jim Fritzell being a Midwesterner. But they didn't ever touch on religion. If anything, Jim might've said something about the Lutherans. I don't think he did, but he was Midwestern, so that would've fit. I don't know if he was Swedish or what, but…

**CG:** Were there any episodes that you felt were particularly written with a religious perspective for Father Mulcahy's character?

**WC:** Not very much. There were one or two shows that touched on religious themes that were written by guys that, I felt, understood some of the depth you could write and the problems Mulcahy was having in trying to reconcile himself to what he was facing and what little he could do as the chaplain. Of course, it wasn't terribly realistic to have him be the only chaplain. There

would have been other chaplains. But Mulcahy was the only chaplain we saw on *M*A*S*H* because people get used to the idea, when they're watching series television, that you have so many regulars, and that's who the show is pretty much about.

But the other thing about Father Mulcahy was, there wasn't much joke writing you could do for him. Hawkeye was kind of natural. You could write silly jokes and Hawkeye could say them, and it would sound like that's just the way this guy is, he's always making wisecracks. But Father Mulcahy's humor came from other things. As far as having out-and-out jokes, that would not have worked. There was not going to put a big laugh after something he said, but Mulcahy had a kind of a wry quality. There was comedy of a sort there to play, but…

It's much the same way that Mulcahy wasn't very combative or passionate or controversial. The only time that Mulcahy gets really ticked off is when he doesn't get a promotion.[9] He's all set to move up from first lieutenant to captain, and he doesn't get the promotion, and he's really bugged over that, because he thinks he deserves it.

There was also a scene that, looking back, I don't think I played quite right, and I always regretted not understanding Alan's idea a little better. That's in the final episode,[10] where Mulcahy has his hearing loss, from the shelling. A truck comes by and he doesn't hear it, and he almost gets hit. He is very upset, and he speaks to God and says, "I don't get it. What have you done to me? I thought I could serve you, and what have you done?" He's angry with his maker. That was an interesting scene to play.

But, you know, those things are not very controversial. Getting angry because you don't get a promotion is not too controversial. And being upset because you're going deaf, that's certainly not controversial! Mulcahy's a pretty nice guy, a straight arrow all the time. He does get mad at Hawkeye once and kicks the stove, and he hurts his foot.[11] I've forgotten what he was mad about, though.

**CG:** Radar is wounded, and Hawkeye can't operate because he's drunk. The way it played, Mulcahy is so angry that Hawkeye expects Mulcahy to punch him. But instead, he kicks the stove and hurts his foot.

**WC:** Oh, that's right. See, I had no recollection of the plot. I do remember kicking the stove.

**CG:** Did you have much input into stories that were written for Father Mulcahy, or where they took the character?

**WC:** Well, the writers took the approach of, "We're going to write for your character, and we want to get to know you. What are the things you can do, the things you like to do?" And then they would use those as your characters' traits and work them into the scripts. I don't know if I told them how much I like Greek, but that never got into Father Mulcahy that I recall. But I did tell them about playing the piano, Scott Joplin.

I was playing the piano off and on at home, and I had loved Scott Joplin going way back. I had a very good friend who played piano, and we go back to high school days together, and he used to play Joplin for me, and I was enthralled. So I learned a couple Joplin pieces, and in my college days I used to play them. And then I bought a lot of music when we moved to California. I didn't have a piano for a while, but when we got a piano, I got a big book of Joplin tunes, and I started learning. I learned about eight or nine rags I could play. I couldn't play them very well, but I enjoyed playing them, and I worked on them. So I told them at *M*A*S*H*, and they said, "Oh fine, we'll write that in," and they did. So that's why you find Father Mulcahy playing ragtime.

I always enjoyed the fact that, when *The Sting* came out, Marvin Hamlisch made Scott Joplin a star. People may not have gotten the name "Scott Joplin" – everybody heard "The Sting," when that was in the movie *The Sting*, and the theme "The Entertainer" for the most part -- but he used a lot of Joplin. Well, I beat him to it. I got Joplin on national television in the first season of *M*A*S*H*. I don't think a season went by when Mulcahy didn't play something by Joplin. Of course, that was pretty much the only thing I could play.

There were a couple other times where Father Mulcahy was doodling around on the piano, and I actually wrote a couple of songs, pieces of music. One of them I never finished, and I wanted the writers to write some more of the song, more words. In the episode, Mulcahy gets the idea of writing a war song.[12]He says to Hawkeye, "I've got this war song I've written," and he plays this little song. It's kind of silly, and I don't remember what Hawkeye says, but Hawkeye's not terribly impressed. So Mulcahy writes another song, and it's much more serious,

and that was a complete song. And I made up the tunes of these songs and played them. Somebody wrote to me once – I don't think I ever answered them – and they said they liked those songs, and what episode was that from? And I didn't know, and I didn't write back, and I guess I should've.

**CG:** You made up the music yourself?

**WC:** I made up the tunes, yes. The first one, they only wrote a couple of lines, and I made up the tune, but they didn't make up the rest of the words. So I always wanted to go to the writers and say, "Write the rest of the words, so I can write the rest of the music." So that was from my own life.

The other thing I was going to mention was, there was one storyline I really wanted to do, but it didn't turn out very well. They liked the idea, but when they wrote it they toned it down, and the way it turned out, it wasn't really the idea that I had given them.

**CG:** What was the idea?

**WC:** My idea was that Father Mulcahy meets a woman he responds to, someone he really feels passionately about. I wanted Mulcahy to really struggle with his feelings, his passion and love for this woman versus his love for the Church and his vow of celibacy.

They did write an episode based on my idea,[13] but it wasn't at all what I had in mind. In the episode, this woman kind of comes on to Mulcahy, and he's rather surprised and doesn't know what to do about it, but he doesn't feel anything for her. She's a nice person, and he wants to help her, but he doesn't love her. I forget why they were working together or what it was she was trying to accomplish.

**CG:** She wants to be a doctor, and Mulcahy is helping her study for medical school.

**WC:** Yes, that's it. He tries to counsel her, but she sort of falls for him, and then he goes to Hawkeye and says, "Look, this girl seems to be coming on to me. What should I do?" And I forget what Hawkeye does or how it gets resolved, but the woman is somehow made to understand that Father Mulcahy is strictly off limits, and Mulcahy is relieved, and they're just friends again. And that was it. That's the way the script actually came out. But that wasn't my idea at all.

**CG:** You would have liked to have seen --

**WC:** I would have liked to have had it be a real challenge for Mulcahy. I thought Mulcahy should really have an inner struggle, because he really felt something for this woman, and felt it was something he would like to give in to. But that is totally missing from the script that they wrote. The writers felt – well, what they told me was, "It's only going to be a half hour long, it's only going to be one of the plotlines, the script can't all be devoted to this one story, and we just don't have time to write it." Well, maybe. I felt it was more like they didn't know

how to write it. Or maybe they were afraid to write it, afraid of offending people. "He's a Catholic priest, and we don't want the mail that might come," or something. I don't know.

**CG:** In the tenth season, there is an episode[14] where we find out that as a boy, Father Mulcahy had idolized this boxing champion, and Mulcahy has this beautiful soliloquy about how he liked boxing and had read Plato both. Was that something drawn from your own experience? You're a Greek scholar. Had you read Plato?

**WC:** Well, they may have put it in because of my Greek studies, but I never read Plato in Greek. My Greek isn't good enough. Plato's vocabulary is too big for me. Homer is nice because it's a rather contracted vocabulary, not very big. But they might've gotten the idea from my reading Greek, and put that in.

About the boxing thing…it was never an interest of mine, but Mulcahy was supposed to be able to box, and in one episode they had him hitting a punching bag, and I had a terrible time. I had to reshoot that and reshoot that, because I couldn't make the bag go. I had a guy help me, to teach me how to do it. But you're supposed to hit the bag, first one fist and then another, in rhythm sort of, and the bag keeps rattling. Well, I was finally able to do it just long enough for it to be on camera, but it took an awfully long time before we got it. It took about eleven takes. We all laughed about that. But I finally got it done.

And speaking of punching…there was one show I was really sorry about, where I was supposed to hit somebody. But they gave the part to Loretta, because I couldn't be in it. The reason I wasn't able to shoot that is, I had hepatitis. This was in 1976.

**CG:** In real life, you had hepatitis?

**WC:** In real life. Yes. We were told one day that somebody in Craft Services had come down with hepatitis. Craft Services are the people that serve us the food. And they said, "You've all been exposed, and it's not very contagious, but we want you to go over to the infirmary and get gammaglobulin shots. That'll protect you a little bit. Don't worry, you probably won't get it." So I did get the shots, but I still got it. I remember coming down with it. I was shooting that morning, and I felt terrible. I had a scene to do with Radar, Gary Burghoff. It was a short scene. We were sitting in the mess tent talking over our trays, and Burt Metcalfe was directing. I felt so sick. So we were getting ready to do the scene, and Gary looked at me and he said, "Your eyes look all yellow!" I said, "Don't say anything. I feel awful, but let's get this scene done." So we shot the scene, and I was able to do the lines, but it was so hard. And Burt Metcalfe says, "Let's do it again. Bill, pick it up a little bit. Add a little more life. You were dragging." I thought, "Oh, God. You were lucky to get what you got, and you want to do it again!" Maybe I made a little prayer. But we shot the scene again, and he said, "Okay, that's good enough. Print. Bill, that's all for you today."

So I went straight to the doctor. I remember it was a Tuesday, because it was Election Day. I called my doctor and said, "I've been exposed to hepatitis. My eyes are yellow, and I feel terrible. Can I come right in and see you?" He said yes, I came in, and he took one look at me and said, "You've got it. I don't even have to examine you. I'm going to draw blood from you anyway, but I can see from your eyes you've got the symptoms, and I'm sure you've got hepatitis." Then he said, "Did you vote yet?" I said, "No." He said, "Are you a Republican or a Democrat?" I said, "I'm a registered Democrat." And he said, "Okay. First, go vote, then go home and go to bed." So I did. I came home and Barbara and I went and voted, then I went to

bed. So we got the tests, and he said, "You're going to be in bed a couple of weeks anyway, at least."

Now, at this time, 20th Century Fox had decided to sell the ranch, the space they owned out in Malibu Canyon where the exterior sets for the 4077th were, to the state, as part of the state park system. The real estate people wanted to get their hands on it and cut it up for building lots but the conservancy of state parks got that land, and they made a deal with Fox and said, "We'll be the owners, but you can keep working out there. We'll let you shoot some more." Well, we didn't know that that was definitely going to happen, so we had shot the exteriors for five shows. And that was when I got hepatitis. So I was in those five shows, but I was only in the exteriors. There was one episode that Klinger has decided to sit on a pole as his latest wacky stunt,[15] and Father Mulcahy walks by and talks to him, and that little scene is the only scene I do in that show. But later in that same episode, Loretta has a fight and punches somebody. Well, that was actually supposed to be Mulcahy that did that. But they had to rewrite it. I couldn't come in, because I was in bed with hepatitis. Because of the exteriors we'd already shot, I didn't miss a single show.

**CG:** Were you the only one who got sick?

**WC:** Yes, I was the only one who got it. When I got back on the set, they'd painted my chair yellow. Then we shot this show called "Hepatitis,"[16] where Father Mulcahy gets hepatitis, which was of course inspired by what had really happened to me.

**CG:** Can I ask you about a few specific episodes?

**WC:** Of course.

**CG:** "The Interview."

**WC:** "The Interview"[17] is a show that very often I talk about, because it was kind of improvised, and was an unusual experience. It was at the end of the fourth season. We had done 24 episodes, and for some reason CBS wanted another, and the writers didn't have one prepared. So they had this idea, having seen the film footage of Edward R. Murrow in Korea doing interviews, that they'd do an interview show, and they wouldn't need a script. They'd just have the actors talk in character. So they gave us some questions, and taped our answers, and had somebody transcribe it, and then made a script out of it. Loretta is not in it, because we thought it was going to be the season break, and she was replacing someone on Broadway, in *Two for the Seesaw*, I think. She was very nice and let me use her dressing room while she was gone.

When we got the scripts, the stuff that I had to say was nothing, really, that I had recorded. But it has this wonderful description that Father Mulcahy gives, this startling thing where he is asked, "Are you changed by the war? " And he says, "You see the surgeons warm their hands on the open wound. How could anyone look on that and not be changed?" The line is much longer than that, but when I went to learn the lines, they said, "Don't worry about the exact words, just learn the ideas, and then just sort of talk it out and let it happen."

Well, that was the only show we ever did that was like that. When I did my part, it was quite moving to me, saying it, and it came out very well, and I was very proud of it. And I look back on that as being a high point of my experience on *M*A*S*H*. It not only gave Mulcahy a wonderful moment and me as an actor a wonderful moment, but the whole experience was very different from what an actor usually gets to do.

**CG:** Was that episode the reason that you became a regular, and moved up to the main cast? The reason I ask is that it seems that it's after your performance in "The Interview" that Father Mulcahy is in the main. Your name is in the main credits at the beginning of the show afterward, and there start to be more episodes about him specifically. In season five, for example, there is the episode "Mulcahy's War", in which he performs a tracheotomy on a soldier while under fire.[18]

**WC:** No, that wasn't the case, not entirely. The whole fourth year, I was under contract and was already a regular. When I did the first three years I was not a regular, although I think I was on almost all the shows. But I didn't have front billing yet, that was a mistake they'd made, and maybe they moved me up in the sense you describe.

I thought "Mulcahy's War" was earlier.[19] That's one of the episodes I usually refer to, because it was about the first one I had the lead part in. Although in the first year, I had a scene where I take a hand grenade away from Klinger,[20] and that was a sort of a special show, too.

Jamie and I had already met, you know. I knew Jamie from a movie we were in earlier. So we'd worked together before we did that scene.

**CG:** You mentioned Loretta Swit. There's one tiny incident that I simply have to ask you about. There's an episode[21] with a subplot that everybody's betting on whether the Yankees are going to win the pennant. And when the announcement comes over the radio that the Yankees have won, Father Mulcahy grabs Margaret and kisses her, full on the lips! And I have to ask you: was that in the script, or was that ad-libbed?

**WC:** That really was ad-libbed. They were pleased with it, and I thought it was fun. But she didn't know I was going to do that.

**CG:** It shows! She looks completely startled, like she's going to burst out laughing. It's a very funny moment.

**WC:** Not a lot of that happened on *M*A*S*H*.

**CG:** There wasn't a lot of ad-libbing? That surprises me, because you were such a talented group of actors…

**WC:** Well, it had that feeling, and that's good, but that's because we had such talented writers. And actors too, of course, though I say it myself. But the show was really scripted pretty tightly, and we stuck to the script. The writers were very willing to rework your lines, if you wanted to make changes; but once it was established what the lines were going to be, that was it. That's why "The Interview" was such an unusual experience.

**CG:** And still on Loretta Swit: in watching all of *M*A*S*H*, there seems to be practically no interaction between the Mulcahy character and Margaret Houlihan. Mulcahy interacts with everybody else at various other times, but there's almost nothing –

**WC:** He kisses her!

**CG:** Well, yes, he kisses her in that episode. But there are major storylines she has that you'd think he'd be involved in, and he's not. It seems odd, because Margaret is going through all these things. She's having an affair with Frank Burns, which you'd think the Father might

have an opinion about; then she's getting married; then her marriage is on the rocks; then she gets divorced. Yet she never has much interaction with Father Mulcahy.

**WC:** You know, you're right. I had never thought of that. I can't think of any time we actually had a scene together. I had scenes with Alan, with Mike, with Gary, and David Ogden Stiers, and of course I had scenes with Harry Morgan and Jamie, but…

**CG:** But you and Loretta knew each other and liked each other and got along well?

**WC:** Oh yes. I did do the wedding, where Margaret gets married. But I never had a heart-to-heart with her. That's interesting. I never thought of it. I never thought of it at the time either, saying, "Why don't you write a scene for us together?" I should've thought of it. Well, it's a little late now. (laughs)

**CG:** What were the later years of *M*A*S*H* like?

**WC:** I needed to color my hair by the end of *M*A*S*H*. I got quite gray. My hair was always brown in the beginning of *M*A*S*H*. And when they took a cast photo of us – I forget if it was for the tenth season, or the last episode, or what -- I was really shocked to see the gray hair on Father Mulcahy. I did use Loving Care, because I didn't want to look different. By the end, Alan Alda was getting gray, too. I don't know if he colored his hair.

The other thing that happened during my *M*A*S*H* years was my eyesight. Originally, I didn't wear glasses. Those were fake glasses they gave me to wear as Mulcahy, as I said. But by the time *M*A*S*H* was over, I was really wearing glasses. I had actually started wearing reading

glasses during *M*A*S*H*, but then I needed them all the time. When I started *M*A*S*H* I didn't need them, and when I ended *M*A*S*H* I did. But that's how much you change in eleven years.

Mostly though, I recall how included we all felt. We had a very good time doing work that we all felt proud of. And there was not any rivalry or anything. We all felt that we contributed our own piece to the greater whole.

**CG:** And the final episode, "Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen." How did that come about?

**WC:** Each time that *M*A*S*H* was renewed, it was sort of up to Alan Alda. It was largely Alan's baby. It was his workshop, he was writing for it, he was directing it. If Alan had said, "I've had enough," *M*A*S*H* would've just gone off the air. But Alan kept saying, "It's fun to do." Then, at the tenth year, Alan said, "This is going to be my last season." We had a goodbye party in New York, and the network even gave us little tokens. It was a big deal. And then we heard that they decided that Alan was going to write, with others, a final episode, and that it would be done in a movie length, and they would augment that with a few other episodes. I don't know how many other half-hours we ended up doing, five or ten.[22] Not 24. But the last season had a certain number of half hours, and then this final show.

So we did that long final episode, and it was originally supposed to be an hour long. But there was a wildfire on the area where we were shooting that burned up the set. And they managed to get some footage of that, so they decided to put that into the final episode, and that extended the length. We had to use another location, so *M*A*S*H* had to "bug out," as they say,

and set up in another location and build another set. It extended the show, so it became an hour and a half. Or, no…I think it was a two-hour show. It was like a movie.

There are two full storylines in it. There's one first about Hawkeye, who has lost his marbles and is in a sanitarium, and then there's the one that actually wraps everything up. But I can't remember – I said its two hours, which would mean actual screen time it was two and a half hours, because there would have been commercials. But it might have been longer. Was it two and a half hours long? That's an awful lot of time.[23]

I think it was kind of padded. You know, I once said to Larry Gelbart, "*M*A*S*H* could be an hour show," especially once they started doing more serious stories. But he said that would be awfully tough on the writers, to have to fill an hour every week. And there is an aphorism in show business, "Leave the audience wanting more."

But even if it was a little padded, the last episode worked alright. It was a huge event on television. A lot of people watched it, I know that.[24]

Then we did *AfterMASH*…

***AFTERMASH***

**CG:** I have heard or read somewhere that, at the end of *M*A*S*H*, the seven principal actors sat down and said, "Do we want to keep this going or not?", and four of them said no and three said yes -- and you and Harry Morgan and Jamie Farr wanted to continue, and so you did *AfterMASH*. Is that true?

**WC:** No, it's not true. It did not happen that way.

**CG:** How did *AfterMASH* come about?

**WC:** Well, Fox had a great show in *M*A*S*H*. It was very popular, with critics, and audiences, and advertisers, and the network. But Alan didn't want to do any more *M*A*S*H*. He had other things he wanted to do, and in the last episode the war was over, so definitely, that was it. But CBS was interested in continuing the success that *M*A*S*H* had built, and so Burt Metcalfe, who had then become senior producer, said, "You know, why don't we try to do it with a VA hospital, and have some of these people come back?" It would be an awful coincidence, having them all come back to the same hospital, but so what? The public would buy it.

I got the idea at that time that they had asked others in the cast to come back for this sequel series they were planning. I think they did ask Loretta and Mike. I'm not positive, but they probably started with Loretta, because she was a popular figure. They probably didn't start

with me. Mulcahy was sort of the bottom of the heap, when it came to the pecking order. I was the last one signed to the regular cast of *M*A*S*H*, and my billing was at the end. I didn't know anything about it until they came to me and said, "We're thinking of this show in a VA hospital. We're not sure who will be involved, but we'd like you to be part of it. Are you interested?" And I said, "Oh, that would be wonderful! Of course I am!" But it wasn't a matter of everybody sitting down in one place and it being open to discussion.

So I signed on, and it was a couple days later that I heard it was going to be Jamie and Harry and myself. Klinger had, in the last episode of *M*A*S*H*, married a Korean girl, so I guess that's one thing they thought, that that would be interesting. Klinger could come back from the war, and be working at the hospital, and have this Korean war bride. And they asked Harry, and he agreed. I guess he didn't have anything else to do. I certainly didn't have anything else to do!

**CG:** What did you think of *AfterMASH*, conceptually?

**WC:** *AfterMASH* struck me as an interesting idea. I thought it really was a noble undertaking, to try to have a show about men who came back from war. Today, we're hearing so much about the suicides among veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Well, at that time, the early 1980s, the Vietnam War was just over, and we were going through something similar. And *M*A*S*H* was obviously commenting on the Vietnam situation, although it was set in Korea. After the Korean War, I was in the army. I can't say I knew any vets who'd seen combat

in Korea personally, but it must've been very grim, and there must've been suicides and people who fell apart, and who were destroyed by the experience.

There could have been a lot of episodes about that, the repercussions of the war and how the veterans were coping with it, or weren't. According to the timing of *AfterMASH* Korea had just been over, and the hospital would've had a lot of men with all kinds of problems. Alcoholism, and drugs, too. If you go back to those days, I'd hardly heard of marijuana until I was in college, but then I grew up in this kind of lily-white suburb of Chicago north of Evanston. But I know that in Korea, there was a lot of use of drugs, because these guys were suffering terribly, and the drugs were becoming available. After Vietnam we became much more aware of it, guys getting hooked on drugs. I don't know much about it, but certainly I could see the struggle to get back to normalcy and to get clean. And of course, there were guys coming home crippled and maimed and with terrible injuries, as there are in every war.

And Father Mulcahy had gone through it. In the last episode of *M*A*S*H*, Mulcahy was exposed to this explosion, and it supposedly damaged his ears and he becomes very deaf. He comes home from the war – in the last episode of *M*A*S*H* he says he's going to stay in Korea and work with the orphanage, but for the new show to work, of course, he had to be in America. Klinger had also said he was going to stay in Korea at the end of *M*A*S*H*, and here he is, too. Anyway, Mulcahy is back from the war, and he's living with this handicap – one which, incidentally, would make it almost impossible for him to hear confessions or be a priest -- and he's starting to drink. At the end of *M*A*S*H* there was no indication that Mulcahy was going to go off the deep end, but when *AfterMASH* picks up they suggest that it's happened, and that he's

gotten over it, that he's gone through it and gotten sober. When they started *AfterMASH*, Mulcahy was supposed to have gone through a period of drinking, but we didn't see it happen. He gets assigned to this hospital where Colonel Potter is, and also Klinger is there, and he rehabilitates himself in the first episode. It's commented on a bit thereafter, he's drinking coffee, and he's a teetotaler, but they didn't do very much with it. It would have put him in a position to be sympathetic, to reach out a hand, and that was his calling, after all. But they never did anything with it. He never counsels anyone with alcoholism. Alcoholism was not a theme.

And deafness was not a theme. At the beginning, they had Father Mulcahy wearing cords coming out of his ears down to an apparatus, to an antique hearing aid of the period. And I think they thought that might look kind of ugly. So they had Father Mulcahy undergo a magical operation, and he's able to hear again. He doesn't have any trouble at all. You'd think they would've done something with it. His hearing could've been damaged, he could've had some sort of difficulty.

Not that it should have been all about a priest and his work in the hospital, because I realize that this wasn't "The Father Mulcahy Story" we were doing; but if we could do the VA hospital as, "What is it like to return from war?" as a serious theme, that seemed like a great idea for a show. So many people came back from the war with missing arms and blind, and a VA hospital is chock full of wounded people, and their stories would be difficult and dramatic and worth telling. I felt that that was going to be a wonderful idea for *AfterMASH*, but that never happened. CBS did not want to do that.

But it could have been done, I think. *M*A*S*H* was set in a war, with surgeons, and that wasn't a wildly funny setting, either. But of course, they had scenes in the Swamp and times when there wasn't anything going on, and they played jokes on each other. I don't know if in a hospital setting you could do that.

But with *AfterMASH*, CBS didn't want to be serious at all. And the writers they hired – well, they very talented guys, Ken Levine and David Isaacs,[25] but really they were joke writers. They were very *funny* joke writers, but they were really focused on writing humorous dialogue. It really made out the hospital as being a joke, and I don't think that worked too well.

It just didn't seem to click as a comedy, or to use the serious potential, either. Larry Gelbart did write an episode about Agent Orange – well, it wasn't Agent Orange. It seems to me it had to do with, um…

**CG:** Nuclear fallout.

**WC:** Yes. But it was inspired by Agent Orange. The Vietnam War was over, and there were veterans who had been exposed to Agent Orange that were trying to make a case for themselves, and Larry saw the parallel between that and those Korean veterans who'd been exposed to atomic fallout from the atoll bomb when they were sent in to clean up, and then they had poisoning, and the government didn't want to stand up to what they owed these men. It was an interesting show.[26]

But that was the exception. I'll admit, the difficulty of returning from war doesn't lend itself very much to comedy.

**CG:** This occurred to me while you were talking. At that time, there was not a track record for a medical-themed comedy. With *M*A*S*H*, there had been many other "service comedies," where there were people in the military -- whether it was Sergeant Bilko or *Gomer Pyle* or *McHale's Navy* or whatever -- and they laughed at the bureaucracy of the military, and thumbed their noses at authority; but until *AfterMASH*, there had never been a comedy set in a hospital. Medical shows on TV had always been serious.

**WC:** Very serious. Think back to *Ben Casey*.

**CG:** And so maybe the writers didn't know how to make it work. Or people thought it was distasteful. A comedy about a hospital full of crippled veterans…

**WC:** Well, it's not a very funny concept. But I thought, maybe it *shouldn't* be funny.

**CG:** It might've worked better as a straight drama.

**WC:** Yes, I think it would have. That was what I was hoping for, that they would move in that direction. But they didn't want to.

Do you remember *St. Elsewhere*? It was on during the same years as *AfterMASH*. *St. Elsewhere* was a hospital show, and it was serious with serious things going on, but they had comedy too. I always felt that *AfterMASH* could have been like that. I liked *St. Elsewhere*. I watched it at the time, and one reason was that I wanted to see what they did, because it was about a hospital, too. They used some good people.

**CG:** William Daniels.

**WC:** Yes, Daniels was very good. And of course Ed Begley was on it. But it didn't get great ratings. *St. Elsewhere* kind of limped along and didn't quite catch fire. It just stayed on the air because one of the producers was powerful. I can't remember too much about that, but I do remember reading about the fact that its ratings were really down, and some people wanted to drop it, and that it was not that cheap a show to do. It was an hour show, so it was expensive.

I don't know. Maybe *M*A*S*H* was helped by the fact that it was only half an hour and it had a lot of zip to it, it went rocketing by. *AfterMASH* was also slotted as a half hour. Maybe it would've been better as an hour-long drama? I thought *St. Elsewhere* showed what *AfterMASH* could've been. But then, as I say, *St. Elsewhere* wasn't very successful, either.

We had some strong actors, too. Harry Morgan, of course, was totally convincing. He says he's a doctor and you believe it, no matter what he was doing. A wonderful actor. He could do serious scenes well. And we had the theme of the bride that Klinger brings back. That could've been treated in a serious way, being a Korean-born woman coming to this country. She

could have had problems adjusting, maybe a little soap opera- ish, but still, it might have spoken to people.

But CBS didn't want *AfterMASH* to be ugly, I think. They didn't want it ugly at all. There was one scene with wheelchairs, I remember, but it was an attempt to be funny with wheelchairs, having wheelchair races in the hallway, and Father Mulcahy joining in.[27] So the focus was the hospital, and the hospital was pretty much a silly hospital, but the show was neither serious enough, nor funny enough.

**CG:** There were some serious characters. In the first season there was Doctor Boyer, who'd lost his leg in Korea.

**WC:** Yes, that's right. That was when they were trying to get more guts into the show. But then, the hospital administrator was a comic character. And John Chappell, who played him, was a funny actor, but they dropped him. And there was supposed to be sort of a battleaxe, a woman who was very crabby…

**CG:** Brandis Kemp. She played the administrator's secretary.

**WC:** Yes. (sighs) That didn't work very well, either as serious or funny, I'm afraid. I don't mean to criticize her, but I don't think that was very well-written.

**CG:** There was also a sharp difference in the two seasons of *AfterMASH*. The first season, there's a little more drama, like the "Fallout" episode by Larry Gelbart you mentioned. But in the second season, all of a sudden, Klinger is acting nutty again, and dressing up again, and finally ends up in the psycho ward.

**WC:** He does? I don't remember that. I remember there's some sort of trial.[28] I can't remember what it was about, though.

**CG:** Klinger's on trial for assaulting someone who swindled him. Colonel Flagg comes to the trial as a witness against Klinger.

**WC:** I knew that Mulcahy's on the stand, and does very badly. He thinks he's going to be helpful, and he's not. I didn't think it was awfully well-written. It's like they were trying to put more overt comedy in, and it didn't work very well.

**CG:** It also seemed like they were looking for a storyline for Father Mulcahy, and trying to find something for the character to do. In the first season, Father Mulcahy meets a woman in the hospital elevator,[29] and it turns out she's a prostitute, and he kind of redeems her --

**WC:** I don't remember any of that.

**CG:** -- and she ends up working as a waitress in a bar near the hospital instead. Because Mulcahy believes in her, and tells her, "You don't need to do this. You're better than that."

**WC:** I don't remember *AfterMASH* very well. I can't remember the episodes, the plotlines. I really can't. I wasn't disappointed altogether. The shows I did do, I was happy enough with them. The only thing that bothered me was that the hospital didn't seem very serious. But there were some storylines that could've been developed more with Mulcahy.

**CG:** Did you have some ideas about where you would've liked to see that character go?

**WC:** Well, I did approach them with one notion, but it didn't go anywhere.

When I found out I was going to do *AfterMASH*, I did a series of tapings with a priest, Father Wadjowicz, who was a parish priest in – I forget where he was – Culver City, I think. I went down with my tape machine and had him talk. And he said, "You should have a story about life in the rectory, and the housekeeper, and a diocesan priest and a religious order priest living in the same house. And the diocesan priest would have all this work to do, and the religious priest wouldn't, because he wouldn't have the same assignments, and there would be friction between them." He was full of ideas, lots of funny things that happen in the rectory.

Well, this was all exciting to me, because I thought, "Oh, this is great. There's some real potential here." Father Wadjowicz was so full of ideas, and I thought, "This guy should be a technical advisor on the show. I should introduce him to the producers, and maybe get all this stuff right about the rectory." But that wasn't meant to be. I was all excited about my character, and what he could do. So I recorded a lot of this stuff and I talked to the producers, and they said,

"Bill, forget this. We're not going to make a slice-of-life show about what it's like to live in a rectory." Well, I didn't expect that they would, but we could have done something with it, I think.

**CG:** That is a really interesting idea, and it's too bad the producers didn't use it. What they did end up doing in the second season of *AfterMASH* was, Father Mulcahy gets an apartment in this sleazy neighborhood, in a building filled with thugs and loan sharks and prostitutes.[30] It all seemed very sordid. I mean, maybe they were trying to set up a contrast between Father Mulcahy and the lowlifes living in this slum tenement. But you have to wonder whether a show set in a rectory really would've been any worse.

**WC:** The idea of creating a silly hospital was really uppermost in the minds of the producers and the writers. And Mulcahy didn't fit into that as easily as Harry and Jamie's characters did.

I don't want to be too hard on the show. The first season, *AfterMASH* actually did fairly well. The first few episodes did very well, had a huge viewership. But at the end of the first season, it started slacking off. And in the second season, *AfterMASH* was on against a show that was very popular. I forget what show it was.

**CG:** *The A-Team*.

**WC:** *The A-Team*, yes. We just got wiped out in the ratings. We didn't even finish the second season. We were supposed to do 24 episodes, and I think we did nine. So it didn't surprise us too much when it died. *AfterMASH* never seemed terribly exciting.

## CATHOLICISM AND FATHER MULCAHY

**CG:** I'd like to ask you some specifically Catholic questions. You were around throughout the Sixties. Especially with Barbara having been Catholic, were you very aware of some of the things that were happening in the Catholic Church in the Sixties? Things like the Second Vatican Council, and then later with some of the radical priests like the Berrigan brothers?

**WC:** No, not very much. I thought that Pope John XXIII was pretty winning, and his sort of liberal feelings were, I thought, good and healthy for the direction of the Church. But not being particularly religious…

It's not that I'm not spiritual at all, because I do have a feeling of a higher power, and I have feelings of humility when it comes to understanding what the faith can mean to people, and how important it can be. And I felt always when I was cast to play anyone representing the faith, like Father Mulcahy, that I wanted to have it be as genuine as possible and understand as much as I could.

But especially during the years you speak of, it didn't seem terribly relevant to my life. I felt that I had given the Church an opportunity with my life, when I was getting married and during my instruction, and they didn't seem too interested in me, and it didn't take too long before I wasn't too interested in them, either. When I was at Wesleyan, I was in singing groups, both the glee club and the choir, and the choir sang in the Sunday service and also in an evening assembly once a week. And I found I was more attracted to the choir, and they sang a number of religious things. It was rather lovely music. Not that my voice was so great, but I favored that over the glee club. I only mention that because it gave me some sort of contact with religion in a sort of quiet way, and I could sit and meditate in my own way. I wasn't very much an active participant, but it was always there for me.

And then the period that you speak of, with the upheaval in the church, I can understand it being pretty important to practicing Catholics, to have some stability, and some discomfort at change, sort of, references to guitars in the sanctuary and so forth...

When I was in the army, I came back from Germany with a fellow who was killed. He was a friend of mine, and he was killed in an automobile accident in Germany. And so because I knew his family, I was assigned to escort his body back home. So I came back, and I went to the funeral service, and it was a Catholic funeral. It was all in Latin, with a little bell that was rung at certain times. And I sat there and listened, and I found it extremely moving. It all had to do with the mystery of it, and I wasn't quite sure why it was moving, but I always felt that somehow the mystery was part of it. And I could understand perhaps people who might have missed that, when it went away. Maybe it was the theatrics of the mystery that I was responding to, because

I'm an actor? The emotion of that funeral was very moving to me, and brought a lot of tears to my eyes, without my knowing why. And I sort of thought later, when the changes to the Mass came in, maybe people are upset by the change and don't want to give up the Latin, because one of the things that maybe keeps for them is some of that mystery. I don't know.

On the other hand, if you talk about the early Christians, when they started the Church, how fascinating those early years must've been. I've always wondered how much we know, and how much has been reconstructed of what the very early church was like, when they were just beginning to invent some of this ritual and codify it eventually. And the things that they said, they were speaking in the vernacular. So, what mystery there was, wasn't because it was in some foreign tongue. It was in the vernacular, and people could relate to it. They knew what the priest was saying, because he was speaking their language. So what would be wrong with updating it? Why not? Let the light in. Let the understanding flow. Let the community embrace. And this shaking hands over the back of a pew, and this hugging and touching, can be very strengthening and not so formal and not so reserved and not so shrouded in mystery.

Now, I'm speaking as a non-Catholic, looking back at a time as you suggest. That's sort of what I thought, then. I could kind of see it both ways. Maybe it's a good thing, and maybe I can understand why some of the old school doesn't like it. But I was not going to Mass. It was nothing to me. It was not going to affect my life.

**CG:** Were you influenced any way in your portrayal of Father Mulcahy by any other media portrayals of priests, like Bing Crosby in *Going My Way*? Or was it all original to you, and you were just playing the part as yourself?

**WC:** Well, I think I'd have to say it was just me. I didn't have any…there was no one I've thought about. There have been other times when I've been playing a character and I've thought about another actor, or his interpretation of a part. I can't actually give you an example, but…not with Mulcahy. Mulcahy was different. As far as playing a religious, you know, we had examples like Barry Fitzgerald, who was always turning up in a clerical collar and his Irish accent. Barry Fitzgerald is wonderful to watch in *Going My Way*, but he's pretty much this kind of stereotype and lots of fun. And Bing Crosby, too. Bing Crosby's so good, and he sings "Going My Way" and is surrounded by all the kids, and he has the magic touch. There's a case where the woman looks at him and she melts, and she's just in love with her priest. But he doesn't have any problem with that, because he's given to his vocation and he is comfortable with his vows, and celibacy is no problem. That is the perfect ideal, and that is the way Bing Crosby won an Oscar, playing *Going My Way*. But it's so far from the Mulcahy character.

And oh, another person was Spencer Tracy, in the film *San Francisco*, with Clark Gable. They're real buddies that grew up together in this rough part of San Francisco, and Gable turns out to be a saloon owner and wild guy, and the Spencer Tracy character becomes a priest. And they're still good friends, but Spencer Tracy was wonderful playing that part, as the priest. I don't know if that influenced me at all. I was thinking of that recently, when I was again playing a priest. And Spencer Tracy and his portrayal of the priest is very strong and yet has a lot of

humor, and always has a wonderful, warm humor that shows through. I've seen it about four times. Oh, and Tracy also played a priest in *Boys Town*. And he's really terrific.

I don't know if he influenced me. I don't think so. I never even thought about him, when I was playing Mulcahy. It never occurred to me. It occurs to me now. Maybe it's because I'm older. I'm playing my own age, close to eighty. And I always thought Mulcahy was a lot younger -- younger than probably people thought I was. I thought it would be best to have Mulcahy be about thirty, and not have been a priest terribly long.

**CG:** That's the impression you get when you watch *M*A*S*H*. And that was kind of the conceit of the show, that most of these characters were younger than the actors who were playing them. Hawkeye was supposed to be just out of medical school, for example, but by the end of *M*A*S*H*, he had gray hair.

**WC:** Well, I hope that came through, that our characters were younger. Actually, 1972 was the year I turned forty, but I always thought of Mulcahy as at least ten years younger than I was, and I tried to make him feel and act younger.

**CG:** Two more specifically Mulcahy questions. The first one: actors often create, in their own mind, a backstory for a character they're playing, which may get used, or the writers may decide to do something else. What kind of background did you think Father Mulcahy had?

**WC:** I didn't really do that. I did like the idea of Mulcahy being a Midwesterner -- there was a family who wrote to me, and their name was Mulcahy, and they lived in Milwaukee -- so I

thought maybe that's where he grew up. But we were doing a show once that established where he was from, and Burt Metcalfe decided he came from Philadelphia. So, that became the story.

Now, oddly enough, the name "Mulcahy" was chosen by the creator of *M*A*S*H* because there was a baseball player for Philadelphia named Mulcahy. I have a letter from the golfing partner of – what was his name? The author of *M*A*S*H*, the guy who wrote the book?

**CG:** Hornberger. His pen name was Richard Hooker.

**WC:** That's right. Well, Hornberger played golf, and he was living somewhere in New England, and he had a golf partner, and the golf partner wrote to me – I think this was after Hornberger died – and he said, "You played Mulcahy, and this is just something you might like to know, a bit of trivia, but I once asked Hornberger why he named the priest Mulcahy, and he said it was because of a pitcher that played for Philadelphia." Quite a while back, I guess. Maybe in the 1940s.[31]

As I say, I didn't get that letter until long after *M*A*S*H* was over. I've still got it somewhere. But I thought, "That justifies Burt Metcalfe saying Father Mulcahy was from Philadelphia." Mulcahy probably should have had a Philadelphia accent, but I couldn't do one. I could do a Milwaukee accent. I probably *have* a Milwaukee accent!

But I never really created too much of his backstory. There was some reference to the Jesuits. I've forgotten what it was exactly, but it was something pretty silly, and it occurred to me at the time that it was probably inaccurate. I did have a priest say to me once, "I don't think Mulcahy's a Jesuit. He's not bright enough."

**CG:** Ouch.

**WC:** I think he suggested which order Mulcahy might have belonged to, but I don't remember what it was.

**CG:** Also, the Jesuits have a ten- or twelve-year formation period, so if Mulcahy was only about thirty, that wouldn't have worked, either. *M*A*S*H* makes clear that he'd had extensive experience in a parish and with the CYO before becoming a chaplain.

**WC:** But no, I didn't really invent a childhood or background for Mulcahy. He had a sister – his sister, the Sister – but that was just introduced by the writers. I had no idea he had a sister, until I read a script that said he had a sister. Or that he was from Philadelphia, until I read a script that he was from Philadelphia. Then I didn't have a chance to argue.

**CG:** One last question about Father Mulcahy. He's been through the war, and he's worked at the VA hospital. What do you think the future past, say, 1955, would've held for Father Mulcahy? Do you think he would've stayed at the hospital? Would he have gotten involved in the civil rights movement? Would he have eventually left the priesthood?

**WC:** Well, I don't think of him as leaving the priesthood. As he was defined in *M*A*S*H*, I think he's a permanent fixture. He talks about his interest in youth and the CYO. I guess I would see him doing that, sort of like Spencer Tracy in *Boys Town*, that kind of thing. Of course, not being a Catholic, I don't know what the Church would offer him, and how much latitude he'd have. But I do think he'd be involved with young people. And having seen Korea, and come home wounded, and worked in the veteran's hospital and all, he probably would've been in the anti-war movement.

We have a pastor here in Pasadena named George Regas,[32] who's had some national attention. I know George. He's a fighter for the poor and downtrodden. He's had food marches, and I've marched with him. I think of Father Mulcahy being that kind of a pastor, involved in issues. He's not a scholar. Though that's just that I'm not a scholar. I read Greek, but I'm not good at it.

**CG:** So do you imagine Father Mulcahy is happily retired somewhere right now?

**WC:** Oh, I don't know that he would have retired. I guess he wouldn't, because I haven't.

**LATER CAREER**

**CG:** What kinds of things have you done in the years since *M*A*S*H*?

**WC:** Well, I was asked to do a musical some years ago. It was concocted in Minneapolis and played there for a long time, and it was called *Church Basement Ladies*. It takes place in the basement of a Lutheran church, in the kitchen, and the ladies raise this panel to the gathering hall which is next door, and they pass the food out. And these four women are down there, and Pastor Gunderson comes in every once in a while and talks to them, and drinks coffee and sits around. Everybody in the show has a MEE-neh-SOH-tah accent. It's very Garrison Keillor-ish.

**CG:** Yes, that sounds authentically Lutheran.

**WC:** Have you seen it?

**CG:** No, but it sounds like something I ought to see. I'm actually from Minnesota, and I was raised Lutheran. I'm Catholic now, but…

**WC:** Well, you'd like it very much. You'd find *Church Basement Ladies* very amusing. It was the first of a series. They wrote a follow-up, *Away in a Basement*, which was their Christmas show, and then there was another one after that. There's a book called *Growing Up Lutheran*…

**CG:** Yes. I know it.

**WC:** You've read it?

**CG:** I've lived it!

**WC:** Well, *Growing Up Lutheran* – I have a copy of it – the two women that wrote that, I met them. They are considered the inspiration for this musical, *Church Basement Ladies*. It has wonderful music. I was asked if I was interested in doing it, and I said, "It sounds wonderful. I would love to do it." So I went to Minneapolis to see it, and it was playing in a little tiny theater, and I was surprised in a way, because the guy who's playing the pastor has a song, a solo, and it's quite a difficult song. And I thought, "Gee, I'm not a singer. Do they know? Why are they asking me to do this? They don't even know if I can sing. Could I sing that song?" And they said, "Sing it as best you can. It doesn't matter." Well, it's a lovely song, and I'm not sure I did

justice to it. But I did it twice, on tour. I did two tours with it, and one was quite an extensive tour. It was about a four-month tour. We were out on the road doing *Church Basement Ladies*, a week in each town. We played in all kinds of towns, in the Midwest mostly. It was wonderful doing it. Great response. The audience loved it. But really, the focus is on the ladies. The pastor's part isn't very big, but they thought I was a good draw, because I had played Father Mulcahy and they could advertise it that way. And I did the song, and did the best I could.

I was very disappointed with the sequel, because I didn't get cast in it, and I've never done it. In the original, Gunderson's age isn't established, but there's some talk about him, and the four ladies don't approve of the fact that Pastor Gunderson has remarried and has a young wife. So I thought that Pastor Gunderson could be in his sixties. But in the sequel, Pastor Gunderson seems to be younger.

Of course I was older when I played Gunderson, but I could pass for sixty, and as far as the singing and dancing was concerned, it didn't really matter. There wasn't much dancing, not for me. But the four ladies do a lot of singing and dancing, and the audience thought it was lovely. So I got to wear the clerical collar and play Pastor Gunderson for a number of shows. But I doubt I will be doing that again.

**CG:** You mentioned that you "haven't retired." Are you doing anything currently?

**WC:** Just this past week, I've been playing a priest, Father Tobias, on the soap opera *Days of Our Lives*. It's just a small part, and I have no idea if it will be recurring, or just a one-shot role, but yes, I'm still working.

I was playing this character, this priest, yesterday, and this woman comes to him, and she's very troubled. And she starts to talk, and she says "I'm so troubled." And he says, "Well, go on." She says she's going to confess. Well, she never does. It never gets to the confession. She finally ends up saying, "I'm not penitent. I'm terrible. I'm going. I've wasted your time." And she walks out.

So at any rate, she's very nervous, and she hears a noise. And she says, "What was that?" And he says, "Oh, relax. Relax! We have a radiator that rattles like a freight train." Now, if you're really looking for a reason not to have a serious conversation, then this priest is going to let her off the hook. Then she says, "No, Father, I want to talk to you. I have to do this." But I wanted to bring a kind of lightness to it. And I guess that's one of the things I think could make this priest I've been playing on this soap opera a little different, a little more real. A little more human.

**CG:** Did you find it difficult playing a priest again?

**WC:** Oh, no. The only question I had trouble with was, if the priest is hearing this woman's confession, should he be wearing his stole? Well, I didn't know, and nobody knew. So Barbara went on line, and there's this wonderful website called "Ask a Catholic." And somebody

had written in and said, “Hey you guys, what’s the story on the stole? Do you really need to have that stole to…?” And the answer was, the stole is used in the sacraments, but it’s not really necessary. If a priest needs to hear someone’s confession, he can do it without the stole. It’s up to the penitent – it’s the penitent who creates confession, not the priest.

It was sort of like being on *M*A*S*H* again. The script just says, “Father hears her confession,” but it doesn’t give any details on how to do that. I’m still doing my own research, trying to get it right!

**CG:** Did you enjoy the part?

**WC:** Well…yes. I’ve been trying to watch the soap, because I know those people now. But it’s hard. It’s very hard.

**CG:** It’s hard to follow the plot?

**WC:** It’s hard to watch it. Have you ever tried to watch a soap opera?

**CG:** Not recently.

**WC:** Well, I’ve never watched soaps. Now I feel somewhat like, the gods have been good to me and handed me this role, so I think the least I can do is know what these people are doing, what they’re trying to do, and be a part of it. And I don’t know whether Father Tobias is going to have a long life or not. Sometimes people will do ten or twelve episodes and then they

don't continue. Or they do maybe thirty episodes. Some of those people have done hundreds and hundreds of episodes.

There was a big event on the show that happened just before the Olympics. The show was not shown, because the Olympics were on NBC. A terrible explosion takes place underground, there's supposed to be some tunnels and a gas leak and some explosion. And one of the actresses laughingly called it the "DAYSaster." And then the Olympics came. So Barbara and I tuned in after the Olympics, to see what was happening, and how the "DAYSaster" was coming, and it turns out two of their regular characters were killed off. But it's hard to watch.

**CG:** What do you like to watch on TV?

**WC:** I've become a great fan of *The Good Wife*. I think Julianna Margulies is wonderful. And Barbara and I also became fans of Kyra Sedgwick, on *The Closer*.

And, of course, one of our *M*A*S*H* people is on *The Closer*. G.W. Bailey, who plays one of the detectives, Lieutenant Provenza, has been on *The Closer* since the beginning. And now that *The Closer* is over, they have a new show, a spin-off, and G.W. Bailey's still playing Provenza. Well, G.W. Bailey was Sergeant Rizzo on *M*A*S*H*. I haven't seen him in years, but he was a good actor. And he's terrific on *The Closer*.

**FAN MAIL**

**CG:** When I got in touch with you, I had been reading about the different *M*A*S*H* actors in online fan forums, and there seemed to be an impression that you don't like talking to your fans. Is that true, or are you just too busy to answer your mail?

**WC:** Well, I'll tell you. When I was on *M*A*S*H*, I used to get a lot of fan mail. I was making enough money that I decided to hire a secretary. I had a nice dressing room, and my secretary used to come there, and we'd do the fan mail. I'd sign a lot of pictures. I've even done some of those shows where you go and sit in a booth, and people pay you to sign your autograph. I've done a couple of those, but I don't like them. I don't really like selling my autograph. It goes against my grain. Morally, I think there's something wrong with that, selling my picture and my signature. On the other hand, I have done it. But I've given up doing it. I've had some offers to go to other shows like those, and I've decided I wouldn't. And anyway, I've got tons of pictures left over from the *M*A*S*H* days. Tons. When I was on *M*A*S*H*, I bought – oh, never mind.

But about the fan mail…I used to answer all my fan mail. I had a special box at the Post Office, and a box number I gave out, and I even had a Father Mulcahy website. But I was getting so much mail I couldn't keep up with it, and I always felt guilty all the time. And then, when the Unabomber happened, there were all these threats of bombs coming through the mail, and I said, "That's it. I'm going to close my box and tell my fans all their mail will be stamped 'Return to Sender. Box Closed.' And nobody's going to know what happened to me, and I won't get any more fan mail, and I won't have to feel guilty all the time about not answering it."

So I did that, and for a while it seemed to stop the tide. But since that time, people have been writing to various places I was associated with. I was on the board of the Devereux Foundation, which is a foundation that helps disabled people, because my son is autistic. And the Autism Society of America, I would get mail through them. And even mail from 20th Century Fox, that would go to them and they would forward it to me. And I just kept getting mail, even

though my own address isn't readily available. Well, I suppose actually it is, because people can find me if they really want to, I guess. You found me.

Anyway, I've got a drawer full of old mail. But I'm terrible. I've got emails I haven't answered, I've got fan mail I haven't answered, some of it goes back ten years. And a lot of them put photographs in there, photographs they bought for me to sign. I don't know if I'll ever answer it. I don't know what I should do.

I feel very guilty about it. But if you're going to write this for the public to read, tell them I'm very sorry that I haven't answered. I feel very guilty. But I'm going to go to my priest and he's going give me absolution. He's going to absolve me for not answering my mail…and then I won't have to.

**STAYING IN TOUCH**

**CG:** Do you stay in touch with any of the folks from *M*A*S*H*, and do you all still get together?

**WC:** We used to, but we haven't for quite a while. Loretta has been sort of the person who gets us together for dinners and things. Loretta is swell. But now, we haven't gotten together for quite a while. I think the last time – gosh, it's been well over a year, now. Very often, somebody's not in town. And not everybody lives here. Gary doesn't live here, and David Stiers doesn't live here, and Alan doesn't live here. So it's usually Mike and Loretta and myself and Jamie, with our spouses. Well, Loretta's not married. And Harry Morgan. So that was the group. And sometimes others, Gene Reynolds joined us, and Allan Arbus and his wife -- Allan

played the psychiatrist, Sidney Freedman -- he has joined us for dinner. But we haven't had a get-together since before Harry's death. Harry died last year, and during the last years of his life it was hard to get together.

**CG:** Did you see everybody at the funeral?

**WC:** I was expecting I would, of course. But there wasn't a funeral. Apparently, Harry's wishes were very specific, and the family said there wouldn't be a service.

**CG:** Do you stay in touch other ways? Do you phone or email them?

**WC:** Well, I haven't. I did a play two years ago, nearly, in the beginning of 2011 in Fayetteville, I did the wonderful part of the stage manager in *Our Town*. It was a nice production. And then the following year, this year, I did *On Golden Pond*. And while I was doing *On Golden Pond*, a guy came in and said, "I worked with Gary Burghoff. I did *The Odd Couple* with him." And I did *The Odd Couple* too, with Jamie Farr, so I said, "I'm sure it was fun to do." Gary, I'm sure, would've played the same part I played, Felix. I said, "Now that I've talked to you and met you, I have a reason to talk to Gary. I'll call him up. He lives in Florida. I'll call him up and say hello and tell him we met."

**CG:** Were there any of the cast members of *M*A*S*H*, or *AfterMASH*, that you were particularly close to?

**WC:** We all got along pretty well. But I felt especially close to Mike Farrell. I always admired his interest in humanity. When *M*A*S*H* came to an end, he went to the Far East and went to a number of refugee camps, and he wrote about his experience, and I think he did

something for the UN. That isn't why I was close to him; I just admire that about him. But he's an awfully likeable, easy-going guy. He's married to Shelley Fabares, who is an actor, too, you know.[33] Shelley and Mike and Barbara and I go to dinner every once in a while. The last thing we did together, we went to a play that Alan Alda wrote which was being presented in Westwood, and after it was over, Alan happened to be there. And actually, at the same production, Wayne Rogers turned up, too. That was a nice coincidence. So we all went over to Alan's apartment and drank some wine and talked. It was very nice. It was a little reunion, which I didn't expect.

Of course, I got to know Jamie very well, because I went on tour with him in *The Odd Couple*. But I think I'm a little less like Jamie, and a little more like Mike. Jamie and I really are an odd couple!

**FINAL QUESTIONS**

**CG:** Do you still have the hat Father Mulcahy always wore?

**WC:** Yes. We had this wonderful costumer named Albert. He was from Germany, and sometimes I tried to speak German with him. When I was leaving, Albert said, "Some people are taking their stuff. Do you want anything?" And I said, "Sure. I'll take my costume." So I took the hat, the coat, the black shirt, the chain and the cross, the pants, and even the boots. I took the whole thing. I've still got it.

**CG:** Do people still come up to you on the street and call you Father Mulcahy?

**WC:** Not very often. My voice hasn't changed much, and some people are very sensitive to the sound of a voice, so I have had people turn around and say, "You sound like Father Mulcahy" or "Were you Father Mulcahy? I knew it by your voice." But I think my face has changed some with age. People who know who I was will say, "Oh, you haven't changed a bit." Well, of course, I have.

**CG:** Do you feel that playing Father Mulcahy typecast you as a priest? And if it did, does it bother you?

**WC:** No, it doesn't. I think it did typecast me somewhat, because look at what I've done since. They wanted me in *Church Basement Ladies* because people would think of me easily as being their pastor. And the soap opera, I'm sure that playing Father Mulcahy helped me in getting that part. But it doesn't bother me in the slightest.

As I think about my grandmother and the sort of spiritual calling she thought I'd have, which I didn't really feel called to, the clergy or the church, I feel now that my career was sort of fulfilling a prophecy. My grandmother's wish was finally achieved. In my part in *Beyond the Fringe,* I actually was in the pulpit. And looking back, I sort of feel that that part started me on my road. When Father Mulcahy came along, I felt like I was on the same track – the humorous clergyman.

You know, actors like to think they have a big range and can do lots of things, but most have a particular niche, a particular quality, that they do best and they're most comfortable with. And the writers and the producers look at the character that they've created, and they find an actor that fits that mold. That's the reason they want to use you. If you can find a character that

fits your niche as an actor, that's a huge blessing. And if it's on a long-running and successful program – well, how can it get better than that?

Sometimes I think about poor McLean Stevenson. McLean had a wonderful quality; he could be very funny, and he could be kind of wild, but he could be serious too. He had these great writers that were writing for him, yet he decided to leave. He was sort of seduced away, because he had people saying to him, "You could have your own show. You could be the top star." Nobody ever said that to me. But I think McLean may have felt, after he left, that maybe he shouldn't have. Because *M*A*S*H* became such a staple, and the shows he went on to do really didn't. He did do another sitcom…

**CG:** He did a couple.[34]

**WC:** He did a couple. He did *Hello, Larry*, which wasn't…. Well. He did not have a big, spectacular career. But if he had stayed with *M*A*S*H*, I assume he would have.

Gary Burghoff also left *M*A*S*H*. Gary was brilliant and a hard-working actor. He played Radar and loved playing Radar, I think because it all came out of himself. When he did the movie -- he's the only one who did the movie and the series, too -- I'm sure that Robert Altman found that quality in Gary that fit the character of Radar perfectly, and he just let Gary run with it. And Larry Gelbart and Gene Reynolds and Alan Alda and the rest did the same on the series. Gary had a great time doing *M*A*S*H*, but he got to the point where he was just burned out playing Radar, and he was tired of the character and didn't want to do it anymore.

Well, I never found that with Mulcahy. I loved doing Mulcahy, and I couldn't imagine leaving. That's why I did *AfterMASH*. I wanted to do it more!

**CG:** Do you ever regret having done it?

**WC:** Oh no, never. It was a great joy. We had those wonderful writers, and they were really creating for us, and they wanted to know us and use us and do the things we felt comfortable with. I had a wonderful time. Each time I'd get a script, even if I had a small part, I knew I was part of this grand machine, this wonderful production that was doing something challenging and new and creative, on a show that was changing television.

**CG:** Any final thoughts?

**WC:** The only thing I can say is, I feel like a pretty lucky man. I've had a rich, full life. To have a house like this, to end up with a wonderful wife and be in good health at my age, to have grandchildren…it's pretty nice, and I don't take it for granted. One of the things I think we should do is give back to our society. I'm happy to pay my taxes, and I do a certain amount of charitable giving. I know how well I live, and how lucky I am.

I've had a wonderful career. It's hard to have a career as an actor and make a living at it. A lot of very, very talented people don't luck out, and I had some fortunate breaks. If one of them was playing a priest on *M*A*S*H*, and it typecast me, well, I had all those wonderful years of working with all those great writers and actors, and I'm very grateful for that.

# ENDNOTES

## INTRODUCTION

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[2] John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 7-11.

[3] Elana Levine, *Wallowing in Sex: The New Sexual Culture of 1970s American Television* (Duke University Press, 2007), especially chapter 4, "Symbols of Sex: Television's Women and Sexual Difference," 123-168; Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion*. Duke University Press, 2001, particularly chapters 4 and 5, 123-198, and her Introduction, 1-5.

[4] Colleen McDannell, editor, *Catholics in the Movies* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

[5] Les and Barbara Keyser, *Hollywood and the Catholic Church: the Image of Roman Catholicism in American Movies* (Loyola University Press, 1984), xii.

[6] Thomas J. Ferraro, "Boys to Men: Angels with Dirty Faces," *Catholics in the Movies*, Colleen McDannell, editor (Oxford University Press, 2008), 62-64.

[7] Ferraro, in McDannell, 71.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Anthony Burke Smith, "America's Favorite Priest: Going My Way," *Catholics in the Movies*, Colleen McDannell, editor (Oxford University Press, 2008);

[10] Anthony Burke Smith, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (University Press of Kansas, 2010), 67-73.

[11] Examinations of Sheen and his program's influence include Kathleen L. Riley, *Fulton J. Sheen: An American Catholic Response to the Twentieth Century* (Alba House, 2004); Thomas C. Reeves, *America's Bishop: The Life and Times of Fulton J. Sheen* (Encounter Books, 2001); Mark S. Massa, *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day and the Notre Dame Football Team* (Crossroad, 1999), 82-101; Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium:*

*Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (Columbia University Press, 2003), 153-160; David Weinstein, *The Forgotten Network: DuMont and the Birth of American Television* (Temple University Press, 2004), 154-173; Christopher Owen Lynch, *Selling Catholicism: Bishop Sheen and the Power of Television* (University Press of Kentucky, 1998).
[12] Richard Wolff, *The Church on TV: Portrayals of Priests, Pastors and Nuns on American Television Series* (Continuum International, 2010)
[13] Wolff, 6-7.
[14] Wolff, 216.
[15] Wolff, 214.
[16] Wolff, 49.
[17] Michael Kackman, *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 27.
[18] Mary Ann Watson, *The Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy Years* (Duke University Press, 1994), 124-125.
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[20] Sources on DuBay include John Leo, "The DuBay Case" and A.V. Krebs, "A Church of Silence," *Commonweal*, July 10, 1964; *Time*, "Roman Catholics: For a White-Collar Union," March 4, 1966, and "The Issue of Imprimatur", August 19, 1966; and Francis J. Weber, *His Eminence of Los Angeles: James Francis Cardinal McIntyre*, vol. II (Saint Francis Historical Society Press, 1997), 442-467.The television episode in question is *The Mod Squad,* "Keep the Faith, Baby," ABC, March 25, 1969. For a fuller discussion of the episode and its resemblance to the DuBay case, see chapter four.
[21] Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (University of California Press, 1994); Andrew M. Greeley, *An Ugly Little Secret: Anti-Catholicism in North America* (Sheed Andrews and McMeel, 1977); Philip Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism* (Oxford University Press, 2003)James Martin, S.J., "The Last Acceptable Prejudice?" *America*, March 25, 2000, http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=606, retrieved May 3, 2008. While Greeley is a useful source for historical images of the priesthood, he is less so for perceptions of priests in the 1960s, as by that era his work was dealing more with internal sociological implications of the priesthood than with its perception by a wider populace.
[22] Keyser, 3.
[23] Bodroghkozy, 1.

[24] Donald B. Cozzens, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul* (Liturgical Press, 2000), 111.
[25] Levine, chapter 6, "From Romance to Rape: Sex, Violence, and Soap Operas," 208-252.
[26] For Coughlin, see the works previously cited, as well as chapter one of this dissertation. Corridan is discussed in Keyser, 82-83. Sources on Mindszenty include József Mindszenty, *Memoirs* (translated by Richard and Clara Winston) (Macmillan, 1974); Joseph Vecsey, as told to Phyllis Schlafly, *Mindszenty the man* (Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation, 1972); George Nauman Shuster, *In silence I speak* (Farrar, 1956); Swift, Stephen K., *The Cardinal's story* (Macmillan, 1949); Béla Fábián, *Cardinal Mindszenty; The Story of a Modern Martyr* (Scribner, 1949).For a discussion of television portrayals inspired by Mindszenty's plight, see chapter two.
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[2] William Brewster, "Of Plymouth Plantation," in Perry Miller, ed., *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (Columbia University Press, 1982), 5.

[3] Lockwood, 18.

[4] Dolan, 75-90.

[5] Dolan, 102.

[6] Lockwood, 17.

[7] Dolan, 105.

[8] Steven Waldman, "Was John Adams an Anti-Catholic Bigot?," Beliefnet.com, retrieved April 9, 2008.

[9] John Adams, letter to Abigail Adams, in John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution: The Faith of the Founding Fathers* (Baker Books, 1987), 267.

[10] John Adams, letter to Thomas Jefferson, May 5 and August 9, 1816, Waldman, retrieved April 9, 2008.

[11] Thomas Jefferson, letter to Horatio G. Spafford, 1814. Lipscomb, Andrew, and Albert Ellery Bergh, eds. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Memorial Edition, 1904), vol. 14, 119.

[12] Thomas Jefferson, letter to Mrs. Samuel H. Smith, August, 6, 1816, http://www.nobeliefs.com/jefferson.htm, retrieved Nov. 10, 2010.

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[16] Franchot, 120.

[17] Richard Hofstadter , "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" *Harper's*, (November, 1964).

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[25] McGreevey, 125.
[26] Lockwood, 36-39.
[27] For the revived Ku Klux Klan, see David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Duke University Press, 1987); David A. Horowitz, *Inside the Klavern: The Secret History of a Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1999); Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915 - 1930* (Ivan R Dee, 1992); Shawn Lay, *The Invisible Empire in West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (University of Illinois Press, 2003); Nancy K. MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford University Press, 1995); Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928* (University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (Oxford University Press, 1998).
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[29] James Martin, S.J., "The Last Acceptable Prejudice?" *America*, March 25, 2000, http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=606, retrieved May 3, 2008.
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**CHAPTER 1**

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[3] For Catholics and the New Deal, see Zachary R Calo, "The Circumscribed Radicalism of New Deal Catholicism: Catholic Liberalism in the 1930s," Valparaiso University School of Law,

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[5] Meyerson.

[6] For sources on Rice, see Charles J. McCollester, ed., *Fighter with a Heart: Writings of Charles Owen Rice, Pittsburgh labor priest* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), and Patrick J. McGeever, *Rev. Charles Owen Rice: Apostle of Contradiction* (Duquesne University Press, 1989); for Wagner, J. Joseph Huthmacher, *Senator Robert F. Wagner and the Rise of Urban Liberalism* (Atheneum, 1968); on Murray, Paul F. Clark, Peter Gottlieb, and Donald Kennedy, eds., *Forging a Union of Steel: Philip Murray, SWOC, and the United Steelworkers* (ILR Press, 1987). On the ACTU, see Douglas P. Seaton, *Catholics and Radicals: the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists and the American labor movement, from Depression to Cold War* (Bucknell University Press, 1981). On Sheil, see Mark B. Sorvillo, *Bishop Bernard J. Sheil: Hero of the Catholic Left* (n.p., 1990); on Mundelein, Edward R. Kantowicz, *Corporation Sole: Cardinal Mundelein and Chicago Catholicism* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1983). For Day's autobiography, see Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness* (Harper, 1996). Other biographies include Robert Coles, *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion* (Da Capo Press, 1989); Jim Forest, *Love is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day* (Orbis, 1994); and William Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography* (HarperCollins, 1984). For the impact of Day's Catholic Worker movement, see Carol Byrne, *The Catholic Worker Movement, 1933-1980: A Critical Analysis* (AuthorHouse, 2010); Robert Craig, *Religion and Radical Politics: An Alternative Christian Tradition in the United States* (Temple University Press, 1995); Anne Klejment, and Nancy Roberts, *The Influence of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement* (Praeger, 1996); Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America* (University of Alabama Press, 2006); and Nancy L. Roberts, *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker* (State University of New York Press, 1985).

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[8] Dolan, 344; Hennessey, 229.

[9] Dolan, 345.

[10] Though the importance of radio has long been understood and "studied" by fans of "old-time radio," it is only in about the last decade that radio broadcasting has received serious academic (as opposed to popular nostalgic) attention. The literature of media studies is too vast for an exhaustive listing; but former "fan-based" works would include Frank Buxton and Bill Owen, *Radio's Golden Age* (Easton Valley Press, 1968), and the same author's update of the same

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[12] Other sources agree that the Klan's provocation took place; but Warren claims the cross-burning was a fabrication of Coughlin's meant solely to generate sympathetic publicity and raise money. Compare Brinkley, 90, with Warren,17.

[13] Brinkley, 94.

[14] Brinkley, 102.

[15] Brinkley, 87.

[16] For generations, the standard academic histories of American populism have been Richard Hofstadter's hopelessly biased and condescending *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (Knopf, 1963) and *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (Knopf, 1965). Hofstadter's prejudices are carried forward to the present day by Chip Berlet and Matthew Lyons in *Right-Wing Populism in America* (Guilford Press, 2000). Impeccably researched and written, though still biased, is Michael Kazin's *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Cornell University Press, 1998). More balanced is Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford University Press, 2009).
[17] See Brinkley, especially chapter 7, "The Dissident Ideology," 143-168, for a more thorough examination of this relationship.
[18] Brinkley, 94.
[19] Brinkley, 94.
[20] Brinkley, 129.
[21] Brinkley, 100.
[22] Brinkley, 110.
[23] Hennessey, 261.
[24] Brinkley,108.
[25] Brinkley, 108-109.
[26] For EPIC, see Greg Mitchell, *The Campaign of the Century: Upton Sinclair and the End Poverty in California Movement* (Random House, 1992). For the NPL, see Herbert E. Gaston, *The Nonpartisan League* (Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920). For Olson and Farmer-Labor, see George H. Mayer, *The Political Career of Floyd B. Olson* (University of Minnesota Press, 1951); Dan C. McCurry, ed., *The Farmer-Labor Party: History, Platforms, and Programs* (Arno Press, 1975); Millard Gieske, *Minnesota Farmer-Laborism: the Third-Party Alternative* (University of Minnesota Press, 1979); Richard M. Valley, *Radicalism in the States: the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the American Political Economy* (University of Chicago Press, 1989); and James J. Lorence, *Gerald J. Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance* (University of Missouri Press, 1994). For the LaFollettes, see Patrick J. Maney, *Young Bob: A Biography of Robert M. LaFollette Jr.* (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2002) and John Miller, *Governor Phillip F. LaFollette: The Wisconsin Progressives and the New Deal* (University of Missouri Press, 1982). For Long, see William Ivy Hair, *The Kingfish and His Realm: the Life and Times of Huey P. Long* (Louisiana State University Press, 1991) and Glen Jeansonne and Oscar Handlin, *Messiah of the Masses: Huey P. Long and the Great Depression* (Longman, 1997). For a summary of the various radical anti-poverty movements and organizations of the era, see also Brinkley, particularly chapter 10, "Uneasy Alliances," 216-241.
[27] Brinkley, 125.
[28] Warren, 62.
[29] Brinkley, 134-137.
[30] Brinkley, 265-269.
[31] For a detailed account of Coughlin's post-1936 dealings with Mooney and eventual silencing, see Leslie W. Tentler, *Seasons of Grace: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit* (Wayne State University Press, 1990), 332-342.
[32] Warren, 2, 27.
[33] Warren, 26.
[34] Warren, 29-30.

[35] Warren, 25.
[36] Wallace Stegner, "The Radio Priest and His Flock," quoted in Brinkley, 92.
[37] Brinkley, 82, 97.
[38] Warren, 5.
[39] Warren, 63.
[40] Warren, 6.
[41] Brinkley, 117.
[42] Warren 28.
[43] Brinkley, 152.
[44] Warren, 66.
[45] Warren, 89.
[46] Brinkley, 83, 119.
[47] Brinkley, 120.
[48] Brinkley, 83.
[49] Warren, 47.
[50] Brinkley, 120.
[51] O'Brien, 179-80.
[52] Hennessey, 274-75.
[53] See, for example, Morris Dickstein, *Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression* (W.W. Norton, 2009, 233; Louise P. Gerds, ed., *The 1930s* (Greenhaven Press, 2000), 224-228; David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 227-234; Anthony Burke Smith, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (University Press of Kansas, 2010), 135; T.H. Watkins, *The Great Depression: America in the 1930s* (Blackside, 1993), 231; William H. Young, *The 1930s* (Greenwood Press, 2002), 218.
[54] James Martin, S.J., "The Last Acceptable Prejudice?" *America*, March 25, 2000, http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=606, retrieved May 3, 2008.
[55] For Peyton, see Jeanne Gosselin Arnold, *A Man of Faith: Fr. Patrick Peyton C.S.C., His Life, Mission, and Message* (Family Theater Press, 1983); and Richard Gribble, *American Apostle of the Family Rosary: The Life of Patrick J. Peyton, C.S.C.* (Crossroad, 2011). Peyton's own perspective can be found in Patrick Peyton, *All for Her: The Autobiography of Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.* (Doubleday, 1967).
[56] Dunning, 240, 571.
[57] Histories of the Production Code and its effects are numerous. For the reasons Hollywood came to believe the Code was advisable, see Thomas Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930-1934* (Columbia University Press, 1999). For the Code Administration itself, see Matthew Bernstein, *Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era* (Rutgers University Press, 1999); Francis G. Couvares, *Movie Censorship and American Culture* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Gerald C. Gardner, *The Censorship Papers: Movie Censorship Letters from the Hays Office, 1934 to 1968* (Dodd Mead, 1988); Lee Grieveson, *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America* (University of California Press, 2004); Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, *The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code* (University Press of Kentucky, 2001); Jon Lewis, *Hollywood v. Hard Core: How the Struggle*

*Over Censorship Created the Modern Film Industry* (NYU Press, 2002); and Murray Schumach, *The Face On The Cutting Room Floor: The Story Of Movie And Television Censorship* (Morrow, 1964). For the Catholic influence on Hollywood and the Production Code Administration, see Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) and *The Catholic Crusade Against the Movies, 1940-1975 (*Cambridge University Press, 1998); Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor: Joseph I. Breen & The Production Code Administration* (Columbia University Press, 2007); Colleen McDannell, *Catholics in the Movies* (Oxford University Press, 2007); Frank Walsh, *Sin and Censorship: The Catholic Church and the Motion Picture Industry* (Yale University Press, 1996).
[58] Doherty, *Censor*, 33.
[59] Walsh, 52-54.
[60] Walsh, 55-60.
[61] Walsh, 77.
[62] Walsh, 80.
[63] *Time*, "Religion: Legion of Decency," June 11, 1934. http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,762190-1,00.html, retrieved April 10, 2011.
[64] Walsh, 104.
[65] On Breen, see Doherty, *Censor*; on Gavin Lord, Thomas F., *Champion of Youth: A Dynamic Story of a Dynamic Man, Daniel A. Lord, SJ* (St. Paul Editions, 1977); on the Legion of Decency specifically, see James M. Skinner, *The Cross and the Cinema: The Legion of Decency and the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, 1933-1970* (Praeger Publishers, 1993).
[66] Keyser, 58.
[67] Keyser, 93-94.
[68] Andrew Bergman, *We're in the Money*: *Depression America and its Films* (Ivan R Dee Publications, 1992), quoted in Keyser, *Hollywood and the Catholic Church,* 62.
[69] Smith, 45.
[70] *San Francisco*, 1936, DVD.
[71] Keyser, 65.
[72] Keyser, 62.
[73] Keyser, 66-67.
[74] *Boys Town*, 1938; *Men of Boys Town*, 1941. DVD.
[75] *Angels with Dirty Faces*, 1938. DVD.
[76] Keyser, 62.
[77] Keyser, 67-68.
[78] Keyser, 66.
[79] Among the best works on American film before and during the Second World War are Bernard F. Dick, *The Star-Spangled Screen: The American World War II Film* (University Press of Kentucky, 1996); Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (Columbia University Press, 1999); and Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (University of California Press, 1990).
[80] *The Fighting 69th*, 1940. DVD.
[81] Jim Bishop, *Fighting Father Duffy* (Vision Books, 1956); Stephen L. Harris, *Duffy's War: Fr. Francis Duffy, Wild Bill Donovan, and the Irish Fighting 69th in World War I* (Potomac Books,

2007); and Martin J. Hogan, *The Shamrock Battalion in the Great War* (University of Missouri Press, 2007). Duffy's own autobiography is Francis P. Duffy with Joyce Kilmer, *Father Duffy's Story: A Tale of Humor and Heroism, of Life and Death With the Fighting Sixty-ninth* (Kessinger Publishing, 2005).
[82] *Going My Way*, 1944. DVD.
[83] Keyser, 98. However, not every historian regards *Going My Way* as being a positive and beneficent influence. In his essay "America's Favorite Priest" in Colleen McDannell's *Catholics in the Movies* (Oxford University Press, 2008), and even more in his own *The Look of Catholics*, Anthony Burke Smith eschews the importance of *Going My Way* for the assimilation of Catholics. Consumed by the typical academic obsessions with class and radical politics, Smith sees the film as part of a transition of Hollywood from support for an underclass exploited by greedy capitalists to what he considers Henry Luce's shallow, materialistic, and anti-Communist "American Century": "By affirming American society, this highly assimilated priest in fact represented a repudiation of the reformist values of the New Deal era. Community, in the hands of O'Malley and *Going My Way*, no longer centered on the common good of ordinary citizens, ethnics, and outsiders against the private interests of elites and the culturally privileged....*Going My Way* was nothing less than a symbolic cleansing of the streets of urban America, ridding them of all the critical, reformist energies that Hollywood had recognized in the 1930s." Smith, *Look*, 67-73.
[84] Keyser, 94-95.
[85] Walsh, 229.
[86] Cozzens, 111.
[87] *The Bells of St. Mary's*, 1945. DVD.
[88] *On the Waterfront*, 1954. DVD.
[89] Keyser, 82-83.
[90] Hughes' defiance of the PCA is thoroughly covered in Walsh, 196-201.
[91] For the *Miracle* case, see Walsh, 250-55; Raymond J. Haberski and Laura Wittern-keller, *The Miracle Case: Film Censorship and the Supreme Court* (University Press of Kansas, 2008); and Raymond J. Haberski, *Freedom to Offend: How New York Remade Movie Culture* (University Press of Kentucky, 2007).
[92] For the changing mores of the postwar generation, see Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (Basic Books, 2000); Tom Englehardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (Basic Books, 1988); Alan Petigny, *The Permissive Society: America, 1941-1965* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
[93] Doherty, *Censor*, 325.

**CHAPTER 2**

[1] For many years, the only history of the development of American broadcasting was Eric Barnouw's three-part *A History of Broadcasting in the United States: A Tower in Babel, to 1933; The Golden Web, 1933-1953;* and *The Image Empire, From 1953* (Oxford University Press,

1966, 1968 and 1970), and the one-volume "condensation" of the latter two books, *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television* (Oxford University Press, 1975). Since that time, many other histories and memoirs have emerged. For the development of television programming, see Michele Hilmes, ed., *The Television History Book* (British Film Industry Publishing, 2003); Max Wilk, *The Golden Age of Television: Notes from the Survivors* (Moyer Bell Limited, 1989); William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (University of Illinois Press, 1990); James L. Baughman, *Same Time, Same Station: Creating American Television, 1948-1961* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); David Weinstein, *The Forgotten Network: DuMont and the Birth of American Television* (Temple University Press, 2004); Coyne Stevens Sanders and Tom Gilbert, *Desilu: The Story of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz* (Harper Collins, 1993); and Harry Castleman and Walter Podrazik, *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* (Syracuse University Press, 2010). Not strictly narrative histories, but extremely useful for reference regarding the names, dates, and basic facts of radio and television programming, are John Dunning, *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio* (Oxford University Press, 1998); Alex McNeil, *Total Television: The Comprehensive Guide to Programming from 1948 to the Present* (Penguin, 1997); Arthur Shulman, *How Sweet It Was: Television, a Pictorial Commentary* (Bonanza Books, 1966); Susan Sackett, *Prime-Time Hits: Television's Most Popular Network Programs, 1950 to the Present* (Billboard Books, 1993); Alvin H. Marill, *Movies Made for Television: The Telefeature and the Mini-Series, 1964-1986* (Baseline Books, 1987); Michael Karol, *The ABC Movie of the Week Companion* (IUniverse, 2008); Harry Castleman and Walter Podrazik, *Harry and Wally's Favorite TV Shows* (Prentice Hall, 1989), an opinionated but thorough and informative guide to television series from 1950 through the 1980s; and Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh's truly indispensible *The Complete Directory to Prime-Time Network and Cable TV Shows, 1946-Present* (Ballantine, 2007).

[2] Brooks and Marsh, xii.
[3] Brooks and Marsh, xiii.
[4] Baughman, 64.
[5] Baughman, 178.
[6] Baughman, 51.
[7] Baughman, 53.
[8] Brooks and Marsh, xiv.
[9] Boddy, 88; Wilk, 31; Brooks and Marsh, 1323.
[10] Baughman, 180.
[11] Baughman, 180-184.
[12] Sylvester L. Weaver, address to University of Chicago Management conference, March 26, 1955, copy in Hedges Collection, cited in Baughman, 6.
[13] Weaver, speech to NBC affiliates, December 9, 1955, NBC Papers, LC, folder 948, in Baughman, 105.
[14] Baughman, 64.
[15] Baughman, 117.
[16] Baughman, 184, 186.
[17] Dunning, 362.
[18] Baughman, 110-115.
[19] Baughman, 83.

[20] Brooks and Marsh, xv-xvi.
[21] Baughman, 279.
[22] Baughman, 74.
[23] Baughman, 273.
[24] Baughman, 106.
[25] Baughman, 116.
[26] Baughman, 83.
[27] Baughman, 113-114.
[28] Baughman, 280, 282.
[29] The most complete biography of Sheen is Kathleen L. Riley, *Fulton J. Sheen: An American Catholic Response to the Twentieth Century* (Alba House, 2004). Also helpful are Thomas C. Reeves, *America's Bishop: The Life and Times of Fulton J. Sheen* (Encounter Books, 2001), and Janel Rodriguez, *Meet Fulton Sheen* (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2006.) For Sheen's influence on American culture, see Mark S. Massa, *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day and the Notre Dame Football Team* (Crossroad, 1999), 82-101, and Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (Columbia University Press, 2003), 153-160. For Sheen and the television industry, see David Weinstein, *The Forgotten Network: DuMont and the Birth of American Television* (Temple University Press, 2004), 154-173, and Christopher Owen Lynch, *Selling Catholicism: Bishop Sheen and the Power of Television* (University Press of Kentucky, 1998).
[30] Reeves, 218.
[31] Weinstein, 162; Brooks and Marsh, 415.
[32] Weinstein, 157.
[33] Riley, 355.
[34] "Microphone Missionary," *Time*, April 14, 1952, 72-79.
[35] Brooks and Marsh, 1411.
[36] Smith, 249.
[37] Doherty,158.
[38] Massa, 84.
[39] Massa, 86-87, 101.
[40] Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion*, Volume 3, *Under God, Indivisible 1941-1961* (University of Chicago Press, 1986), 323, in Weinstein, 161.
[41] For a discussion of the various historiographical interpretations of Sheen's success with a diverse audience, see Massa, 85-86.
[42] Massa, 95.
[43] Gene Schwope, Pat Schwope, Morris Gildemeister, interviews by author, December 28, 2010.
[44] Doherty, 153.
[45] Weinstein, 160.
[46] Doherty, 158.
[47] Doherty, 160.
[48] *What's My Line*, CBS, October 21, 1956. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prgvEA2D4sw. retrieved June 4, 2010.
[49] Doherty, 153.
[50] Baughman, 52, 118.

[51] Carroll O'Meara, *Television Program Production* (Ronald Press, 1955), 328, quoted in William Boddy,101-102.
[52] Doherty, 156.
[53] Doherty, 158.
[54] Predictably, Anthony Burke Smith sees Sheen as a repressive, proto-fascist tool of capitalist elites "etched in anti-modern suspicion and distrust," who "sought to mobilize Catholics in the United States into a forceful, united block against modern progressives and liberals." Smith, 134-135.
[55] Weinstein, 155.
[56] Doherty, 150.
[57] Baughman, 264.
[58] Jim Harmon, *The Great Radio Heroes*: MacFarland, 2001), 168.
[59] *The Lone Ranger*, "The Lost Chalice," ABC, February 10, 1955. Viewed at the UCLA Film and Television Archive, Inventory Number VA19258 T, August 26, 2010.
[60] Dunning, 302.
[61] Dunning, 311.
[62] Brooks and Marsh, 590.
[63] *Have Gun -- Will Travel*, "The Statue of San Sebastian," CBS,June 14, 1958, season 2 DVD.
[64] *Dragnet*, "The Big Little Jesus," NBC, December 24, 1953; Golden Movie Classics DVD.
[65] *Dragnet*, "The Christmas Story," December 21, 1967; retrieved from Hulu.com November 3, 2010.
[66] http://www.loretta-young.com/FY-come-to-the-stable.html, retrieved 7-04-10.
[67] Shulman, 237.
[68] Brooks and Marsh, 810.
[69] http://www.loretta-young.com/FY-see-you-next-week.html, retrieved 7-04-10.
[70] Brooks and Marsh, 810.
[71] *Letter to Loretta*, "The Faith of Chata," NBC, December 13, 1953. UCLA Film and Television Archive, Inventory Number T1680, viewed August 26, 2010.
[72] *The Loretta Young Show*, "The Cardinal's Secret," NBC, April 22, 1956. UCLA Film and Television Archive, Inventory Number 1671, viewed August 26, 2010.
[73] *The Loretta Young Show*, "Enter At Your Own Risk," NBC, January 8, 1961. UCLA Film and Television Archive, Inventory Number T1754, viewed August 26, 2010.
[74] "Code of Practices for Television Broadcasters," December 6, 1951. http://www.tvhistory.tv/SEAL-Good-Practice.htm, retrieved February 25, 2011.
[75] Brooks & Marsh, 355-356; Paul Cullum, "The Dick Van Dyke Show," Museum of Broadcast Communications website, http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=dickvandyke, retrieved February 25, 2011.
[76] "The Life and Love of Joe Coogan," *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, CBS, January 22, 1964; Hulu.com, retrieved January 6, 2010.
[77] Jay Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 175.
[78] http://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/eng251/amourstudy.htm, retrieved January 17, 2011.
[79] http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/resources/poetry/merton.html, retrieved January 17, 2011.

[80] On Marian devotion, see Paula M. Kane, "Marian Devotion Since 1940: Continuity or Casualty?", in James O'Toole, ed., *Habits of Devotion: Catholic Religious Practice in Twentieth-Century America* (Cornell, 2004), 89-130.
[81] Wilk, 29.
[82] Brooks and Marsh, 1322.
[83] For the evidence of communism's effects in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, see Mark Kramer, ed., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Harvard University Press, 1999). Pages 394-400 deal specifically with Hungary. For the rise of communism in Hungary, see Peter Kenez, *Hungary from the Nazis to the Soviets: the Establishment of the Communist Regime in Hungary, 1944-1948* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[84] Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius11/P11DIVIN.HTM, retrieved November 9, 2010.
[85] For Mindszenty, his experiences, and reactions to them see József Mindszenty, *Memoirs* (translated by Richard and Clara Winston) (Macmillan, 1974); Joseph Vecsey, as told to Phyllis Schlafly, *Mindszenty the man* (Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation, 1972); George Nauman Shuster, *In silence I speak* (Farrar, 1956); Swift, Stephen K., *The Cardinal's story* (Macmillan, 1949); Béla Fábián, *Cardinal Mindszenty; The story of a modern martyr* (Scribner, 1949).
[86] John Cooney, *The American Pope: The Life and Times of Francis Cardinal Spellman* (New York: Times Books, 1984), 166.
[87] *The Loretta Young Show*, "The Man Who Couldn't Smile," NBC, April 9, 1961. UCLA Film and Television Archive, Inventory Number T1712, viewed August 26, 2010.
[88] For "Harvest of Shame," see Bob Edwards, *Edward R. Murrow and the Birth of Broadcast Journalism* (John Wiley and Sons, 2004), 141-143. On the Alliance for Progress, see William D. Rogers, *The Twilight Struggle: The Alliance for Progress and the Politics of Development in Latin America* (Random House, 1967); L. Ronald Scheman, *The Alliance for Progress: a Retrospective* (Praeger, 1988); and Jeffrey Taffett, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: the Alliance for Progress in Latin America (*Routledge, 2007).
[89] Castleman and Podrazik, *Harry and Wally*, 388.
[90] Brooks and Marsh, 1038.
[91] Keir Freign, http://www.hulu.com/watch/63080/the-outer-limits---original-a-feasability-study#x-0,vepisode,1,0, retrieved October 12, 2010.
[92] *The Outer Limits*, "A Feasibility Study," ABC, April 13, 1964. Retrieved from Hulu.com October 12, 2010.
[93] Michael Kackman, *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005). For Mission: Impossible specifically, see chapter 6, "Agents or Technocrats: Mission:Impossible and the International Other," 144-175.
[94] Brooks and Marsh, 902; Castleman and Podrazik, *Harry and Wally*, 341-342.
[95] *Mission: Impossible*, "Old Man Out," parts 1 &2, CBS, October 8 & 15, 1966. Season 1 DVD.
[96] *Mission: Impossible*, "The Heir Apparent," CBS, September 29, 1968. Season 3 DVD.
[97] *Mission: Impossible*, "The Cardinal," CBS, November 17, 1968. Season 3 DVD.
[98] Brooks and Marsh, 670; Castleman and Podrazik, *Harry and Wally*, 248.
[99] *The Invaders*, "Storm," ABC, April 4, 1967. Season 1 DVD.

[100] On Sheen's diocesan debacle as Bishop of Rochester, see Riley, particularly chapter 8, "Bishop in a Diocese: The 'Sound and Fury' of the Rochester Years, 1966-1969," 269-310, and Reeves, 291-327.

**CHAPTER 3**

[1] On John XXIII -- and for anecdotes about his "brotherly" approach to others – see Peter Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII: Shepherd of the Modern World* (Doubleday, 1985); Thomas Cahill, *Pope John XXIII* (Viking, 2002); Richard Cushing, *"Call Me John": A Life of Pope John XXIII* (Daughters of St. Paul, 1963); E.E.Y. Hales, *Pope John and his Revolution* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965); and Kurt Klinger, ed., *A Pope Laughs: Stories of John XXIII* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).
[2] Hebblethwaite, 296-297.
[3] Hebblethwaite, 294.
[4] Klinger, 81.
[5] John L. Allen, *All the Pope's Men: The Inside Story of How the Vatican Really Thinks* (Doubleday, 2004), 16.
[6] John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Harvard University Press, 2008), 105.
[7] Hebbletwaite, 303.
[8] Ronald J. Rychlak, "A War Prevented: Pope John XXIII and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Crisis Magazine*, November 11, 2011. http://www.crisismagazine.com/2011/preventing-war-pope-john-xxiii-and-the-cuban-missile-crisis, retrieved May 17, 2013.
[9] Hebblethwaite, 296-297.
[10] *Time*, March 23, 1959.
[11] Hebblethwaite, 468-469.
[12] Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century* (Liturgical Press, 2003), 7.
[13] Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 421-422.
[14] Dolan, 424-425.
[15] Hoge, 7.
[16] Dolan, 424-425.
[17] Many political historians have dealt in passing with the implications of Kennedy's Catholicism for his presidential campaign. Some recent works which have focused specifically on the Catholic issue are Thomas J. Carty, *A Catholic in the White House? Religion, Politics, and John F. Kennedy's Presidential Campaign* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Shaun Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon 1960* (Oxford University Press, 2009); and Albert J. Menendez, *The Religious Factor in the 1960 Presidential Election: an Analysis of the Kennedy Victory over Anti-Catholic Prejudice* (McFarland, 2011).
[18] O'Malley, 1.
[19] Philip Hannan with Nancy Collins and Peter Finney, Jr. *The Archbishop Wore Combat Boots: Memoir of an Extraordinary Life*. (Our Sunday Visitor, 2010), 246.
[20] Hannan, 246.
[21] O'Malley, 4.

[22] Major histories of the Second Vatican Council consulted include Giuseppe Alberigo, translated by Matthew Sherry, *A Brief History of Vatican II* (Orbis, 2006); Bill Huebsch, *Vatican II in Plain English: the Council* (Ave Maria Press, 2006); Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering, eds., *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition* (Oxfored University Press, 2008); Ralph M. McInerny, *What Went Wrong with Vatican II: The Catholic Crisis Explained* (Sophia Institute Press, 1998); Francis X. Murphy (writing as "Xavier Rynne"), *Vatican Council II* (Orbis, 1999); John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Harvard University Press, 2010); Alan Schreck, *Vatican II: The Crisis and the Promise* (Servant Publications, 2005); Ralph Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows Into the Tiber: A History of Vatican II* (Tan Books, 1985).
[23] The short- and long-term effects of the implementation of the Second Vatican Council's reforms have been perhaps the largest field of study for historians of American Catholicism in recent decades. Of particular use in this study were Jeremy Bonner, *The Road to Renewal: Victor Joseph Reed & Oklahoma Catholicism, 1905-1971* (Catholic University of America Press, 2008); Donald B. Cozzens, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul* (Liturgical Press, 2000); Jay P. Dolan, R. Scott Appleby, Patricia Byrne, and Debra Campbell, *Transforming Parish Ministry: The Changing Roles of Catholic Clergy, Laity, and Women Religious* (Crossroad, 1990); Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century* (Liturgical Press, 2003); Philip Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism* (Oxford University Press, 2003); Kenneth C. Jones, *Index of Leading Catholic Indicators: The Church Since Vatican II* (Roman Catholic Books, 2003); Les and Barbara Keyser, *Hollywood and the Catholic Church: The Image of Roman Catholicism in American Movies* (Loyola Press, 1984); George J. Marlin, *The American Catholic Voter: 200 Years of Political Impact* (St. Augustine's Press, 2004); Mark S. Massa, *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day and the Notre Dame Football Team* (Crossroad, 1999); Mark S., Massa *The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever (*Oxford University Press, 2010); Leslie Woodcock Tentler, ed. *The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland and Quebec* (Catholic University of America Press, 2007); R. Scott Appleby, "Decline or Relocation? The Catholic Presence in Church and Society, 1950-2000," in Tentler, *Modernity*; James D. Davidson, "The Catholic Church in the United States, 1950 to present," in Tentler, *Modernity*; Michele Dillon. "Decline and Continuity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland and Quebec," in Tentler, *Modernity*; Leslie W. Tentler, *Catholics and Contraception: An American History* (Cornell University Press, 2004).
[24] O'Malley, 214.
[25] Hennesey, 310-312.
[26] O'Malley, 1, 34.
[27] Sources on Connelly and Mosher include John Dunning, *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio* (Oxford University Press, 1998); Bart Andrews and Ahrgus Julliard, *Holy Mackerel! The Amos 'n' Andy Story* (E.P. Dutton, 1986); Melvin Patrick Ely, *The Adventures of Amos 'n' Andy: A Social History of an American Phenomenon* (University Press of Virginia, 1991); Dennis McLellan, "Joe Connelly, 85: Helped Create 'Leave It to Beaver,' *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 2003; Neil Genzlinger, "Golly, Beav, We're Historic," *New York Times*, June 25, 2010; Peter Orlick, "Leave It to Beaver," Museum of Broadcast Communications website, http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=leaveittob

retrieved July 10, 2011; bkohatl, "Bob Mosher and Joe Connelly," Sitcoms Online Internet bulletin board thread, http://www.sitcomsonline.com/boards/archive/index.php/t-6586.html, retrieved July 10, 2011.
[28] Dunning, 35.
[29] Andrews and Julliard, 52.
[30] See Ely for a fuller examination of the issues of race surrounding *Amos 'n' Andy* on TV, particularly chapter 9, "The Black Debate Begins," 160-193.
[31] McLellan.
[32] Genzlinger.
[33] Bkohatl.
[34] Genzlinger.
[35] Paietta, Ann C., *Saints, Clergy and Other Religious Figures on Film and Television, 1895-2003* (McFarland and Company, 2005), 678.
[36] McLellan.
[37] Sources on Kelly include Clive Hirschhorn, *Gene Kelly - a Biography* (Henry Regnery, 1974); Tony Thomas, *The Films of Gene Kelly: Song and Dance Man* (Citadel Press, 1974); Alvin Yudkoff, *Gene Kelly: A Life of Dance and Dreams* (Back Stage Books, 1999); Jane Ardmore, "Holy Father or Holy Terror," *TV Radio Mirror*, November 1962, 29, 80-82.
[38] *Going My Way*, "Back to Ballymora," ABC, October 3, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA10242T, viewed August 10, 2010.
[39] Gene Schwope, interview by author, December 28, 2010.
[40] Ardmore.
[41] Hirschhorn, 33.
[42] *Going My Way*, "The Father," ABC, October 24, 1962. *Going My Way: The Complete Series* DVD, Timeless Media, 2011, viewed July 2, 2012.
[43] *Going My Way*, "Not Good Enough for My Sister," ABC, November 14, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21540T, viewed August 11, 2010.
[44] *Going My Way*, "My Son the Social Worker," ABC, January 9, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21522T, viewed August 12, 2010.
[45] *Going My Way*, "Reformation of Willie," ABC, March 27, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21519T, viewed August 19, 2010.
[46] Hirschhorn, 14.
[47] Hirschhorn, 225.
[48] *Going My Way*, "A Matter of Principle," ABC, November 21, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21494T, viewed August 11, 2010.
[49] *Going My Way*, "Ask Me No Questions," ABC, December 7, 1962, *Going My Way: The Complete Series* DVD, viewed August 12, 2012.
[50] "Reformation of Willie."
[51] *Going My Way*, "A Saint for Mama," ABC, December 26, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21487T, viewed August 12, 2010.
[52] *Going My Way*, "The Shoemaker's Child," ABC, January 30, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21524T, viewed August 13, 2010.
[53] Hirschhorn, 14-15.

[54] *Going My Way*, "Custody of the Child," ABC, April 3, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21530T, viewed August 19, 2010.
[55] *Going My Way*, "A Memorial for Finnegan," ABC, January 16, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21548T, viewed August 13, 2010.
[56] "A Saint for Mama."
[57] "A Matter of Principle."
[58] *Going My Way*, "The Crooked Angel," ABC, October 10, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21493T, viewed August 10, 2010.
[59] *Going My Way*, "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven," ABC, January 2, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21551T, viewed August 12, 2010.
[60] "A Memorial for Finnegan."
[61] *Going My Way*, "Cornelius, Come Home," ABC, March 6, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21480T, viewed August 16, 2010.
[62] *Going My Way*, "A Dog for Father Fitz," ABC, December 19, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21481T, viewed August 12, 2010.
[63] "A Matter of Principle."
[64] *Going My Way*, "Blessed Are the Meek," ABC, February 27, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21477T, viewed August 16, 2010.
[65] *Going My Way*, "A Man for Mary," ABC, October 31, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA15395T, viewed August 13, 2010; *Going My Way*, "Mr. Second Chance," ABC, November 28, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21496T, viewed August 11, 2010.
[66] *Going My Way*, "The Boss of the Ward," ABC, March 13, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21478T, viewed August 16, 2010.
[67] "The Boss of the Ward."
[68] *Going My Way*, "The Parish Car," ABC, October 17, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21523T, viewed August 10, 2010.
[69] "The Parish Car."
[70] "Not Good Enough for My Sister."
[71] "A Dog for Father Fitz."
[72] O'Malley and Fitzgibbon's full names are given in the episode "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven," when they are named in a police complaint.
[73] "Back to Ballymora", "Not Good Enough for My Sister."
[74] "A Dog for Father Fitz"
[75] *Going My Way*, "The Slasher," ABC, February 6, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21520T, viewed August 13, 2010.
[76] "Back to Ballymora."
[77] While the precise number of years' worth of pastoral experience Father Fitz possesses varies with the episode, the most frequently cited approximation is 40 years; "A Memorial for Finnegan," "The Boss of the Ward," *Going My Way*, "Florence Come Home," ABC, April 10, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21539T, viewed August 19, 2010.
[78] "The Parish Car."
[79] "A Dog for Father Fitz."
[80] "Blessed Are the Meek."

[81] http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001991/bio, retrieved on August 14, 2011.
[82] "A Man for Mary."
[83] *Going My Way*, "My Son, the Social Worker," ABC, January 9, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21522T, viewed August 12, 2010; *Going My Way*, "Has Anybody Here Seen Eddie?," ABC, February 20, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21549T, viewed August 13, 2010; *Going My Way*, "A Tough Act to Follow," ABC, April 24, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21542T, viewed August 12, 2010.
[84] "A Dog for Father Fitz."
[85] "A Saint for Mama."
[86] "Blessed Are the Meek."
[87] "Custody of the Child."
[88] "A Memorial for Finnegan."
[89] "A Memorial for Finnegan," "A Man for Mary."
[90] "A Matter of Principle."
[91] "A Dog for Father Fitz."
[92] "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven."
[93] "A Matter of Principle."
[94] "Cornelius, Come Home."
[95] "A Saint for Mama."
[96] "[Chicago's] Back of the Yards...residents could choose between eleven Catholic churches in the space of little more than a square mile – two Polish, one Lithuanian, one Italian, two German, one Slovak, one Croatian, two Irish, and one Bohemian." John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: the Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10. McGreevy also notes that in the early 20th century, "Brooklyn alone contained one hundred and twenty-nine parishes and over one hundred Catholic elementary schools," 15.
[97] "The Father."
[98] "A Saint for Mama," "Not Good Enough for My Sister."
[99] "Not Good Enough for My Sister," "Back to Ballymora."
[100] "Back to Ballymora."
[101] *Going My Way*, "Run, Robin, Run," ABC, March 20, 1963, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21543T, viewed August 16, 2010.
[102] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 82.
[103] In "Don't Forget to Say Goodbye," a wedding is mentioned but not shown. "Mr. Second Chance," "Not Good Enough for My Sister," and "The Boss of the Ward" each conclude with the wedding party assembled on the church's front steps after the ceremony; in "A Saint for Mama," the planning of a wedding features prominently in the plot, but the events of the episode skip from discussion of the forthcoming nuptials directly to the post-wedding reception.
[104] "A Saint for Mama."
[105] "Back to Ballymora," "A Dog for Father Fitz."
[106] "The Parish Car."

[107] *Going My Way*, "Like My Own Brother," ABC, November 7, 1962, UCLA Film and Television Archive, record # VA21486T, viewed August 11, 2010; "Cornelius, Come Home"; "Mr. Second Chance"; "Florence, Come Home."
[108] "The Crooked Angel"; "The Shoemaker's Child"; "Has Anybody Here Seen Eddie?"
[109] "The Parish Car."
[110] "A Saint for Mama."
[111] See McGreevy, especially chapter 2, "Race and the Immigrant Church." See also Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem* (Yale University Press, 2002).
[112] 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, Douay-Rhiems translation.
[113] "Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family" in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, promulgated December 7, 1965.
[114] Wiltgen, 267-272.
[115] See, for example, the debate over interdenominational marriage discussed in Bonner, 220-225.
[116] O'Malley, 265.
[117] *Going My Way*, "Don't Forget to Say Goodbye," ABC, January 23, 1963, *Going My Way: The Complete Series* DVD, Timeless Media 2011, viewed July 20, 2012.
[118] In addition to the appropriate portions of *Gaudium et Spes* discussing marriage, the documents debated and issued during the Council touching matters of vocation were *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (On Lay People), *Perfectae Caritatis* (Renewal of Religious Life), and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (On the Life of Priests).
[119] "Not Good Enough for My Sister."
[120] "Blessed Are the Meek."
[121] Cooney, 23.
[122] "Smith was a ubiquitous face and voice of native goodness during [World War II], and it is conceivable that his modest acting abilities would not have come to the fore in any other environment except one stressing, even demanding, plain decency as the most patriotic of signs. In several films Smith played the moralistic American." Alexander Nemerov, *Icons of Grief: Val Lewton's Home Front Pictures* (University of California Press, 2005), 29. Ironically, Smith's stolid, middle-class American optimism was utilized by Russian *émigré* producer Val Lewton as a sharp counterpoint to the prevailing mood of artsy, brooding European pessimism in his dark, subtly subversive series of low-key horror films for RKO in the mid-1940s.
[123] Bonner, 210.
[124] Cooney, 89.
[125] Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, 21-23.
[126] Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, 30-32.
[127] Wiltgen, 120.
[128] Wiltgen, 119-127.
[129] O'Malley 131.
[130] Bonner, 210-211.
[131] Bonner, 215-235.
[132] "A Saint for Mama."
[133] "Reformation of Willie."

[134] "My Son, the Social Worker."
[135] McGreevy, 146.
[136] "A Memorial for Finnegan."
[137] "A Matter of Principle."
[138] "Mr. Second Chance."
[139] Matthew 28:19-20, Douay translation.
[140] *Divini Redemptoris*, promulgated March 19, 1937.
[141] *Gaudium et Spes*, Chapter 1, "The Forms and Roots of Atheism."
[142] *Gaudium et Spes*, Chapter 1, "The Church's Attitude Toward Atheism."
[143] Nor was this mere television plot contrivance; parish youth were sometimes prone to acts of violence against those they perceived as "outsiders," such as the "boys wearing letter sweaters from Catholic high schools" who rioted against African-Americans moving into their neighborhood. McGreevy, 97.
[144] Only the briefest overview of the subject of race as it impacted American Catholicism, and *vice versa*, is possible here. Major sources on the question include John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom* (Norton, 2003), particularly chapter 2, "Catholicism, Slavery, and the Cause of Liberty"; McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*; and Bonner, chapter 8, "A Colorblind Church."
[145] McGreevy, *Freedom*, 52.
[146] Wiltgen, 212.
[147] See McGreevy, *Parish*, especially chapters 6 and 7.
[148] A vast scholarly literature is devoted to examining the construction of "whiteness," and to the theory that by oppressing African-Americans, immigrants attempted to be accepted and join the American cultural mainstream by "becoming white." Among the sources exploring this theory are Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (Routledge, 1995); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (Verso, 1991), and *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (Basic Books, 2005); Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks: And What That Says About Race in America* (Rutgers University Press, 1998); Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton University Press, 1997); and Matt Wray, *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (Duke University Press, 2006).
[149] The entirety of McGreevy's *Parish Boundaries* is devoted to exploration of the clash between integrationist Catholic liberals and working-class Catholic traditionalists.
[150] Works examining the portrayal of African-Americans on TV include J. Fred MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV: African Americans in Television Since 1948* (Wadsworth, 1992); Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for "Blackness"* (University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Sasah Torres, ed., *Living Color: Race and Television in the United States* (Duke University Press, 1998); Allison Graham, *Framing the South: Hollywood, Television and Race during the Civil Rights Struggle* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Darnell M. Hunt, *Channeling Blackness: Studies on Television and Race in America* (Oxford University Press, 2005).
[151] Brooks and Marsh, 964.
[152] "Run, Robin, Run."
[153] Cooney, 103.

[154] McGreevy, *Parish*, 124.
[155] Cooney, 104.
[156] O'Connor, Edwin, *The Last Hurrah* (Atlantic Press, 1956).
[157] "The Boss of the Ward."
[158] McGreevy, *Parish*, 114, 123-124.
[159] See, for example, McGreevy, *Parish*, 111-132; McGreevy, *Freedom*, 166-215; Cooney, 284-288; James Hennessey, S.J., *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (Oxford University Press, 1981), 318-331.
[160] *Time*, "Television: The New Season," October 12, 1962.
[161] JamesO'Gara, "Going Whose Way?" *Commonweal*, January 11, 1963.
[162] Jack Gould, "Going My Way," *New York Times*, October 5, 1962.
[163] Jane Ardmore, "Holy Father or Holy Terror," *TV Radio Mirror*, November 1962, 29, 80-82.
[164] Of the 326 uses of "Going My Way" found in a search of *Variety*'s online archive, the overwhelming majority referred to the Bing Crosby movie. Fewer than a half-dozen referenced the TV show – and most of those were mere mentions of the program in obituaries of series actors Gene Kelly and Dick York.
[165] "A Breck Switch: TV Surpasses Print," *Sponsor*, October 1962, 34-36, 59-60.
[166] "Breck Switch," *Sponsor*, 35.
[167] Ibid.
[168] "Sponsor-Week Network News", *Sponsor*, March 1963, 58.
[169] Sponsor-Week Network News", *Sponsor*, June 1963, 59.
[170] "Sponsor-Week Network News", *Sponsor*, May 1963, 56.
[171] James Cornell, "Forecast," *Television Magazine*, October 1962, 56.
[172] Deborah Haber, "Television's First Family," *Television Magazine*, May 1963, 43.
[173] Gene Kelly, in Thomas, 24.
[174] Hirschhorn, 275-276.
[175] Hirschhorn, 275-276.
[176] Brooks and Marsh, 343.
[177] Marty McKee, *Johnny LaRue's Crane Shot*, "A Matter of Conscience," September 4, 2011. http://craneshot.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2011-09-10T09%3A41%3A00-05%3A00, retrieved September 21, 2011.
[178] http://www.tvobscurities.com/2009/11/top-40-programs-from-first-nielsens-of-the-1963-1964-season/
[179] John Douglas, "Dick York of *Bewitched*: Darrin's Final Interview," *Filmfax,* vol. 1 no. 32, April 1992, 29.
[180] Hirschhorn, 276.
[181] Hal Erickson, *Syndicated Television: The First Forty Years, 1947-1987* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1989), 193. For a more academic discussion of the impact of syndication on American culture, see Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation: How Repeats Invented American Television* (New York: Routledge, 2005), especially Chapter 5, "Our Television Heritage: Reconceiving Past Television."
[182] Hirschhorn, 276; http://geneius.webs.com/cantyouseeimbusy.htm, retrieved February 10, 2011.

[183] Brooks and Marsh, McNeil's *Total Television*, and other standard TV reference works and encyclopedias of television programming feature only the briefest entries on ABC's *Going My Way* – entries which not infrequently get even basic information about the program wrong.
[184] Richard Wolff, *The Church on TV: Portrayals of Priests, Pastors and Nuns on American Television Series* (Continuum International, 2010).
[185] Wolff, 6-7.
[186] Wolff, 9.
[187] Wolff, 216.
[188] Wolff's thesis may have some applicability when applied to ongoing series -- particularly comedies – which have clergy as main characters. But as we have seen, throughout the history of television programming, when appearing in a "guest" slot or as the focus of individual episodes of anthology series, Catholic priests were invariably treated with dignity and gravitas. Often, they were portrayed as openly heroic, particularly when defying atheistic or amoral totalitarian regimes. Even on the allegedly "sappy or slapstick" *Going My Way*, in some episodes – "A Saint for Mama," "Tell Me When You Get to Heaven," "The Crooked Angel" – Father O'Malley is presented as the traditional "heroic priest": almost grim, determined to speak truth to power against authority figures who are antagonistic to the Christian worldview. Such presentation is done without any sense of humor, irony, or self-parody, thus demonstrating the exaggeration, if not outright falsity, of Wolff's view of *Going My Way*.
[189] Wolff, 3.
[190] Wolff, 21.
[191] Joseph H. Fichter, S.J., *Dynamics of a City Church* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p.4, quoted in Jay Dolan, *Transforming Parish Ministry: The Changing Roles of Catholic Clergy, Laity, and Women Religious* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 286.
[192] "A Man for Mary"
[193] "Like My Own Brother"
[194] "Hear No Evil"
[195] "The Custody of the Child"
[196] Marlin, 234-235.
[197] Bonner, 151.
[198] Bonner, 174.
[199] McGreevy, *Parish*, chapter 4, 79-110.
[200] Bonner, 149.
[201] James Cornell, "Forecast," *Television Magazine*, October 1962, 56.
[202] Wolff, 49.
[203] Wolff, 9.
[204] Wolff, 214.
[205] Wolff, 49.
[206] Wolff, 49.
[207] Wolff, 15.
[208] Too, those responsible for television production in the early 1960s – production companies, network standards and practices divisions, and advertising agencies (which still held a large measure of power at the time) – would likely have insisted upon a sanitized, "safe" approach to so potentially divisive a subject as religion in prime time, popularity of JFK or no. Most of all,

network and advertising executives – many of whom came of age professionally in the era of Hollywood's Production Code and the Legion of Decency – may have feared the gradually diminishing but still powerful financial clout of traditionalist Catholic laity.

[209] Both media studies scholars generally and those of Catholicism in media in particular have heretofore consistently ignored the program. In his extensive essays on the film *Going My Way* in both Colleen McDannell, ed., *Catholics in the Movies* (Oxford University Press, 2000) 107-126, and his own *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (University Press of Kansas, 2010), Anthony Burke Smith does not even mention the TV series – nor is his omission unique. Indeed, the only scholarly attention given to the television program prior to the current dissertation is a small portion of one chapter in Richard Wolff's *The Church on TV: Portrayals of Priests, Pastors and Nuns on American Television Series* (Continuum International, 2010), 15-26. Given the series' decades-long obscurity and inaccessibility -- a fact which necessitated the research for this chapter being conducted during August 2010 at the UCLA Film and Television Archive in Los Angeles, which offered the only means of viewing the show -- the reader can best imagine this author's mingled astonished bemusement and irritation when, on December 6, 2011, *Going My Way: The Complete Series* was released on DVD by Timeless Media Group.

**CHAPTER 4**

[1] Historical sources on the 1960s number in the thousands. This account relies most heavily upon the following: John M. Blum, *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961-1974* (W.W. Norton, 1992); Peter Collier, and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the '60s* (Free Press, 1996); William E. Leuchtenburg, *A Troubled Feast: American Society Since 1945* (Little Brown, 1983); Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-c.1974* (Oxford University Press, 1998); Allen J. Matusow,,*The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (University of Georgia Press, 2009); William L. O'Neill, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s* (Times Books, 1971); Alan Petigny, *The Permissive Society: America, 1941-1965* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[2] Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 423.

[3] Marwick, 37.

[4] Marwick, 8-15.

[5] In his cultural history of the 1960s, Marwick dismisses the global intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and cultural influence of Catholicism in a single sentence: "Throughout the sixties, the Catholic Church tended to operate as a center of opposition to all the great movements aiming toward greater freedom for ordinary human beings."(34) The Second Vatican Council receives no mention, not even a footnote, in Marwick's 900+ page opus, the author preferring to focus on far weightier concerns like pornographic novels and the "pop art" phenomenon. In his history "based on dispassionate analysis" (20), Marwick also carefully distinguishes between "the relatively advanced *milieux* of California and the East" (26) and middle America, which is populated exclusively by "fundamentalist fanatics" (117) who provided "truly ponderous obstruction on the paths to new thinking and freer lifestyles" (34), buttressed by the power of "the National Guard – ill-trained, trigger-happy [and] attracting the conservative and the

bigoted." (27) The reader can only wonder what a history based on *passionate* analysis would look like.

[6] Sources on the changes to the Church in the Conciliar and post-Conciliar years include Jeremy Bonner, *The Road to Renewal: Victor Joseph Reed & Oklahoma Catholicism, 1905-1971* (Catholic University of America Press, 2008); James Colaianni, *The Catholic Left: The Crisis of Radicalism within the Church* (Chilton: 1968); Donald B. Cozzens, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul* (Liturgical Press, 2000); Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (Crossroad, 1990); Jay P. Dolan, R. Scott Appleby, Patricia Byrne, and Debra Campbell, *Transforming Parish Ministry: The Changing Roles of Catholic Clergy, Laity, and Women Religious* (Crossroad, 1990); Philip Hannan with Nancy Collins and Peter Finney, Jr., *The Archbishop Wore Combat Boots: Memoir of an Extraordinary Life* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2010); James Hitchcock, *The Decline & Fall of Radical Catholicism* (Herder and Herder, 1971); Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century* (Liturgical Press, 2003); Philip Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism* (Oxford University Press, 2003); Kenneth C. Jones, *Index of Leading Catholic Indicators: The Church Since Vatican II* (Roman Catholic Books, 2003); Les and Barbara Keyser, *Hollywood and the Catholic Church: The Image of Roman Catholicism in American Movies* (Loyola Press, 1984); George J. Marlin, *The American Catholic Voter: 200 Years of Political Impact* (St. Augustine's Press, 2004); Mark S. Massa, *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day and the Notre Dame Football Team* (Crossroad, 1999); Mark S. Massa, *The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever (*Oxford University Press, 2010); John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Harvard University Press, 2010); Thomas C. Reeves, *America's Bishop: The Life and Times of Fulton J. Sheen* (Encounter Books, 2001); Xavier Rynne, *Vatican Council II* (Orbis, 1999); James Patrick Shannon, *Reluctant Dissenter* (Crossroad, 1998); Leslie Woodcock Tentler, ed. *The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland and Quebec* (Catholic University of America Press, 2007); R. Scott Appleby, "Decline or Relocation? The Catholic Presence in Church and Society, 1950-2000," in Tentler, *Modernity*; James D. Davidson,"The Catholic Church in the United States, 1950 to present," in Tentler, *Modernity*; Michele Dillon, "Decline and Continuity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland and Quebec," in Tentler, *Modernity*; Leslie W. Tentler, *Catholics and Contraception: An American History* (Cornell University Press, 2004); Ralph Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows Into the Tiber: A History of Vatican II* (Tan Books, 1985).

[7] O'Malley, 214.

[8] O'Malley, 186

[9] Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), promulgated November 18, 1965.

[10] Ibid.

[11] O'Malley, 187.

[12] Bonner, 158.

[13] O'Malley, 273.

[14] Hoge, 8, 59.

[15] Dolan, 5.

[16] Dolan, 59.
[17] Bonner, 13.
[18] On Spellman's attitude toward his priests, see John Cooney, *The American Pope: The Life and Times of Francis Cardinal Spellman* (Times Books, 1984), 86-90; for McIntyre, see Massa, *Culture*, 172-178, and Massa, *Revolution*, chapter 5, "The Dangers of History," 75-102.
[19] Reeves, 315-320.
[20] Bonner, 160-168.
[21] Bonner, 112.
[22] As perhaps the single most polarizing incident in post-Vatican II American Catholicism, *Humanae Vitae* is a major point of discussion in every history of late 20th century American Catholicism. Most heavily drawn on here are Massa, *Revolution*, and Leslie W. Tentler, *Catholics and Contraception: An American History* (Cornell University Press, 2004).
[23] Cozzens, 22.
[24] Hannan, 435.
[25] Cozzens, ix-x.
[26] Dolan, 436.
[27] For the radical extreme on the 1960s and '70s Catholic left, see James Colaianni, *The Catholic Left: The Crisis of Radicalism within the Church* (Chilton: 1968); Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (Crossroad, 1990); James Hitchcock, *The Decline & Fall of Radical Catholicism* (Herder and Herder, 1971); James Patrick Shannon, *Reluctant Dissenter* (Crossroad, 1998); Mark S. Massa, *The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever* (Oxford University Press, 2010).
[28] Colaianni, 217-220.
[29] Massa, *Revolution*, 31.
[30] Hitchcock, 84. For an extensive (if obviously self-serving) discussion of this incident, see Shannon's autobiography, *Reluctant Dissenter* (Crossroad, 1998).
[31] Colaianni, 199.
[32] Keyser, 194.
[33] Dolan, 64.
[34] In addition to primary sources (the television programs themselves), the sources most heavily replied upon for information on television programs discussed below are Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime-Time Network and Cable TV Shows, 1946-Present* (Ballantine, 2007); Harry Castleman and Walter Podrazik, *Harry and Wally's Favorite TV Shows* (Prentice Hall, 1989); Richard Wolff, *The Church on TV: Portrayals of Priests, Pastors and Nuns on American Television Series* (Continuum International, 2010).

[35] Sources on DuBay include John Leo, "The DuBay Case" and A.V. Krebs, "A Church of Silence," *Commonweal*, July 10, 1964; *Time*, "Roman Catholics: For a White-Collar Union," March 4, 1966, and "The Issue of Imprimatur", August 19, 1966; and Francis J. Weber, *His Eminence of Los Angeles: James Francis Cardinal McIntyre*, vol. II (Saint Francis Historical Society Press, 1997), 442-467.
[36] *Commonweal*, 478.
[37] Ward, 448.

[38] *Time*, "Roman Catholics: For a White-Collar Union," March 4, 1966
[39] Hitchcock, 68.
[40] *Time*, "Roman Catholics: For a White-Collar Union," March 4, 1966.
[41] Ward, 462.
[42] http://www.romancatholicreport.com/id119.html, retrieved October 10, 2010.
[43] This personal and career arc was by no means atypical of many progressive clergy in the 1960s. Moving from moderate reformer to radical activist, to leaving clerical or religious life to marry and later divorce, and becoming involved in banal and even dangerous "human potential" movements and cults was a path followed by many clergy during the devastating personal and psychological upheavals of the 1960s. James Hitchcock discusses several such cases at length in *The Decline and Fall of Radical Catholicism.* Notably, in his *The American Catholic Revolution*, Mark Massa devotes entire chapters to Curran and the Berrigans, but does not make even a passing reference to DuBay. It seems likely that the reason for DuBay's conspicuous absence from Massa's hagiography of the 1960s radical Catholic Left is that his story is all too typical of the majority of radical priests who abandoned their vows to marry, divorce, and lose their way. For an historian who wishes to idealize the late 1960s, it is more comfortable to concentrate on figures, like Curran and the Berrigans, who have continued to retain their commitment to radical action – however few they may be – than to be forced to confront the harsh reality of the thousands more whose vocations, marriages, and lives were shattered by the radical politics, philosophies, and psychology of the era.
[44] For the portrayal of "hippies" and the radical Left on 1960s television generally, see Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion* (Duke University Press, 2001); for the Mod Squad specifically, see chapter 5, "Negotiating the Mod: How *The Mod Squad* Played the Ideological Balancing Act in Prime Time," 164-198.
[45] Brooks and Marsh, 910.
[46] Castleman and Podrazik, *Harry and Wally*, 349.
[47] Bodroghkozy, 164.
[48] *The Mod Squad,* "Keep the Faith, Baby," ABC, March 25, 1969, Season 1, Volume 2 DVD.
[49] *ABC Movie of the Week,* "Go Ask Alice," ABC, January 24, 1973. DVD.
[50] Brooks and Marsh, 1195.
[51] Castleman and Podrazik, *Harry and Wally*, 448; http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066708/, retrieved July 10, 2010.
[52] Brooks and Marsh, 1594. While *Sarge* is not available on DVD, and neither the Paley Center for Media nor the UCLA Film and Television Archive have episodes in their holdings, episodes are possessed by the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. This fact was discovered after this dissertation's primary research phase, too far into finalization of the project to be incorporated. More extensive information awaits further research to be conducted at a later time.
[53] Brooks and Marsh, 918.
[54] *Harry and Wally*, 351. Like *Sarge, The Montefuscos* aired against immensely popular opposition – *Barney Miller* on ABC, and *The Waltons* on CBS – and as a result was cancelled within a month. Also like *Sarge*, episodes are not available in any of the standard television archives.
[55] Brooks and Marsh, 728.

[56] *Kate McShane*, "The Best Possible Defense," CBS, September 10, 1975. UCLA Film and Television Archive, catalogue # T24708, viewed August 9, 2010.
[57] *Kate McShane*, "God on $15, 732 a Year," CBS, November 12, 1975. UCLA Film and Television Archive, catalogue # T24713, viewed August 9, 2012.
[58] *The Streets of San Francisco*, "Requiem for Murder," ABC, January 22, 1976. Paley Center for Media, catalogue # T79:0036, viewed June 13, 2010.
[59] *All in the Family*, "Edith's Accident," CBS, November 6, 1971.
[60] *All in the Family*, "Edith Flips Her Wig," CBS, October 21, 1972.
[61] *All in the Family*, "Edith's Conversion," CBS, November 10, 1973.
[62] Like *Sarge* and *The Cavanaughs, In the Beginning* is unavailable for review, existing solely in Sony's corporate archives. Information on the series is drawn from Brooks and Marsh, 662; Castleman and Podrazik, *Harry and Wally*, 245; Wolff, 40-44; and Kevin Allman, *TV Turkeys: An Outrageous Look at the Most Preposterous Shows Ever on Television* (Perigee Books, 1987), 106-108.
[63] Brooks and Marsh, p. 662.
[64] Castleman and Podrazik, *Harry and Wally*, 245.
[65] For the extent of Communist influence in Hollywood from the 1930s onward, see Kenneth Lloyd Billingsley, *Hollywood Party: How Communism Seduced the American Film Industry in the 1930s and 1940s* (Forum, 1998) and Ronald and Allis Radosh, *Red Star Over Hollywood: The Film Colony's Long Romance with the Left* (Encounter Books, 2006). For confirmation of Communist infiltration and influence on government, academia, and entertainment, see the pioneering works of John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr: *The Secret World of American Communism* (Yale University Press, 1996); *The Soviet World of American Communism* (Yale University Press, 1998); and *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (Yale University Press, 2000). On the academy's unwillingness to accept such research, see Haynes and Klehr, *In Denial: Historians, Communism, and Espionage* (Encounter Books, 2005).
[66] Peter E. Dans, *Christians in the Movies: A Century of Saints and Sinners* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 196-199.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Roger Greenspun, "Movie Review: M*A*S*H," *The New York Times*, January 26, 1970.
[69] Les, and Barbara Keyser, *Hollywood and the Catholic Church: the Image of Roman Catholicism in American Movies* (Loyola University Press, 1984), 188.
[70] Keyser, 190-191.
[71] Suzy Kalter, *The Complete Book of M*A*S*H* (Abradale Press, 1984), 26.
[72] Kalter, 22.
[73] David S. Reiss, *M*A*S*H: The Exclusive, Inside Story of TV's Most Popular Show* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1989), 40.
[74] Kalter, 132.
[75] *M*A*S*H*, "Alcoholics Unanimous," CBS, November 12, 1974.
[76] *M*A*S*H*, "Identity Crisis," CBS, November 2, 1981.
[77] *M*A*S*H*, "Trick or Treatment," CBS, November 1, 1982.
[78] *M*A*S*H*, "Follies of the Living – Concerns of the Dead," CBS, January 4, 1982.
[79] *M*A*S*H*, "Requiem for a Lightweight," CBS, October 1, 1972. For a description of the significance of the CYO, and particularly its emphasis on boxing contests, in the portrayal of

Catholicism in popular culture, see Anthony Burke Smith, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (University Press of Kansas, 2010), 29.
[80] *M*A*S*H*, "Cowboy," CBS, November 12, 1972.
[81] *M*A*S*H*, "I Hate a Mystery," CBS, November 26, 1972.
[82] Hannan,112.
[83] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Dad," CBS, December 17, 1972.
[84] Massa, *Culture*, particularly Chapter Nine, "Thomism and the T-Formation: Ethnicity, American Catholic Higher Education, and the Notre Dame Football Team," 195-221.
[85] *M*A*S*H*, "The Army-Navy Game," CBS, February 25, 1973.
[86] An attribute derived from actor William Christopher's own hobby of playing Scott Joplin ragtime on the piano. William Christopher, interview by author, Pasadena, California, August 18, 2012 (see Appendix 3).
[87] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Dad, Again," CBS, February 4, 1973.
[88] "Because of the constantly changing front and the rapid movement of units, some chaplains had to travel more than 50 miles between the elements of their 'congregations'...The constant traveling, however, brought many of them in contact with the needs of the local people and inspired their involvement in soliciting and distributing supplies from Stateside churches." Rodger R. Venzke,, *The United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975* (Office of the Chief of the Chaplains, Washington, 1977), quoted on http://www.usachcs.army.mil/Korea/BattleforKorea3.htm, retrieved February 13, 2012.
[89] *M*A*S*H*, "Showtime," CBS, March 25, 1973.
[90] "Dear Dad."
[91] "Dear Dad, Again."
[92] "Dear Dad."
[93] *M*A*S*H*, "Ceasefire," CBS, March 18, 1973; *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Dad...Three," CBS, November 10, 1973
[94] *M*A*S*H*, "LIP (Local Indigenous Personnel)," CBS, October 27,1973; *M*A*S*H*, "Springtime," CBS, October 15, 1974
[95] *M*A*S*H*, "Life with Father," CBS, October 29, 1974.
[96] *M*A*S*H*, "Bombed," CBS, January 7, 1975.
[97] "Alcoholics Unanimous."
[98] *M*A*S*H*, "Deluge," CBS, February 17, 1976.
[99] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Mildred," CBS, October 24, 1975.
[100] *M*A*S*H*, "The Kids," CBS, October 31, 1975.
[101] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Peggy," CBS, November 11, 1975.
[102] Murray, Noel, "M*A*S*H, The Interview," *The Onion A.V. Club*, August 26, 2010, retrieved from http://www.avclub.com/articles/M*A*S*H-the-interview,44585/, February 15, 2012.
[103] Burt Metcalfe, Archive of American Television interview, http://www.emmytvlegends.org/interviews/shows/M*A*S*H-the-interview retrieved February 13, 2012.
[104] "*M*A*S*H*: The Interview Trivia," http://www.tv.com/shows/M*A*S*H/the-interview-43296/, retrieved January 13, 2012.
[105] *M*A*S*H*, "The Interview," CBS, February 24, 1976.

[106] *M*A*S*H*, "Rainbow Bridge," CBS, September 17, 1974.
[107] *M*A*S*H*, "Payday," CBS, February 25, 1975.
[108] *M*A*S*H*, "Rally Round the Flagg, Boys," CBS, February 14, 1979.
[109] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Sigmund," CBS, November 9, 1976.
[110] "Father Sampson, a famous Catholic chaplain in the 101st Airborne Division, was captured and lined up to be executed until a German sergeant saw his intercessory medal and spared him. In his gratitude and excitement, Father Sampson, grasping for a prayer, could only come up with: 'Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty' – our Grace Before Meals." Hannan, 124.
[111] *M*A*S*H*, "Mulcahy's War," CBS, November 16, 1976.
[112] *M*A*S*H*, "Out of Gas," CBS, December 4, 78
[113] *M*A*S*H*, "An Eye for a Tooth," CBS, December 11, 1978.
[114] *M*A*S*H*, "Tea and Empathy," CBS, January 17, 1978.
[115] *M*A*S*H*, "A Holy Mess," CBS, February 1, 1982.
[116] *M*A*S*H*, "Bottle Fatigue," CBS, January 7, 1980.
[117] *M*A*S*H*, "Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen," CBS, February 28, 1983.
[118] "A Holy Mess."
[119] "Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen."
[120] "Tea and Empathy."
[121] Though the lyrics were penned by the episode's writers John Rappaport and Jim Mulligan, William Christopher created the tune on the spot, drawing on his personal experience playing ragtime on the piano. William Christopher interview.
[122] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Uncle Abdul," CBS, December 3, 1979.
[123] *M*A*S*H*, "Ping Pong," CBS, January 18, 1977.
[124] *M*A*S*H*, "Exorcism," CBS, December 14, 1976.
[125] Cooney, 88-89.
[126] "The Kids."
[127] "Mulcahy's War."
[128] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Sis," CBS, December 18, 1978.
[129] William Christopher interview, Appendix 3.
[130] "Dear Sigmund."
[131] *M*A*S*H*, "War of Nerves," CBS, October 11, 1977.
[132] *M*A*S*H*, "Life Time," CBS, November 26, 1979.
[133] *M*A*S*H*, "Morale Victory," CBS, January 28, 1980.
[134] *M*A*S*H*, "Letters," CBS, November 24, 1980.
[135] "A Holy Mess."
[136] *M*A*S*H*, "Blood Brothers," CBS, April 6, 1981.
[137] "Follies of the Living – Concerns of the Dead."
[138] "Identity Crisis."
[139] *M*A*S*H*, "Hepatitis," CBS, Feb 8, 1977.
[140] *M*A*S*H*, "Death Takes a Holiday," CBS, December 15, 1980.
[141] "Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen."
[142] "A Holy Mess."
[143] "Dear Sis."

[144] "Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen."
[145] "Dear Sis."
[146] *M*A*S*H*, "Our Finest Hour," CBS, October 9, 1978.
[147] *M*A*S*H*, "Run for the Money," CBS, December 20, 1982.
[148] "Dear Sis."
[149] *M*A*S*H*, "Carry On Hawkeye," CBS, November 24, 1973.
[150] *M*A*S*H*, "There is Nothing like a Nurse," CBS, November 19, 1974.
[151] *M*A*S*H*,"Margaret's Marriage," CBS, March 15, 1977.
[152] "An Eye for a Tooth"
[153] *M*A*S*H*, "Hey, Look Me Over," CBS, October 25, 1982.
[154] *M*A*S*H*, "The Yalu Brick Road," CBS, November 19, 1979.
[155] *M*A*S*H*, "Twas the Day after Christmas," CBS, December 28, 1981.
[156] "An Eye for a Tooth."
[157] *M*A*S*H*, "Captains Outrageous," CBS, December 10, 1979.
[158] "Blood Brothers."
[159] "Dear Sigmund."
[160] *M*A*S*H*, "Dreams," CBS, February 18, 1980.
[161] *M*A*S*H*, "Strange Bedfellows," CBS, January 10, 1983.
[162] *M*A*S*H*, "Change Day," CBS, November 8, 1977.
[163] "An Eye for a Tooth."
[164] *M*A*S*H*, "Major Ego," CBS, November 6, 1978.
[165] *M*A*S*H*, "A Night at Rosie's," CBS, February 28, 1979
[166] *M*A*S*H*, "Fallen Idol," CBS, September 27, 1977.
[167] "Captains Outrageous."
[168] "Dear Sis."
[169] *M*A*S*H,* "Heroes," CBS, March 15, 1982.
[170] "Alcoholics Unanimous."
[171] Kalter, 133.
[172] Kalter, 132.
[173] *M*A*S*H*, "Hanky Panky," CBS, February 1, 1977.
[174] *M*A*S*H*, "What's Up, Doc?" CBS, January 30, 1978.
[175] *M*A*S*H*, "Hot Lips is Back in Town," CBS, January 29, 1979.
[176] Kalter, 133.
[177] *M*A*S*H*, "Your Retention, Please," CBS, January 5, 1981.
[178] "Dear Sis."
[179] *M*A*S*H*, "Quo Vadis, Captain Chandler," CBS, November 7, 1975.
[180] Kalter, 133.
[181] *M*A*S*H*, "As You Were," CBS, February 2, 1974.
[182] *M*A*S*H*, "The Price of Tomato Juice," December 16, 1975.
[183] *M*A*S*H*, "Fade Out, Fade In," CBS, September 20, 1977.
[184] Kalter, 132.
[185] *M*A*S*H*, "Last Laugh," CBS, October 4, 1977.
[186] *M*A*S*H*, "Inga," CBS, January 8, 1979.
[187] *M*A*S*H*, "The Price," CBS, January 15, 1979.

[188] *M*A*S*H*, "Nurse Doctor," CBS, October 29, 1979.
[189] "Follies of the Living – Concerns of the Dead."
[190] "Strange Bedfellows."
[191] Basic background details about the Sarducci persona were found at http://www.fathersarducci.com/index.html, retrieved Nov 4, 2012, and http://www.filmreference.com/film/74/Don-Novello.html, retrieved Nov 4, 2012.
[192] For a detailed analysis of the Smothers' program, see Bodroghkozy, chapter 4, "Smothering Dissent: *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* and the Crisis of Authority in Entertainment Television," 123-163.
[193] Brooks and Marsh, 1262; David Bianculli, *Dangerously Funny: The Uncensored Story of the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* (Touchstone, 2009); Aniko Bodroghkozy, "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour," Museum of Broadcast Communications website, http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=smothersbrot, retrieved November 7, 2012.
[194] *The Smothers Brothers Show*, NBC, February 2, 1975, Paley Center for Media record #T82:0017; *The Smothers Brothers Show*, NBC, April 24, 1975, Paley Center for Media record # T77:0065; both viewed July 24, 2010.
[195] Brooks and Marsh, 1196. For more on *SNL*, see Geoffrey Hammill, "Saturday Night Live," Museum of Broadcast Communications website, http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=saturdaynigh, retrieved November 10, 2012; Doug Hill and Jeff Weingrad , *Saturday Night: A Backstage History of Saturday Night Live* (Beech Tree Books, 1986); Michael Cader, *Saturday Night Live: The First Twenty Years* (Houghton Mifflin1994); Tom Shales and James Andrew Miller, *Live From New York: An Uncensored History of Saturday Night Live* (Hachette Books, 2002); and Jay Mohr, *Gasping for Airtime: Two Years in the Trenches of Saturday Night Live* (Hyperion Books, 2004).
[196]*Saturday Night Live,* NBC, October 21, 1978, Paley Center for Media record # B:47796, viewed September 4, 2010.
[197] John Allen, *Conclave: The Politics, Personalities, and Process of the Next Papal Election* (Doubleday, 2002), 107. For more details of the privations endured by cardinals during the conclaves of 1978, see also Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan-Witts, *Pontiff* (Doubleday, 1983), 174.
[198]Accounts of this perspective on the election of John XXIII are numerous, but one such example is John-Peter Pham, *Heirs of the Fisherman: Behind the Scenes of Papal Death and Succession* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 115-120.
[199] *Saturday Night Live,* NBC, March 17, 1979, Paley Center for Media record # B:51887, viewed September 4, 2010.
[200] Ibid.
[201] *Saturday Night Live,* NBC, May 12, 1979, Paley Center for Media record # B:86213, viewed September 11, 2010.
[202] *Saturday Night Live,* NBC, February 24, 1979, Paley Center for Media record # B:50363, viewed September 11, 2010.
[203] *Saturday Night Live,* NBC, January 26, 1980, Paley Center for Media record # B:86218, viewed September 25, 2010.
[204] *Saturday Night Live,* NBC, February 16, 1980, Paley Center for Media record # B:51881, viewed September 25, 2010.

[205] http://www.fathersarducci.com/index.html, retrieved Nov 4, 2012; http://www.filmreference.com/film/74/Don-Novello.html, retrieved Nov 4, 2012.

**APPENDIX 2**

[1] *CBS Playhouse 90*, "Catholics," CBS, November 29, 1973. Paley Center for Media, catalogue # T79:0072, viewed July 23, 2010.
[2] Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 429.
[3] Mark S. Massa, *The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 2-3.
[4] Massa, *Revolution*, 15.
[5] Kenneth C. Jones, *Index of Leading Catholic Indicators: The Church Since Vatican II* (Roman Catholic Books, 2003), 72-76.
[6] Gene Schwope, interview by author, December 28, 2010.
[7] On Sheen, see Thomas C. Reeves, *America's Bishop: The Life and Times of Fulton J. Sheen* (Encounter Books, 2001), 315-320; for Kanaly, see Jeremy Bonner, *The Road to Renewal: Victor Joseph Reed & Oklahoma Catholicism, 1905-1971* (Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 166-169.

**APPENDIX 3**

[1] In 1973-74, the Saturday night schedule on CBS consisted of *All in the Family, M*A*S*H, Mary Tyler Moore, The Bob Newhart Show,* and *The Carol Burnett Show.*

[2] Video evidence in the form of viewing each episode of the fourth and fifth seasons demonstrates that William Christopher's name appeared in the end credits after each episode of *M*A*S*H* through the end of season four, and did not appear in the show's opening credits until the beginning of season five.
[3] *M*A*S*H*, "Sometimes You Hear the Bullet," CBS, January 28, 1973.
[4] *M*A*S*H*, "O.R.", CBS, October 8, 1974.
[5] *Mr. Peepers* was one of the first continuing situation comedies on television, beginning its run on NBC in the summer of 1952. The program starred Wally Cox as the eponymous Robinson Peepers, a shy high school teacher, and Tony Randall as his brash friend Harvey Weskit. As it was produced weekly and aired live, the program necessitated Fritzell and Greenbaum writing an original script each week for the three-year duration of the program. For a discussion of *Mr. Peepers*, incorporating an interview with Fritzell and Greenbaum and their memories of working on the show, see chapter five of Max Wilk, *The Golden Age of Television: Notes from the Survivors* (Moyer Bell, 1989), 74-84.
[6] Jim Fritzell and Everett Greenbaum wrote 29 episodes of *The Andy Griffith Show*, including several of the most famous and beloved: "Man in a Hurry," "Barney's Sidecar," and "Convicts at Large," which were chosen by polls of The Andy Griffith Show Rerun Watcher's Club as the three best episodes in the series' history.
[7] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Mildred," CBS, October 24, 1975.
[8] *M*A*S*H*, "The Smell of Music," CBS, January 3, 1978.

[9] *M*A*S*H*, "An Eye for a Tooth," CBS, December 11, 1978.
[10] *M*A*S*H*, "Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen," CBS, February 28, 1983. In the episode, Father Mulcahy runs to free a group of trapped North Korean soldiers imprisoned in the compound during an artillery barrage, and becomes almost totally deaf as a result.
[11] *M*A*S*H*, "Fallen Idol," CBS, September 27, 1977.
[12] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Uncle Abdul," CBS, December 3, 1979.
[13] *M*A*S*H*, "Nurse Doctor," CBS, October 29, 1979.
[14] *M*A*S*H*, "Heroes," CBS, March 15, 1982.
[15] *M*A*S*H*, "Souvenirs," CBS, March 1, 1977.
[16] *M*A*S*H*, "Hepatitis," CBS, February 8, 1977.
[17] *M*A*S*H*, "The Interview," CBS, February 24, 1976.
[18] *M*A*S*H*, "Mulcahy's War," CBS, November 16, 1976.
[19] "The Interview" was the closing episode of the fourth season, airing originally on February 24, 1976. "Mulcahy's War" was the ninth episode of the fifth season, airing originally on November 16, 1976.
[20] *M*A*S*H*, "Dear Dad," CBS, December 17, 1972.
[21] *M*A*S*H*, "A War for All Seasons," CBS, December 29, 1980.
[22] Not counting the final special, *M*A*S*H*'s eleventh season comprised 15 episodes.
[23] Running time for "Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen" is 135 minutes -- two hours and fifteen minutes. Including commercials, the program ran for three hours when originally aired on February 28, 1983.
[24] From 1983 until 2010, "Goodbye, Farewell and Amen" held the record as the most-watched television broadcast in American history. It was finally passed in total viewership numbers by Super Bowl XLIV.
[25] After getting their start on – and being nominated for several Emmys for – *M*A*S*H* (including the unique episode "Point of View," in which the entire episode is seen through the eyes of a patient at the 4077th), Ken Levine and David Isaacs went on to write and produce *Cheers* and *Fraiser,* sharing an Emmy for Outstanding Writing on the latter. Isaacs has since won another Emmy as producer of *Mad Men*.
[26] *AfterM*A*S*H*, "Fallout," CBS, December 5, 1983. The episode earned Gelbart an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Director in a Comedy Series.
[27] *AfterM*A*S*H*, "Madness to his Method," CBS, October 16, 1984.
[28] *AfterM*A*S*H*, "Trials," CBS, October 9, 1984.
[29] *AfterM*A*S*H*, "Night Shift," CBS, October 24, 1983.
[30] *AfterM*A*S*H*, "Less Miserables," CBS, September 23, 1984.

[31] Hugh "Losing Pitcher" Mulcahy (1913-2001) was a major league baseball pitcher for the Philadelphia Phillies from 1935-1940. In the four years between 1937 and 1940, Mulcahy never had a winning season, losing 20 games in 1938 and 22 in 1940. Because box scores and wire service reports listed "Mulcahy, LP" (losing pitcher) so frequently, he was dubbed "Losing Pitcher Mulcahy" by the press.

[32] The Reverend Doctor George Regas was rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena from 1967 until his retirement in 1995, thereafter remaining active as rector emeritus. During his

tenure, All Saints became one of the largest Episcopal parishes in the United States, and was famous for its social activism, particularly its ministry to the homeless, and to HIV/AIDS victims. In 1992, Regas was one of the first clergy to begin blessing same-sex unions. Regas also served as president of the Coalition for a Non-Violent City and co-founder of the Interfaith Center to Reverse the Arms Race, and preached sermons against the Vietnam and Iraq Wars.

[33] After beginning her acting career at age 10, Shelley Fabares became famous for her role as teenage daughter Mary Stone on *The Donna Reed Show* (1957-1963). During her time on that program, she recorded the song "Johnny Angel," which became a number-one hit single. Thereafter, she starred in several movies with Elvis Presley. Remaining active in a variety of guest-starring roles on various television programs, Fabares was later cast as TV anchor (and later, lead character Hayden Fox's wife) on *Coach* (1989-1997). Most recently, she has done voice-over work as Ma Kent on *Superman: the Animated Series*.

[34] After his departure from *M*A*S*H*, Stevenson starred in no fewer than five series – *The McLean Stevenson Show, Celebrity Challenge of the Sexes, In the Beginning, Condo,* and *America* – each of which was cancelled within months of its premiere. Stevenson's career reached its nadir with the 1979 NBC sitcom *Hello, Larry*. Critically lambasted for its inferior writing, *Larry* was also the frequent butt of jokes in Johnny Carson's monologue and on *Saturday Night Live*. Though the program ran for an unusually long eight-month first season and was renewed for a second, it did so "simply because so many of the network's offerings bombed that they had nothing better to run -- a fact that beleagured network execs cheerfully admitted to." ("westpac," *Hello, Larry* Internet Movie Database commentary thread, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078623/reviews, retrieved November 3, 2012.)

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