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Women, Catholicism and World War II

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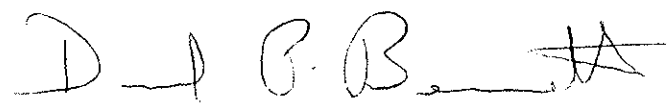
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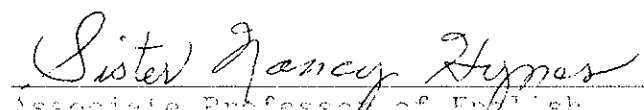
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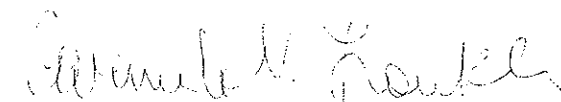
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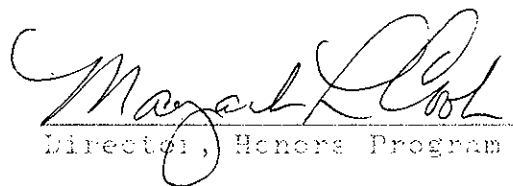
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INTRODUCTION

World War II was an intensely powerful, patriotic, and
emotional time for Americans. Nearly everyone involved
themselves in the war effort in one way or another. Extensive
scholarly investigation has been devoted to a wide assortment of
topics on this intriguing era. This is certainly true of
research on women and their role in wartime society; the topic
has triggered a broad range of analysis and debate.

Due to the influx of women--single and married, young and
old--into the work force during this period, many historians
believe the war had a lasting impact on society's views of women.
One side of the argument claims that World War II was
instrumental in transforming the lives of women; their acceptance
as a legitimate sector of the work force was born during the war
era (see Diedrich and Fischer-Hornung; Hartmann; Chafe). On the
flip side there are those historians who argue that, while the
media did change the image of women during the war, the
traditional roles emphasizing women's place in the home remained
intact throughout the war (see Honey; Gluck). In supporting
their argument they demonstrate how the years after the war were
very conservative and traditional regarding women's roles.

Because the more general issues of women, work, and World War
II has been the subject of so much debate, a revisionist approach
to the issue would have been, in my view, simply another
appendage to an old debate. In my view a fresh angle was needed;
an angle that not only satisfied my yearning to understand
women's position during World War II, but also satisfied a more

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personal yearning to understand more about my Catholic faith. It's for these two reasons that I decided to concentrate this thesis on a more specific, particular topic. Catholicism's views of women have often been labeled conservative, traditional and static. My research seeks to understand this labelling in the context of World War II and to find if this label has any truth to it.

While the general American public, and most particularly the American media, urged women, both single and married, to enter the work force during World War II, the Church approached the problem from a different angle. When speaking of the Church, I am referring particularly to the leaders of the American Catholic faith--the bishops and the priests. Undoubtedly, the Church was influenced by papal authority in Italy; however, not all papal advice was strictly adhered to by the American Church (see Chapter 6). Therefore, when referring to the Church, it is the bishops and priests to whom this is directed. While there were undoubtedly those Catholics who disagreed with the teaching of the Church leaders, most did not seriously challenge the Church's proclamations.

Both governmental propaganda and media propaganda urged women of all walks of life to enter the war industries to help the nation toward Allied victory during World War II. The women who did participate seemed convinced they were doing it for the nation and for their men; their patriotism was the key link in assuring an American victory. Thoughts of the nation, they were told, should come before more selfish thoughts of home in this emergency situation; if the family had to be put on hold for

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ashort time, it would all be worth it, since the continued success of the family depended largely on the success of the war; if the United States lost the war, the family would be lost as well.

The Catholic stance, however, differed from that taken by the general population. While the Church was not opposed to women entering the work force for the sake of the war, the family always had to be a top priority. Accordingly, mothers of children should not be expected to leave the home. In fact, it was imperative that they not desert their family at a time when they were most needed in the home. The Church believed that there was a pool of other workers available, including men who were not overseas and single women, who they expected to fill the vacancies left in the many industries, but mothers could best serve the nation by remaining at home with their families. This theme ran consistently through the Catholic writings of wartime America.

Without looking any further, it would appear that the Catholic Church's reaction to women in the war effort was unpatriotic. After all, according to wartime propaganda, in time of war it was necessary for the nation to come before the individual and the family; if the nation lost the war, it was perceived that the family would disintegrate. Seen from this perspective, the reaction of the Church does appear unpatriotic, and the Church did risk being labelled as such by others. The actual situation reveals the contrary. The Church wholeheartedly supported the war, believing it to be consistent with the

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Catholic orthodoxy. However, due to the Church's strong belief that mothers were the backbone of the home, it was necessary for them to urge mothers to remain in the home; at the same time they advocated that other men and women serve the war effort. Although this stance allowed claims of "un-Americanness," the Church never wavered in its conviction.

The logical and ideological structure underlying Catholic dogma during this particular part of the twentieth century thus reveals a pattern of consistency in Catholic thought with regard to women, women's role in society, the family's role in the nation, and the nation's role in the world. What the war exemplified, according to the Church, was the democratic way of life--a life which was worth fighting for. If victorious, a true democracy--one in which a common brotherhood would be created among all people--could be established on a national and, ultimately, international scale. Patriotism to the American war effort was really not a debatable issue for the Church; it endorsed the war and fought for victory, because victory meant that the world was coming closer to realizing a true democracy; a democracy supported by a Catholic revival. Nevertheless, a democratic victory could be won if, and only if, the home as the support of society was kept intact. Therefore, mothers did play a key role in the war.

The Church's stance on the topic of mothers working during World War II was not solely reactionary. On the contrary, there could be no strong nation without a strong family; the family was the bulwark of the nation, the bulwark of democracy. To the Church, the family, patriotism, democracy, and Catholic

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renewal all went hand in hand. If one of these ties was missing, the nation could never reach its potential greatness; it could never realize its potential as the foundation of world salvation.

This thesis attempts to demonstrate the important ties between women, the family, the nation, and democracy in the Church's belief system. In doing so it will reveal the consistency in Catholic thought during World War II. The first chapter will focus both on women in general and on Catholic women and their role in society prior to World War II. By putting the expectations and roles of women in perspective, it will be easier to understand the impact of the changes brought on by World War II. The second chapter is meant to give the reader a solid background on the general American reaction to the war, particularly the role women were expected to fill in the war effort. The third chapter deals specifically with the Catholic reaction to the propaganda urging women to enter the work force and the Church's attitudes regarding working mothers. The fourth and fifth chapters step back to take a look at the historical development of the Catholic religion in America, the anti-Catholicism that swept the country, and Catholic involvement in previous wars. The next two chapters develop the link between the Church's past, its beliefs about what constitutes a democracy and its stance against anti-Christian regimes. Chapter 8 explores the idea of a Catholic "renaissance," and the final chapter serves to unite the links, showing the consistency among them. It should become clear that the Church was quite adamant in its belief that America, if victorious, could serve the needs

of the Catholic faith to its utmost and that mothers played a key role in the home as their contribution to this effort at victory.

CHAPTER 1
WOMEN'S ROLE BEFORE WORLD WAR II

The nineteenth century witnessed a major development affecting the lives of American men and women alike. The boom in industrialization and the advent of the economic system of capitalism brought great change to the nation. With these changes came a separation of the workplace from the home; while much work continued to be based in the home, it would only be a matter of time before the workplace would be seen as an entirely different world.

This separation of home and workplace drew men away from the hearth, while women continued their business within the home. Eventually certain roles, specific to men and women and built upon the needs of the economic system, emerged. Men became "worldly" and women, "domestic." "As men and women drifted farther apart in the workplace, the social roles of the sexes became more distinct. The "cult of true womanhood," based on the Victorian understanding of woman as the model of purity, piety, and domesticity, separated women from men and their world."[1] Soon the home was regarded as a haven from the outside world. A husband would come home, forget about work for a time, relax and spend some time with his family.

Before long, a woman's identification with her home would become the basis for her entire worth. This was especially true of the women of middle-class status whose husbands did not have trouble supporting the family on their own; these women served to strengthen the construction of the "cult of true womanhood."

"Smaller families, the closing off of the workplace from middle-class white women, and the solidification of the concept of woman's real "nature" contributed to equating the home with women."[2]

Catholic opinion greatly reinforced the concept of the "cult of true womanhood." This was "not only an acceptable model but a familiar one, resting in part on a Christian tradition that held that such a pattern was designed by God."[3] For Catholics, the "cult of true womanhood" was integral to the development of a healthy family; the mother was the spiritual leader, she strengthened the family's faith. Catholic historian Thomas McAvoy, in A History of the Catholic Church in the United States, reaffirms this belief, stating: "The Catholic home of the era after the Civil War in the United States was the basic unit of Catholicism."[4]

American women's status in general was to change only very slowly after the turn of the century. "While industrialization meant that many of the goods and services produced in the home were increasingly provided by the market economy, it also brought ever-increasing numbers of women into the paid labor force."[5] The availability of factory and clerical jobs, in particular, lured women, mostly young and single, into the work force, challenging society's expectations of them. Industrialization, especially, led factories to employ women at rapid rates.[6] Similarly, female employment in clerical jobs, due to a "feminization" of the clerical field in the early twentieth century, was rising as well. "The demand for clerical workers

posts. But the trend was for women to take over an increasing percentage of clerical jobs."[7] Although women continued to be viewed as mothers and homemakers first and workers second, their employment rates continued to climb. In 1920 women comprised 20.4% of the work force compared to 18.1% in 1900. Their numbers rose from nearly 5 million in 1900 to well over 8 million in 1920.[8] This steady increase in female employment would continue throughout the following decades.

With American involvement in World War I, jobs in many industries, war industries in particular, needed workers desperately. Women became the perfect labor pool to introduce into these industries; they were hard workers, they were sure to learn quickly, and they posed no real threat to men returning home after the war, since society continued to recognize that women's true place was in the home. The end of the war would naturally put an end to their employment, and they would resume their important station in the home, where most believed they belonged. This type of propaganda was successful, for the most part, and while a number of women remained in the workplace after the war, the majority returned to their pre-war position in the home, as was the case following World War II. Post-World War II statistics are representative of most post-war periods in American history. These statistics show that while 19.3 million women (36.1% of the work force) were employed in 1945, that number had dropped to 16.7 million (27.9% of the work force) by 1947.[9]

The 1920s ushered in a new era in women's history. These years prior to World War II witnessed an even greater increase

injobs in sales and clerical fields. Unmarried women were most likely to fill these openings. With the increase in the number of unmarried women in the workplace came an increase in their personal independence. The "flapper" era of the "roaring twenties," following on the tail of the women's suffrage amendment in 1920, provided an outlet for women's growing frustration with the situation in which they found themselves. Independence and liberation were themes that grew in importance throughout the decade, though they never reached great heights.

The beginnings of a true feminist movement was stirring but never actually reached fruition. One group of "feminists" believed in equal rights for men and women and tried to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). A second group recognized that changes regarding women's status in society needed to be made but putting women on an equal footing with men was not the answer. As much as both groups realized the need to change society's image of women and their roles, this change was slow to materialize. Most women, recognizing a need for change nonetheless reverted to the traditional role of wife and mother before long.

This time of feminist expression was the scene at the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. The lack of jobs and the financial difficulty for American families during this period often required a second income (that of the wife) simply to get by. In other cases, husbands had lost their jobs and it was up to the wives to provide the family's income. What was the consequence of this? In many cases "working women were

stigmatized as unnatural creatures, as traitors and parasites, robbing men of their last chance in the job market and threatening their masculinity."[10] While many felt strongly that a woman's place was invariably in the home, others recognized that hard times demanded a temporary shift in attitudes if the nation was to pull through the depression.

Historian Susan Hartmann maintains "the extent to which World War II altered women's lives and social norms can be fully understood only with reference to the Depression decade." She claims that "women were put on the defensive as a general consensus hardened around the position that married women should not work outside the home."[11] She also believes that "the Great Depression failed to reverse general, long-term trends in women's employment."[12] Unmarried women continued to dominate the female labor force and married women were still not accepted as legitimate contributors. Instead of becoming an era in which society would be compelled to see women's worth in the job market, women's employment during the depression was considered an anomaly; it was a necessity--tolerated only until the return of prosperity.

The lack of encouragement toward women's employment during the depression years can be viewed in stark contrast to the general attitude that prevailed during the years of World War II. Suddenly, with the onset of U.S. involvement in World War II, propaganda campaigns not only legitimized female employment, but encouraged it wholeheartedly. This ultimately had important implications for women. Hartmann believes that "the material deprivation, the economic discrimination and the psychological

discouragementexperienced by women during the Depression made the Second World War all the more important in improving their lives and status."[13]

The importance of motherhood and family remained continuous throughout the decades preceeding the war, especially for the Catholic community.

> [In fact], from 1830 to 1920, the model of _family_ _and_ _home_ prevalent in the early years of the republic remained dominant . . . This ideal clearly was the norm among middle-class English-speaking Catholics. Guidebooks and etiquette books for women clearly supported this model . . . Such books as the _Mirror_ _of_ _True_ _Womanhood_ enshrined the home as "the true woman's kingdom" and urged women to be the Catholic superwoman.[14]

This ideal was to be reinforced manifold in Catholic teaching throughout the decades before the war. The Church's teaching is remarkably consistent regarding women's "proper sphere" before the war. Understanding women's role, particularly Catholic women's role, in American society leading up to World War II is an important part of understanding what happened during the war.

CHAPTER 2
AMERICAN WOMEN DURING WORLD WAR II

World War II, as with most wars, created a temporary shift
in social attitudes, beliefs and actions. "[T]he Second World
War transformed the economy, made unprecedented claims on women
and men, and disrupted social arrangements on a broad scale."[1]
American involvement in World War II in 1941 required a massive
shift of labor power; the large numbers of men (and women) who
were called to duty overseas left many job openings in regular
industry and, perhaps more important, in munitions industries.
While the Depression found many people looking for jobs but not
finding them, World War II found many jobs looking for people.
With the absence of a regular male work force, many women who
had previously been employed, or had not been employed at all,
were called on to contribute to the war effort by filling the
vacancies. The unmarried and the married, the young and the old,
were called to this patriotic duty, to serve their nation by
electing to take over their husbands' and brothers' jobs.
However, the issue of working mothers, in particular, generated
concern as the war progressed. On the eve of American
involvement in the war, the propaganda campaigns appeared to push
family issues into the background. "America's deep concern for
home and family was quickly forgotten . . ."[2]

Although women had been entering the labor force in
increasing numbers since the turn of the century and World War I
had seen a similar shift in labor, the numbers of women working
during World War II are nonetheless unprecedented. "Between

1941 and 1945 the female labor force increased by more than six million, or approximately 55 percent."[3] Was it simply a patriotic inpulse that drew these women into the war effort? Many historians speak of the media and its influence in drawing women into the labor force. With the advent of American involvement in World War II, the massive propaganda campaigns to lure women into the work force began. "The campaign to attract women into war production was part of a drive to weld the home front into an economic army, well disciplined, highly motivated by patriotism, and willing to make sacrifices for the good of American soldiers."[4] The media's influential role in this particular task cannot be overemphasized.

The Depression had forced many more women into the labor force than in previous years; economic necessity required it. As noted, a certain amount of hostility, especially toward married women, had built up around this distinct phenomenon. At the start of World War II, it was both an economic and a national necessity for women of all walks of life to enter the work force. Because of the large number of married women in the country, the propaganda campaigns necessarily had to include them in their plans.

> Recruiting homemakers into war industries meant
> challenging--or at least temporarily abandoning--
> the very definitions of womanhood that American
> culture promoted and that most women seemed to
> accept. Coming on the heels of the depression, when
> hostility toward married women was so intense, the
> campaign was especially difficult.[5]

Magazine articles, advertisements and even works of fiction were conductors of the media's propaganda campaign. National patriotism was their motto: "The emphasis on self-sacrifice, patriotism, and soldier welfare became the chief method for portraying war workers in popular fiction . . . and was an important element in mobilizing the population as a whole."[6] The intense surge of national patriotism coupled with the equally intense propaganda techniques provided an arena for an unprecedented number of women to enthusiastically enter the work force. Historian Maureen Honey states: "[W]e are provided with an example of how quickly images can change when the media, government, and industry are mobilized to accomplish a goal."[7] As America's involvement in the war grew, it became increasingly easy for civilians to believe what the media was saying; with everyone's help, women's and men's, the war would surely be over soon.

Scholars differ on what they believe the impact of World War II on women's status and role in society was. Some maintain that the war did have an impact, however minor it may be. Others believe the war had no significant impact, that traditional roles and attitudes regarding women were conveniently "overlooked" for a few years only to resurface at the war's end. Both opinions are backed up with convincing evidence that makes it hard to draw one simple conclusion.

Maria Diedrich and Dorothea Fischer-Hornung hold the former opinion:

> [T]he war, which threatened men with annihilation,

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emasculation, and loss of autonomy, also promised and achieved substantial, new economic and social opportunities for women in Western Europe and the United States by greatly increasing their mobility and by helping to liberate them from constraints imposed by traditional sex roles.[8]

Women's new-found status was, according to them, a permanent step on the road to real progress in changing women's roles. In his essay titled "World War II As A Pivotal Experience For American Women," William Chafe, a well-known author on the subject, also claims that, although women's role in society did not do an about-face, it is possible to argue "that the war did make a significant difference, albeit in a paradoxical fashion . . . [I]t sanctioned, and made possible, the employment of married women who were middle-aged and middle-class."[9] Thus, the "sanctioning" legitimized this age cohort's entry into the work force. Another historian who agrees that the war made a difference in altering society's views of women is Susan Hartmann: "That many of the crisis-induced changes in women's lives were reversed by the end of the 1940s does not cancel out the importance of World War II in altering sex roles."[10] In her estimation, the changes in women's position in postwar years were significant enough to demand a re-evaluation of their role in society.

Most of the defenders of a change in women's status base their analysis on job statistics centering around the increase of married women (and women in general) in the work force. Other historians are not as optimistic. They see a definite difference

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between the image society was portraying ("Rosie the Riveter")
and the underlying roles of women, which they claim remained
unchanged. Maureen Honey describes these roles:

> [There were] two conflicting images of women [which]
> existed during the war: the strong, dependable patriot
> who could run a machine and the innocent, vulnerable
> mother, outside the realm of technology, who was
> depending on soldiers to protect her way of life.[11]

While the propaganda induced by the media played an
important role by urging women into the work force, it did not
necessarily enforce the notion that women should continue their
employment at the war's end. In fact, some historians believe
that the media was quite overt in stating that this was only a
transient stage in women's history. Sherna Berger Gluck supports
this view: "By [the media] emphasizing the temporary nature of
women's wartime work the cultural values were kept intact."[12]

William Chafe believes that, "despite such changes [in
employment patterns], there was little, if any, progress made on
issues of sexual equality during World War II."[13] Even though
women appeared to be gaining headway in society, traditional
values remained solid even as the numbers told a supposedly
different story. During the war "feminism was utterly
discredited; a women's movement trying to challenge the status
quo of gender relationships had almost ceased to exist."[14] The
media's attention to women and work failed to excite a feminist
stirring among the female population.

The question that has absorbed those of us focusing

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on the ideological dimension of this period is why

the media's legitimation of female entry into male

work failed to supplant the traditional image of women

as homemakers.[15]

However, it must also be understood that the propaganda was aimed

at patriotism for the war effort and not for a general women's

movement. When seen in this light, it's not as hard to understand

why a feminist uprising did not occur during the war era.

As America's involvement in World War II lengthened, the

initial patriotic surge and enthusiasm over women helping the war

effort began to wane. Thoughts of family and home life became

subject to question and debate. Was it really the best thing for

mothers to be away from their children for such an extended

period of time? Also subject to much discussion was the issue of

the temporary nature of women's jobs. Perhaps people were

becoming uncomfortable with the ease with which women were

adapting to their role in the war effort; or maybe the

realization of a victory was simply close enough to allow the

country to look beyond the war to what the post-war years would

bring. Whatever the case, the intensity of the media propaganda

started to drop off around 1944 and certain new themes could be

seen taking the place of older ones. The theme of motherhood,

especially, begins to emerge:

> Women as mothers were charged with perpetuating
>
> the culture that men were fighting for; abandoning
>
> this role in wartime would not only upset the gender
>
> balance but undermine the very core of American
>
> society.[16]

This conservative shift, as will be mentioned later, reflects the traditional roles the Church advocated consistently throughout the war.

With the probability of the war coming to an end, an obvious shift back to pre-war values was becoming evident; the closer the country came to victory, the more attention the media gave to reversing what it had originally endorsed. There appeared to be an equally intense propaganda campaign to draw women out of the work force and back, once again, into their more suitable realm, the home. "These campaigns . . . never failed to remind women that the home and family were still the proper sphere to which they were expected to return after the war."[17] Another line of thought which follows closely to that of the Catholic Church is the renewed emphasis on the importance of the family in American society. Maureen Honey describes this shift more fully:

> There were other propaganda strategies that con-
> tributed to a reactionary view of women at the war's
> end. One of these was that advertisers translated the
> complex issues over which the war was being fought into
> mythic symbols of national identity and meaning. The
> most profound of these was the home sheltering and
> nurturing, an institution that came to be equated with
> the core of American values--the family.[18]

The articles and advertisments in the popular magazines were, without a doubt, influential in the shift that portrayed families as lost without their mother; the employment of mothers was becoming too burdensome for the household to handle. "[T]he

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initial idea that working mothers could raise happy children was replaced by tragic portraits of families breaking under the strain of mother being away. By the spring of 1944, ads began dramatizing the unhappiness of children with war-working mothers."[19] By 1945 there was a "shift [in propaganda] from approval of factory work to encouraging work in the home."[20]

At the end of the war, most of the country expected things to return to "normal"; women were expected to give up their place in the job market, allowing "their men" to move in where they had left off. Mothers were expected to return to the home, satisfied that they had the opportunity to help in the effort to restore peace. The "feminine mystique" derives from this attitude:

> Wifehood and motherhood had always claimed
> supremacy among American women's aspirations and
> the norms of society itself. What Betty Friedan
> called "the feminine mystique" was no more than a
> slightly revised version of the nineteenth-century
> model which centered women's purpose and responsibility
> in the home.[21]

The number of married women in the job market grew in the post-war years, from 7.5 million in 1947 to 10.4 million in 1952; many mothers, against the wishes of their family--and the nation in general--did remain in their employment.[22] However, the strong feelings the nation had regarding women's role in post-war years led, to a great extent, to the encouragement of traditional roles for women, roles implied in Friedan's term--the"feminine mystique."

CHAPTER 3
CATHOLIC OPINION OF WOMEN DURING WORLD WAR II

The general attitude prevailing in the nation during the war with regard to women illuminates Catholicism's sentiments on the issue of women, especially mothers, in the workplace before and after the war. It's ultimately necessary to understand the emotional urgency the nation was displaying in order to contrast it with Catholic thought. The propaganda used by the media was not something to be taken lightly; it was very successful in its goals. To what extent was Catholic belief affected by this propaganda? Was the Church as caught up in the patriotic aura of the war as the rest of the country? What is interesting is the Church's general attitude regarding women's role in Catholicism and how this attitude related to the country's expectations of women during the war. In fact, the Church's position was consistent throughout these years; this consistency will be examined in an historical context to make clearer why the Church reacted as it did.

Just as the media played an important role in wartime propaganda for the majority of Americans, the Catholic press played an essential role in Catholic propaganda. It's interesting to note that while some journals were more liberal and others more conservative on particular issues, there developed a consensus among them regarding the stance they took towards working mothers. The more conservative Ave Maria viewed women as "the heart of the family," instructing that a break from this tradition would be disastrous.[1] However, even the more liberal Catholic Action and Catholic Charities Review

saw a mother's place as being in the home, even during wartime.

While the more liberal journals were more likely to offer

alternatives to mothers working (i.e., Negroes, single women),

they nonetheless retained an established belief that mothers

should remain in the home. The consistency within the Catholic

press mirrors the consistency the Church displayed in general

throughout its teachings before, during and after the war.

"It is a sacred thing to be a woman. To be a woman is to be

a mother. Motherhood is unquestionably the most perfect

reflection in the world of the goodness and mercy and benignity

of God."[2] This statement, made shortly before American

involvement in World War II, reflects the general attitude of the

Church in relation to women's true position in a Catholic

society. The family was the primary unit of society, according

to the Church. Each family member had a role specific to their

gender and age. The family is like "a body in which the husband

is the head of the family in ruling it and the wife is the heart

of the family in radiating love."[3] The child's task was to learn

the Catholic teaching from his or her parents so they might carry

on the Catholic tradition in their own family in the future. In

an article published during World War II, Pope Pius XII states:

"[T]he sphere of woman, her manner of life, her native bent, is

motherhood. Every woman is made to be a mother: a mother in the

physical meaning of the word or in the more spiritual and exalted

but no less real sense."[4]

Not only was the mother essential in the creation of a

proper Catholic home, but the family was fundamental to the well-

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being of the nation. "Catholic writers used a theory of correspondence to assert that a well-ordered home created well-ordered citizens, which created a well-ordered nation."[5] Again, the theory of the family as the fundamental feature of Catholic society is argued forcibly. E. J. Ross, a Catholic writer in the 1940's and author of Sound Social Living, states: "Many people who would like to be good citizens forget that the family is the primary unit of society, and that if it fails to maintain high ideals, the nation will inevitably suffer."[6] Catholics were not the first or the only Americans to see the family as the basic unit of the nation; however, they were one of the few groups who remained loyal to this belief consistently through the war years. This notion was so imperative to their identity that the Church refused to be sucked into the whirlwind created by the media to the extent that the majority of Americans were. For the Church, it was necessary for motherhood and the family to come first; if not, the nation would inevitably be open to vice.

But how did the Church's attitude during the war compare to pre-war years? Research shows a remarkable consistency between pre-war and war year attitudes towards mothers in the work force. For instance, one author writing in 1920 states:

> The home is the source of our national life. Back
> of the national Capitol and above it stands the
> home. Back of the President and above him stands the
> citizen. What the home is, this and nothing else
> will the Capitol be. What the citizen wills, this
> and nothing else will the President be.[7]

The stress placed on the family and the mother as the strength of

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family life is substantial. The years directly preceeding the war demonstrate this more fully. In part, the Catholic stance reflected the growing concern with the family as an institution. The pre-war years witnessed what was viewed as the decline of the family. In fact, one article states that "the American pastime of disrupting family sanctuaries has in great measure descended to the utterly ridiculous."[8] The economic demands on parents, especially during the depression years, required many mothers (as well as fathers) to serve in the work force. One writer states:

> [I]t is generally recognized that World War I proved seriously demoralizing to the American family. Damaging evils took root at that time that continued down to World War II, leaving our family life in a much more weakened and disorganized condition than it had been prior to 1914.[9]

The ever-widening responsibilities of the family members in the growing society led many Catholics to see a disintegration of the family. The capitalist system remains a key reason for validating the disintegration of family life. Capitalism physically separated members of the family, at the same time producing a drive for material wealth. "[F]amily life within the home has been injured rather than improved by the many drastic moral, economic, and social changes which have taken place" due to capitalism.[10] Before the advent of industrialization and capitalism, the family was a very cohesive unit. After capitalism was established, the family supposedly started to grow farther and farther apart.[11]

The Church strongly believed that the capitalist system was no world for the wife and mother. "[C]an a woman, perhaps, hope for her real well-being from a regime dominated by capitalism?" asks Pope Pius XII in "The Holy Father On Woman's Duties."[12] He believed women should not be required to work; their place was in the home. The growing capitalist society was to blame for the unnatural numbers of women entering the paid labor force.

> [O]ur industrialized modern state . . . has produced the problem it now faces. It has made the conditions under which women's participation becomes attractive and ultimately to an extent necessary. The neglect of . . . a family wage due in social justice rendered obligatory the work of wife or children to supply the deficiency.[13]

Capitalism, in preventing the father of a household from earning enough to support his family on his own, had, in the Church's view, forced mothers into a situation of employment in which they didn't belong. Yet, whether it was the capitalist system itself, the economic needs of the family, or a woman's own greed for automony, "it is a well-known fact that mothers in ever greater numbers are deserting their children for work in industrial establishments. The effect of this on the children of America and the homes of America is frightful beyond measure."[14] This pre-war concern strengthened the Church's conviction that a mother's place was in the home.

The Catholic Church's concern over this particular issue in the first decades of the twentieth century was exacerbated by the events of World War II. Not only were mothers now being forced

by economic necessity to enter the work force, but it was being portrayed as patriotic and exciting. For the Church, though, mothers being pulled out of the home to work in war industries was detrimental to the home life of the nation. "The fact that large numbers of mothers of small children have gone to work in war industries is creating a very serious social problem in many parts of the country."[15]

The Church viewed the absence of mothers from the home as a dangerous situation; it was believed that without their mothers, children would fall off the beaten track. "An unfortunate development common to all defense industry and military centers in wartime is a sharp increase of juvenile delinquency."[16] "A Mother's Place in Wartime," written in 1942, claims that "dilettante mothers who remain away from home to dabble in too many phases of the war effort run the risk of turning their sons and daughters into problem children."[17] The author intimates that a mother's true vocation is in the home and that directing their attention away from it would be mere "dabbling."

The opinions of some Catholics during World War II allow for more leeway toward its mothers, although the conservative nature is still evident: "If she [the mother] had to work outside the home, she was to redouble her attention to her family during the time she was at home."[18] In other words, while work outside the home might be tolerable, the family must not suffer any consequences because of it.

In general, however, the Catholic concensus was that mothers should remain free of the work force and concentrate on family

matters. It wasn't simply a matter of not recognizing the need
for women in the factories; Bishop John A. Duffy understood the
bind the nation was in but declared: "No matter how dire our
emergency becomes, it would seem that we should defer employment
of mothers with 'teen-age' children as a last resource.'" He
goes on to propose a solution:

> The proper approach to the problem, since the
> protection of the home is far more fundamental than
> any other question involved, is to exhaust first
> of all the available potential labor supply of
> manpower, single women and wives without children,
> and return from industry its mothers of children
> and put them back where they belong--in the home.
> The care of the home and their offspring is their
> natural duty and takes precedence over every other
> claim that may arise from national good or war
> purposes.[19]

Another writer of this era, recognizing the importance of
mothers in the home, pointed out that "there is still a large
reserve of unemployed men, composed principally of Negro labor,
Mexican labor and other minority groups, and that there is also a
large reserve of single women."[20] That most Catholics expressing
their opinions at this time did not object to single, unmarried
women participating in the work force indicates that the Church's
views on women in general were not as conservative and
traditional as their views on mother:

> [I]f they [unmarried women] abandon the beaten
> track, they do not desert it, but rather consecrate

themselves to the service of mankind with a complete

disregard for themselves and their own interests

by an act incomparably broader in its scope, more all-

embracing and universal.[21]

Although the propaganda campaigns were not enough to alter the

Church's belief in the family as a vital national institution (and

the mother as the head of that institution), the Church's

flexibility regarding single women undoubtedly portrayed the

effects that intense propaganda had on even the most conservative

Church minds. Yet while single women were encouraged to enter

work during wartime, it was assumed, nonetheless, that this role

was only temporary; when the war was over, single women were

expected to marry and raise families.

Much of what has been said up to this point leads the reader

to believe that the Church was almost unpatriotic in asserting

that mothers should not enter the work force. Quite the opposite

is the case; the Church strongly supported the war effort but

believed a peaceful resolution would be based on the home;

stability within the family was the key to creating and

maintaining peace both at home and abroad.

[T]hose principles of the fatherhood of God and

the brotherhood of man that could transfer our

present chaotic universe into a peaceful, God-loving

world come not to one while reading an eloquent

encyclical, or listening to the persuasive sermon

of a priest in the pulpit. No, it is at the feet of

a Christian mother.[22]

To gain world peace, therefore, the mother's importance in the family had to be recognized and reinforced. Mrs. William Berry, the author of an article in Catholic Action written in 1945, states: "How clear it should be that as soon as we cause the disintegration of the home we destroy the foundations of patriotism . . . [T]he walls of the home keep out not only the rain and storms of the heavens but the oppression and strife of earth."[23]

The issue of child care was one which demanded the nation's attention during the war. The necessity for child care arose out of the vast number of women being called into defense factories. In the early part of 1942, the Lanham Act was established. It provided for "emergency assistance to communities hit hardest by the transition to a wartime economy."[24] How did the Church react to the issue of child care? Once again the Church's views remain consistent. In my research I was initially surprised that much of what was written in the Catholic press supported child care measures to some degree. Although they recognize that a mother's place is undoubtedly in the home, when they are removed from it the child's welfare has to be taken into consideration.

> As the labor situation becomes more acute we shall
> have to face realistically the problem of millions
> of married women working in the factories and shops,
> while their children are cared for by public or private
> agencies. It was agreed that such a situation is a
> serious menace to family life but the present crisis
> makes it necessary.[25]

Recognizing that its wish for mothers to remain in the home

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was not always a realistic goal, the Church realized that measures would have to be taken to provide for the children of these working women. They saw the function of day care as "supply[ing] for those children whose normal living conditions have been disrupted by the present emergency an opportunity for growth and development as closely proximating the normal as possible."[26] What is crucial to the Church with regard to the child care situation is not the repression of day care measures; to do that would be to deny reality (that mothers *were* actually working) and to show a lack of concern for the children's well-being. On the contrary, the Church's ultimate concern, as noted, was if the family was functioning properly and, thus, fulfilling its role in society. And a strong, stable family developed from strong individual family members. The concern over the welfare of children demonstrated the Church's concern with the breakdown of family life and the resulting juvenile delinquency. One abnormal situation--a mother working--could not be solved by creating another abnormal situation--children without proper supervision. Thus, the Church's concern with the breakdown of the family structure was met by supporting child care measures in this time of emergency; if the family was to be the bulwark of the nation, it had to be kept intact.

Even in post-war years the Church's attitudes continued to remain consistent with its prior teaching. To the Church, motherhood was, and always would be, the primary task of women, a task so important that it must always be the prime motivation of

the female. "Motherhood can never become for woman the special assignment of a certain time; it is her task, simply and utterly."[27] This statement, made in 1954, reflects the traditional role of women long after the end of World War II. That a mother's place continued to be in the home remained essential to Catholic teaching. The fundamental balance between "feminine" and "masculine" qualities in an increasingly secularized society needed to be maintained.

> If women, both physically and spiritually, fails to
> exercise her specific function as mother of life,
> mankind faces a vacuum where her mystery ought to
> bear fruit. In the midst of anarchy and despair the
> right balance must be restored between the masculine
> and the feminine forces, and woman must assert her
> influence as a woman, by means of her healing, womanly
> power, to restore order to a derelict human race.[28]

The complementary nature of men and women's roles is emphasized continuously through the war and post-war years by the Church. It was necessary for both men and women to "contribute their respective energies to the building of a world which is not leveled into uniformity but is harmoniously organized."[29] By stressing the validity of separate spheres for each gender, the Church continued to recognize the importance of women in the domestic sphere. At the same time, it also reaffirmed the hierarchy and patriarchy inherent in the Catholic structure at a time when women were increasingly entering the paid labor force. Church leaders, placed in a position of high status within the Church, were helping to firmly consolidate their superiority.

Whether this led to the emphasis on women in the home directly or indirectly is open to debate. What it did do was reaffirm that men's role was in secular matters (which continued to grow in importance in modern society) and that women's role remained static (although still of prime importance to Church tradition). Even through the post-war 1950s, the Church remained consistent with regard to the position mothers were expected to play in society.

CHAPTER 4
THE EARLY CHURCH IN AMERICA

In order to fully understand the connection between the
Church's view regarding Catholic women and World War II, it's
necessary to gain a general background knowledge of the history
of the American Church, its high points and its low points. Only
by recognizing that this history is integral to the wartime
ideology of the Church can we fully acknowledge its validity and
consistency.

The Catholic Church was a minority religion in early
America. The Protestant faith dominated the early culture of the
colonies and grew to become strong in numbers as well as
philosophy during the formative years of the nation. The
Catholic Church was initially viewed as an outcast; it seemed to
be outdated in a growing republic. The idea developed out of a
European trend toward separation of church and state. Initially,
European society was a "traditional society in which
participation in the church and participation in the wider
community were not considered distinct. By the end of the
eighteenth century, however, the sphere of religious and secular
were beginning to separate."[1] The Church was beginning to lose
secular importance; on the other hand, the strengthening of the
Protestant faith was beginning to displace Catholicism's
status in Europe.

The Catholic religion embodied many traits that the growing
Protestant faith came to resent and fear. A distinct anti-
Catholic movement was building whose foundations were rooted in

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European culture: "[I]t should be noticed that the anti-Catholic tradition crossed the ocean with the British settlers and played a major role in the formative years of our nation."[2]

Andrew Greeley, in An Ugly Little Secret: Anti-Catholicism in North America, states that "anti-Catholicism is as American as blueberry pie. Most serious students of American history are willing to admit that the country has been swept by wave after wave of anti-Catholic sentiment."[3] Throughout the early years and continuously thereafter, this anti-Catholic attitude received continuous support, diminishing only when a more pressing issue presented itself. "[I]t might be noticed that the anti-Catholic spirit underwent periods of prosperity and poverty concurrent with historical events . . . Periods of poverty for the anti-Catholic rhetoric paralleled historical periods where sensational events displaced the prejudice."[4] Hence, during the Civil War, anti-Catholic sentiment decreased as more intense issues (i.e., slavery) came to dominate the nation's thoughts.

Despite the periods when anti-Catholic sentiment was overpowered by more pressing issues, anti-Catholic rhetoric continued to be a force to reckon with. Why was it so powerful? Why were Protestants so fearful of a religion that involved a minority of the country's people? To answer this we must look at the development of the nation. Two developments in particular can be seen as the general cause for Protestant disfavor: Catholic philosophy and economic conditions.

First, the Catholic Church's philosophy was considered antithetical to the prosperity of a growing republican nation. Initially, the colonies of the New World were separated by

economic and geographic factors. The New England Puritan colonies had a distinct background and way of life that was very different from that of the early Chesapeake colonies. Nevertheless, eventually the northern and southern colonies merged toward one interdependent, homogeneous body. The onset of this growth toward a cohesive republic was something the Protestant majority strongly believed in. However, "many Protestants in early America were sure Catholicism was antithetical both to genuine Christianity and democracy, a sentiment manifest in much of the rhetoric inspiring both the American Revolution and the Union cause during the Civil War."[5] For the Protestants, a democratic republic would be threatened by the Catholic Church.

The trend in early Protestant thought was toward distrust of the Catholic Church on the grounds of its structure: "During the decades following the Civil War several books of distinct anti-Catholic flavor commanded attention. One of the earliest, The Papacy and the Civil Power (1876), advanced the theory that an irreconcilable conflict existed between papal theory and popular government."[6] The hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church, reinforced the anti-Catholic notion that the Church was not democratic in itself; therefore, how could it support and encourage a democratically-run republic? A Catholic could not be a good American because "you were dominated by your clergy and your scheming, plotting hierarchy, because you owed allegiance to a foreign prince, because your family life restricted economic achievement."[7] The fear that the Catholic faith was in

opposition to the "American" lifestyle would surface again and again in anti-Catholic rhetoric throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The second factor encouraging the rise of anti-Catholic sentiments was part of a more general nativist movement. "Economic conditions . . . contributed to the rise in anti-Catholic resentment. Intermittent spells of depression filled the postwar [Civil War] period."[8] It was precisely at these times of depression that immigration played an influential role in American history. "Large scale foreign immigration began during the period 1820-1830," which closely paralleled the first public anti-Catholic outbreaks.[9] Many Americans, particularly those in the Protestant majority, "quickly reacted to the immigrants, especially those aliens who worked for cheaper wages and became wards of pauper institutions. Most American resentment toward the newcomers was directed against the Catholic Irish."[10] Combined with the fear that the Church would delay the fulfillment of a democratic republic, the indignation felt by those workers who were being displaced by Catholic immigrants only served to heighten the tension between the two religions.

By internalizing their frustration, those who were economically affected by immigration began to believe that these immigrants--mostly Catholic--were inherently inferior. This led, once again, to the idea that the Catholic Church was un-American, that it was not fit to be a legitimate American institution. The longevity and intensity of this belief is cited by Greeley: "That Polish, Irish, or Italian Catholics could not be good Americans was widely assumed to be true in theUnited States at

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least until the 1920s."[11] Father James Hennesey, in his history

of the Roman Catholic community, agrees: "Hostility to

immigrants, particularly Irish immigrants, was widespread" in the

nineteenth century.[12] Colleen McDannell gives her interpretation

of the hostility felt by the Protestant majority: "The

association of Irish Catholicism with crime, pagan practices,

poverty, and drunkenness became a battle cry for those who sought

to rid the nation of immigrants and proclaim it a Protestant

state."[13] The fear of an undemocratic Catholic reaction to the

growing republic and the hostility directed toward Catholic

immigrants due to economic displacement combined to create an

anti-Catholic rhetoric that would be kindled throughout the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This fear was proclaimed

both politically, through the Know-Nothing Party of the mid-

nineteenth century, and socially and economically, through the

literature and voices of the Protestant people.

CHAPTER 5
PATRIOTISM AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The patriotism displayed by the Catholic population during

times of war was, in part, a reponse to anti-Catholic sentiment.

One author has stated that "there has been no uniform pattern in

the reaction of the Christian church to the problem of war."[1]

However, taking a look at the Civil War and, more particularly,

World War I, a patterned Catholic reaction emerges, a pattern

revealing the supportive response of Catholicism to war. Again,

part of this wartime philosophy can be attributed to a direct

reaction against anti-Catholic rhetoric. An instance in Georgia

during World War I addresses this issue: "There was undoubtedly a

strong connection between [the] forceful patriotism and the

impact, felt by the Catholics of Georgia, of the anti-Catholicism

which had immediately preceded the war. Having had their loyalty

called into question, Georgia Catholics were eager to assert the

quality of their citizenship."[2]

In the Revolutionary War, Catholics took up arms and

patriotically defended the nation. However, even the years

between that war and the Civil War were plagued with nativist,

anti-Catholic sentiment. "Nativists had come not only to

question their [Catholics'] loyalty but their very eligibility to

become true citizens."[3] To prove them wrong, during the Civil

War Catholics did not hesitate to take sides in support of the

war effort. "On both sides, thousands of Catholics took up

arms."[4] In fact, in Democracy In America, Frenchman Alexis de

Toqueville claims that Catholics "constitute[d] the most

republican and most democratic class in the United States."
However, de Toqueville is quick to recognize that "there were
also local factors encouraging the democratic spirit among
American Catholics: their poverty, social inferiority and
minority status."[5] This view militates against the earlier
Prostestant view that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church was in
opposition to the democratic way of life. In actuality, the
Church had much to gain from the strengthening of democratic
practices. Nonetheless, as Catholic historian Timothy Walch
states:

> Though a vast majority of American Catholics professed
> a devout loyalty to the United States, and many
> Catholics had died in the Civil War, the denomination
> was tarred with the accusation of being un-American
> because of its large number of foreign-born
> communicants.[6]

If the Civil War revealed Catholics patriotically taking up
arms, World War I demonstrated something even more powerful.
During the Civil War, the nation was split; consequently, so was
Catholic support for the war. During World War I, however, the
Catholic Church had something more tangible to fight for: the
victory of the democratic nation. "Regardless of their immigrant
backgrounds, American Catholics were by and large loyal to their
country and fought for it against the nations of their
ancestors."[7]

"[In its] early stages the war aroused no particular
enthusiasm among Catholic Americans."[8] This attitude would soon
change. Both the need to show its patriotism and, more

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importantly, its stake in the war cause, allowed the Catholic

Church to become involved aggressively in the war campaign.

Catholics helped both on the home front and in the army.[9] If

their loyalty and patriotism had been called into question

previously, these claims of disloyalty were, to some extent,

withdrawn after the events of World War I.

One historian goes so far as to say that it was "apparent

that American Catholic leaders were moved to a new national

consciousness in 1917."[10] This new "consciousness" was not

strictly the result of an attempt to diminish the anti-Catholic

sentiment.

> [T]he international scope of their church and the
>
> characteristics it was held to have in common
>
> with the fundamentals of American society made
>
> it possible and profitable for Catholic leaders
>
> to embrace the idealism which swept the country
>
> during the war.[11]

There was little hesitation on the part of the Catholic

hierarchy, once the realization of the importance of the war hit,

to spread this message to its Catholic followers. "[T]he war was

an opportunity for American Catholics to show the world the

harmony between love of country and love of God which our

[Catholic] tradition declare[s] and our hearts accept."[12]

A major step was made by the Catholic hierarchy in forming the

National Catholic War Council in 1917 to aid the war effort.

"Formation of the War Council was a major organizational step for

the Catholic Church in the United States. For the first time in

its history an institutional commitment was being made to social and political action."[13] The council was set up to assist the government as much as possible in the war effort. "[It] served as the agent of the Catholic Church to create and carry out its wartime ministry . . . It was official in character, sanctioned by the Hierarchy, and national in scope, embracing the entire Church, and at least potentially every aspect of Catholic life."[14]

In forming the War Council the Catholic Church took a giant leap in American involvement; it demonstrated its support for American political policy. In fact, one Cardinal "indicated that the pope and president were both working for permanent peace and described them as 'the two greatest influences in the whole world, the head of the old historic Church and the head of American democracy.'"[15] This patriotism stems in part from a reaction to anti-Catholicism but is, more importantly, influenced by the Catholic belief in a democratic philosophy which will be addressed in the next chapter. Catholic support of World War II would be proven as well; this topic will be taken up in Chapters 6 and 8.

CHAPTER 6
DEMOCRACY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church's support of democracy has varied by
time and country. Foremost, it is necessary to make a distinction
between several possible definitions of democracy; without this
distinction, the Catholic support of democratic principles
throughout the war effort cannot be correctly interpreted. One
definition describes the institution of democracy as a political
entity, one in which a country would run on politically
democratic principles--government of the people, by the people,
for the people. However, a second definition is necessary to
understand the validity of this chapter and its relation to
Catholic ideology in general. The Catholic Church saw democracy
in its more humanistic form:

> That the Christian faith sanctions and supports the
>
> democratic way of life is fast becoming a platitude . . .
>
> [However], we do not get [this idea of democracy] from
>
> those gifted people who discovered the political
>
> institutions of democracy, won popular government, and
>
> coined the word for it. It was one of the symptoms of
>
> the instability of Greek democracy, and one of the
>
> causes of its failure, that it was never supported by
>
> a deep and wide-spread conviction in the dignity of the
>
> common man.[1]

The belief in the dignity of the brotherhood of man, then,
was a basic democratic principle which the Catholic Church

supported throughout World War II. Although the political

practice of democracy, something the United States in general was

very proud of, was not necessarily a Catholic priority, its

ideology lent itself well to Catholic principles on

egalitarianism.

Prior to World War I much of the Catholic world opposed

political liberal democracy as an institution. Pope Pius X

states: "Government of the people and by the people, government

responsible to the people, is contrary to Catholic truth."[2]

Thus, the Protestant claim that the Catholic Church was

antithetical to the growing democratic, republican nature of the

nation was supported by the papacy. In the era between World War

I and World War II, papal concern regarding democracy heightened.

According to James Hastings Nichols, author of Democracy and the

Churches, the interwar years were characterized by general

Catholic support of fascism. "Although the war [World War I] was

nominally won by the liberal democracies, its consequence was a

widespread reaction against liberal democracy."[3]

The stance of the American Catholic Church toward political

democracy during the wars is difficult to define. Pressure from

the hierarchy in Rome undoubtedly affected American opinion. "In

the interval between wars . . . the weight of American

Catholicism was consistently and often effectively thrown on the

side of antidemocratic foreign policy on orders from Italy."[4]

World-wide Catholic opinion prior to World War II can thus be

seen from a politically pro-fascist stance.

Half-hearted support of the antidemocratic policy of the

Church in Rome did not deter the American Church from supporting

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the democratic ideal, professed by them in more humanistic terms

during the Roosevelt administration and throughout World War II.

In fact, the advancement of a humanist democracy was a natural

goal of the Church. Father James Hennesey notes: "There was a

deeply rooted conviction of the basic harmony of American

democratic ways with Catholicism."[5] The American way of life,

stressing unity among people, was considered substantial and,

therefore, worth fighting for. Furthermore, Catholics were not

only concerned with guaranteeing this form of democracy in

America. "Christianizing patriotism should lead to the supreme

goal of creating a true internationalism."[6] This "true

internationalism" would receive its support from a world-wide

democracy based on humanist values.

The Church's ideals of brotherhood and unity were similar to

national ideals--ideals which were expounded with particular

enthusiasm during the war years. Nonetheless, the Church didn't

have to compromise its principles in order to realize the

harmony between American and Catholic goals; these goals worked

together naturally in the Catholic tradition. Thus, the Church

could be both Catholic and American. Catholic historian David

O'Brien voices his belief: "The American Catholic church . . .

must be fully itself, fully Catholic, and at the same time it

must be fully American, accepting in principle and practice the

demands of personal freedom, religious pluralism and democratic

culture."[7]

Thus, the Catholic tradition emphasizing the importance of a

common brotherhood with personal freedom worked well with

American emphasis on the common unity binding the American people to a national cause. The Church was caught up in the enthusiasm which swept the country, centering around a democratic victory. Eventually the Church grew to associate their own goal of a humanist democracy with the nation's goal of political democracy.

The Church's dealings with President Franklin Roosevelt had much to do with this reconciliation of beliefs. "The Great Depression . . . initiated the greatest shift in American thought and attitudes for half a century . . . [and] the American Churches responded in their own way with a new social and political awareness."[8] The demand for social awareness, in particular, was witnessed on the national, political level in Roosevelt's New Deal policy of the 1930's. His alliance with Catholic principles was reinforced prior to the onset of war in Europe:

> In his message of January 4, 1939, which has been said
> to contain "the outline of that reconstruction in their
> moral philosophy which the democracies must undertake
> if they are to survive," President Roosevelt stressed
> the fact that democracy, respect for the human person,
> for liberty, and for international good faith find
> their soundest foundation in religion and furnish
> religion with its best guarantees.[9]

Roosevelt intertwined political democracy and humanist democracy allowing the Church to see its Catholic goals as parallel and, at times, identical to those of the nation's. The Church also realized the necessity of joining the two principles. Without

the political ideology of democracy and the power it held, their own humanist philosophy wouldn't find enough strength to win over the world.

The Church's patriotic support during the war was, in part, a result of the anti-Catholic rhetoric prevailing well into the twentieth century. However, it was inevitably much more than that; that the democratic principle conformed to the Catholic way of life lent credibility to their fight for a democratic victory. Ultimately, the role women would play in the family would best assure the nation of a strong foundation and thus, a democratic victory. However, the Church's position was not purely offensive; the next chapter will address the issue of nondemocratic, anti-Christian regimes and how part of the Church's support of democracy and the family stemmed from a fear of "nondemocracy."

CHAPTER 7
THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-CHRISTIAN REGIMES

Catholic patriotism during World War II cannot easily be doubted. The number of Catholics who took up arms for the defense of their country was considerable. "Estimates put Catholic members of the armed forces in the war years at between 25 and 35 percent of the total,"[1] a number significantly "beyond their proportion in the population."[2] Thus, the Catholic community demonstrated their "Americanness."

> American Catholics had proven to the American cultural majority that they were truly American. Their alliance with Roosevelt's New Deal . . . provided a preliminary basis for their acceptance, which was extended still further by their support of the war.[3]

As noted to some extent in the previous chapter, the ultimate goal of national democracy was also a Catholic goal. It was quite possibly more important during this war than any other war, however, because the threat of nondemocratic, anti-Christian regimes was a direct threat to the American Church and its ideology. Although the Church had gained confidence in its own institution by this time, governments that pronounced blatantly anti-Christian principles were threatening nonetheless.

> The new Totalitarianisms . . . clearly proclaimed philosophies in thorough-going conflict with the philosophy of Christianity. It was no longer any mere question of dangerous tendencies; it was the devil himself.[4]

A similar paranoia is affirmed by Jacques Maritain: "Communism is not an economic system alone, it is a philosophy of life based on a coherent and absolute rejection of divine transcendence."[5]

Anti-Christian regimes were often viewed as anti-family. This particulary aroused the Church's defenses, as the family was seen as the basic institution of society (and was an important component of wartime strength). One anti-Totalitarian war article claims: "The evidences of the usurping of individual and family rights are all too evident as we look at those parts of the world today under totalitarian rule. Rights of parents are non-existent in the countries where the state is the absolute."[6]

As prior to it, the Catholic community attempted to "restore" the links in society during World War II that were really the most important--the links of the mother to the family and the family to the nation. "A careful observer of social conditions and one interested in a sound community life cannot fail to recognize that no patriotic endeavor that militates against the well-being of the home should receive public approval!"[7]

That one of the main items of concern for Catholics during the war was the perserverance of the family unit is witnessed in the defensive stance of the Church toward governments deemed anti-Christian. One of the ways in which they carried through with this ideal was in their firm belief that mothers were vital to a stable family. The defense against anti-Christian forces demonstrates that this concern was all-consuming; mothers at home were ultimately what kept the Catholic faith together. That the family played a strong role in the fight for democracy has been

noted.   But was there ultimately some other complementary goal to the making of a common brotherhood?   The next chapter will focus on the growth of the Catholic Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the Church's emphasis on Catholic renewal.

CHAPTER 8
THE CATHOLIC RENAISSANCE

In the formative years of the American Catholic Church, its
powers and priveleges were limited. "[N]ational power remained
unobtainable while Catholics were limited by language, education,
and working-class status."[1] However, as the Church grew in
numbers, it began to exert more influence in cultural, social,
political and economic areas. "During the 1880s and 1890s the
Catholic Church in America engaged in activities that dramatized
its growing strength in the United States." It witnessed
"spectacular expansion in dioceses and parochial schools."[2]
This expansion was triggered by an increasing American Catholic
population.

The large demographic growth of the Church and its slowly
increasing acceptance in American society (despite the anti-
Catholicism that never actually ceased), allowed it to gain a
certain degree of power and importance as a legitimate religious
institution. "Once an immigrant religion so oppressed that the
anti-Catholic American Party virtually controlled Congress . . .
the church had ascended to the first stage of power--local, urban
power--by 1900."[3]

Its numbers continued to grow into the twentieth century.
Between 1900 and 1920 the Catholic population rose from 10
million to almost 18 million.[4] Yet the Church's power was
still not fully recognized: "It was not till the 1920s, after a
new tide of immigration from Italy and Eastern Europe, that the
Catholic population became large enough to dominate many
cities."[5] Along with this obvious demographic growth was a

parallel growth in Catholic confidence. Between the wars "the

American Catholic community throughout its many-layered being

grew in self-assurance and acquired a sense of chosen-ness

theretofore reserved in America for those with better Puritan

credentials."[6] This adds a new dimension to the Catholic story;

it demonstrates the growing confidence of the Church which led,

in turn, to a renewed assertiveness. Even with all of this,

Catholics and Catholicsm remained "foreign and obscure to other

Americans."[7]

The activity of a "European Catholic Renaissance" in the

1930s brought forth a number of philosophial works on

Catholicism; the "[spread of this material] to America in 1933

with the opening of Sheed and Ward's New York office" brought the

spirit, as well as the content, of Europe's "revivalism" to the

country with writers like Jacques Maritain (quoted previously)

and Georges Bemanos.[8] In fact, an American Catholic revival was

in the making. Years of not knowing where and to what extent

they fit into American society was being replaced by an attitude

quite different; Catholics were now very willing to assert the

power and influence they had lacked in the early years of their

American existence. "In these years the underlying quest of

American Catholics for a unifying, integrating principle on which

to build a vision of America and their special role in it

acquired a significant new dimension."[9]

This was aided in part by the immigration quotas put into

effect in 1924 which limited the number of Catholic immigrants

that could legally enter the country. Because Catholicism tended

to be seen as an immigrant religion, the quotas allowed

Catholicism to "shed its ethnic identity."[10] Without the

restrictions inherent in a religion that was viewed as foreign by

other Americans, Catholics could now set about the task of

creating a true American Catholicism, worthy of the respect of

its contemporaries.

The growing Catholic self-awareness was fueled by a number

of other factors as well. Between 1900 and 1930 there was a

"remarkable expansion of educational facilities on every

level."[11] Both primary and secondary schools flourished. The

Catholic high school became an essential part of the "educational

enterprise." Catholic colleges, as well, became prominent and

enrollment rose steadily.[12]

In addition, the depression of the 1930s became a major

concern of Catholics. Their general support of President

Roosevelt's New Deal program was bolstered by their own

organizations. One specific organization, the Catholic Worker

Movement, founded in 1933 by Catholic convert Dorothy Day and

French immigrant Peter Maurin, was particularly influential in

the Catholic community. The organization placed "emphasis on

creative and manual work by people living and working

together."[13] It set up "hospitality houses" where workers would

meet the needs of the poor--the victims of modern capitalism.[14]

Other organizations that emphasized the growing influence of

Catholicism were popular as well: the Catholic Youth

Organization, founded in 1930; Young Christian Workers and Young

Christian Students; a Labor Alliance; and Catholic Action.[15] The

increase in organized Catholic groups not only showed Catholic

concern and support for American social causes, but demonstrated

their growing awareness of the place of Catholicism in American

society. Thus, the years prior to World War II witnessed a

growing faith in Catholic values and an attempt to assess them in

public life. Catholics were no longer content with the private

knowledge of their worthiness; they wanted all of society to

realize their value as well. Their faith was becoming much more

than "a creed, a code, or a cult. Catholicism must be seen as a

culture."[16]

The importance of the family was critical to a Catholic

identity and it inevitably came to play an important role in the

Catholic revival. Along with the emphasis on greater social

awareness came an increase in the attention allotted to the topic

of the family. Consequently, the issue of women's role in the

family and Catholic society in general would also be addressed.

"During the 1920s and after, increased attention was directed to

the family" and organizations were founded to help "strengthen

and assist family life."[17] Two organizations that assisted in

evaluating and strengthening family life were the Family Life

Bureau, founded in 1931, and the Christian Family Movement, which

prospered in the 1930s and 1940s.[18] Concern about family life

was well-founded; the family was integral to the prosperity of

Catholics as well as all Americans. And "the Catholic position,

articulated principally by sociologists and clergymen, was that

rapid social change posed a threat to family life."[19] Although

this was not a new concern, it was revived by a combination of

circumstances--the depression and Catholicism's effort at a

Catholic renaissance, an effort that required strength of every aspect of its being. That the family was perceived as a weak point in society thus generated concern among Church leaders and attempts to reverse this downhill trend were put into effect.

The number of papal encyclicals devoted to the family and, particulary, to women is indicative of the importance this topic assumed in the years preceeding World War II. Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) invoked four encyclicals addressing women's role in renewing family life. One, "The Model for Mothers" (1931), asserts:

> It will prove particularly efficacious if those mothers who in our day, weary of children and of the marriage bond, have repudiated the duties they voluntarily undertook, raise their eyes to Mary, and meditate on her who raised to such sublime heights the heavy responsibilities of motherhood.[20]

Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) also was similarly concerned with the family issue. From 1939 to the eve of American involvement in World War II, the Pope addressed the issue of women and the family on six separate occasions. From 1941 to the end of the war in 1945, thirteen additional encyclicals on women's role in Catholic society were generated. All of these affirmed that women's place in society was in the home, where they could best serve the Catholic community. The astounding number of papal encyclicals addressed to issues of women and family attest to the importance of the family in the Catholic tradition and concern over its present status in society. The number of similar encyclicals produced after the war demonstrates the continuance

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of this concern.

Papal emphasis, combined with the general Catholic population's consternation regarding the role of women and the family, stresses the substantial character of the family in Catholicism. In an era when Catholic Americans were attempting a religious renaissance that would prove their "Americanness" at the same time as reaffirming their own unique identity, this "weak spot," the decline of the family, was particularly bothersome to Catholics. As reflection on the depression turned to reflection on the war, this disparity was continuously addressed head on by the Church. The insistence that mothers remain in the home during the war years is thus seen as additional leverage in the quest to strengthen the Catholic family and the Catholic tradition.

The confidence and assertiveness of the Catholic community in the years preceeding the war inevitably spilled over into wartime ideology. Catholic historian Jay Dolan claims that a Catholic renewal on the national level would spread over national boundaries. "Catholics also shared the American desire to export their culture and religion to other countries."[21] That Catholics viewed the democratic ideal as ultimately linked to the overall Christian ideal is also essential in understanding Catholicism's unwavering belief in their own institution throughout the war.

French philosopher Jacques Maritain, whose writing became popular in America in the years before the war, asserts: "[D]emocracy . . . has never lost sight of its Christian origin."[22] The theme of democracy as a Christian derivation is

repeated throughout Catholic wartime writings. Accordingly, without a Christian commitment, democracy would not survive. "Not only does the democratic state of mind stem from the inspiration of the Gospel, but it cannot exist without it."[23] In the circumstances surrounding World War II, especially, there was a need, according to Catholics, to revitalize the Christian concept behind democracy--a need to reveal its roots in Christianity in order to understand the importance of a democratic victory. President Roosevelt himself, as noted above, was willing to address the issue of democracy and its link to religious ideals. Writing in 1942, Christian philosopher Michael de la Bedoyere states: "[S]ome well-grounded hope of restoration of civilised order lies in the spiritual and moral inspiration of Christianity."[24] How was Christianity to assert its influence in the cause of the war effort? According to some, there was no doubt that the world needed to return to "Christiandom." However, it could not be forced upon them. Christianity had to speak for itself and, in doing so, allow the world to realize the significance of the task it was undertaking.[25]

It is important to note that these authors are not claiming that the Christian principle and the democratic principle are one and the same. They do claim, however, that there is an undeniable bond between the two and that the latter depends upon the former. Since the two were not always seen as connected, a first step needed to be a recognition of this relationship. "If the democracies are to win the peace after having won the war, it will be on condition that the Christian inspiration and the democratic inspiration recognize each other and become

reconciled."[26]

Speaking directly of the war at hand, Maritain asserts:

> Thus in the fearful historical upheaval, on which
> the Pagan Empire is staking its all to liquidate
> at the same stroke Christianity and democracy, the
> chances of religion, conscience and civilization
> coincide with those of freedom; freedom's chances
> coincide with those of the evangelical message.[27]

Stating this sentiment more immediately is Michael de la Bedoyere in Christian Crisis: "[T]he victory of one side may prepare the way for the re-establishment of Christian values and the victory of the other necessarily drive Christian values from the public way of life of Western man."[28] Thus the democratic drive of World War II, must, according to Catholic thought, be intricately tied to Christianity. If a Catholic revival on the American home front is achieved, the eventual restoration of a Christian way of life to the world could be attained. The role of mothers in the home was a basic step for this national revival of the Catholic tradition and thus, ultimately, for world-wide conversion.

CHAPTER 9
TYING TOGETHER THE LINKS

How, then, is the reader to understand the relationship
between the different facets of the Church's position during
World War II? The main point of this thesis is to demonstrate
that there were a number of factors at work in determining the
stance that the Church took, particularly with the issue of
women working during the war. A dialectical discourse appears
between the Church's beliefs regarding mothers in the work force
and its historical position in society. This includes, but is
not limited to, its views on anti-Catholicism, patriotism,
democracy and Catholic renewal.

A simple cause and effect model will surely not suffice in
this instance. Instead, one needs to understand that these
specific factors are related in a much more intricate fashion.
In fact, this dialectical approach to the argument ultimately
becomes necessary in understanding the relationship between
women, democracy, patriotism, and war.

The Church's views on mothers in the work place is clear;
her place is undoubtedly in the home. If a strong democracy is
to be built and to survive, a solid foundation must be grounded
in the stability of the family. Also, if a revival of Catholicism
is ever to succeed, this same familial orientation has to be
maintained; in times of war, this ideal must not be allowed to
break down. In fact, it is at these times that it is even more
important to emphasize and enforce the bulwark of the family as a
means to victory. The home is built on the mother; the nation is

built on the home.

For maintaining this viewpoint and emphasizing it so strongly, the Church might easily have been ticketed as anti-patriotic; anything that might impede the war effort was commonly labeled as such. Conversely, the Church not only supported the war cause, but it had an ultimate stake in it. That stake was a democratic victory which would follow the Church's belief that the democratic way of life was necessary for a renewal of Catholicism.

The end of the war saw a conservative trend in American society in general that mirrored Catholic attitudes. The return to peace was followed closely by a change in attitude with regard to women; a change in behavior is evidenced as well. "The blows dealt to family life by the material deprivation of the 1930s and the dislocations and anxieties of the war years enhanced the attractions of domestic privacy."[1] Although this wasn't true of all of society, the general trend was for women to retain their traditional roles in post-war years. The romanticism and economic prosperity of the post-war years helped ease American women back into these roles. "Within a few months, what Betty Friedan later dubbed 'the feminine mystique' had come to dominate American popular culture."[2] Renewed emphasis was placed on family and the mother's role in the family. "The disruptions of family life during the war . . . had caused family life to be more highly valued, prompting a renewed emphasis on it in the post-war period."[3] Thus, a return to "normalcy" invariably meant a return to a conservative, traditional role for women, a role that the Catholic Church had consistently advocated from the

start.

By the 1950s, the Catholic revival had been attained to a great degree.

> Catholicism in the United States had clearly come of age
> . . . Being Catholic was indeed compatible with being
> American. The religious revival of the 1950s
> demonstrated how conducive the United States was to
> religion, and this only served to boost the confidence
> of Catholics about their place in the nation.[4]

Catholic strength had demonstrated itself to the American public; with the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960 as the first Catholic president, the institution had finally proven its worthiness on a national level. Furthermore, it did this without giving up any of its basic principles.

World War II impels us to look at the Catholic Church from a unique perspective. The issue of women, particulary mothers, in the work force allows the reader a glimpse at what lies behind Catholic convictions. It shows the consistency which the Church brought to social and political problems, a consistency which extends far beyond the war years. Recognizing the importance of the history of the American Church and its ideological structure makes the job of comprehending any particular stand the Church takes on an issue that much easier. By supporting the belief that mothers should remain in the home with the family during the war, the Church exposes much about what it values in its identity; it reveals what the Church considers crucial to its existence. And, in the instance of World War II, the Church's

belief is quite clear: "We shall have lost the war if we lose the home."[5]

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