REFORM IN THE QUEEN CITY:
RELIGION AND RACE IN CINCINNATI IN THE ERA OF VATICAN II

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School
of the University of Notre Dame
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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February 2017
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This dissertation examines how the Roman Catholic community of Cincinnati, Ohio, experienced the reform movement initiated by the Catholic Church’s Second Vatican Council, at which the world’s bishops met in Rome in four sessions between 1962 and 1965. The study focuses on two aspects of conciliar reform as it shaped life in Cincinnati: Jewish-Catholic relations and the Catholic response to racism in church and society. As such it makes two major interventions into the historiography.

First, while the Second Vatican Council (“Vatican II”) is often touted as a revolutionary moment given its repudiation of centuries of Catholic anti-Semitism, in Cincinnati such a pronouncement barely rippled among local Catholics and Jews, who had long cooperated, especially on civic projects, with little thought for the theological obstacles that ostensibly divided them. Thus what was revolutionary at the level of the global Church was met with little attention at the local level. Second, Vatican II’s neglect of race as a discrete social concern fueled intra-Catholic conflict over the Church’s
response to discrimination in local communities. With no clear direction on how the Catholic laity were to respond to racism, despite making forceful admonitions that lay men and women should be deeply engaged in their surrounding communities, Vatican II led to bitter disputes over the propriety of lay activism on race or even the acknowledgement of race as a systemic illness of American society. How religious believers were to reform their own communities, then, was conditioned by their experience of reform within their own traditions, with local conditions taking priority over universal pronouncements at the highest levels of theological authority. To paraphrase a well-worn saying: “All religion is local.”

In Cincinnati, Catholics determined a formal response to these problems through an archdiocesan synod, which concluded in 1971 and outlined the local Church’s renewal process vis-à-vis Vatican II and contemporary social upheaval. Most importantly for this dissertation, Cincinnati Catholics confirmed their friendship with Cincinnati Jews, acknowledged the need for a coherent racial policy, and formulated a response to the conditions of their community in the post-Vatican II world.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Despite most of its labor being solitary, every academic project is the result of numerous contributions. Across both space and time, works such as this dissertation ultimately are collaborative. My debts for this work are nearly countless.

My status as a first-generation student has alternately aided or hindered all of my academic progress; it was thus that, when I arrived at the University of Notre Dame in August 2011, newly married and newly a homeowner, I felt truly out of place. However, many faculty eased that transition and have fostered my development as a scholar with patience, kindness, and generosity. I am grateful to James Smyth for not only accepting me as a student but also for conferring his blessing when I abandoned the field of eighteenth-century Britain for the twentieth-century United States. Welcoming me to the fold was Mark Noll, who somehow found time and energy to take yet another student. Mark is the model of Christian scholarship, a gentleman in the purest sense of the word.

My intellectual journey was not over when I entered the Noll cadre, however, and soon Kathleen Sprows Cummings agreed to advise me in conjunction with Mark. Over time it became clear that Kathy would be my primary advisor, taking on all of the responsibility of guiding, encouraging, critiquing, and supporting my work – tasks I made easy some days and quite difficult others. Yet throughout my time at Notre Dame she has been an unfailing champion of my intellectual interests, ensuring that I moved toward a
completed dissertation as quickly as possible without sacrificing rigorous analysis and
close attention to sources. More importantly, her patience and genuine empathy of the life
of a graduate student – especially one with a young family – has meant that her support
has seen me through several extraordinarily difficult periods. Her service has been solace
more often than she knows.

I have been fortunate to meet and engage some of the brightest minds in their
fields. Thomas Tweed and Mike Amezcua generously agreed to serve on this
dissertation’s committee. Tom especially provided a great deal of thought-provoking
commentary, pushing me to think in ways I had not considered. For those who know his
work, his fingerprints are legible in numerous places in the document below. David
Endres served as a willing source on Cincinnati Catholic history. More importantly, this
dissertation is in one sense the product of his assistance, as he facilitated my access to the
Chancery Archive of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The many hours spent at the
Archive’s two locations on Eighth Street were filled with surprise, excitement,
consternation, and a revitalized interest in the possibilities of the local scale of history.

Other scholars provided much-needed companionship on the journey,
accompanying me not so much in the content of my work as the daily work of the
historian. Dan Vivian has been both mentor and role model, patiently listening and
commiserating while constantly showing me how historians can be deeply engaged in
local communities and carry out service to the public. The University of Louisville is
fortunate to have Dan’s formidable intellectual and technical knowledge; I am fortunate
for his guidance and support.
Of course, historians can accomplish nothing without standing on the shoulders of archivists. Karen Oddi kindly hosted me at the Archive of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis; while that place has faded from this project, it remains on my interminable list of projects to pursue later. Richard Hamilton helped begin my research at the Chancery Archive of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, wisely shepherding his collections and ultimately granting me free reign over the materials. His friendship energized the sometimes-monotonous grind of research. More importantly, over lunches at Sophia’s and long phone conversations, he showed me an openness of spirit and an attitude of self-giving that is hard to fine. As Richard began my work in the Cincinnati archdiocesan archive, Sarah Patterson finished it, taking over at the archive’s beautiful new home next to St. Louis Church. Sarah was a source of countless data on the archdiocese, never failing to track down even the most banal of documentation and sending files my way with alacrity. The history of the archdiocese — indeed, an enormous piece of the history of Cincinnati — is safe in Sarah’s hands. The librarians at the Cincinnati Museum Center swiftly attended to my many requests for materials and were always happy to indulge my need for living conversation after a long day communing with the dead. At the American Jewish Archives, Joe Weber was a cheerful presence and extraordinarily helpful; Dana Hermann welcomed me warmly each time I visited; and Rabbi Dr. Gary Zola always showed a keen interest in the work of each scholar.

The support given by many in ways not directly related to the dissertation’s content has been as significant as the intellectual contributions mentioned above. Ben Wetzel is an exemplar of virtue and industriousness. I am grateful that Kathy Cummings welcomed to her cohort Jill Plummer, Andy Mach, and Jim Breen, colleagues to which I
feel a particular affinity. Another of Kathy’s students, Natalie Sargent, has gone from friendly acquaintance, to trusted colleague, to cherished friend – her generosity has kept the Skaggs household running smoothly and given all of us much-needed space and time to grow and breathe. Our sons always look forward to visits from Nat-uh-lee. Fr. Stephen Koeth likewise has become not only a dear friend but also displayed truly priestly kindness, finding space in his Mass schedule whenever I have needed it. Msgr. Michael Heintz, whose brilliance took him from his St. Matthew’s congregation to training the next generation of priests at Mt. St. Mary’s Emmitsburg, baptized both of our sons during our time in South Bend. Fully aware that sacraments work *ex opere operato*, we will always be grateful that it was he who brought Henry and George fully into the Church. Fr. Wilson Miscamble has supported our family with his prayer and kindness.

Many in the Notre Dame community gave me opportunities to hone my scholarly and pedagogical skills. I am grateful for conversations on Catholic research resources with Pat Lawton and Jean McManus. Greg Doyle and Tom Cummings brought me into the Satellite Theological Education Program, where I learned more about teaching than I had ever expected.

Funding for this dissertation was provided by a number of generous benefactors. The American Dream program in the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts funded research into Chapters 2 and 3. The Department of History and ISLA’s general fund supported conference presentations that allowed me to hone several chapters. Grants from the College of Arts and Letters Advisory Program and the Mellon Grant for Religion across the Disciplines supported my work in the summer of 2016. The American Catholic Historical Association awarded me a Presidential Travel Grant and Summer Research
Grant, which supported research on Chapters 2 and 3 as well as presenting elements of Chapter 3 at the American Catholic Historical Association Annual Meeting in January 2016.

Finally, none of this would have been possible without the innumerable contributions of my family. My parents Mike and Brenda sacrificed greatly to provide the best education available through grade school and high school; my grandmother, Peggy, and her longtime sweetheart Earl made sure that none of us ever needed for anything. Kim Skaggs and Tom Dwyer have provided their support and encouragement for several years by now. My sister Katie has helped keep me silly. My mother-in-law, Carole Wadsworth, made much of this project feasible by giving me a place to stay during research visits. Christopher McCartin, family in the broader sense of the word, has been my constant companion, even from a distance.

When Caroline married me in August 2011, I very much doubt she knew precisely what she was in for in wedding a graduate student. Neither did I. She has been my rock – encouraging me, celebrating with me, consoling me, and putting up with me when no reasonable person should have done so. In a very real way this dissertation is as much hers as it is mine. Even if completing this dissertation was not quite miraculous, much more incredible is the beauty of the two children she bore and has raised with me. It is no accident that, even at the end of those exhausting days when our toddlers Henry and George have done their level best to make as many messes as possible and sap every ounce of energy out of us, we put them to bed and soon wish they were awake with us still.
What insights this dissertation provides rest upon the support of the people above.

Its shortcomings are my own.
INTRODUCTION

In May 2016, Cincinnati’s City Council passed a resolution to support Mayor John Cranley’s wish for the city to recognize identification cards issued by Catholic Charities of Southwest Ohio on behalf of the Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati (MARCC).1 The IDs were intended for “the homeless, undocumented immigrants, those recently returning from incarceration and others who face challenges getting standard state IDs.” While the IDs carry limitations - they cannot be used to apply for a job, for instance - Kurt Grossman, Immigration Chair for the American Jewish Committee of Cincinnati, said that they “bring dignity and safety to a broad spectrum of our community.” The resolution passed easily and MARCC has offered several ID registration events over the course of 2016.2

From its founding in 1968, MARCC has served as a unifying body for the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish communities of Cincinnati to cooperate on issues of

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contemporary social concern. The timing of MARCC’s coalescence was not coincidental. In the late 1960s, more and more Americans were coming to grips with the era’s social crises. Despite federal legislative victories in the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965), racism continued to rend the fabric of American communities; Cincinnati itself experienced a race riot in the summer of 1967. Even more specifically to Cincinnati, the influx of both black and Appalachian families to the urban core posed new questions about the city’s ability to address systemic poverty, a problem which the Archdiocese of Cincinnati partially addressed through its Bible Center Apostolate. The city, like countless others across the United States, continued to deal also with \textit{de facto} segregation in housing. Religious communities themselves contained a stark lack of diversity: the city had few black Catholics, even fewer (if any) black Jews, and a Protestant community comprised largely of racially homogenous congregations. Yet that these communities would unite as MARCC in 1968 to address these problems was unsurprising on at least several counts. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews were also involved in Project Commitment, a lecture and discussion program aimed at educating the community about racial strife and strategies for countering its structural underpinnings. More narrowly, Catholics and Jews had been engaged in cooperative processes for several years already, especially as the Jewish community followed the Second Vatican Council and local Catholic leaders tried to interpret the Council’s Roman developments for Jews at the local level.

\footnote{3}{“History,” Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati, accessed Nov. 18, 2016, \url{http://www.marcconline.com/home/about/history.html}.}

Indeed much of the world at least noted with interest the epoch-defining event of Pope John XXIII’s early papacy, when in January 1959 he announced his intention to convoke an ecumenical council with the general goal of *aggiornamento* for the Church, using one of those multivalent - some would say vague - Italian words that translates best (although still roughly) to “bringing-up-to-date”. After an extensive preparatory period, the first session lasted from October until December 1962. John died in June 1963.

Giovanni Battista Cardinal Montini was elected pope, taking the name Paul VI and immediately announcing his intention to continue the council. The remaining three sessions ran from September to December 1963, 1964, and 1965.

In December 1963 Paul promulgated *Sacrosanctum concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) and *Inter mirifica* (Decree on the Means of Social Communication). The third session was more productive, resulting in *Lumen gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), *Orientalium ecclesiarum* (Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite), and *Unitatis redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism). The Council ended in December 1965 with a flood of official proclamations, including *Christus Dominus* (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops), *Perfectæ caritatis* (Decree on the Renewal of Religious [Vowed] Life), *Optatam totius* (Decree on Priestly Training),

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5 Officially, the documents were issued personally by Paul. In practice, they were the result of conciliar deliberations by the assembled bishops in St. Peter’s Basilica. Throughout the dissertation I follow the custom of capitalizing only the first word of the title of Church documents, unless in English translation. This usage is because the Latin titles almost always come from the first few words of the document itself. *Christus Dominus* only seems to break this rule; as that phrase translate to “Christ the Lord,” *Dominus* retains its capitalization.
Gravissimum educationis (Decree on Christian Education), Nostra ætate (Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions), Dei verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation), Apostolicam actuositatem (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity), Dignitatis humanæ (Declaration on Religious Liberty), Ad gentes (Decree on Missionary Activity), Presbyterorum ordinis (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests), and Gaudium et spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the Modern World). Of even more immediate effect was the mutual lifting of excommunications by the Western and Eastern Churches of 1054, one day before the Council’s solemn closing on December 8, 1965.

III

This dissertation’s broadest goal is to determine what influence Vatican II, both as a series of meetings and as an imaginative force, exerted on Catholicism in Cincinnati, Ohio. The dissertation further considers how the Council changed Catholic life in terms specifically religious and more broadly civic: in other words, how did Catholics change as a result of Vatican II?

As the following four chapters show, the Second Vatican Council changed the course of Cincinnati Catholicism in several distinctive ways. While Cincinnati’s Catholics reacted publicly to much of Vatican II’s reform agenda, it was the Council’s directives on modifying the Catholic Mass that occasioned the most frequent - and most voluble - response by lay men and women in Cincinnati. That response arose from an assertiveness on the part of the Catholic laity that would come to be endorsed explicitly by the Council Fathers themselves, the bishops who envisioned a Church in which the
laity “openly reveal to [the bishops] their needs and desires with that freedom and
confidence which is fitting for children of God and brothers in Christ.”

The Council’s clear opening of the possibility of lay Catholics making known
their needs was paired with its vagueness or even near-silence on other issues, some of
which affected Cincinnati and its Catholic community deeply. One such issue was the
contemporary racial crisis then rippling through most American communities. The
Council Fathers said little on race in the official documents of Vatican II; however, the
general movement of reform through the Catholic Church toward the end of the Council
and the years afterward fueled bitter conflict among Cincinnati’s Catholics as they
grappled with questions of racial equity. Yet even as the Council was silent on some
issues that bore directly upon the state of affairs in Cincinnati, it said volumes on others
that made little difference in the Queen City. The Council’s Declaration on the Relation
of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, for example, meant little to a Cincinnati
community in which Catholics and Jews had been relating well for quite some time.

IV

By focusing on Cincinnati, this dissertation contributes to a “re-finding” of what
Midwestern historian John Lauck calls “the lost region.” Frederick Witzig castigates
historians for their neglect of the Midwest, giving voice to those pushed to defend
choosing Midwestern subjects of inquiry: “Is the history of the average American, of all

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6 Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican
Website, Nov. 21, 1964, sec. 37, accessed Nov. 16, 2016,
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-
gentium_en.html.

7 John K. Lauck, *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (Iowa City: Iowa
colors and ethnicities, not important enough to understand?” Philip Barlow has wondered whether the Midwest is, in demographic terms, America “writ small.” If one were to code a map of the United States according to any given criterion, Barlow argues - concentrations of race, religious adherence, income, and so on - the Midwest would stand out by virtue of its sheer diversity, rather than showing the heavy concentrations found elsewhere in the country.

Historians are devoting more and more attention to the Midwest as a source for understanding significant events and trends in American history. Harvard historian Lizabeth Cohen’s seminal work on Depression-era industrial labor in Chicago remains central to contemporary labor history. Frederick Jackson Turner’s intellectual descendant William Cronon’s *Nature’s Metropolis*, on Chicago, is foundational in numerous fields, especially urban and environmental history.

Yet Cohen’s and Cronon’s work, though indispensable in several circles, contributes to the longstanding problem of substituting Chicago for the entire Midwest. Less well-known is recent work aimed at lifting up other cities as worthy of close attention. Adam Criblez’s *Parading Patriotism* includes Chicago but lavishes equal

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attention to four other cities: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Indianapolis.\textsuperscript{12} To Criblez, understanding “the urban Midwest” requires looking at some combination of cities more often treated by local or amateur historians.

Cincinnati enjoyed prominence in the region prior to the rise of Chicago as the Midwest’s urban titan. By 1819 Cincinnatians thought the city “justly styled” as “Queen of the West”; three decades later, Mainer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow found himself astounded by city leader Nicholas Longworth’s vineyards and wrote “Catawba Wine” in honor of “the Queen of the West / in her garlands dressed / on the banks of the Beautiful River.”\textsuperscript{13} As Chicago came to dominate the industrial and agricultural markets of the nation’s interior, however, Cincinnati fell to second-tier status and away from national noteworthiness. Yet the Queen City, as Longfellow (among others) called Cincinnati, functions as an exemplar of how ostensibly universal religious reform is received and implemented unevenly at the local level. Not all American cities received, understood, or implemented Vatican II like Cincinnati did, of course; however, what the city does tell us is that in the long-term dialogue between a center like Rome and a periphery like an American city, local conditions determined the ultimate way ahead.

The historiography on Cincinnati Catholicism itself is sparse. Aside from rich, focused, article-length work by Revs. David Endres and Edmund Hussey, both priests of the Archdiocese, little scholarly attention has been devoted to Catholics in the Queen City.\textsuperscript{14} Rev. John Lamott published his \textit{History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati} in 1921


\textsuperscript{13} “How did Cincinnati come to be known as the Queen City?” Cincinnati Museum Center, accessed Nov. 18, 2016, \url{http://library.cincymuseum.org/cincifaq.htm#queencity}. 

\textsuperscript{14}
as a centennial commemoration. It reads, like much historiography of the time, as a valedictory chronicle of institution building. Roger Fortin followed in Lamott’s footsteps at the other end of the twentieth century; however, his *Faith and Action*, while acknowledging the contemporary social contexts in which local Catholicism has developed over time, ultimately still provides a numbers-and-names timeline of archdiocesan growth rather than a critical history.

Although this dissertation is not an archdiocesan history in the style of Lamott and Fortin, focusing on Cincinnati via its Catholic archdiocese is advantageous for what it tells historians about local Catholicism. As Kathleen Sprows Cummings, Timothy Matovina, and Robert Orsi note, in the Catholic worldview “a diocese is Catholicism in miniature,” a local reflection of the universal Church. Here, they point out, is where the Second Vatican Council’s decisions “were experienced most intimately and unpredictably,” two descriptors that, as this dissertation shows, apply well for Cincinnati. This dissertation aims to begin fulfilling “the promise…of a fuller and richer history of the meanings and consequences of [Vatican II] than is currently possible” by embracing the complexities, the felicities (and infelicities), and the contradictions that Vatican II engendered in one place.

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14 For example, see Endres, “‘Take the Word of God to the Heart of the City’”; M. Edmund Hussey, “Two Archbishops of Cincinnati and the Second Vatican Council,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17 no. 4 (1999): 83-98.


18 Cummings *et. al.* *ibid.*
A primary concern of extending beyond the diocesan framework in Cincinnati is Catholics’ historic engagement with race. William Osborne made an early intervention in the Catholic approach to American racism and the ensuing conflict over how, or even whether, to solve that problem. His 1967 diagnoses of the contemporary American Church could read, as this dissertation will show, as though Osborne was observing Cincinnati as he wrote: the continuation of Catholic racism despite the implementation of desegregationist policies; the phenomenon of “the thinking and actions of the Catholic people lag[ging] behind the Church’s moral teaching on interracial justice, behind the official statements of the bishops, and behind the progressive positions taken by laymen in the Catholic interracial movement”; and, especially pronounced in Cincinnati, the episcopal tendency to value stability over radical change, with the result that many bishops - including Cincinnati’s Archbishop Karl J. Alter - hedged on questions of racism.19

Later historians of American Catholicism have arrived at other conclusions about Catholic approaches to racial questions, some of which apply to Cincinnati at midcentury and others of which do not. John McGreevy cites the geographically-limited parish as the spatial source for historic Catholic opposition to integration: unable simply to attend another parish, Catholics in the urban north fought vigorously against attempts at including blacks in the life of the parish.20 As this dissertation shows, by the 1960s Catholic resistance to progressive racial projects in Cincinnati was based not only on


physical proximity in housing but also on the implication that white Catholics “owed” something to blacks or somehow bore responsibility for American structural racism. There were attempts in Cincinnati, however, to calm the fears of white Catholics over the entry of blacks into “their” neighborhoods, with the specter of lowered home values looming over all.\textsuperscript{21} On the other hand, those Catholics who worked to address racial inequity in Cincinnati bore out McGreevy’s observations elsewhere in the country that Catholic interracial efforts often crossed the lines of faith.\textsuperscript{22}

The ecumenical aspect of Catholic racial activism represents a point of entry of Catholics into the history of the civil rights movement, if for no other reason than by Catholic association with already well-known Protestant racial activism, as Bentley Anderson’s research on New Orleans reveals.\textsuperscript{23} In Cincinnati, Catholic racial activists certainly enjoyed more prestige in ecumenical and interfaith circles than within their own church, where they were sometimes derided as radicals. As in New Orleans, the prodding of lay Catholics for a stronger response by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati was part and parcel of the contemporary post-Vatican II “awakening” of the Catholic laity to a more vocal position in the Church, setting the stage for widespread protest in other areas of Catholic life beyond the scope of this dissertation.\textsuperscript{24}

The connection between the Second Vatican Council and racial activism has been more or less tenuous depending on the subject of historians’ work. McGreevy, for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} McGreevy, \textit{ibid.}, 4.
\item \textsuperscript{22} McGreevy, \textit{ibid.}, 254.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Anderson, \textit{ibid.}, xv.
\end{itemize}
instance, notes that the sight of clergy in civil rights marches was sometimes far more
effective in pushing Catholics toward racial progressivism than Conciliar decrees.25 Amy
Koehlinger, on the other hand, describes a much closer, mutually-constitutive connection
between activism on race and contemporary Catholic reform, especially as both were
experienced by vowed woman religious.26 Vatican II itself was vague on the matter,
gesturing to the importance of eliminating racism but offering no programmatic solution
for Catholics to implement.27 Cincinnati Catholicism bore the brunt of this ambiguity,
with some Catholics interpreting the Council’s call for a Church engaged with the world
to demand racial activism; others lumped such activism in with a perceived avalanche of
change rolling down from on Roman high, rejecting such projects as simply too much to
handle.

While Cincinnati has received little scholarly attention, African American
reformer James H. Robinson’s 1919 description of Cincinnati as “a northern city with a
southern exposure” suggests its importance for understanding interracial tensions even as
the century wore on.28 As Victoria Wolcott notes, this “southern exposure” was due in
large part to the city’s location across the Ohio River from Kentucky. Her monograph
includes a lengthy analysis of Cincinnati’s Coney Island amusement park, whose

25 McGreevy, Parish Boundaries, 156-158.


27 Colleen McDannell, The Spirit of Vatican II: A History of Catholic Reform in America (New

Conference on Social Work (June 1-8, 1919), 524; quoted in Victoria W. Wolcott, Race, Riots, and Roller
Coasters: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania
Press, 2012), 89.
“southern exposure” was its substantial clientele from Kentucky, often used by park officials to absolve themselves of responsibility for discriminatory admissions policies. Yet Wolcott also argues implicitly that this “southern exposure” is ultimately meaningless: suggesting that racism was a southern problem glosses over the systemic discrimination found throughout the American north (especially, in Wolcott’s case, at sites of recreation).29

When Catholic Cincinnatians engaged questions of the social order as part of Conciliar reform, they did so not only as religious believers but as American citizens. David O’Brien argued in 1989 that “after two centuries of organized existence in the United States, the American church has not evolved a coherent understanding of its public role and responsibilities.”30 If that were still true in 1989 at the national level, then it had become eminently clear in Cincinnati, Ohio by the middle of the 1960s. These two processes represented a “double struggle” for Catholics, played out across the nation and in Cincinnati. Catholic grappling with the implications of Vatican II meant that, for many, contemporary social turmoil was mirrored by the end of pre-Conciliar Catholicism, a frustration voiced by no few Cincinnati Catholics. None of these men and women doubted that they were both fully American and fully Catholic; where they disagreed, and sometimes sharply so, was over how one should inform the other.

In broader terms, by the middle of the twentieth century the general role of religion as a social adhesive was broadly accepted. Will Herberg’s landmark Protestant, Catholic, Jew appeared in 1955 and argued that what was most important to most

29 Wolcott, ibid., 5.
Americans was “faith in faith” (even if that faith was not particularly deep), enlisting President Eisenhower as proof: Ike once said “our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don’t care what it is.”

Eisenhower himself embodied “faith in faith” perfectly. Andrew Preston describes Ike’s faith as “more broadly ecumenical and less doctrinally informed” than that of George Washington, citing the time a Cabinet meeting began and someone reminded Ike to pause for a moment. Eisenhower responded “Oh, goddammit, we forgot the silent prayer.”

Yet if religion, broadly conceived, was significant to Americans at midcentury, it is - or ought to be - equally significant to historians of the era. This dissertation aims for a more natural integration, or a cross-fertilization, between the fields of religious history and American history in general. It takes a cue from Thomas McIntire, who notes that starting in the 1970s scholars, “feeling the tensions of the secular and religious dichotomy…resisted placement on the religious side of the dichotomy, and struggled for recognition as secular studies free of the touch of religion.”

Casting aspersions on “general deference” to those he calls “practitioners of the secular option,” McIntire laments an academic worldview which overwhelmingly takes the saeculum, that which is non-religious, “to be both basic and ultimate, the beginning and the end.”

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34 McIntire, “Transcending Dichotomies,” 87.
If the sæculum is both the alpha and the omega, then religion must be explained away. Brad Gregory decries that effort by distinguishing explaining religion from understanding religion. He argues that attempts to explain religion without conceding the possibility that its adherents’ claims are true are implicitly biased by the explainer’s secular assumptions.35 This dissertation avoids separating religio-theological pronouncements by its subjects from concurrent, parallel, interweaved, or overlapping social, economic, or political influences. Respecting the coexistence of such influences carries out the mission set forth by Eric Cochrane in 1975, when he challenged Catholic historians to prevent religion from being “suffocated.”36

Thomas Tweed lauds the later twentieth-century efforts of “religion specialists” to move toward “religion as practiced,” rather than taking institutional, doctrinal, and elite aspects of belief to be the sum total of a religious tradition; at the same time, Tweed calls minimizing “the significance of clergy, beliefs, ecclesiastical institutions, prescribed rituals, and consecrated spaces” a loss to religious studies.37 I position my dissertation as a bridge between those advantages and disadvantages, considering both the “religion as practiced” by Catholics and Jews of Cincinnati while also keeping religious institutions in focus (especially the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its affiliated organizations). However, as Tweed reminds us, even the word “religion” does not carry


an automatic meaning. Is it part of the “everyday” or is it necessarily confined to those times and places set apart as “religious” (organized worship, time designated for prayer by individuals, etc.)? Is it “ordinary” or “extraordinary,” “natural” or “supernatural”? Tweed also observes that scholars use “a more or less self-consciously crafted definition” of religion.38

At the risk of oversimplification, this dissertation defines “religion” for the Catholics in this dissertation as “all of the above”: for the individuals who appear below, their faith was ordinary and extraordinary, natural and supernatural, both set apart and intrinsically woven into their existence. These men and women understood their faith as a total response to and explanation for the entirety of life. To be sure, the thoroughgoing reforms of the Second Vatican Council presented a challenge for many of them; for some, the notion that any single element of the faith could be changed (even if only in understanding and not in essential content) was enough to drive them out of the Church. For many others, Catholicism still represented an existential totality. What had changed was what to “do” with the faith: rather than an individualistic attempt to ensure salvation, being Catholic meant undertaking a mission to the surrounding community and indeed the whole world. Furthermore, that mission was no longer the special ambit of religious orders or zealous clergy, as the “People of God,” with its full inclusion of the laity, were set on a course to bring Christ to all.39

38 Tweed, “After the Quotidian Turn,” 374.

39 For instance, Gaudium et spes took only two paragraphs before explaining that the Church was henceforth focused “on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of the realities in the midst of which it lives.” Second Vatican Council, Gaudium et spes [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World], Vatican Website, Dec. 7, 1965, sec. 2, accessed Nov. 8, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.
For Catholics then and since, Vatican II was epoch-making. The historiography on the Second Vatican Council is vast, even if still confined to Catholic scholarly circles. Giuseppe Alberigo’s *magnum opus*, the edited, multi-volume *History of Vatican II* remains the standard reference for narrow Conciliar history. This dissertation is not so much a history of the Council, however, as it is a history of the Council’s reception at the local level. Works in that vein, too, are many, with any Catholic history touching on the 1960s obligated to acknowledge the Council’s vast influence over contemporary Catholic life.

Particularly rich, however, are works like Colleen McDannell’s intimate history of the Council as seen through the eyes of her own mother. At the same time that McDannell accurately notes that education on the Council and its implementation were starkly uneven across the United States, what unified the American experience of Vatican II was the significance of the local Church, the participation in the Council by local bishops, reactions to the Council by parish priests, news on the Council in the diocesan newspaper, and so on.

Timothy Kelly’s research on Pittsburgh provides a model for understanding local interpretations of Vatican II by examining as close to a “typical” diocese as one might come: “One can read the Pittsburgh story without worrying that other American dioceses had completely different experiences.” Furthermore, while Cincinnati has fallen away

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42 McDannell, *ibid.*, 120.

from prominence in American historiography ever since Chicago eclipsed it - the Second City overtaking the Queen City - in the nineteenth century, like Pittsburgh, Cincinnati’s leaders “played significant roles in the national ecclesiastical and cultural scene.”\textsuperscript{44}

Archbishop Karl J. Alter served as chair of the National Catholic Welfare Conference’s Administrative board from 1952 to 1955 and 1958 to 1961, chair of the board’s Department of Lay Organizations from 1956 to 1958, and secretary of the board from 1962 to 1966.\textsuperscript{45} The city’s Jewish community also hosted a number of national leaders in Jewish affairs, as seen in Chapter Three, and Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion remained the intellectual heart of Reform Judaism in the United States. As with Pittsburgh, Cincinnati offers a representative glimpse into contemporary American Catholicism as experienced by the majority of American Catholics.

By examining one particular locality, this project fits well with the Lived History of Vatican II Project, co-sponsored by the University of Notre Dame and Northwestern University, whose culminating book gathers chapter-length studies of the Council’s reception in dioceses around the world. Rather than confining itself to institutional history, the project’s self-limitation to the diocese is a useful geographic filter rather than a preference for an older style of historiography predicated upon “builder bishops” and the establishment of parishes. This dissertation was in its earliest stage of formation when the Lived History project began and thus has been informed throughout by the project’s methods and questions. The project’s illustration of the enormous diversity marking the reception of Vatican II around the world recommends the usefulness of local studies like

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44} Kelly, \textit{ibid.}, vii.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Sarah Patterson to author, email, Feb. 16, 2016.
\end{itemize}
a dissertation on Cincinnati, Ohio. As project leaders Kathleen Sprows Cummings, Timothy Matovina, and Robert Orsi write,

...the historical significance of the Council, within but also outside specifically Catholic contexts, is best examined at the combustive points where the Council’s messages, aspirations, and fears, explicit and implied, intended and unintended, met up most explosively with the particular circumstances of the modern world it was directed to engage in a new spirit of openness and humility by Pope John XXIII.46

Cincinnati typifies this “meeting up” of the Council with particular, local circumstances; both the intended and unintended consequences of Vatican II unfolded dramatically in the Queen City. As Cummings, Matovina, and Orsi put it, the Council was “heard differently” in different places around the world.47 This dissertation re-broadcasts how Vatican II was heard in Cincinnati. The Lived History of Vatican II Project especially informs Chapter One below.

Cincinnati’s sizable and historic Reform Jewish community offers my dissertation the opportunity to contribute to American Jewish history from an angle as yet unattempted in the historiography: the history of Jewish-Catholic relations is thin in general, much less as they concern the United States, and scholars of American religion still tend to study Judaism entirely on its own. Numerous elements of Cincinnati’s Jewish community commend its inclusion in an otherwise Catholic project; while they will be elaborated upon at much greater length in Chapter Three, a brief overview of Cincinnati’s contribution to American Jewish history will suffice here.

Cincinnati hosts a number of historic Jewish congregations, including the oldest west of the Alleghenies, and also the one that welcomed Isaac M. Wise, the leading rabbi

46 Cummings, et. al., eds., Vatican II.

47 Cummings, et. al., eds., ibid.
in the American Reform movement in the nineteenth century (see Chapter Three, below). Wise was an inveterate institution builder, founding the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (specifically for Reform Jews), Hebrew Union College (which has since developed into the intellectual and rabbinical powerhouse of American Reform Judaism), the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis, and *The American Israelite*, which appears throughout this dissertation. More analogously to Catholicism, Reform Judaism was an attempt by Jews to reconcile (if not outright synthesize) their Jewishness and their Americanness, siting themselves in a local community in a way unimagined and unthinkable by the Orthodox.48 For analyzing interfaith connections and common ground in the United States, there are few groups better suited to the task than Reform Jews and Roman Catholics.

Yet work on Jewish-Catholic relations remains limited, as does that on Jewish-black exchanges. Most significantly for this dissertation Cheryl Greenburg notes that Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement found Jews initially invested in racial equity but later distancing themselves from the militancy that characterized some wings of black activism.49 Cincinnati bore this out, with the city’s overwhelmingly white Jewish population serving on multiple civic organizations to further racial progress; at the same time, *The American Israelite* gave little attention to the Black Manifesto, the 1969 document that radically called for massive reparations from white Christians and Jews for the historic oppression of blacks.


The process narrated by Lila Corwin Berman on the decades leading up to the 1960s - white Jews moving further and further away from Detroit’s urban core as blacks began entering the suburbs - reflects what had happened in Cincinnati over the same period. Queen City Jews were becoming more and more aware that their spread outward had been the result, at least partially, of distaste for living near blacks, with one prominent Jew - Alfred Segal, the “Conscience of Cincinnati” - publicly expressing remorse for his own racism in the past. In Cincinnati, Jewish recognition of this historical pattern fueled self-education and activism toward racial equity.

Historians long have neglected Jewish-Catholic relations, although theologians have done better. Most notable is John Connelly’s assertion that *Nostra ætate*, Vatican II’s Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, was the result not primarily of Catholic guilt over the Holocaust. Rather, the Declaration validated the efforts of a small coterie of theologians who struggled against centuries of Scriptural interpretation that seemed to condone the oppression of Jews. Regardless of the path to *Nostra ætate*, Connelly specifically calls the document “revolutionary.” A local scale reveals how this could be untrue: in Cincinnati, there was no need for an intellectual élite to bless Jewish-Catholic cooperation, no need for a “revolution” in Catholic teaching. Cooperative projects had been underway for quite some time already, and they were undertaken by “average” Jews and Catholics with little thought for the theological obstacles that ostensibly stood between them.

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This dissertation ends with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati’s Sixth Synod in May 1971. Synod VI was, in ways which will become clear below, how Vatican II became formally institutionalized in Cincinnati Catholicism. The Archdiocese’s Fifth Synod, held in 1954, provides a baseline against which to gauge the influence of Vatican II and a starting point for this dissertation.

Archbishop Karl Alter announced his intent to convoke a diocesan synod in 1950, soon after being appointed to the Cincinnati see from his previous episcopal posting in Toledo. Committees composed of priests (with sparing reference to lay consultants) were formed to study clerical life, “persons in the church,” sacramental administration, worship, “the teaching office,” and temporalities. These committees drafted documents for study by Easter 1952; the drafts were then submitted to larger gatherings of priests, for discussion no later than September 1953. The drafts were revised for final promulgation at the synod’s formal conclusion in December 1954. Synod V was presented as an adaptation of existing canon law and Roman regulation to local conditions. Furthermore, that process would be carried out by the clergy: lay Catholics had no substantive role in Synod V. Even the clergy formulating the Synod documents had no formal authority, “since the Diocesan Bishop alone has the power to make

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54 Solemn Session - The Fifth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 2, Archdiocesan Synods: Synod I-Synod V, 1/6, Chancery Archive of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (hereafter CAAC).
laws...The only purpose of the Synod, therefore, is to provide an opportunity for consultation with the clergy about the needs of the diocese.”

Some of the Synod’s provisions were pedestrian. For example, pastors were reminded that the parish needed to have an official record book for a visiting priest “to record his name and diocese.” During weddings, brides and bridesmaids were to be “modestly dressed.” Cincinnati priests also needed reminding that extra space under their churches’ altars was not to be used for storage. Other elements probed more deeply. Marriage was a particular concern; in one drafting meeting, the priests discussed advice to pastors that “in marriages involving unworthy Catholics (apostates, excommunicated, public sinners, communists), the banns [essentially, recurring wedding announcements] are not to be published [in the parish bulletin].” Yet pastors were also reminded that they could not refuse to seek permission to witness a “mixed” marriage provided “the necessary conditions are fulfilled.” In all situations, it was only the bishop who could declare marital nullity, “even if a marriage is certainly [sic] invalid.”

55 Solemn Session - The Fifth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1-2, Archdiocesan Synods: Synod I-Synod V, 1/6, CAAC.

56 “II Meeting of Synodal Secretaries and Promoters,” May 27, 1952, 2, Archdiocesan Synods: Synod I-Synod V, 3/4, CAAC.

57 “3rd meeting of synodal secretaries,” June 3, 1952, 1, Archdiocesan Synods: Synod I-Synod V, 3/4, CAAC.


59 “3rd meeting of synodal secretaries,” June 3, 1952, 1, Archdiocesan Synods: Synod I-Synod V, 3/4, CAAC.

60 The language surrounding the ostensible “end” of Catholic marriages is rarely well-understood. In popular (and mistaken) parlance, the Church has the authority to “grant an annulment” - in effect, provide a “Catholic divorce.” While the history of the process itself is enormously complex and contentiously debated into the present, “nullity” is a state of affairs discovered, not created, as the result of an investigation into the capacities and intentions of the putative spouses at the time the marriage was ostensibly contracted. What is often spoken of as “an annulment” - an active process ending a marriage - is,
synodal committees also laid out tightly constrained conditions for joint projects with non-Catholics, decreeing that they must have civic or social goals only. On “questions of religion,” such endeavors needed the bishop’s approval.  

In the detailed plan of the Synod’s closing ceremony, priests were informed that at a certain point “the Master of Ceremonies instructs the [attending clergy] to indicate their placet [“yea” vote] on their ballots.” They would soon “present the ballot, and signed Profession of Faith, kiss the Archbishop’s ring, and depart [the sanctuary].” The published program for the day mentioned the laity precisely once, in the final sentence describing the ceremony: “The Archbishop then confers the solemn blessing…upon the assembled clergy and laity, and thus passes into history the Fifth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.”

VI

This was, in large part, the state of Catholicism in Cincinnati prior to Vatican II: the clergy exerted a great deal of official control, and vast swaths of life were regulated for Catholics, whether they obeyed those regulations or not. These circumstances frame the question: what was the effect of Vatican II on Catholic life in Cincinnati?

in reality, a finding that the marriage never actually took place due to some impediment (e.g., incapacity for one or both parties to give willing consent to the marriage, concealment of an impediment to the marriage, etc.). Catechism of the Catholic Church, trans. United States Catholic Conference (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), sec. 1629.


62 “Synodal Proceedings,” 2, Archdiocesan Synods: Synod I-Synod V, 1/6, CAAC.

63 Solemn Session - The Fifth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 6, Archdiocesan Synods: Synod I-Synod V, 1/6, CAAC.
This dissertation engages the press closely to answer this question, relying especially upon *The Catholic Telegraph* and *The American Israelite* to survey contemporary opinion on religious reform, interfaith relations, and racial prejudice. Attention to the press has the advantage of providing at least some insight into non-elite voices, which have remained difficult to hear even from the mid-twentieth century. Because much news coverage of the Second Vatican Council shows what publications considered to be most pertinent to their readers and what would sell the most copies, news media can illustrate a great deal of public consciousness about Vatican II.

Examining how the general public understood the Council, which exerted an influence far beyond the Catholic Church, can be done most effectively through the press, a technique deployed throughout this dissertation. Before later chapters’ fine-grained analysis of press coverage at the local level, however, it is helpful to establish a general, national “press atmosphere” against which Cincinnati’s significance and difference can be measured. This is accomplished by turning to *Time* and *U.S. Catholic*, two publications with large circulations during the dissertation’s timeframe, and using those magazines to contribute to what we might call a Vatican II *mise-en-scene*. While this analysis makes no claim that the two publications are representative of the national conversation on Vatican II, they are typical, and their respective foci and the differences between them illuminate how Vatican II was not understood in a uniform way in the American media. This otherwise uncontroversial observation becomes enormously important when considering its results: Vatican II was an entirely different idea, with different goals and outcomes, depending on what one read or watched. Looking first at *Time* and *U.S. Catholic*, and later the *Catholic Telegraph* and *American Israelite*,
illustrates not only how radically differently a publication could conceive of Vatican II from the national discourse, but also what Cincinnatians thought Vatican II was, what it might achieve, and their thoughts in response to it.

*Time’s* coverage of Vatican II helped convey to American society at large the conscious effort at reform that Catholicism was making. *Time* enjoyed a massive national circulation and published deep analyses of events as part of its editorial “mission.” Luce was not Catholic himself, but the lifelong Presbyterian pushed his editors to devote space in his magazines to religion “as a significant force in society.”  

Luce viewed Catholicism as a bastion against the disappearance of “natural law and/or the moral law,” not least because of his deep friendship with Jesuit priest John Courtney Murray.  

*U.S. Catholic* spoke to a narrower audience - generally, the well-read lay Catholic - yet its national circulation also meant that it exerted influence over a broad swath of the American Church. The magazine - founded as The Voice of St. Jude before being shortened to *St. Jude* in July 1961 and, finally, switching to *U.S. Catholic* in September 1963 - falls into the category of Catholic monthlies aimed mostly toward a lay audience; other examples often used by historians include *Commonweal* or *Ave Maria*.  

These publications differed from diocesan papers in several ways. It is significant that a national distribution for Catholic publications often meant that no local bishop exercised *ex officio* authority over the publication. Even beyond geographical considerations, this lack of episcopal oversight was also implicit for magazines published by religious orders. *U.S.

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64 Alan Brinkley, *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 438.

65 Brinkley, *ibid.,* 438-439.

66 I refer to the publication as *U.S. Catholic* throughout for simplicity.
Catholic was one such publication, founded in 1935 as The Voice of St. Jude by the Congregation of Missionaries, Sons of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Congregation began publishing the magazine out of the massive popularity of the national shrine of St. Jude in Chicago. During the 1960s, the magazine shifted away from its devotional roots and became more of a general-interest publication for the well-read Catholic, published under the title U.S. Catholic.

Among the national press, one element of the narrative was common to many publications: conflict within the ranks of the Council Fathers. By presenting Vatican II as a theological war between “progressives” and “conservatives” - a battle array popularized, if not established in toto, by the Redemptorist priest Francis X. Murphy’s “Letters from Vatican City” published under the pseudonym Xavier Rynne - the American national media cast the outcome of Council as the mold for the Church of the future. In their presentations, depending on who “won” at Vatican II, the Church itself would be set on either a “conservative” or a “progressive” course once to the work of the Council Fathers was complete. American Catholics thus were conditioned for the fight that would unfold over the next several decades as lay Catholics and clergy struggled to define the meaning of the Second Vatican Council and what it meant for Catholics in all walks of life.


68 Orsi, Thank You, St. Jude, 4-5.

69 See, for example, his New Yorker articles collected in such publications as Xavier Rynne, Letters from Vatican City: Vatican Council II (First Session): Background and Debates (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964).
For *Time*, the Council was a battleground over whether Catholicism would “modernize” or remind hidebound. For a Catholic publication like *The Voice of St. Jude / U.S. Catholic*, Vatican II foregrounded the hope for Christian unity, liturgical reform, and intra-Catholic conflict over the implementation of Vatican II in everyday life. Coverage at the national level offered thus widely differing perceptions of Vatican II. Furthermore, the press narrative consumed by American audiences helped lay the groundwork for later struggles in the American Church over what the Council meant and what its results should be.

*Time* covered Vatican II extensively. In particular its columns placed heavy emphasis on the apparent rift that opened up between factions of Council Fathers, the outward-facing attempts at Christian unity, and the theological-governmental restructuring of the Church. Yet the magazine published remarkably little on some of the Council’s reforms which had the most obvious effect on American Catholicism. *Time* spent notably little time on liturgical reform, neglecting also the Council’s debates on religious freedom - the document which featured the greatest contribution by the American delegation at the Council, with the historical wall between Church and state in the United States imparting a unique perspective to the American bishops. The magazine also passed over almost entirely the issue of the laity’s role in Catholicism. Finally, *Time* published very little on the Council’s renewed perspective on Judaism, a question taken up in Chapter Three. The space *Time* did not devote to liturgical reform, religious liberty, the laity, or Judaism was well-filled by its coverage of apparently bitter conflict on the Council floor, the attempt by Pope John to use the Council as a bridge between Christian

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70 I have focused only on feature-length articles, excluding the numerous tiny one- and two-sentence reports related to the factual unfolding of Vatican II.
traditions, and reforms to the Church’s governance structure. *Time* continuously portrayed Vatican II as a political showdown between old-school religious conservatives and more enlightened liberals.\(^71\)

Following Pope John XXIII’s lead, *Time* also described Vatican II as one massive undertaking in pursuit of Church unity. Over the course of the Council, the magazine interpreted well the Council Fathers’ turn away from ecumenism via conversion to Catholicism and toward acknowledging the validity of non-Catholic Christianity. Dr. George H. Williams, a Congregationalist who attended the Council as an alternate for his delegation, was impressed by the pope’s literal positioning *vis-à-vis* the non-Catholic observers in an audience the Sistine Chapel: “When he spoke to the observers, did he sit on a throne? No. He sat on a chair just like the ones we were sitting on…He is with us.”\(^72\)

Finally, the magazine’s coverage of the Council examined closely the development of ecclesiology as it pertained to local bishops and the pope. The question of why the episcopacy mattered so much was particularly nuanced. Here was a chance at unity, too: if Vatican II defined infallibility as residing within the college of bishops rather than only the Bishop of Rome, the Orthodox might be more inclined to consider a corporate reunion.\(^73\)

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\(^71\) Between 1962 and 1965, eighteen of the magazine’s feature articles narrated the Council as a contentious event, pillorying the “conservatives” or “traditionalists” from Italy and Spain while glorifying the “progressives” or “liberals” from Northern Europe. *Time* ran an article just after the Council began that opened with Bishop Fulton Sheen chastising journalists for exaggerating the differences between the various factions at Vatican II. Sheen cited the Acts of the Apostles, apparently free of much conflict, as the literary model for describing such a church gathering. The rest of the article was, of course, focused closely on conciliar battles; the author flipped Sheen’s defense and wrote that Acts was full of conflict via the Council of Jerusalem. Acts 15:7: “And when there had been much disputing, Peter, rising up, said to them...”. “The Loyal Opposition,” *Time*, Nov. 2, 1962, 85.

\(^72\) “Best Seats in the House,” *Time*, Oct. 26, 1962, 58. The magazine never followed up with any Protestant observers, as far as my research indicates, on their thoughts pertaining to John’s entrance into St. Peter’s Basilica on the *sedia gestatoria*. 
On the other hand, the national, religious magazine *U.S. Catholic* understood Vatican II to have sparked intense dialogue in three ways, which partially resonated with *Time*: Christian unity (later “ecumenism”), liturgical reform, and intra-Catholic conflict over the future of the Church. *U.S. Catholic* differed from its secular counterpart by not conflating American political affiliations and particular leanings in Catholic theology; its coverage and discussion of internal conflict was not as acrimonious or heated; and it did not see the Council primarily as a moment of quasi-democratic updating via episcopal collegiality.

*U.S. Catholic* took Christian unity to be the Council’s first priority. As in *Time*, the articles published over the course of the Council describe a shift in the conception of unity from one in which non-Catholic communities would “re-join” the Roman Church to one in which all Christians began to acknowledge a few basic areas of common ground without seeking corporate reunion. In the spring of 1962 when preparations were still underway, Bob Brizzolara wrote with confidence and certainty: when (not if) Christians were reunited, “it will be on Roman Catholic terms in no whit different from what they are today, i.e., recognition of the Church as that founded by Christ and entrusted to St. Peter and his valid successors with the power of the keys whose binding and loosing on earth is ratified in heaven.”

The tune changed once the Council had been underway for a few sessions. By October 1964, “ecumenism” was a more appropriate term for the Catholic attitude vis-à-vis Protestants; in an interview with theologian Karl Rahner, the Jesuit suggested that the institutional Church was more of a governance structure than

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anything, and that most Christians could settle on “baptism, Scripture, grace, and the Holy Spirit” as the essential components for theological cooperation.75

As with the Time, U.S. Catholic did narrate conflict within the Council aula in St. Peter’s Basilica. What set the magazine apart from its secular colleague, however, was the tenor of its coverage. For example, Desmond O’Grady ended a retrospective on the Council by suggesting that the Via della Conciliazione, the broad Roman road leading to St. Peter’s Basilica, had been during Vatican II like “a street in Byzantium where theological questions were passionately discussed” - hardly the nasty battleground described in Time.76

While U.S. Catholic largely neglected liturgical reform in feature-length articles, it made up for this gap in its opinion and news sections. In the regular spread “The Church in the News” (from April 1964, “The Church and the World”) featured liturgical reform frequently. Much of this reportage focused on language. Early reports depicted the vernacular as but a starting point for better Catholic worship. Frederick McManus, then-president of the National Liturgical Conference, warned in 1961 that English would be no cure-all for a lack of piety or devotion during worship.77 After Sacrosanctum concilium was implemented in parishes, with English appearing in the Mass, the American Bishops’ Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate warned that “recitation of prayers in a routine or sing-song manner would be a grave abuse of the spirit of the Council’s Constitution on

the Liturgy,” and thus fail to take advantage of the vernacular as an aid to deeper prayer.78

In most American dioceses, English became standard during at least some parts of the Mass starting on the First Sunday of Advent (November 30), 1964. It did not take long for conflict to break out over the disappearance of Latin, the turning of the priest to face the congregation throughout the Mass, and the expectation that all participate vocally.

The letters section of *U.S. Catholic* hosted a vocal strain of resistance to the liturgical reform brought forth by the Council. These letters assumed a tone of defensive exasperation, that of the opponent who has been beaten into submission and simply wishes for the bout to end:

Is it necessary to heckle those who are not as gleeful over all the changes as in [a recent article]? There are many of us in the laity who have practiced and loved our faith seriously; have accepted the English and some hymns also. But it seems anyone who doesn’t delight over all these changes is held up for ridicule by most of the Catholic press. Really, living in a noisy world, is asking for a small amount of quiet with our Lord at Mass so terrible? It’s getting so one doesn’t have to think anymore; just be talked *at* and holler back! We do enjoy your magazine and find it very enlightening, but guess we’re just sick and tired of hearing so much complaining about everything. Would you say that Luther was right all the way; that the Church has been wrong all these years? We aren’t signing, because we feel that anyone who speaks out in disagreement is either ignored anyway or will receive unkind treatment. Thank you for listening though.79

Resistance became more assertive, even combative, once the Council had ended.

I am *not* enjoying the polyglot jumping-jack-hog-calling desecration of the sacred liturgy which is being jammed down our throats by a bunch of reactivated modernists who have seized the upper hand and are downgrading the sacrificial concept which is the essence of the Mass.80

The dearth of letters on the Council in general, rather than liturgical reform in particular, does not mean that readers of *U.S. Catholic* were disconnected from contemporary reforms in the Church. If they did not write about the Council, they certainly wrote in what has been called the “spirit of Vatican II,” that general sense of openness, change, and uncertainty as they looked to the future.81

VII

This dissertation moves across the above *mise-en-scene* and focuses on several key areas in 1960s Cincinnati Catholicism. Chapter One, “‘We shall have to be aggiornamented’: Vatican II in Cincinnati,” argues that through Cincinnati, setting local and national coverage in contrast reveals how localities could interpret the Council differently than the national press by avoiding a grand, conflict-driven narrative of the Council. What was important to writers in national urban centers was not necessarily so important on the banks of the Ohio. What was of interest to Cincinnatians about Vatican II, and overwhelmingly so, was liturgical change. The other concerns of this dissertation - Catholic approaches to race and Jewish-Catholic exchanges - were not often linked by the Cincinnati laity directly to the Council. Indeed lay reactions in Cincinnati were restricted almost entirely to liturgical reforms; while there was some increase in lay activism immediately after the Council, it was still confined to archdiocesan-sponsored structures, led by clergy. It was not until 1970 and 1971, when Synod VI was being planned and

81 The spirit of Vatican II has been deployed both positively and negatively. Proponents cite it as a mindset of experimentation, openness to the world, and an abandonment of a past Catholicism ostensibly more focused on sin and fear than mercy and love. An excellent example of this attitude is in McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II.*
executed, that Cincinnati Catholics realized how deep and thoroughgoing the Council’s influence was going to be.

Chapter Two, “‘A soul spotless in the sight of God’: Vatican II and Race in Cincinnati,” reveals that in Cincinnati the Second Vatican Council became fuel for local conflict over race rather than the source of a clear solution. Lay Catholics embraced their new role, conceived by Council as engaged in the modern world and cooperating with the clergy, in extraordinarily different ways. Yet it was not until local disturbances, local policy changes by the Church, and local Catholic activism got under way that lay Catholics began connecting Vatican II and racial conflict. It was as though they suddenly realized, several years after the Council had closed, that the deep reform typified most vividly by the liturgy could apply to other aspects of life. Catholics “obedient” to the hierarchy alternately believed Catholicism should inform contemporary racial progress or thought limited clerical pronouncements meant the Church should more or less avoid controversy. Others “defied” the clergy alternately by demanding greater and faster action or condemning any Church concessions to racial activism. Sharp disagreements in Cincinnati over Project Commitment, the local ecumenical and interfaith project on racial progress, and the Black Manifesto illustrate an American hierarchy struggling to acknowledge social crises without endorsing what bishops and other Church leaders believed to be social radicalism. From a historiographical standpoint, this chapter’s treatment of Project Commitment and the Black Manifesto thrusts these two ideas into the center of Catholic racial history, drawing attention to Project Commitment’s wide embrace in the region and drawing out the Black Manifesto’s intrinsic necessity to contemporary narratives of religious approaches to racial crises.
Chapter Three, “‘Mishigoyem Mushrooms con Vino Blanco’: Catholics and Jews in Cincinnati” argues that even while high theology was up for debate in the global center of Catholicism, there was no question over the warm relationship between Jews and Catholics in Cincinnati. Furthermore, when Cincinnati Jews wrote about Vatican II in the American Israelite, both praise for Nostra ætate and criticism of the document were directed at Rome, not at Cincinnati Catholics. This relationship was fostered by both the absence of theologically- or culturally-motivated dislike of one another - in neither the American Israelite nor the Catholic Telegraph are there critiques of the other group qua religious believers - and by common goals on problems such as race relations. Likewise, the point of sharpest disagreement - government aid to schools - had nothing to do with the specifics of religious belief and everything to do with definitions of church/state separation. Thus Cincinnati offers an excellent case study of Will Herberg’s description of contemporary “faith in faith” among Americans, with the specifics of religious belief contributing neither to bonhomie nor potential for disagreement. In Cincinnati, only a minority of Jewish leaders raised questions about Nostra ætate, and those questions do not appear to have lingered. Throughout the Council, finally, Cincinnati Jews paid attention to what was going on in Rome - perhaps even more so than their Catholic co-citizens - even to those elements not specifically related to the Church’s relationship with non-Christians.

Because the relationship between Catholics and Jews as religious believers had become so normalized, the Catholic Telegraph’s Council coverage did not focus on the potential for the Church to say anything definitive about Jews until Nostra ætate was well on its way. Furthermore, Cincinnati lay Catholics wrote very little in the newspaper about
the document until it was promulgated. The religious dimensions of the relationship between Catholics and Jews was so inconsequential that it did appear even when the *Telegraph* covered and editorialized on Jewish opposition to state aid for parochial schools; in fact, at least one prominent Jew wrote to the *Telegraph* to thank the paper for its charitable and objective treatment of the Jewish position. Furthermore, through the *American Israelite*, Cincinnati Jews’ concern for racial equity becomes overwhelmingly clear. Because the Catholic community was so large, and because Cincinnati Jews realized the potential for joint action as religious believers, the Jewish community actively sought out the cooperation of Catholics on race projects. Cincinnati Jews first acknowledged that these partnerships with Catholics would have to proceed cautiously because the institutional Church had not yet articulated a clear racial policy; however, by the time the Council was history and Cincinnati’s Sixth Archdiocesan Synod was on the horizon, both Cincinnati Jews and Catholics were deeply involved in efforts like Project Commitment, openly uniting with institutional approval to address racial crises.

Chapter Four, “‘A new Pentecost of understanding and harmony’: The Sixth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1971,” shows how Cincinnati Catholicism ultimately embraced the need to address social problems in the community, searched for ways formally to integrate the teachings of Vatican II into the archdiocese, and embraced the city’s Jewish community as official partners in taking a religious perspective on contemporary problems. Indeed the Synod devoted an enormous amount of space to Judaism, wholeheartedly endorsing *Nostra ætate* and publicly acknowledging the deep, mutual heritage of Christians and Jews. However, it could only refer to historic persecution of Jews on the part of Catholics in the abstract because, as far as can be
determined, such oppression was not a problem in Cincinnati (or at least not in recent memory). The Synod formally promoted joint social projects with Jews, finalizing a union which had long been in process by which Jews and Catholics worked together to achieve specific social goals. By examining Synod VI, Cincinnati offers a case study in how new models of the Church, with new ideas of authority and purpose in broader society, informed Catholics’ understanding of their roles in their Church and their civic communities. Furthermore, it offers a clear moment of the institutional Church coming to grips with both racial conflict and interfaith dialogue, two forces that had informed both the most heated conflict and strongest alliances in the preceding decade. With Synod VI, Cincinnati Catholicism definitively closed the door on the Vatican II era and entered the postconciliar age.

Understanding how local Catholics received Vatican II; how they saw their Jewish neighbors; and how white Catholics and white Jews saw themselves as positioned to solve racial discrimination reveals much about the massive changes experienced by American society broadly at midcentury. The involvement of religious believers in civil rights efforts has been known for some time. Less well-understood are some believers’ motivations for involvement, which arose not only from joining the acknowledgment that essential rights extended to African Americans but also from a recognition that an active, believing, and motivating faith required white believers to propagate the God-given dignity of all people. Finally, and least understood of all, how those religious believers interacted with each other as believers tells us a great deal about how they saw themselves, how they viewed their neighbors of different faith traditions, and what it meant to be a believer in an era of remarkable change. Cincinnati helps tell all these
stories, laying the groundwork for similar investigations in other cities across the United States.
CHAPTER ONE

“WE SHALL HAVE TO BE AGGIORNAMENTED”: VATICAN II IN CINCINNATI

I

Just as events reported in the pages of Time and U.S. Catholic altered Catholics’ lives across the United States, so, too, did the conditions obtaining in local communities help determine how Vatican II “arrived.” This process of “arrival” was no less true for Cincinnati than other parts of the country.

The Council arrived in Cincinnati with much fanfare via the Catholic Telegraph.¹ The newspaper carried continuous coverage of Vatican II during all four sessions, including close analysis of individual documents by Cincinnati priest Eugene Maly and numerous editorials lauding the Council’s various reforms as steps forward in Catholic history.² Maly, a priest of the archdiocese, provided a crucial service by writing for the Catholic Telegraph on the Council’s proceedings. Aside from two years spent at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (in Roman terminology, the Angelicum) and another two at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Maly spent his entire life in Cincinnati.

¹ The newspaper’s title was The Catholic Telegraph-Register prior to January 5, 1962, when its title changed to The Catholic Telegraph. I refer to it throughout as Catholic Telegraph for simplicity.

from his birth in 1920. He was appointed a faculty member at Mt. St. Mary’s Seminary, which served the archdiocese, at the age of thirty and remained there in various teaching and administrative roles until his untimely death in 1980. He went with Archbishop Karl Alter to the Council, where he was appointed to the American bishops’ press panel and was named a *peritus* to the Council itself in November 1962. The encomia to Fr. Maly after his death said surprisingly little about his conciliar service, both in Rome and in the diocesan newspaper. This biographical lacuna points up the need for greater attention to the sort of casual reportage that many diocesan newspapers hosted, those columns written by individuals (usually priests) who were not professional journalists *per se* and thus engaged in commentary that could not be found in fact-based articles and was less guarded or less well-considered than editorials by established Catholic commentators in journals like *Commonweal* or *America*.

Even beyond Maly’s generally sycophantic reporting on the Council, as the official organ of the archdiocese the newspaper was more or less automatically supportive of everything the Council did, as Archbishop Alter himself spoke often and highly of Vatican II. As discussed below, however, the *Telegraph* provided more nuanced coverage of the Council than even the independent, national *Time* and *U.S. Catholic*. In parishes, priests were encouraged to preach from a provided list of preparatory sermon outlines on various aspects of the Council in order to prepare the laity for changes both liturgical and otherwise. The observant Cincinnati lay Catholic thus had ample opportunity to learn how Catholic life was going to change as a result of Vatican II.
This chapter accomplishes two goals. First, by contrasting local coverage of Vatican II with the introduction’s *mise-en-scene*, it offers a vivid example of the diversity within American Catholicism. This diversity is significant as it further complicates the reception of Vatican II: not only were Conciliar reforms understood differently from region to region around the globe, but they also differed in their application within regional or even national contexts. In Cincinnati, setting local and national coverage in contrast reveals how localities could interpret the Council differently by avoiding the grand, conflict-driven narrative of the Council seen in *Time* and *U.S. Catholic* - even if readers themselves bought into the pugilistic characterization of Roman developments. Some *Telegraph* readers noted the difference between national accounts and those in their diocesan weekly, criticizing the *Telegraph* when such elements of conflict crept into its coverage. Most importantly, however, noting the difference between how press outlets reported on Vatican II and how individual Catholics reacted to that coverage reveals early splits between the institutional Church and the laity. In Cincinnati, and especially in response to liturgical reform, no few men and women rejected the “all is well” assurances put forth by the *Telegraph*’s editorial board and instead called into question the wisdom of reform and the competence of their fellow co-religionists who either supported or rejected that reform. The door to much stronger disagreement voiced by lay Catholics on race, discussed in Chapter Two, was opened by liturgical reform; the key itself was turned by Vatican II.

Second, this chapter identifies several “signposts” to track the implementation of the Council in the archdiocese and the response of lay Catholics as conciliar reforms began to exert meaningful influences on their lives. These include both words, such as
Archbishop Karl Alter’s archdiocese-wide sermon series on the documents of the Council, and deeds, such as the early post-conciliar merging of the Archdiocesan Councils of Catholic Men and Women to form the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. These “signposts” emerge vividly from personal correspondence between lay Catholics and Archbishop Alter, as well as letters to the editor published in The Catholic Telegraph. In contrast to the rich inclusion of official, bureaucratic sources in Roger Fortin’s history of the archdiocese, this chapter looks to the Cincinnati laity, whose public and private expressions of approval or disagreement with Conciliar reforms enliven the contemporary narrative of Vatican II-era evolutions in local Catholicism. More importantly to the historiographical endeavor, these sources have not before been examined for academic study.

While generally welcoming of Vatican II, the reform process was not without its tensions. Unsurprisingly, it was the liturgy that proved most contentious after the American Church began to use English during parts of the Mass on the First Sunday of Advent, 1964. The change over time narrated in this chapter is read best against the snapshots provided in the dissertation’s introduction and Chapter Four, which rely on the Archdiocesan Synod of 1954 and that of 1971 to establish the state of the archdiocese in those eras. From a broad perspective, a newly-invigorated laity, willing to express itself publicly and vocally both on matters of the faith and social questions qua Catholics, was the most substantial shift over the pre-, during, and post-Conciliar period. As far as the archdiocese and the rest of the Church were concerned, prior to Vatican II the Church

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was the *societas perfecta*. Vatican II provided a plan for how it was to become the People of God. Yet during Vatican II and in the years just after it closed in 1965, how that plan should be implemented was unclear - or, at least, the details of its implementation were up for debate.

And debate them the Cincinnati laity did. This chapter peers into those debates as they pertained to internal Church affairs, revealing the laity’s willingness to depart from the institutional Church’s perspective by disregarding the *Telegraph’s* admonition not to see Vatican II as a theological *battle royale* and instead engaging one another on the letters page over reforms - especially liturgical - as they unfolded. Chapter Two turns to conflicts over Catholics’ relationship with broader communities; disagreement there was even more vociferous than over internal Church reforms. Thus the open conflict between lay Catholics and Church authorities and amongst the laity themselves that exploded in Cincinnati over racial questions was foreshadowed in the local Church’s infighting over Vatican II as it unfolded. It was not until the decade had closed, until a new archbishop had taken the *cathedra*, that the Council’s plan for the People of God was applied to Cincinnati in a programmatic way and the conflict began to die down. Those events are covered in Chapter Four; until then, a great many things were in store for Cincinnati as the local Church experienced the Council.

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4 “Hence, this word [mystical] in its correct signification gives us to understand that the Church, a perfect society of its kind, is not made up of merely moral and juridical elements and principles. It is far superior to all other human societies...it surpasses them as grace surpasses nature, as things immortal are above those that perish.” Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* [Encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ], Vatican Website, June 29, 1943, sec. 63, accessed Nov. 19, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi.html.

This chapter contributes to an ongoing conversation on local Catholicisms, what Catholic ecclesiology calls “particular” churches. A “particular” church is typically associated with the diocese, the most basic unit of the worldwide Catholic Church. As far theology and canon law are concerned, a diocese is essentially a local, but entirely complete, expression of the universal Church.\textsuperscript{6} Despite the intense administrative centralization achieved at the First Vatican Council through \textit{Pastor æternus}, dioceses are, for most intents and purposes, “whole” churches in their own right.\textsuperscript{7} This is also the chapter that speaks most directly to scholars of American Catholicism, although the processes it describes also apply to religion understood as a social experience regardless of its institutional or dogmatic framework (or lack thereof).

There is no shortage of scholarship on Catholic life in America as organized by diocese, the essential building block of the global Roman Catholic Church. Most diocesan histories are commemorative chronicles, narrating the triumphant building of institutions designed to minister to local Catholics and spreading Catholicism in a particular place. Professionally trained historians also have turned to the diocese: Leslie

\textsuperscript{6} Code of Canon Law, c. 368 and 369, Vatican Website, accessed Nov. 9, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/__P1C.HTM.

\textsuperscript{7} First Vatican Council, \textit{Pastor æternus} [First Dogmatic Decree on the Church of Christ], reprinted in \textit{Catholic World} 11 no. 66 (1870): 848-858.
Woodcock Tentler, with her work on the Archdiocese of Detroit, set the standard with *Seasons of Grace* in 1990. More narrow in thematic and chronological focus is Timothy Kelly on the Diocese of Pittsburgh after Vatican II. Kelly’s exploration of how lay women and men understood themselves to have been renewed by the Council points up the approach that currently serves American Catholic historiography best: if working within a diocesan framework, there must be some thematic and chronological limits, as critical histories of an entire institutional Church simply are too unwieldy.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati is no exception to generalizations about institutional Catholic historiography. There are two histories of the archdiocese: John Lamott’s centennial *History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1821-1921* and Roger Fortin’s 1996 *Faith and Action*. Lamott’s *History* is a straightforward chronicle (although even its research and writing was not without controversy). Fortin’s history,

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11 In the introduction to his *History*, Lamott bemoans the difficulty of his project: “We had to overcome the inconvenience of having practically no diocesan archives at Cincinnati. We were rather fortunate, however, to find the more important documents from those archives either at Mt. St. Joseph, Ohio [headquarters of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati] or in the National Catholic Archives at Notre Dame University, Indiana.” Lamott, *History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati*, xiv. Lamott’s satisfaction, however, apparently came at a price. There was drama behind the outcome of a type that archival researchers find difficult to resist following. Lamott likely prevailed upon Archbishop Henry Moeller to demand Notre Dame return all archdiocesan materials to Cincinnati in order to facilitate easier study in the future. Word got out, though: Peter Guilday, then the secretary of the American Catholic Historical Association, wrote to his friend Sister of Charity of Cincinnati Sister Mary Agnes McCann to ask “What is this I hear about the Archbishop of Cincinnati requesting that all the Cincinnati papers etc in the Notre Dame Archives be returned to the Diocesan Chancery. If it is true, can you tell me who is behind it? Lamott? And whether they have any place that meets with archival requirements for the safeguarding of the precious papers.” Rev. Peter Guilday to Sr. Mary Agnes McCann, Jan. 9, 1922, Mary Agnes McCann Papers, Box 1, Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati (hereafter ASCC). By the end of the month Guilday was furious: “Unless you see a possibility of our meeting soon, I wish you would write down the whole Cincinnati question, and I promise to destroy your letter at once. I feel that a fight should be made
while more comprehensive after an additional seventy years of records and a wider lens to encompass more than Lamott’s institution-building, would have benefited from more scholarly distance so as to avoid the boosterism that creeps into his narrative.

The type of history in this chapter—local, “lived” history—is enjoying a wave of scholarly attention at present. Premiere among that work is the Lived History of Vatican II, a multi-year collaborative project sponsored by the University of Notre Dame and Northwestern University. By gathering scholars across generations, religious commitments, and geographic regions, this project provides a definitive text on the local reception and translation of the Second Vatican Council.12

III

The Council’s own document on the press, _Inter mirifica_ (Decree on the Media of Social Communications), rarely appears in the historiography. Yet it is of particular interest to the contemporary American Church because of its partially American origins. The influence of several prominent Americans in its preparation and revision also suggest _Inter mirifica_ is more significant to American historiography than scholars have previously understood it to be. The pre-Council draft of the document was authored by

against this pillaging of archives, and if L. [Lamott] is the prime mover, I intend to take a hand. He has been a sort of dog-in-the-manger for the past five years. He refuses to take any share in the work I am doing, especially the [American Catholic Historical] Association, and then has the discourtesy to write me a sharp letter because his History (pilfered from the C[atholic] H[istorical] R[eview]) has not been noticed. The N.D. people seemed to me to be a pack of children. They ought to know how to procrastinate. I said to the Provincial - ‘If you people were only Jesuits, the game would be easy.’ After N.D will come your collection!” Guilday to McCann, Jan. 26, 1922, Mary Agnes McCann Papers, Box 1, ASCC. The Guilday-McCann correspondence does not reveal the final outcome, although there is little today on the Archdiocese of Cincinnati at the University of Notre Dame.

the Secretariat for the Press and the Moderation of Shows, one of the preparatory bodies established by Pope John XXIII after the Council had been announced. President of this Secretariat was Pennsylvanian Archbishop Martin O’Connor, then-rector of the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Another American, Monsignor Timothy Flynn, served as both consultor to the Secretariat and director of the Information Office for the Archdiocese of New York. The Secretariat was later absorbed into the Commission for the Lay Apostolate.\(^\text{13}\) Once the draft went to the floor for debate, the Council Fathers accorded the news media primacy of place in \textit{Inter mirifica}, mentioning the “gravely important responsibilities” of, among others, news writers and editors. These responsibilities stemmed from the media’s powerful ability to “lead the human race to good or to evil by informing or arousing mankind.”\(^\text{14}\) The \textit{Catholic Telegraph} played such a function in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

\textit{Inter mirifica} was something of a “utility tool” at the Council, giving the Fathers a break from arguing over more contentious topics by allowing them to pass something in addition to \textit{Sacrosanctum concilium} (the Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) in the fall of 1963.\(^\text{15}\) However, its success was not guaranteed: an international and informal coalition, which included several prominent Americans, attempted to throw the brakes on this otherwise smooth journey through the ratification process.\(^\text{16}\) Nine days before the

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Norman B. Tanner, \textit{The Church and the World}: \textit{Gaudium et spes}, \textit{Inter mirifica} (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 93-96.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Tanner, \textit{The Church and the World}, 96, 100.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Tanner, \textit{ibid.}, 102.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushleft}
final vote was set to take place, John Cogley of *Commonweal*, Robert Kaiser of *Time*, and Michael Novak of the *National Catholic Reporter* began distributing a petition calling the decree “a step backward” which gave “a ‘hopelessly abstract’ picture of relations between the church and modern culture.” It dealt “with a press that exists only in textbooks,” “unrecognizable to us.” And finally, *Inter mirifica* would give Catholic publications “a teaching authority and near-infallibility that is neither proper to journalism nor helpful to the formation of public opinion in the church.” Among the petition’s clerical supporters was John Courtney Murray, the previously silenced Jesuit whose work on the compatibility of religious pluralism and Catholic theology - as opposed to older Catholic political theories requiring at least token efforts toward religiously uniform (i.e., Catholic) societies - was foundational to the eventual approval of the Council’s Declaration on Religious Liberty in 1965.  

That petition, along with another calling into question the press decree’s appropriateness at an ecumenical council, was hurriedly distributed to the Council Fathers arriving at St. Peter’s on November 25, 1963, the day they voted on *Inter mirifica*. Archbishop Pericle Felici, secretary-general of the Council, was enraged at the attempt to influence the vote. Felici summoned the Swiss Guard to break up the politicking. The petitions ultimately were unsuccessful: *Inter mirifica* passed 1,598 to 503.  

With its syndicated material, in-house columns, and event notices for the archdiocese’s parishes and schools, the *Catholic Telegraph* functioned as a weekly portal

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17 Tanner, *ibid.*, 102.

18 Tanner, *ibid.*, 102-103.
into all things Catholic in the greater Cincinnati area. The news published therein did not pertain exclusively to internal Church matters, however, with each issue covering contemporary events in wider society, almost always with some indication of how they should be viewed by Catholics. That should was important: as a diocesan publication, the Catholic Telegraph cleaved closely to doctrinal orthodoxy; as an arm of the Church hierarchy, it simply did not exist to host divergent opinions. While the positioning of the Catholic Telegraph was by no means unique for the period - most diocesan newspapers functioned as house organs for the bishop - there were some diocesan publications, both in the United States and elsewhere in the Anglophone world, that ventured beyond the boundaries of strict orthodoxy. The few non-diocesan newspapers in print at the time, like Our Sunday Visitor, were generally orthodox. In 1964, however, the National Catholic Reporter appeared in the Diocese of Kansas City, Kansas, independent of any ecclesiastical control. The newspaper quickly fell under suspicion and later condemnation.

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19 In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, The Criterion published a wide variety of articles on the Council and general Catholic topics. Its editor, Monsignor Raymond Bosler, happily embraced the adjective “progressive” and largely had a free hand to publish whatever he thought most suitable for the newspaper’s audience. He had felt himself transformed by attending the Council as peritus to Archbishop Paul Schulte, and Bosler spooled his own transformation out into a decades-long crusade to speak to as many audience as possible on the Council, including Catholics in Cincinnati. That arrangement ended in 1977, when then-archbishop George Biskup grew weary of Bosler’s editorial edge. Half a world away in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, the diocesan weekly The Advocate came under fire from some members of the Australian episcopacy and prominent lay Catholics. Appointed editor in 1961, Fr. Michael Costigan believed that a Catholic newspaper should “report issues which were of relevance to [its] readers and to the Church, without fear or favour.” Costigan intentionally included items that questioned orthodoxy, relying especially on “reports of dissent among American Catholics” to convey what he considered the true image of the contemporary Church, warts and all. See Robert Carey, “Vacated Marketplace: A Lost Battle for Editorial Independence in the Catholic Press,” Australian Journalism Review 37, no.1 (2015): 137,139. Costigan later left the diocese to re-evaluate his service as editor for The Advocate, eventually resigning that post as well as leaving the clerical state. The Criterion followed a more orthodox line after Bosler’s forced retirement in 1977, while The Advocate underwent a similar process after Costigan’s departure in 1969 until it ceased publication in 1990. Carey, “Vacated Marketplace,” 142.
by the local ordinary, who was more or less powerless to end its publication since the newspaper did not rely on institutional approval.20

These newspapers were in the minority in their independence from the institutional Church. The Telegraph thus represented an entirely typical diocesan newspaper for the mid-1960s. It is important to note, however, that with contemporary Catholics’ close reliance upon the organizational framework of the Church to orient themselves within broader society, Catholic newspapers provided much more general news coverage than most do today. With the proliferation of national weekly magazines and (especially) online outlets, many diocesan newspapers now restrict themselves to activities partaken of various groups in the diocese, general news from the Catholic world, events involving the local bishop, and the like.

The Telegraph’s editorial board printed a number of brief opinion pieces each week - generally two or three, each a few paragraphs in length - that set out the newspaper’s official stance on various issues. As discussed below, during the Council these editorials treated a wide variety of issues pertinent to the Council. Furthermore, diocesan priest Fr. Eugene Maly wrote an in-depth column while the Council was in session (first “Council Observer,” when he was in Rome as peritus to Archbishop Alter, and later “Council Notes” when he remained in Cincinnati).21 Maly’s column was wide-ranging, from fawning over Archbishop Alter to intricate explorations of the theological


21 Maly wrote in September 1964, at the start of the third session, that “A particular situation at Mt. St. Mary’s Seminary, involving a radical change in the Scriptures courses, has necessitated my remaining behind to teach this semester.” Rev. Eugene Maly, “Council Notes,” Catholic Telegraph, Sept. 18, 1964, A4.
implications of conciliar debates. Particularly vivid was his description of what the
Council Fathers did every day, worth quoting at length:

Rome - I am writing the first draft of this article at an actual session of the
Vatican Council. I will attempt to describe the scene as I see it and the actual
proceedings of this morning's meeting.

Directly below me are the two long banks of upholstered seats where the
Council Fathers have taken their assigned places. All the Cardinals, their red
robes gleaming, are on the Gospel side of the Basilica, in the seats nearest the
papal altar. The Archbishops and Bishops follow the order of seniority,
determined by the date of their consecration.

The two banks, one on each side of the main aisle, stretch from the front
door of St. Peter's to the papal altar. They are divided into sections by stairways
that lead from the top row to the bottom. There are about 18 sections in each
bank, about 11 rows in each section, and about six seats in each row. (The actual
numbers vary slightly because of particular conditions). Each bank is also divided
in the center by a passageway leading to the side aisles.

At the last seat of the bottom row of every other section there is a
microphone, reading stand and lamp. The Bishop who is to address the council
goes to the microphone nearest him. While he is speaking, the Bishop who is to
follow makes his way to a microphone, in order that the proceedings might not be
delayed by long intervals between addresses.

Directly in front of the papal altar, just beyond the two banks of seats,
there is a long table where the Cardinal members of the Presidency are seated. A
different Cardinal presides each day. It is his task to announce the names of the
Bishops who are to speak, to warn the speaker by a small bell when his ten
minutes are up (some leeway is allowed at times), to interrupt if he feels the
remarks being made are not pertinent, and to make other announcements.

Above and slightly behind the seats of the bishops are eight tribunes, or
boxes, built up on steel scaffolding (which, of course, is artfully concealed). There
are four of these on each side, between the huge pillars that divide the central
nave from the side aisles. In the two tribunes nearest the papal altar are extra seats
for those Bishops who could not be accommodated below, and also for the heads
of those Religious Orders and Congregations that have a right to vote.

In the next four tribunes (two on each side) are the "periti," or official
experts of the council. Since their number is not too great no specific tribune is
assigned to each "peritus." The last tribune on either side is not being used at
present. The non-Catholic observers have special seats on the Epistle side not too
far from the papal altar.

Loudspeakers are located in every conceivable place. There is one, for
example, on each side of every tribune. As a result it is impossible to miss
anything that is being said.

Just in front of the Presidents' table a temporary altar stands. Here each
morning promptly at 9:00, one of the Council Fathers offers the Sacrifice of the
Mass, facing the assembled bishops. All present join in answering the prayers.
This active participation in the Sacrifice is one of the highlights of the day, giving concrete expression to the unity of all present.

After the Mass the solemn enthronement of the Gospel takes place. One of the prelates, attended by two acolytes, carries the Sacred Scriptures in procession to the altar where it is put in a place of honor. It represents the source of revelation which must guide all Christians. During the procession all chant the "Credo" or some other appropriate hymn.

The secretary now announces, "Exeunt omnes," i.e., "Let everyone depart." It is addressed to all who do not have official permission to attend the meetings. In response to the order the Swiss guards, who stand at attention during the Mass, turn and leave the Basilica.

All is now ready for the beginning of the meeting. The President, this morning Cardinal Frings of Germany, has just read the names of those who had requested to speak at this session. Only 13 names were read off. Since there are usually 20 or more speakers each day, everyone realizes that there will be some special development.

The sixth Bishop has just finished his address. The special announcement is made that a vote will be taken on whether the Fathers wish to end discussion on the present schema ("the "fonts of revelation" - a much disputed question). They are told that if two thirds vote affirmatively (Placet), it will mean that the present schema will be [illegible] altogether and a new one will be [illegible].

While the votes are being taken up by seminarians and tabulated by a computer, the discussion continues. Shortly after [illegible] the results of the voting are given. The proposal had failed to gain the required two-thirds majority by a small number. (It would have required slightly over 1400 votes). Therefore, since the proposed schema is still "in possession," the discussion on it will continue. Now the individual chapters will be taken up one by one.

While the proposal did not pass, the results of the vote are revealing. They show that a large number of the Fathers are not too happy with the general presentation of the matter in the present section. It might be expected, therefore, that, if it is not abandoned altogether in a subsequent vote, it will at least be subjected to many revisions.

The meeting of Tuesday, Nov. 20, came to a close immediately after the results of the votes were announced. While it may not have been a "typical" day in the life of the Second Vatican Council, it may give our readers some idea of how the Council proceeds.22

This description of a Council daily session was the entire column that week, and all of Maly’s other columns were of similar length and detail, whether that detail was practical descriptions of Roman goings-on or explanations of theological and ecclesiological issues

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under debate in St. Peter’s Basilica. If Pope John XXIII had opened a window into the Church, Maly opened a window onto Vatican II.

Although Maly’s reports did include some of the high drama of specific Council sessions - his report from November 22, 1963 on a “test vote” to assay the Council Fathers’ positions on episcopal collegiality was a blow-by-blow report of the day’s verbal sparring - he could also contextualize episcopal disagreements as unfolding with the good of the Church on everyone’s mind. After describing Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani’s fiery defense of the Holy Office against a perceived attack on Ottaviani’s own authority, Maly wrote that the emotion of the Cardinal’s speech “flowed from intellectual conviction and not from any spirit of personal animosity.”23 And even while using such terms as “radically different viewpoints” and “opposition,” Maly noted that public disagreements could only redound to the benefit of the Church because they would require clarification of positions and foster the need for the Council Fathers to stake their claims with precision.

Between Pope John XXIII’s announcement that he intended to convocate an ecumenical council in January 1959 and Vatican II’s opening in October 1962, the Catholic Telegraph wrote about the upcoming council in terms quite similar to those of Time. Both publications picked up on John’s stated purpose in calling a Council aimed at unifying Christendom, especially by effecting a reconciliation of Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy. The Catholic Telegraph, however, conducted a much more nuanced analysis of the impending event than Time.

The first editorial after John’s announcement acknowledged that communism was a force that John surely would reckon with, but “as the Pope has observed, the way to peace [in the fight against communism] is through unity.” In addition, the paper acknowledged the potential for closer ties with Protestant groups than did *Time*, shrewdly pointing out that while Orthodoxy had been separated from the Latin Church for far longer than the fifteenth-century reformers, the doctrinal gaps between the Roman Church and Orthodoxy would be much easier to bridge. Finally, the *Telegraph* recognized that ecumenical councils could be messy affairs, with results not necessarily matching up with intended expectations. The national publications seemed content to narrate the Council as an attempt toward unity from its impending start to its future finish.

The Cincinnati paper departed from *Time* and *U.S. Catholic* when it came to reporting on Protestants before the Council got underway. Even more significantly, it did not suggest that Protestant reunion with Catholicism would need to be on Roman terms. Instead, the editors cited Benedictine Father Godfrey Diekmann and Emile Cardinal Leger, archbishop of Montreal, for their studied opinion that the Church would stand to gain by seeing what Protestants had to offer. Deikmann had told Protestant ministers in Minneapolis that some of what the leaders of the Reformation had taught was “more Catholic and traditional than what was being presented at the time by many professedly Catholic teachers.” Leger was more measured, awarding the faint praise that the reformers “were not altogether without genuine positive insights.”


Finally, the Catholic Telegraph made an obscure comparison that nonetheless foreshadowed future local concerns. Late in 1961, when other publications were silent on Vatican II after the excitement of its announcement had worn off, the newspaper published an editorial on the “double jubilee” of Pope John’s birthday and third anniversary of his coronation. The editors reviewed the pope’s accomplishments in the three years since he had ascended to the Chair of Peter. Among them was his announcement of an ecumenical council - at that point, the event for which John was most known worldwide - and his creation of new cardinals, “including the first Negro and Japanese Cardinals”. The Telegraph’s equal treatment of convoking the Church’s twenty-first ecumenical council with the creation of a black cardinal is arresting. The comparison is all the more remarkable given the Council’s general neglect of racial issues, which were of concern especially to the American delegation. Concerned as well was the Catholic Telegraph which, as we will see in Chapter Two, took a strong stance on racial discrimination in Cincinnati and beyond, shaming racists and exhorting Catholics to embrace the fullness of the Christian message by rejecting racial inequity.

The Catholic Telegraph also made a sharp departure from the plotlines published in Time by not focusing on a supposed conflict that that national source highlighted as dividing the Council Fathers into “conservative” and “progressive” factions. Over the


27 The rest of his accomplishments included that “the top-level of the Church’s administration was revamped…liturgical reforms were extended; the mission apostolate was given special attention; the cause of Christian unity received its greatest impetus in centuries; five encyclicals, including a master plan for Christian social reform, were published.”

28 The cardinal was Laurean Rugambwa, then Bishop of Rutabo (later renamed Bukoba) in Tanzania.
course of the entire Council, the newspaper admonished both its readers and other publications against thinking about the Council or describing it as a theological *battle royale*. Although readers themselves would join battle against one another, the paper itself (through its editorial board’s opinion) remained outside the battleground.

At the same time, neither did the editors pretend that there were no disagreements on the *aula* floor in Rome, conceding that “it is no secret that there are differences in outlook among the Council Fathers and that certain members of the Curia are among those who seem most reluctant to introduce changes.”

In fact, some discord was a good thing as far as the editors were concerned, as they reminded readers that “religious orthodoxy does not mean rigidity of thought.” This open-mindedness notwithstanding, by the intersession between the fall of 1963 and 1964 it was evident that some of the conflict in Rome was coming home. The problem was not simply one of news outlets ginning up circulation by turning Vatican II into a holy brawl; now, Catholics themselves were starting to bicker over what was happening in the Church.

In the lead-up to the implementation of the reformed liturgy in November 1964, the newspaper ran an editorial setting the record straight on why the liturgy was being reformed at all. Readers were reminded that what was coming was “not something entirely new in the Church”; the changes were not for novelty’s sake; that a reformed liturgy was not a quick-fix to bring about spiritual renewal; and that the impending liturgical changes were “not a pious fad imposed on us by a handful of enthusiasts.”

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is telling that the editors offered no explanation for why some might fear such a “pious fad,” as the absence indicates that this was a narrative propagated by at least some within the Church after *Sacrosanctum concilium*’s landslide passage: 2,162 bishops voted in favor of the document. Only 46 voted against the Constitution.  

In the interim between John’s announcement and the beginning of the Council, the subject most often treated by the *Catholic Telegraph*, but neglected almost entirely by the national media, was the worldwide Catholic laity. During the entirety of the Council, for example, *Time* published only three articles on lay women and men; by contrast, even before the opening of the first session, the *Catholic Telegraph* had run six editorials on the role “average” Catholics were expected to play during Vatican II.

The newspaper used the public speeches of Pope John and prominent contemporary theologians to convey a sense of ownership of Vatican II by all Catholics. An editorial in May 1962 quoted Father Hans Kung extensively on how lay Catholics could “make some contribution to the success of the Council.” The paper went so far as to suggest that nothing the Council decided would have any effect unless it was enacted by each and every Catholic. And in a wistful send-off to Archbishop Karl Alter when he left Cincinnati to attend the first session of the Council, the newspaper underscored the theological relationships between bishops and the laity in their dioceses, claiming that “in

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33 “Joint Effort,” *Catholic Telegraph*, May 4, 1962, A4. Kung outlined four ways Catholics could contribute, including suffering over disunity and shortcomings in the Church, prayer, constructive criticism, and action.

34 “The Council and You,” *Catholic Telegraph*, July 20, 1962, A4. “Pope John’s recent call to penance and prayer was…a reminder to the Catholic world that the success of the Ecumenical Council will depend in a very real sense on every member of the Church.”
a very real sense the entire body of the faithful of the Archdiocese shall accompany our Archbishop to the Council.”

Reading about the event through the lens of *Time* gives the impression that the Council was merely a far-off meeting of a clerical élite, a hilltop legislative process from which reforms fell to those below. The model presented by the *Catholic Telegraph* differed drastically by presuming an active laity, a “constituency” of the Council with a role to play, even if that role were as apparently ephemeral as prayer.

The years 1963 and 1964 in particular witnessed numerous editorials on the laity. When *Sacrosanctum concilium* passed in a landslide vote at the end of the second session, the *Catholic Telegraph* highlighted the reformed liturgy as where Vatican II would become vividly apparent to lay Catholics.

The high theology of the Mass was discussed extensively in *Sacrosanctum concilium*, but this was of less immediate concern to many Catholics than the structural and mechanical modifications the Council Fathers advised. Guiding many of the changes was the admonition that “the rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation.” In other words, the arcana of the Mass should give way to a more easily grasped ritual with each rubric’s significance being obvious. Furthermore, “there is to be more reading from holy scripture, and it is to be more varied and suitable” - an attempt to correct the longstanding notion, oftentimes correct, that Catholics knew little of the

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Bible.\textsuperscript{37} Perhaps most vivid of all was the concession that “since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended.”\textsuperscript{38} It would not be long before those limits encompassed the entire Mass, rather than only sections therein. While the Constitution made numerous other modifications - all told, it runs to over 13,000 words in English translation - these were the changes that confronted Catholics on the First Sunday of Advent 1964, the date that most American dioceses implemented the reformed Mass.

When they did go to Mass that day, the \textit{Telegraph} hoped that those lay women and men were not simply to assent to the changes unthinkingly. The paper quoted passages from the Constitution, noting that Catholics should not attend Mass “as strangers or silent spectators”; the editors recommended “a thorough study” of \textit{Sacrosanctum concilium} to ease the growing pains brought on by such a monumental change.\textsuperscript{39} Whether anyone followed that advice, the introduction of the vernacular and the use of musical instruments beyond the organ - not to mention the phenomenon of parishes installing new altars so priests could celebrate Mass facing the congregation - would become particularly sharp sticking points in the years after the Council. The editorials following after the passage of \textit{Lumen gentium} (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) in November 1964, which clearly set out the role of the laity as full partners with

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}, sec. 35.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid.}, sec. 36.

the clergy as the “People of God,” predictably were congratulatory, lauding the Council Fathers for “present[ing] the laity a vision of their true dignity as the People of God.”

There were limits to this newfound approval of all things lay, however, and one contemporary squabble illustrates the Telegraph’s preference to move ahead full-steam with whatever the Council Fathers approved. When Father Gommar DePauw’s Traditionalist Movement, which included both clergy and lay Catholics and was deeply skeptical of the Council’s liturgical reforms, got underway in early 1965, the Catholic Telegraph adopted the language of majority and minority rights to condemn the Traditionalists.

The editors were especially perplexed that DePauw’s group would call for a referendum on the reformed liturgy, as requesting a vote “under traditionalism’s banner is simply bizarre.” The Traditionalist Movement had anticipated such reactions and parsed Lumen gentium to support their anti-liturgical reform platform: Lumen gentium had, as the manifesto mentioned, instructed the laity that they “should openly reveal…their needs and desires with that freedom and confidence which is fitting for children of God and brothers in Christ.” And DePauw’s group was not wrong when claiming that the laity had not been consulted in regard to the liturgical changes. These Traditionalists did not take exception to Vatican II per se. They had no qualms with embracing one document - Lumen gentium - to express their dissatisfaction with another - Sacrosanctum concilium.


Thus could not decry conciliar reform *in toto* but could (and did) claim authority as the People of God to react to Council decisions.42

The editors wrote that the Traditionalists had no “right to represent a referendum on liturgical changes as the action of ‘traditionalists.’ Nobody has a clear right to suggest that the Church is being divided into a ‘radical minority’…and a ‘traditionalist majority’ - especially when this latter group would exclude the overwhelming majority of the Fathers of the Council, not to mention the Holy Father himself.”43 In other words, the discontented Traditionalists needed to concede that the fight had already been lost by virtue of the Council Fathers’ vote on *Sacrosanctum concilium*. Lay activism was good and well - unless it entailed seriously calling into question the fruits of Vatican II. The editorial team of the *Catholic Telegraph* also displayed a much keener understanding of the Second Vatican Council, and its potential implications, than either *Time* or *U.S. Catholic*. The *Telegraph* was especially willing to step back from the conflict-driven narrative of other publications.

While not shying away from Vatican II as an event of epochal proportions, the editorial board also knew that the Council would consider some threads already being unspooled in the Catholic world before Pope John’s announcement. In November 1962, by which point it had become clear that liturgical worship would be high on the Council Fathers’ list of priorities, the newspaper reminded readers that a liturgical movement had been underway for decades. Pius XII’s encyclical on the liturgy *Mediator Dei* (1946) was but a very recent milestone in the attempt “to awaken in the Universal Church a renewed

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liturgical spirit”; while the Council Fathers’ debate in Rome represented the most prominent discussion from which liturgical matters would evolve, the liturgical movement itself was not new.\(^4^4\)

The newspaper looked askance at the more sensationalistic accounts of the battle ostensibly unfolding in the aula of St. Peter’s Basilica. Early in the first session the editors asserted that “the neat division of the Council Fathers into conservative and liberal blocs, like political parties, each with sharply defined views, can be misleading.”\(^4^5\) The editorial went on to challenge the on dit that the Italian delegation was almost entirely “conservative;” also questioning the very notion that disagreement between the Council Fathers revealed anything less than unity within the Church.\(^4^6\)

Once the excitement of the first session subsided into the uncertainty of the period between December 1962 and September 1963 when the second session began, the newspaper could reflect upon how the first session had been presented to an American audience. In March 1963 the paper pushed back against the conflict model of the national publications with the work of Monsignor James Tucek, then head of the National Catholic Welfare Conference News Service Bureau in Rome - in other words, the American bishops’ press man. The editorial is worth quoting at length:

No one denies that the clash of ideas has resulted in some sharp exchanges between opposing schools of thought. Nor is this to be deplored; if all the Council Fathers thought as one man on everything, the Council would hardly be more than an ecclesiastical pageant.

But the persistent report that one group is resorting to every sinister means to smother the opposition is not supported by the evidence. It makes stimulating


reading for people who like all news accounts to read like spy thrillers but it is scarcely enlightening.

There are those who insist that it’s naive not to assume that venality in the Vatican is almost as prevalent as it was at times in Renaissance Rome. Once you accept this as a working principle it becomes easy to convert rumors into facts. A prelate’s ill chosen word or unguarded gesture becomes heavy with significance. Scuttlebut [sic] becomes more reliable than official pronouncements.

But cynicism of this kind, while it makes a great show of not being fooled by what appears on the surface, has a fatal faith in everything it thinks it sees below the surface. In the end it can be quite as misleading as the pious belief that the Fathers conduct their formal debates and informal conversations like choirs of angels.47

The editors also shrewdly interpreted the content of Council debates. Just after the first session closed, a lengthy editorial on the ongoing debate over the liturgy fleshed out the consequences of permitting national bishops’ groups some control over liturgical reform. Citing the example of missionary bishops, who most clearly saw the benefit of inculturating the liturgy to reflect local social norms, the Telegraph noted that conceding authority “in a matter of this kind” did not lessen the “ruling power” of the Pope.48 In other words, the debate on collegiality was not a zero-sum game. Conciliar debate over the role of bishops and their place in the Church’s hierarchy was not necessarily a strident reaction against a papacy emboldened by Vatican I.

As a last comment on the first session and the first intersession, the newspaper was remarkably willing to concede that perhaps not all had been well with the Church in earlier times. Picking up on Augustin Cardinal Bea’s announcement that the Secretariat for Christian Unity would submit a draft on religious liberty to the second session, the newspaper argued that it was perfectly legitimate to question whether “our Church, when


it extols religious freedom, really means what it says.” The editors did not question Protestants’ sincerity when “instances of Catholic repression of Protestants…leave our non-Catholic friends doubtful.”

Contemporaries who challenged Catholic leaders’ support for religious liberty often pointed to Spain, with its legal restrictions on Protestants, as clear evidence of the Church’s hypocrisy. And right they were to do so, according to the editorial board: “the fact is that the situation in Spain lends a degree of substance” to the accusation. The author took the admission a step further and became the accuser, suggesting that “the sooner the Church in Spain clearly repudiates the oppressive laws the better it will be for the Church universal.” Besides, he wrote, “if the flower of the faith is still so delicate in Spain after centuries of Catholic influence that it must fear the attacks [of] one-tenth of one per cent of its population, maybe a little competition from the non-Catholic sects is just what is needed to give it a new vitality.”

The Telegraph was willing to look inward for the source of other perceived problems in the Church. Reports in 1963 of the apparent slowdown in conversions to Catholicism alarmed some; a subset of those looked scornfully upon ecumenism as the culprit. If Christians were embracing each other as adherents of equally valid faith traditions, why should anyone convert to Catholicism? The newspaper once again placed the burden on ordinary Catholics: “With 80 million or so Americans still unchurched, we


have only ourselves - and not ecumenism - to blame if we continue to persuade only about 130,000 every year to join our Church.”

*Time’s* neglect of the Catholic laity and *U.S. Catholic’s* vague gestures toward them are thrown into sharp relief when compared to the close attention paid by the *Catholic Telegraph*. The paper went one step further, inculcating in its readership a deep sense of personal responsibility for the success of the Council and the renewal of the global Church.

The press in general took notice of the Council’s intent and authority to make far-reaching changes to Catholic life as soon as the Fathers began debating the liturgy during the first session. If the apparently timeless Mass could change, the reasoning went, then what else might fall under the reformers’ gaze? Once the discussion on liturgical reform had developed, it was clear enough to the world that the Council Fathers might initiate changes in many other areas of Catholicism. The *Telegraph*, however, anticipated impending reforms by making several demands of readers that would later be codified in the Council’s official documents. The editors hinted at some of the provisions of *Lumen gentium*, with its affirmations of the Church as the whole People of God, rather than a clerical hierarchy, by noting that “if there are to be changes, the greatest change will have to be in ourselves.” In other words, none of the decisions voted upon by the bishops in Rome would have much meaning without the proper “disposition and action of Catholics throughout the world.”

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52 Gary Wills noted that the Council’s biggest revelation was the “dirty little secret” that the Church was capable of change. *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1972), 20.


synagogues near which many Cincinnati Catholics lived, was the Council’s deliberations on Judaism. After the editors thoroughly repudiated the anti-Semitic belief that all Jews were guilty of “deicide” - this, two years before Nostra ætate (Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions), with its identical teaching that only those Jews actually involved in the Crucifixion bore any responsibility as “deicides,” was approved by the Council Fathers - the newspaper declared that lay Catholics’ reaction to any proposed statement on Judaism would be a true test of Vatican II’s viability.55 As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, Cincinnati Catholics responded well to this admonition, banding together with their Jewish neighbors to address the city’s racial crisis from a position of mutual religious motivation.

Reform of the liturgy addressed directly an oft-repeated criticism of the Catholic Church, namely that its most distinctive features were the “rules and regulations” that determined the exercise of faith by Catholics around the world. These “rules” dominated both liturgical worship, with its extensive rubrical guidelines, and daily life in general. The editorial board of the Telegraph noted that being “aggiornamented” did not just mean learning a new set of rules, as though Catholics were simply switching games as a result of Vatican II. No; “our duties will run much deeper than that; we shall have to do much more than learn a new set of technicalities.”56 Even in the face of enthusiasm and ardor in internalizing the outward actions of the reformed Mass, the newspaper reminded readers that truly living out a postconciliar Catholicism “will have to be a study in depth, not just a memorization of new forms and new rubrics.” The aforementioned enthusiasm


arose from a recent demonstration Mass in St. Louis. The editorial board warned readers that “the formalism of the mute spectator, so often criticised [sic] in the past, is scarcely more deplorable than the formalism of the vocal participator who doesn’t understand what he is saying or why he is saying it.”57

A phrase from Sacrosanctum concilium – that parishes “in some manner…represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world” -provided the Catholics of Cincinnati a double.58 First, they were part of a global church: that was the point, after all, of calling an ecumenical or universal council. Second, all of the concerns of the global church did not necessarily reflect the main concerns of Catholics in the United States or Cincinnati, Ohio. These twin points were driven home all the more by the leading lights of the Council’s first two sessions, during which the American bishops remained on the sidelines of the most heated discussions. It was not until sessions three and four, when the debates on religious liberty and relations to non-Christians came to the floor, that the American delegation truly found its voice and assumed a leadership position.

Exhortations from the pope and the newspaper to pray for the success of the Council ebbed after the second session. After the lackluster first session, when no definitive decisions were made, and the productivity of the second - the Council Fathers ratified Sacrosanctum concilium in a landslide of placet votes - it was clear that Vatican II had survived its infancy and was growing healthily.59 In the Catholic Telegraph, there

58 Second Vatican Council, Sacrosanctum concilium, sec. 42.
59 On any given document, a bishop could vote placet (yea), non placet (nay), or placet iuxta modum (yea pending revisions to the document).
was a noticeable shift at the start of 1965 from emphasizing the laity as responsible for internalizing the reform attitude of Vatican II to stressing their responsibility to follow through on specific initiatives stemming from the Council.60

Attentive reading of the Catholic Telegraph would have prepared readers well not only for the reforms that eventually resulted from the Council, but also for the ways in which individual Catholics ought to internalize those reforms and indeed advance them on their own. As some of the reaction to Telegraph coverage showed, however, some Cincinnati Catholics were unwilling to play along.

IV

Cincinnati’s two daily newspapers, the Enquirer and the Post-Times-Star, did cover the Council, but only sporadically.61 The two papers are archived at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, where the indexing process has fallen to the doughty volunteers that keep most public libraries running. Accounting for the difficulties involved in coordinating a volunteer workforce, it is understandable that only

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60 In one representative editorial, the newspaper cited Unitatis redintegratio (Decree on Ecumenism), which exhorted “all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism.” “Road to Unity,” Catholic Telegraph, Jan. 8, 1965, A4. After another round of modifications to the Mass - though not as extensive as those that went into effect in November 1964 - the pope himself reminded Catholics that they must “modify the mental habits we have formed concerning ceremonies and religious practices.” “Changing the Mass,” Catholic Telegraph, Mar. 5, 1965, A4.

61 The Post-Times-Star provides a fascinating case study of contemporary struggles in the world of newspaper publishing; those struggles bear more than a passing resemblance to the fight for survival that many print publications face today. The newspaper changed ownership (hence the double hyphenated title), corporate structure, and distribution several times during the mid-century period. The history of the newspaper is comprised of a single Ph.D. dissertation, itself written during the Council era. See George Edward Stevens, “A History of the Cincinnati Post,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1968).
eight articles on the Council resulted from consulting the library’s Newsdex; a ninth
mentioned Vatican II as late as 1970, but this is the sum total of the preserved coverage.62

To a limited extent a third paper, The Cincinnati Herald, allows me to draw
comparisons between two vastly different categories - race and religion, treated in
Chapter Two - because it was produced by and for one discrete community: Cincinnati’s
African American population. During the Council era it was printed only sporadically.
The Council years of The Cincinnati Herald began with very little coverage of
Catholicism in general and nothing about the Council in particular. In fact the Herald was
“hyperlocal,” featuring very little news of even a national scope. In all of 1962 the
Herald published only six articles with even a tangential connection to Cincinnati
Catholicism, including some coverage of Martin de Porres’s canonization.63

The Herald also featured advertisements and ads for the summer festivals of a
select few Catholic parishes.64 The 1963 ad for the Church of the Assumption’s festival
perhaps unknowingly described the parish as a microcosm of an ongoing process of
white flight:

The Church of the Assumption depends on the success of its annual fair,
as funds derived from it will help in reducing the church debt, and pay for major
repairs on the church and school.

62 “Vatican Council adviser to lead summer workshop at the Mount,” Cincinnati Post-Times-Star,
June 3, 1971, 27. The workshop was on the recently promulgated version of the Roman Missal; attendees
could “learn new ways to use the many ‘new options’ in the Order of Mass” in this workshop “designed to
enliven parish liturgies with a fresh outlook toward its music.” “The Mount” was (and remains) local
shorthand for what was then the College of Mt. St. Joseph, run by the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati in the
Delhi neighborhood at the city’s western extreme.

63 “Blessed Martin de Porres To Be Proclaimed Saint Sunday At St. Mark’s,” Cincinnati Herald,
May 4, 1962, 1. The article apparently misunderstood the fine details of canonization: while the article
itself said the canonization would be “marked” by two local events, the headline itself suggested that de
Porres would be canonized in Cincinnati rather than Rome.

64 “Catholic Church To Hold Giant Festival This Week-End,” Cincinnati Herald, June 22, 1962, 1;
Since many members have moved, the parish is left with just a handful of members.\textsuperscript{65} An ironic ad indeed: the parish was advertising for business among the very audience that its members had fled. The spatial segregation brought about by white flight would occasion a great deal of soul-searching as the decade wore on, with Cincinnati Catholics debating whether there was a problem at all. For Catholics especially, as opposed to non-Catholics, the unfolding of Vatican II and its implementation in Cincinnati drove further speculation as to a specifically \textit{Catholic} approach to race. In 1963, however, the Council Fathers had said nothing even related to race, and the Church hierarchy in Cincinnati had made only vague gestures at racial reconciliation. It would be years before effective, Catholic measures to heal the city’s racial divide were begun and nearly a decade before the archdiocese enacted its own policies of racial equity among the People of God in Cincinnati.

\section*{V}

In addition to coverage in the \textit{Catholic Telegraph}, the archdiocese sought to bring Vatican II to Cincinnati through several programmatic efforts. Two of them, Archbishop Alter’s sermon series and a brief course of study days for clergy, highlight the archdiocese’s priorities in bringing the vision of Vatican II to Cincinnati. Although both the sermon series and study days were distinctly clerical in origin, still they indicated the way that lay Catholics fit into the institutional church in the 1960s and illustrated the hierarchy’s attempts to foster the reinvigorated “People of God” model of the Church called for by the Council.

By situating a discussion on the role of lay Catholics within the context of conciliar decrees and a universal Church only just beginning to come to terms with the Council’s local effects, the 1966 study series can be seen as a “snapshot” of the midcentury evolution of Cincinnati Catholicism, bracketed on either side by the 1954 Synod V and the 1971 Synod VI, the latter of which featured heavy participation by the Archdiocesan Council of the Laity.

When Archbishop Alter convened the fifth archdiocesan synod in 1954, the laity were but a demographical footnote to the proceedings. Roger Fortin summarizes the synod’s accomplishments as amending archdiocesan regulations, proposing new legislation, and a recognition of the archdiocese’s boundary and administrative changes over preceding decades.66 Documents preparatory to the synod were distributed, as Fortin notes, only “to all the priests of the diocese.”

These are, of course, highly institutionalized frames of reference, defining “lived” or “everyday” religion through a clerical framework in which the laity appear only by reading against the grain: few things could be described as more institutional than pre-Vatican II diocesan synods. Even those results of Synod V pertaining to the lives of the clergy had more to do with regulations than religious practices. However, the institutional trajectory from 1954 to 1966 to 1971 did see a gradual introduction of the laity, and concern for their faith lives, into the picture. From near-total exclusion in 1954, to a

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66 Roger Fortin, Faith and Action: A History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1821-1996 (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2002), 284. Cincinnati as a see city - the seat of a bishop - became less prominent over the course of the century. In 1937 Detroit was promoted to archdiocese, at which point it and the Diocese of Grand Rapids left the Province of Cincinnati. In 1944 several counties in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati were transferred to the Diocese of Columbus; that year, Indianapolis became its own province, removing Indiana dioceses from Cincinnati’s juridical oversight.
quasi-custodial meditation in 1966, to full (and voting) participation in 1971, in
Cincinnati lay Catholicism came into its own in the relatively short span of twenty years.

In January 1966 Archbishop Alter directed the priests of the archdiocese to begin
planning a series of sermons on the Council “to highlight some of the more important
aspects of the Counciliar [sic] decrees.”67 His letter laid out a comprehensive vision for
educating Cincinnati Catholics on Vatican II, which included pastoral conferences for
priests and proposed parish study clubs in addition to the Sunday sermons. Alter made
clear, however, that he expected priests to be knowledgeable, front-line sources on the
Council. Since the Council Fathers had produced ream upon ream of official documents,
the archbishop depended “upon your own studies to give the necessary background for an
intelligent and fruitful selection of topics to be emphasized.”68

The sermon series reflected Pope John XXIII’s hope for the Council, that Vatican
II would be a “new Pentecost” for the Church. Alter’s proposed schedule, which
permitted adjustment “to local needs,” ran from January 30 to May 22, 1966. Along the
way priests were directed to preach on the Council’s Decree on Social Communications,
the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the Constitution on the Church (“especially the
chapter on Laity”), the Eastern Churches and non-Christian religions, ecumenism, vowed
religious life, the role of the bishop, education, lay life, revelation, missions, seminaries,
religious liberty, and finally the Church in the modern world.69 This final sermon was to

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67 Archbishop Karl J. Alter to “Reverend dear Father,” Jan. 20, 1966, Karl J. Alter Papers,
“Liturgy,” CAAC.

68 Ibid.

be delivered on May 22. The following Sunday, May 29, was Pentecost in 1966. Thus the “new Pentecost” desired by Pope John would occur in Cincinnati.

Archbishop Alter also infused the archdiocese’s educational program with a deep spirituality. Not only would learning about Vatican II help lay Catholics intelligently understand the faith in accordance with the aggiornamento enacted by the Council Fathers, but embracing the Council’s reforms would also deepen individuals’ personal belief, a moment of quasi-rebirth. Alter also reminded his priests that Pope Paul VI had called a Jubilee Year to celebrate the closing of Vatican II, during which the faithful should look especially to their diocesan cathedral as the exemplar for reformed liturgical worship. Visiting the cathedral carried with it the possibility of “a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions.” Those who could not reach the cathedral could visit “deanery churches outside the See city of Cincinnati.”

Alter’s advertising of the indulgence for observing the new liturgy is but one example of the “revolution” in postconciliar Catholicism, when most lay Catholics came to understand a massive change was afoot through the Mass, that most vivid and

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70 Alter’s prompting of the laity to attend Mass at the cathedral fulfilled section 41 of Sacrosanctum concilium: “Therefore all should hold in high esteem the liturgical life of the diocese which centers around the bishop, especially in his cathedral church.” Second Vatican Council, Sacrosanctum concilium [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy], Vatican Website, Dec. 4, 1964, sec. 41, accessed Nov. 9, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html. According to canon law in effect at the time, “Indulgences given to the living are granted in the form of absolution from temporal punishment due for sins already pardoned as for their guilt, and if granted to be gained for the faithful departed they are applied in the form of suffrage, because the Church has no longer jurisdiction over the faithful once they have passed this life (Canon 911.)…In order that one may gain for himself any indulgence he must be baptized, free from excommunication, in the state of grace at least at the end of the pious works prescribed [in this case, visiting the cathedral or deanery church], and a subject of the authority granting the indulgence. If a subject capable of gaining indulgences is to actually acquire them, he must have at least the general intention to gain them, and fulfil the prescribed good works at the stated time and in the matter required by the wording of the indul. (Canon 925.)” Stanislaus Woywod, O.F.M., The New Canon Law: A Commentary and Summary of the New Code of Canon Law (New York: John F. Wagner, Inc., 1918), 183 no. 754, 186 no. 768.
communal of weekly experiences.71 This particular opportunity put Cincinnati lay Catholics astride the boundary between traditional devotionalism - praying the rosary privately during Mass, for instance, or congregating as a parish men’s or women’s club to pray a novena over the course of nine days or weeks for the intercession of a particular saint - and a reformed Catholicism focused on corporate, readily intelligible worship with a broad cross-section of the parish. Silent prayers between individuals, the saints, and God gave way to vocal, bodily worship with lay Catholics taking an outwardly active role in the Mass. Participating in this new liturgical worship at the mother church of the diocese, according to the jubilee plenary indulgence, remitted the punishment incurred by one’s individual sins. If liturgy was the door through which Catholics passed into the post-conciliar era, then it was indulgences which could turn the key for Cincinnati Catholics.

At the same time that Cincinnati’s priests were preaching on the Council, the Archdiocese provided a program called “The Church in Renewal” for its priests to learn about Vatican II. Alter’s directive on the sermon series had indicated his hope that priests would study the Council documents closely on their own time. “The Church in Renewal” would help either supplement such independent reading or ensure that a minimum of review took place. The program included five days each across the months of February and March for priests in Cincinnati and Dayton. The day would begin with a concelebrated or communal Mass for a particular intention; a speaker would deliver the morning lecture on the day’s topic; the priests would attend an “explanation and demonstration of liturgical singing, including new vernacular chants of celebrant [sic]”;

71 Mark Massa, Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day, and the Notre Dame Football Team (New York: Herder and Herder, 1999), 169.
the speaker would lecture again; and the assembled priests would gather for small group
discussions of the matter at hand.72

The invited speakers for the series included contemporary leaders in several
fields. Fr. Eugene Burke spoke on “The Bishop and His Priests - One Presbytery and One
Family.” Burke had helped found the Catholic Theological Society of America (1946),
worked on national ecumenical projects, and helped draft the United Nations Declaration
of Human Rights (1948).73 Monsignor George Higgins, who was then Director of the
Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, spoke on “The
Church in the World of Today.” Monsignor William Baum, who later became cardinal
archbishop of Washington, D.C., delivered a lecture on “The Practice of Ecumenism.”

On the day of Baum’s lecture, the priests attended Mass in the Maronite Rite “for Church
unity,” exemplifying the unity in diversity of the Catholic Church’s worship.

As the only surviving artifact from the series is an official schedule, it is
unsurprising to find little comment on the irony inherent in the series’ fifth presentation,
“The Laity in the Life and Work of the Church.” The day’s two presentations were given
by Bishop Steven Leven, then Chairman of the awkwardly-named Bishops’ Committee
on the Greater Participation and Involvement of the Laity in the Life and Work of the

72 “The Church in Renewal: A Series of Study Days on the Second Vatican Council Arranged for
the Priests of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati,” 3, Record Group 3.2 Senate of Priests / “Replies to
Archbishop Alter’s Christmas Letter, 1966,” Chancery Archive of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (hereafter
CAAC).

73 Burke’s precise early involvement in CTSA is murky: the Association’s own website puts
Francis J. Connell and James E. O’Connell as presidents before Burke, but both his New York Times
obituary and his biographical page on the UC San Diego site claim he was the organization’s first
president. In either case, he was instrumental in its origins. “Officers of the Society – President,” Catholic
“Eugene Burke,” University of California San Diego Department of History, accessed Nov. 10, 2016,
Church. Leven, a bishop, here represented a national organization and spoke to fellow priests of a regional church about the contributions of lay Catholics to the life of the local and universal Church. The whole “pyramid” of the Church hierarchy, from bishop to lay Catholic, was involved, but only some parts were visible: lay men and women were not invited to the presentation. Nor were they invited, as far as archival evidence shows, to the day’s Sung Mass for Success of the Lay Apostolate.

Admittedly, this is a limited example of how clergy viewed lay Catholics in 1966. Yet it is a significant indicator of how the Council’s re-conceptualization of the Church (or revival of an ancient conceptualization) as the “People of God” was understood in the Church both local and universal. In focusing intensely on the activity of the laity but without the actual presence of lay Catholics, the study series took place in a moment of transition between two models of participation in the Church. In essence, Leven’s presentation and the day’s Mass for the laity was a meditation on “Them,” a non-present “Other” who would carry out works beyond those of the clergy. And while one could reasonably assume that this meditation was a rich one indeed - two lectures and a Mass - its focus on “the lay apostolate,” a phrase which was itself entering its own twilight in the latter half of the 1960s, suggested still that what the laity did in the Church was entirely separate from the activities of the clergy, a notion somewhat at odds with the Council’s reminder from 1 Peter that the laity took part in their own priesthood.74

74 1 Peter 2:9-10: “A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people…who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God,” cited in Second Vatican Council, Lumen gentium, sec. 9.
VI

Participation in the institutional structure of the Church (beyond attendance at Mass) in Cincinnati before the Council was stereotypical. Three “snapshots” of lay Catholic activism prior to Vatican II illustrate how lay women and men in Cincinnati took part in the bureaucratic structures of Catholicism.

A relatively mundane news item from the *Catholic Telegraph* in April 1955 communicates volumes about the relationship between the laity and the clergy. In a prosaic blurb of administrivia, the newspaper announced the appointment of counselors to various committees within the Archdiocesan Councils of Catholic Men and Women. Each of those Councils contained committees on family life, education, social action, “religious activities,” “decent literature,” speakers, legislation, membership, development, and constitutions. A single counselor would cross gender lines, overseeing one or more committees in both Councils, with the expected result of “closer co-operation between committees.”

Those parts of the announcement were mostly insignificant. *Who* those counselors were, though, is more interesting: Monsignor August Kramer, Father James Shappelle, Father John Boyle, Father Norbert McCarthy, Father James Eisenhauer, Father Raymond Favret, and Father Earl Whalen. In their capacity as counselors they would be working both with lay men and women and the moderators of each Council: Monsignor Edward Freking for men and Monsignor Robert Sherry for women.

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75 “Seven Priests Appointed Committee Counselors for Councils of Laity,” *Catholic Telegraph-Register*, Apr. 8, 1955, Karl J. Alter Papers, Box 4 (General Files) / Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men, 1951-1959 Correspondence, CAAC.
That such an arrangement likely obtained in most American dioceses does not lessen what it reveals about pre-conciliar Catholic life. While both the Council of Catholic Men and Council of Catholic Women were active organizations fueled by meaningful contributions by the laity, ultimately both their leaders and the connections between the Councils were clergy. Although this arrangement did not necessarily entail clerical “domination” of the laity, the boundaries were clear: lay Catholics ought to be active in the life of the institutional Church, but they would be shepherded by the clergy.76

A 1960 letter from Alter to the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women (ACCW) provides a second, vivid snapshot of pre-conciliar lay activity. Alter wrote that the purposes of the ACCW were “the spiritual formation of its members on the parish level” and women’s participation in Catholic Action.77 The first objective could be met by membership in parish Altar and Rosary Societies. The second was fulfilled through Catholic women’s modeling of “sound social attitudes toward family life, toward marriage, toward education, toward recreation, toward modesty in dress and manners,

76 E.g., “What was different after the Council was that the laity assumed roles in the leadership and ritual life of their parishes.” Colleen McDannell, The Spirit of Vatican II: A History of Catholic Reform in America (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 177; “The clergy were in control, and the laity were left to pay, pray, and obey.” Jay Dolan, In Search of American Catholicism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 204. Joseph A. Komonchak properly notes that these characterizations of the preconciliar Church are not descriptions of an objective reality: “The progressive interpretations of the Council work with a sharp, almost black-and-white, disjunction between the preconciliar and postconciliar church. Dismissive adjectives characterize the former: it was triumphalistic, legalistic, hierarchical, patriarchal, ghetto-like, clericalistic, irrelevant, and obsessive-compulsive. Pope John XXIII opened the church to allow the Spirit to blow across the dead bones of Ezekiel’s vision.” “Interpreting the Council: Catholic Attitudes toward Vatican II,” in Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America, ed. Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 19.

77 Karl J. Alter to “My dear Catholic women,” Dec. 22, 1960, Karl J. Alter Papers, Box 5 (General Files) / Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, CAAC. Alter’s definition of Catholic Action applies well to other dioceses and organizations: “the extension of Christ’s kingdom here on earth by making Christian principles applicable to our social environment.”
[and] toward women’s proper share in civic and public life.” Furthermore, the most appropriate place for these projects to be worked out was the parish. In this statement Alter advocated a standard paradigm of contemporary social life, with women safeguarding morality and decency within non-elective social structures like the family and the parish.78

A third snapshot draws Cincinnati Catholics into contemporary national and international issues. The Archdiocesan Councils of Catholic Men and Women urged the laity to pray for Christian unity and world peace in the lead-up to Vatican II. In the November-December 1961 issue of The Parish Leader, a small bulletin published jointly by the Councils, the lead item guided families on setting up a devotional candle to pray for the success of Vatican II. The cover featured a quasi-manifesto by Silvio Golzio on that goal:

THE UNITY FOR WHICH WE SHALL PRAY
THE UNITY WE SHALL ENDEAVOR TO ACHIEVE
IS THE UNITY GOD HAS WILLED FOR ALL MEN:
A UNITY OF NATURE AND SUPERNATURAL DESTINY,
WHICH FINDS ITS TOTAL FULFILLMENT
IN THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST -

78 By now, in 2016, the notion of mandatory participation within a territorial parish is all but a dead letter and most Catholics gravitate toward parishes that cater to their own liturgical, social, and theological dispositions. Not so in 1960, when one simply attended and participated in one’s territorial parish.
THE UNITY WHICH WE SHOULD SHOW FORTH
BETWEEN OURSELVES
IN ORDER THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE. 79

The bulletin went on to suggest that families burn their unity candle on Thursdays, both
because that day “is traditionally set aside to commorate [sic] the institution of the Holy
Eucharist, the great sacrament of unity” and because Pope John XXIII did so himself.
Beyond healing divisions between Christian communities, the bulletin pointed to the
pope’s desire for “the unity of the world in Christ.”

The intrinsic connection between Vatican II and Christian unity was emblematic
of Catholics’ expectations of the Council prior to its beginning: John would convoke the
Council at least to bring the Orthodox back into communion with Rome, if not also
Protestants. Reunion was the major goal of Vatican II as understood in 1961 and as
reflected in most news coverage. Urging families to engage in this devotional practice
also connected them to the rest of the Catholic world via the unifying figure of the pope,
who ostensibly was doing the same thing at the same time. Thus Catholics in Cincinnati
were drawn into a global practice that extended beyond their homes, their parishes, and
their country and into the worldwide Church. The unity candle also provided a moment
of spirituality shared between lay Catholics and the clergy (perhaps the cleric par
excellence in the person of the Bishop of Rome). 80

79 Silvio Golzio bore the cumbersome title Chairman of the Directing Board of the Permanent
J. Alter Papers, Box 5 (General Files) / Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, CAAC.
80 The layout of the bulletin implied a hoped-for practical result of Vatican II’s success and the
fruits of Christian unity: four pages followed on speaking about and combatting Communism in American
life.
The most useful overview of lay Catholics’ views on the Council itself, its utility to the contemporary Church, and what they expected of the Council Fathers when they convened in Rome appeared in a 1962 *Eucharist* magazine survey, in which 296 *Catholic Telegraph* readers took part. The newspaper published the results of the survey in October 1962, just before the Council’s opening.

Both the demography of the Cincinnati participants and their responses tracked with the rest of the *Eucharist* sample set. About a quarter of the respondents had completed some graduate study while two-thirds were “college trained.” Overwhelmingly, the Cincinnati participants indicated enthusiastic support for reform on a wide range of topics, although in several areas there was no clear consensus on the need for reform.

The survey itself was not constructed particularly well, and many of its questions read as though intended to produce a certain result. Who could disagree, for example, with the idea that the liturgy should be better understood, or that the notion of religious freedom should be clarified? Other questions broached narrow topics directly and seemed to play on respondents’ sympathies: “Relaxing of celibacy law in favor of converted ministers who wish to be priests”; “the restoration of office of deacons who may be married men”; “Do you feel that anti-clericalism is a serious danger to the Church in America?”. One question in the “Other Churches” section was particularly egregious:

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81 The *Catholic Telegraph* was one of only twenty weekly newspapers selected by *Eucharist* for reader polling. “90% in Poll Say Church Must Institute Changes,” *Catholic Telegraph*, Sept. 28, 1962, 1-2. Of these twenty, ten were in the Midwest, six were in the Southwest, three were in the “Far West,” and only one was in the East.

82 “Readers Tell Council Views,” *Catholic Telegraph*, Oct. 5, 1962,

83 The newspaper had published the general results of the national survey the week previous. “90% in Poll Say Church Must Institute Changes,” *Catholic Telegraph*, Sept. 28, 1962, 1-2.
“Make it clear to non-Catholics that once the essentials are safeguarded, the Church is ready to make every possible change that would truly improve chances for unity.” Only the most intransigent holdout against change could disagree. As it was, 92.5% of those who answered the question thought just such an assurance was needed. Other questions were vague in what they were gauging, such as whether or not the Church needed “better fulfillment of the directives of the Holy See and of Bishops.” Whatever that meant, over 72% of those who responded agreed with it.

Among the possible Council themes that Cincinnatians seemed to agree upon generally were a need to clarify the relationship between Church and state (perhaps sparked in Cincinnati by ongoing debates over parochial school tax funding, explored more in Chapter Three below); a more active role for the laity in Church governance; and a more Scriptural approach to liturgical worship, which would overshadow the panoply of saintly devotions that characterized contemporary Catholic life. While the Mass had always been the central prayer experience for Catholics - indeed, missing Sunday Mass without a serious reason fell into (and technically still does) the category of “mortal sin” - after the Council, it would rise to such prominence that other paraliturgical practices would fade away. In 1966, not long after the Council had closed, Redemptorist priest Daniel Lowery addressed writer Daniel Herr’s argument that a “piety void” had opened up in Catholics’ lives after the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Herr believed this to be a result of the liturgy’s incomplete renewal, a process which, once finished, would fill any gaps Catholics felt in their prayer lives. Lowery acknowledged a decline in several paraliturgical and extraliturgical practices, such as confession, time in prayer before the Eucharist (outside of Mass), making novenas (nine-day or nine-week
prayers), and hosting a visiting priest for a parish mission or going on retreat. Yet Lowery, contra Herr, saw no reason for the reformed Mass and these types of practices to be opposed to one another; instead, updating these practices, or explaining them better to their detractors, would offer Catholics what Lowery called a tertium quid through the throes of postconciliar Catholicism.84

Regardless of balancing the new Mass with devotional practice - despite Lowery’s advice, in most places these practices still went dormant for decades - the primacy of the liturgy in the Council’s priorities was foreshadowed in the survey by massive support for liturgical reform. Accounting for twelve participants who did not answer the question, over 97% of respondents thought the Church should seek to provide “effective guidance at all levels to make the Liturgy [sic] better understood and lived.” The participants also gave their support for a more active laity, including more “consultation” of the laity (82.7% of respondents) and a more effective way by which lay Catholics could make their opinions known to priests and bishops (89%).85

Other questions, especially on externals and incidentals, elicited a safe majority but no landslide. More interesting were the questions on which the respondents were sharply divided. For example, 45% felt that the Council should define new dogmas while 55% did not.86 Half of respondents thought lay men and women were “fairly well


85 The sample did not include enough non-lay Catholics to indicate whether there was broad support among the ordained and religious for a renewed laity. Among those who identified their state in life were only seven priests, five brothers, and a single sister.

86 The example offered to respondents was interesting for how interior it was to Catholicism, given the outward-looking focus of many other questions: “Should the Council attempt to define new dogmas, e.g., the universal, but subordinate mediatorship of Mary?”
prepared” to take on a role of greater autonomy in the Church while 38% thought the laity was “poorly prepared” (10% thought lay Catholics were “well prepared”). Fifty-seven percent of respondents favored dispensation from the requirement of celibacy for ministers of other denominations who converted with the hope of ordination.87

Only one question in the survey touched on issues of contemporary concern that cut across religious and secular boundaries: “Should the Council attempt to declare the Church’s stand on nuclear warfare?”88 152 respondents said yes, while 117 said no - one of the closest outcomes in the survey. The survey’s gaze to the specter of nuclear warfare and whether the Church ought to say something about it prefigured later, and even more tangible, debates later in the decade over race (discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two below). Thus even before the Council had gotten underway, it had become clear that American Catholics were divided on the relationship between their identities as Catholics and as Americans, and whether their faith ought to inform national discourse. It was not until 1983 that the American Church formally addressed nuclear warfare. In that year the National Conference of Catholic Bishops published its pastoral letter The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response. Among other statements, The Challenge of

87 The results of the survey made no mention of the technical exceptions granted to the rare Anglican/Episcopalian or Orthodox priest who converted to Catholicism and was ordained despite being married.

88 The Vatican’s translation of Gaudium et spes sec. 80 does not include “nuclear warfare” explicitly, but the bishops are clear enough when they condemn the use of “scientific weapons”: “Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.” Second Vatican Council, Gaudium et spes [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World], Vatican Website, Dec. 7, 1965, sec. 80, accessed Nov. 10, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.
Peace condemned both the strategy of deterrence and the use of nuclear weapons to wipe out “whole cities or vast areas.”

In broad terms, the Cincinnati sample tracked almost identically with the national survey as a whole, making Cincinnati a representative example of American Catholicism. The Catholic Telegraph’s readers differed from the broader response pool in only three areas. They thought the laity was better prepared than their national co-respondents (61% said “well prepared” or “fairly well prepared” as opposed to 52% nationally); they were less supportive of reform to marriage law, including greater local authority and “regulation of mixed marriages” (66% as opposed to 72% nationally); and they perceived less need for a reduction in days of fast and abstinence in favor of active works of charity and service (44% as opposed to 51% nationally). Even these discrepancies were relatively minor, though. In terms of expectations of Vatican II, the Eucharist survey indicated that Cincinnati offered a reasonable representation of the American laity.

After the Council got underway, the newspaper’s coverage included how Catholics reacted as the event was taking place. Part of the Telegraph’s coverage of the Council and its effects were the letters submitted by readers, which show that the Council did not remain some lofty event far removed from the concerns of “ordinary” Catholics. Interestingly, the letters published by the Telegraph did not track with the results of the Eucharist survey - the massive support for liturgical reform reported in the survey, for example, was countered by sharp infighting over that reform once it had begun to take place. The letters did not generally address other items that the survey had ranked as significant, include the Church’s relationship to the state and the need for lay

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involvement in Church governance. It is tempting to mark as suspicious the discrepancy between the results of the Eucharist survey and letters published in the Telegraph - the priorities of each audience seem to be different - but this temptation is answered by the nature of letters pages themselves, which are curated by an editorial team. Because I have not found a repository of unpublished letter submissions and present-day Telegraph staff maintain that no such collection exists, it is impossible to judge why the letters that did appear were published and others were not. In the absence of such evidence, the apparent discrepancy between the Eucharist survey and Telegraph letters can be attributed, even if unsatisfactorily, to the editorial process that selected certain letters for publication as opposed to the survey process of publishing the results of all responses.

While many of the issues mentioned by the Eucharist survey were of a highly intellectual nature and would take some time to exert any influence on the everyday life of Catholics, Vatican II would have a more immediate influence in at least one way. It “came home,” as it were, and never so vividly as November 29, 1964, the first Sunday of Advent that year, when Catholics first heard a great deal of English and, looking up, in many places could see the priest face-to-face with the congregation rather than celebrating Mass facing the wall-attached altar.90 They had a part to play in addition to the priest and were invited to respond aloud to his calls at several points throughout the Mass. Unless attending a parish whether the pastor resisted Conciliar changes - which did happen from place to place - for most Catholics, the days of silent Masses (either contemplative or boredom-inducing) were over.

90 “The times they were a’changing: Mark Massa on the Catholic ‘60s,” U.S. Catholic 76 no. 7 (2011): 18-22.
However, Cincinnati Catholics had taken note of the Council’s potential for affecting their faith lives long before November 1964. Given that the Council “came home” to most Catholics first through the liturgy, it is unsurprising that Cincinnati Catholics, both lay and clergy, wrote to The Telegraph most often about liturgical worship even before it changed in Cincinnati: between John’s announcement of his intent to call a council in 1959 through 1966, at least thirty letters appeared in the Telegraph’s letters to the editor section on the subject of liturgy. A plurality of these - twelve - were published in 1965, the first whole calendar year in which the revised liturgy was celebrated. While other topics were broached by readers - at least nine letters were published on unity and ecumenism; at least nine appeared on the concept of “updating the Church” / aggiornamento; and at least four each on the reinvigoration of the laity and the press - no category occupied readers so much as the liturgy. Surprisingly, no letters appear to have been published on the relationship between church and state or Judaism as a religious faith. This final category is most surprising given the substantial Jewish community in Cincinnati; however, as Chapter Three will argue at greater length, this was not so much neglect of the Jews as acceptance of them as so “normal” in Cincinnati as to be unremarkable, even when Nostra ætate was published in late 1965.91

91 One cryptic letter from 1963 suggests otherwise, but one letter with no evidence presented is insufficient to extrapolate a prejudice onto a meaningful group. Genevieve Crockett reacted to an earlier item in the newspaper, calling saying it was “more than amusing and brings out a loud laugh to anyone who is aware of the built-in anti-Semitism of the Catholic Church. Cincinnati, certainly, is loaded with members who subscribe to this hostility.” Genevieve Crockett, letter to the editor, Catholic Telegraph Mar. 1, 1963, A4-A5. Crockett presented no evidence for her claim but had at least minor standing in the community. The 1960 city directory lists her as dean of an unnamed school at the University of Cincinnati; in 1958 she quit the book selection committee of the Cincinnati public library over the committee’s 7-3 ban of Nabokov’s Lolita. “Cincinnati Library Puts Ban On Novel: Committee Member Quits As Nabokov’s ‘Lolita’ Is Barred,” Toledo Blade, Sept. 18, 1958, 8.
The second largest grouping of letters exposes an early rift between readers and the editorial board, showing some Cincinnati Catholics leaning toward the conflict-driven narratives of *Time* and *U.S. Catholic* and offering a foreshadow of the much greater divisions between the institutional Church and lay Catholics on social issues (discussed in Chapter Two). Twenty letters generally dealing with conflict at the Council appeared between January 1959 and December 1966. On closer inspection, however, only seven of these twenty were actually written by Cincinnati Catholics; the other thirteen were reprints from outside columns or outside authors responding to Cincinnati criticism. One author explicitly decried the *Telegraph* carrying material that cast the Church in such unseemly terms, criticizing Fr. Eugene Maly’s “Council Notes” column: “Again, I object to this good guys and bad guys approach. Must we plaster a borrowed political image on each action of the Pope and the Council?”

One layman noted the oddity of so-called “traditionalists,” followers of Fr. Gommar DePauw with his “Traditionalist Manifesto,” calling into question the authority of bishops to teach the faithful. Not all readers were so sanguine, however, with one reacting to Fr. Maly’s apparent criticism of the Holy Father by advising “if [Maly] disagrees with a decision of the Successor of Peter, prudence dictates that he should keep his opinion to himself.”

Ultimately, however, it was clearly the liturgy that interested most readers of the *Catholic Telegraph* - a group which wrote hardly any reactions specifically to the Council’s teachings on the laity, and none after the Council’s formal document on the laity (*Apostolicam actuositatem*) appeared. Perhaps more surprising yet is readers’ near-

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total neglect of the role of women in the Church, which was thrust into the spotlight when a woman religious, Sister Mary Luke Tobin, was invited to attend the Council as an observer. The closest readers came to acknowledging a new role for women in the Church was a letter written by a priest in the spring of 1964, praising the decision of the *Telegraph* to include a piece by six women religious on the future of their service to the Church. Rev. J. J. Marquandt noted “Her[e] is a person who would realize that if a Sister without 42 ruffles and pleats in her habit is going to be an effective Catholic Sister in the world, it is going to depend 99.8 per cent on the Sister and not on the ruffle and pleats, absent or present.”

A real diversity of perspectives, attitudes, and suggestions emerged from the letters section of the newspaper during the Council era, covering especially the liturgy and ranging from suggestions for accommodations to caustic attacks on either reformers or those inclined to resist change. Whether by design or happenstance, the *Telegraph*’s published letters during the Council indicate a mix of divergent attitudes *vis-á-vis* Conciliar reform in Cincinnati. By examining readers’ letters during the Council era, one can perceive early hints at a split between the institutional stance of the Church - as given by the *Telegraph*’s editorial statements and Fr. Maly’s Council coverage - and the opinions of lay Catholics, who themselves perceived conflict in the Council and began mirroring it amongst themselves. Thus while the newspaper itself remained above the fray, departing from the journalistic preferences of *Time* and *U.S. Catholic*, the readers of Cincinnati’s diocesan weekly began ascribing to the narrative of the Council Fathers at

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war with one another. From there, readers imported the conflict into Cincinnati and fired
their volleys at one another in the pages of the *Catholic Telegraph*.

Even before *Sacrosanctum concilium*, some readers were concerned about the
potential for liturgical reform emanating from the Council. Father Timothy Leonard
wrote in early 1963 with a suggestion that foreshadowed rather closely what would
eventually result from *Sacrosanctum concilium*, including a reminder that the Entrance
Rite was a moment by which the assembly should recognize itself to have entered into
formal worship. Connected to that was his wish for a greater emphasis on the reading of
Scripture in the first part of the Mass. Focusing on these two items would, in Leonard’s
estimation, help cure Catholics from the thought that making it to Mass just in time for
the consecration of the Eucharist and communion “counted” for attendance.96 A lay
Catholic who had attended the North American Liturgical Week in St. Louis in 1964
positively glowed over the Mass in English that had been celebrated there by special
dispensation of Elmer Cardinal Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis.97 On the other hand,
opined Dr. Joseph Schuster, “would it wound or dampen the festival spirit of the
vernacularisms, the liturgists, the neoliturgists, and the quasi-liturgists, if someone
suggested that, even with fresh 1964 Americanese, strained of dialectical and provincial
forms, free not only of 1520 English but 1920 English, the millennium may possibly not
yet have been reached in created man’s effort adequately and properly to adore the, and
his, triune God-Creator?”98

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Moderation characterized many of the letters. Father Joseph Goetz wrote in January 1965 - just after the introduction of the reformed Mass on the First Sunday of Advent 1964 - citing Thomas Merton on the necessity for sobriety in proceeding with liturgical renewal: “mere observance of the law will never of itself renew the liturgical life of the Church. But there must be an orderliness, a rubrical correctness, a care for the smallest details of the service that will keep the assembly from slipping into the casual and the commonplace.”99 Although the priest advocated stripping away “rhetorical vestiges of triumphalism,” what Sacrosanctum concilium called “useless repetitions,” he nonetheless pointed out that “simplification must not be understood to mean abandonment.”100

Some readers wrote to remind the newspaper and their fellow Catholics that embracing the reformed liturgy did not need to entail rejecting everything from the past, nor did it mean that all potential problems in worship were solved on that First Sunday of Advent. Writing in from Xenia, Mimi Shoup deplored the misconception that the Mass had become understandable only in November 1964: referring to the use of hand missals, Shoup wrote that “any Catholic child educated in a parochial school…was instructed to follow the Mass with the priest - supposedly capable of reading English!”101 She found the suggestion that nobody understood the Mass before the reform “not only ridiculous, but downright degrading to all Catholics,” and pointed out that the well-worn reference to a 20-minute mumbled Latin Mass could apply equally well in 1966: “even today, some

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100 Second Vatican Council, Sacrosanctum concilium, sec. 34.
priests and distracting commentators rapidly read through the Epistle and Gospel, making it even more necessary for one to follow the missal.”

On balance, however, the moderate readers tended to be those who wanted less reform and better participation in the Mass as they had experienced it for decades. In this, they assumed a somewhat defensive posture. Dr. Joseph Schuster, mentioned above, took aim at the entire notion of aggiornamento in the liturgy by pointing out that “mid-20th century Americanese in the Mass hasn’t brought us to the pinnacle of religious social worship.”¹⁰²

In a letter that sparked numerous responses for weeks afterward, self-described singer Vincent V. Alfieri acknowledged that not every parish could field a trained choir but suggested an option “to have at least one Mass each Sunday following in the tradition of the past where those churches having choirs capable of rendering their music can satisfy the people who have a craving for those wonderful Masses and hymns and chants created by master musicians and which are soul-inspiring to lovers of good music.”¹⁰³

Another layman, Valmond Cyr, wrote later in the year from Virginia that “until suitable English settings of good taste are available” - what had been on offer until then was unsatisfactory to him - parishes might alternate Latin Masses and English Masses each Sunday, or at least mix the languages within each Mass.¹⁰⁴


¹⁰³ “Church Music,” Catholic Telegraph, Feb. 19, 1965, A4. Alfieri’s musical accomplishments are unknown, although he was not a singer by profession. The 1965 Cincinnati city directory lists Alfieri Sr. as owner of the Mt. Washington Pharmacy and Alfieri Jr. as a student.

Other lay Catholics in Cincinnati asked simply for exceptions to the general rule of parishes celebrating only the reformed Mass. Matilda Hamer wondered whether it would “be possible to have a Latin Mass on our beautiful main altar with its relics, the priest facing the tabernacle and large crucifix, where the priest can communicate with God without being distracted by the whole congregation? If we could have only one Latin Mass a week facing the main altar, it would make our hearts happy and light again.”

Hamer’s request was both reasonable and subtly critical, suggesting that the congregation at Mass was a distraction if visible and that the celebrating priest could not “communicate with God” were he to face the assembly. Her request also pointed up a logistical conundrum in the post-conciliar era when freestanding altars were installed: what to do with extant high altars, the relics within, and other furnishings required for the pre-conciliar Mass?

Other readers were not so measured in their responses to the reformed Mass, both for and against. One letter, written even before that First Sunday of Advent 1964, displayed a remarkable willingness to disrespect ecclesiastical authority even while defending the Mass as it then stood. The letter is worth quoting in full:

Editor:

You have a department in your paper devoted to current opinion. Well, I am going to give you my opinion on this latest change in the Ordinary of the Mass.

I think it is a shocking disrespect to God Almighty to bring him down to the same level as ordinary people by addressing him as “you” in place of the more reverent pronoun “thee” or “thou”. *I don’t care if it is the Bishops or anyone else who make this pronouncement* for the old adage holds, - “to err is human, to forgive, Divine.” If the expressions “thee” and “thou” were felt fit when addressing royalty in the past, how much more fitting should it now be when addressing the Lord God of Heaven and Earth. [sic] There is enough disrespect in the world today to our Lord *without the Catholic Bishops adding to it.*

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And what do they expect us to do with all our prayer books, sacred objects that have been handed down to us by our forebears or as expressions of love from our own families? Throw them in the ash can? I for one will not surrender my prayer book or missal to satisfy the ego of these modern reformers. One cannot but feel that the whole thing is a commercial idea to sell new prayer books, which is on a par with automobile manufacturers to bring out new cars every year (when last year’s is perfectly good) simply to dig into the pocket book of the ostentatious public.

That is my opinion.106

The author, Edward Medosch, thus set the Mass apart from the competence of the hierarchy, combining commercial cynicism with the understandable emotions surrounding family tradition to reject wholesale what was coming that November.

Dr. Joseph Schuster, who had begun his letter moderately in September 1964 (discussed above) soon veered into invective when commenting on the introduction of English into the Mass. Latin might need to be retained, for instance, for those who may not “be psychologically prepossessed with the enlightened dogmatic enthusiastic self-assurance that this new way is the only and the best way.”107

Others would have none of this criticism. One reader, presuming knowledge of Dr. Schuster’s interior disposition, wrote in to suggest that the sarcastic critic “understands and loves Latin more than he understands and loves the liturgy, the public, and corporate worship of the Church.”108 Fr. Theodore Rolfs went on to suggest that perhaps Dr. Schuster would change his tune if he read the work of Frederick McManus, Godfrey Diekmann, and other contemporary liturgical scholars: in other words, Dr. Schuster had not been sufficiently educated of the reformed Mass’s clear benefits.


Extremism also manifested as condescension and a martyr complex. Robert Brodbeck wrote in March 1965 that resistance to liturgical reform was “based, as any systems analyst can tell you, on fear…the fear usually being groundless.” To the sometimes-claimed notion that liturgical change had been introduced by the devil, Brodbeck responded that “two thousand years ago Our Lord was similarly accused of being possessed by the devil because He brought change to the world.” The liturgical reformers, then, were Christ-like.

Harold Bauer of Dayton took issue not with the reformed Mass itself but with what he perceived to be its lackluster musical accompaniment. His letter took the form of a prayer: “Please, O Lord, give the composers and publishers of the English-speaking church the spark of genius and the inspiration to compose at least two really melodic Masses and a few new hymns…it is apparent that in the sessions of the Second Vatican Council no prayers were sent up to you to inspire some really melodic church music for the millions it is the Church’s job to help and show the way to heaven.”

Finally, Mrs. August Geile feared for the very future of the Church because of the reformed Mass. Geile herself was insulated from many of the reforms by a pastor not inclined to implement them, a situation which obtained elsewhere in the United States. In at least one diocese, for example, priests were instructed that “the use of English is permissive. It is not required or directed…the entire Mass may be said as at present in Latin without making a substitution of the vernacular.” On the national scale, the then-


National Conference of Bishops gave its permission to use English in the liturgy at certain times - not a requirement - and at the global level, an official English translation of the Mass was not published until 1969. Yet even the possibility of widespread English in the Mass, among other concerns, disturbed Geile in Cincinnati. In a conflation of several issues and lumping the newspaper in with the rest of her post-Conciliar woes, she wrote “I do not care for the Catholic Telegraph - I take it for my parish’s sake. It does not answer the questions as we were taught. No wonder we have lost converts. Why change?”, this last query presumably calling into question the efficacy of Conciliar reform if it led only to slower growth in the number of American Catholics.

Until more work is done on diocesan and other newspapers in the Vatican II era, it is impossible to confirm whether Cincinnati’s most active Telegraph readers were representative of the American laity. One suspects, however, that they were, or at least that the Telegraph selected letters for publication in order to provide such an appearance. The preponderance of moderate letters combined with a generous sprinkling of more contentious missives mirrors many, if not most, religious groups. In that way, the Telegraph’s letters section is unremarkable. Remarkable, however, is the moderation of reader tone: despite having definite opinions on the Council, and especially on the liturgy, the Telegraph’s reader letters do not indicate that the Cincinnati laity was totally riven in two - progressive and conservative, liberal or traditional - as narrated by the national press. It is clear that these Catholics interpreted the Council variously as a force for good or an annoyance in their faith lives, but there were no threats to leave the Church.

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112 McDannell, ibid., 124-125.

and few accusations of wrongdoing slung directly at the Council. Liturgical change concerned many but few were, apparently, afraid that the whole edifice of the Church was about to collapse. It would remain until the Council was applied to the rest of life, beyond church walls, that Cincinnati Catholics would find themselves arrayed against each other in heated rhetorical battle. Those brawls unfold in Chapter Two.

In the meantime, barring the discovery of detailed private recollections, the Catholic Telegraph remains the best way of determining just how Cincinnati Catholics felt about the Second Vatican Council. In terms of large-audience newspapers, it is the only way, as the city’s secular newspapers took almost no interest in the Council whatsoever, offering Catholics no material to which they may have wanted to respond with letters.

VII

While it was the liturgy that spurred lay responses to the Council in the Telegraph, the pre-Conciliar examples above contrast sharply with a few snapshots on the other side of Vatican II for other reasons, as well. Early in 1966, Alter wrote to the president of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women with several recommendations on the future of the organization. Expressing disappointment with the apparently low participation of Cincinnati women at the middle of the decade, Alter looked directly to the documents of Vatican II to revitalize the organization.114 He suggested that the ACCW study especially closely Sacrosanctum concilium, Lumen gentium, Apostolicam

114 Karl J. Alter to Mrs. Louis P. Becker, Jan. 18, 1966, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 4 (General Files) / Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, CAAC. Alter conceded that “we know from the studies that have been made in regard to attendance generally of organizations on the national level, that the average is 20 percent [participation].”
actuositatem (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People), and Gaudium et spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). Such a study would be “the first and essential foundation on which to build.” Returning to the idea of parish activism, as he had written of in his 1960 letter, Alter now identified education, social action, and charity as the primary foci of women’s contributions - gone were family life, marriage, recreation, and “modesty” as the special purview of women in the parishes. Even more specifically, Alter hoped that Cincinnati’s Catholic women would become involved in interracial projects and anti-poverty work. The archbishop’s 1966 aspirations thus were a far cry from his image of the ACCW just a few years earlier.

The archbishop also noted that the parish societies which he had raised up as exemplars of women’s activism in 1960 - the Altar Society and the Rosary Society - were insufficient recruiting grounds for the Council of Catholic Women. The problem was generational: “you have noted that the members of the Altar-Rosary society are, as a rule, the older women of the parish and that younger women do not find representation in the parish or the archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women.” It is not clear that any real effort was made subsequently to correct this apparent deficit; moreover, extant sociological data on the national level does not indicate a definitive answer on the increased participation of young people.115

115 For instance, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate notes that from 1965 to 1970: the number of self-identified Catholics grew by two and a half million; the number of students in Catholic high schools nearly doubled; and marriages increased from 352,458 to 426,309. These numbers, all of which might be reasonably connected with age, would indicate a substantial increase in the involvement of young people. On the other hand, Mass attendance fell by seven percent over the same period. “Frequently Requested Church Statistics,” Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, accessed Nov. 10, 2016, http://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/.
Six years after the poetically-covered issue of the *Parish Leader* mentioned above, which pointed to Christian unity and the devotional participation of Cincinnati’s Catholic families to achieve that goal, the same pamphlet touted success much closer to home. In 1967 the Archdiocesan Councils of Catholic Men and Women boasted that 25 dioceses around the country had written to Cincinnati for literature on developing parish councils, bodies which the Archdiocese of Cincinnati had fostered. A local layman, Ferd Niehaus, had been elected Secretary of the National Council for Catholic Men. Cincinnati, then, seems to have risen to national prominence in integrating the laity and the parish into the life of the local Church after the Council.

The bulletin also publicized a liturgical education program provided by the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission. The Councils of Catholic Men and Women loaned out film strips on various aspects of the liturgy in the post-conciliar era, mostly focusing on the historical development and Scriptural components of the Mass. The Councils hoped for a wide viewing among “meetings of parish societies, home study groups, training programs for lectors and commentators, parish and deanery liturgical commissions, etc.”. This concern illustrates the movement from spiritual contributions to the success of Church programs - Christian unity in 1961 - to direct action in internalizing the fruits of the Council via direct education.

Archbishop Alter moved relatively quickly to implement other, non-liturgical elements of Vatican II’s reform mandate in Cincinnati, erecting the Archdiocesan

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116 *The Parish Leader*, Easter 1967, Karl J. Alter Papers, Box 4 (General Files) / Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men (1960-1969), CAAC.

117 “Have You Investigated the Adult Liturgical Education Program of the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission?” *The Parish Leader* (Winter 1967), Karl J. Alter Papers, Box 4 (General Files) / Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men (1960-1969), CAAC.
Pastoral Council in 1966. When the APC met for the first time in November 1966, the agenda leaned heavily toward Vatican II. In fact, the top “special problem” for the APC to consider was how to educate Cincinnati Catholics on the Council. At the first meeting the members formed a Committee on the Decrees of the Vatican Council.

Vatican II also permeated the agenda in more subtle ways. Members were to discuss whether the traditional Holy Name Parade would continue or if it would be replaced by an ecumenical meeting “with Bible service and prayers” (the APC referred the issue to another committee). In addition, transformations in religious life were evident, with a scheduled item to discuss increasing teachers’ salaries, both religious and lay. Archbishop Alter later reported that this proposal came in response to a request by the “newly formed Federation of Catholic Teachers,” an association arising as women and men religious began yielding their classrooms to lay men and women.

In terms of lay involvement with the institutional Church, the archdiocese’s two premier lay organizations - the Archdiocesan Councils of Catholic Men and Women - took the reforms of Vatican II as inspiration to deliberate on their own futures. In 1965-1966, two competing plans for the groups’ reorganization began to coalesce. One, led by the lay men and women, would see the two organizations merged, at least in their leadership. The other, proposed by Archbishop Alter, took members of each group’s board and appointed them to a new Archdiocesan Pastoral Council along with clergy.


119 Minutes of first meeting of Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Nov. 27, 1966, Lay Organizations Papers, Box 1 / ACCM-ACCW Pastoral Council 1966 (Archbishop Alter), CAAC.
Alter enthusiastically embraced the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, proceeding efficiently and deliberately: the archbishop welcomed change, but he wanted to be in control of the process.

The decision to form the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council further shows that 1966 was a key year in the evolution of lay Catholics’ participation as semi-autonomous individuals in Church governance. When the Executive Director of both the ACCM and ACCW met with Alter to present the Councils’ own plans for reorganization, Alter offered his alternative plan with the reminder that “mine is a decree”. And that was that. Who Alter’s interlocutor was is significant on its own. The man presumably opposite the archbishop at his desk was Monsignor Earl Whalen, a diocesan priest who held several powerful leadership roles in the archdiocese over the course of his priestly career (while still Father Whalen, he was among that crop of priests appointed as “counselor” to the ACCM and ACCW in 1955). When layman Daniel Kane was appointed as Whalen’s assistant in 1957, it was the closest a lay Catholic had come to leadership of the organizations.

It is evident that the ongoing project in Cincinnati to give lay Catholics a stronger voice in governance and the overall life of the Church was of national importance. By

120 Fortin, *Faith and Action*, 348-349. Fortin’s claim that this was one of the first diocesan pastoral councils in the country, based on contemporary reports in *The Catholic Telegraph*, merits testing. If confirmed, such a reorganization would raise the historical significance of Cincinnati substantially.

121 Monsignor Earl Whalen to ACCM, ACCW, and Bureau of Information leadership, July 28, 1966, ACCM-ACCW / NCCL / ACO Documents [different from “Lay Organizations Papers”], Box 1 / 1966 ACCM-ACCW Joint Executive Committee (Reports), CAAC. Emphasis original.

122 Fortin, *Faith and Action*, 343. Fortin interprets the event much differently than I do, describing the occasion as proof that “the ACCM and ACCW had developed to such a degree that a layman became assistant to the executive secretary.”
1969, other dioceses were considering implementing their own pastoral councils with the involvement of the laity, but those waters were sufficiently uncharted that many bishops adopted a wait-and-see attitude before launching new ventures. The National Council of Catholic Men looked anxiously upon the work of laymen in Cincinnati for successful exemplars.123 Yet the official liaison between local and national lay organizations remained a member of the clergy. When Martin Work, Executive Director of the NCCM, wrote to Cincinnati to encourage the local Councils of Men and Women, he did so to Monsignor Whalen: “You will be among the pioneers in this new form. As you know, it will be watched closely by all concerned at the national level.”124

Alongside the reorganization of the men’s and women’s councils into an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council was the revitalization of parish councils, which existed prior to Vatican II but exercised much less power. This change was, again, the work of lay men and women with the advisory assistance of priests; still, it was through the parish council that Vatican II became manifest at the local level, enacting tangible change in the lives of the laity. The document laying out the implementation of parish councils, comprised of prefatory comments by the Councils of Men and Women and Alter’s decree erecting the parish councils, made frequent and extensive reference to Vatican II. It began on an audacious note, striking a tone similar to the epic pronouncements of the Council Fathers in Rome:

Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical “Ecclesiam Suam,” and the Second Vatican Council in the Constitution on the Church and Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, have listened to and heeded the voice of this particular age. For in

123 Joseph A. O’Connell to Daniel J. Kane, Feb. 19, 1969, ACCM-ACCW / NCCL / ACO Documents, Box 1 / NCCM 1969 Correspondence, CAAC.

124 Martin H. Work to Monsignor Earl Whalen, Jan. 27, 1969, ACCM-ACCW / NCCL / ACO Documents, Box 1 / NCCM 1969 Correspondence, CAAC.
these days, a combination of circumstances have [sic] come together to produce a change in men’s thinking which history may well compare to the Renaissance and give some sort of similar epithet. Modern man is almost painfully aware of his own existence, of the human self or person vis-a-vis [sic] the rest of the universe. And he is at the same time almost self-consciously aware of his need for community with others and of an inherent demand that he help fulfill the needs of other human persons.125

The document relied heavily on *Ecclesiam Suam, Apostolicam actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity), and *Lumen gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) to root the new parish councils directly in the Second Vatican Council. Furthermore, Archbishop Alter ordered the parishes to move quickly: each parish was to have its own council by the end of 1966, just a year after the end of Vatican II.126 He explained that this was simply his duty as required by *Christus Dominus* (Decree on the Bishops’ Pastoral Office in the Church).

Alter did not have to move so quickly, however. Anecdotes abound of bishops and priests dragging their feet on Conciliar reforms, either not seeing their necessity or actively fighting against them for various reasons (recall the advice to priests in Los Angeles that English in the Mass was not required). In a twist of the Council’s intended outcome for the global Church, the devolution of more authority to local bishops meant that those same bishops could exert more influence to slow the implementation of those conciliar reforms they did not like or did not want to pass.

Archbishop Alter established the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council by decree on June 29, 1966. The Council was to meet four times per year and consisted of lay

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125 *The Parish Council: Structure for Dialogue, Program for Parish Renewal*, 5, ACCM-ACCW / NCCL / ACO Documents, Box 1 / 1966 ACCM-ACCW Joint Executive Committee (Reports), CAAC.

Catholics, diocesan clergy, religious clergy, and representatives from the archdiocese’s orders of women religious. Its purpose was threefold: to represent the laity of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati within the Ohio Catholic Welfare Conference; to address thematic pastoral questions in the archdiocese, “especially in the areas of ecumenism, interracial justice, anti-poverty, liturgical developments, and in all matters of legislation and public policy affecting the good of religion”; and to be a channel between Cincinnati lay Catholics and the archbishop. Furthermore it would “provide representation” on community programs, essentially functioning as the interface between the institutional Church in Cincinnati and the broader public of the city.

Alter’s decree was significant for Catholics’ involvement in broader civic activism. The stated goal of the Council’s activity in ecumenism, interracial justice, and so on reflected a close embrace of Lumen gentium, which during Vatican II had laid out the necessary inclusion of the laity in fulfilling the mission of the Church. Echoes of Apostolicam actuositatem are here, with its desire for lay Catholics to sanctify their work and contributions to society in such a way that the institutional Church could rely on them to carry out “the apostolate,” or the Church’s general responsibility to witness to

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127 Diocesan priests do not belong to a religious order (e.g., Franciscans, Benedictines, etc.) and answer directly to a local ordinary, or bishop. Religious priests, on the other hand, take vows to enter into religious orders and answer to superiors within that order, which often cross territorial lines. In theory bishops have some authority over religious order clergy in their dioceses, but historically episcopal attempts to direct the activity of religious order priests have been tentative.

128 “Decree on Pastoral Council of Archdiocese of Cincinnati,” June 29, 1966, ACCM-ACCW / NCCL / ACO Documents, Box 1 / ACCM-ACCW Pastoral Council (Archbishop Alter), CAAC.

129 While certain individuals on the Pastoral Council were active in various community initiatives - men like Daniel Kane and Martin Cassidy - there is little evidence to suggest a programmatic attempt by the Pastoral Council to establish a toehold in the various interfaith and public-private organizations active in the 1960s and 1970s in the city.
Christ in the world. Thus the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council provided a crucial link between the Second Vatican Council and Cincinnati Catholics’ involvement with the city’s racial tensions, an involvement necessarily predicated upon creative interpretations of Vatican II which was itself almost totally silent race *per se*. In the wide-ranging and detailed discussion on race by this still-new Pastoral Council, references Vatican II were conspicuous by their absence. The Council thus functioned more or less as a starter’s gun, setting the members of the Pastoral Council off on their work but with a sound and an effect that ended almost immediately.

When setting up the Pastoral Council, Alter specifically cited *Christus Dominus*, Vatican II’s Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church. That document envisioned pastoral councils established “to investigate and to weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity, and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them.” In Cincinnati and in American society at large, race was a matter bearing on pastoral activity. The immediately post-Conciliar years were a key moment in American Catholic history because it defined another of the processes by which Vatican II had a tangible effect in American life. That effect was, in turn, defined by specifically American

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circumstances, problems, and needs. The pastoral councils envisioned by *Christus Dominus* and the lay activity called for by *Apostolicam actuositatem* could take a variety of forms. In Cincinnati, this meant (at least in part) addressing the city’s smoldering racial conflict, detailed in Chapter Two.

VIII

Despite the fact that Cincinnati Catholics were, to judge by the survey published in the *Telegraph* on what Catholics wanted from Vatican II, broadly representative of the rest of the country, local coverage and reaction painted a very different picture from that in the narratives prevailing in the national press. Without combing through the personal effects of hundreds of thousands of lay women and men, religious, and priests from the period, one cannot know whether Catholics in Cincinnati were reading about the Council in both the national and local press; surely more than a few did. For the reflective Catholic, doing so would show either that Cincinnati saw the Council in a much more positive light, that the national narrative on Vatican II glossed over significant local geniality, or both. *The Catholic Telegraph* looked beyond the superficial tensions on display in St. Peter’s and saw more of a fruitful exchange between intellectual sparring partners, rather than the life-or-death battles narrated by *Time* between Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani’s ultraconservatives and the liberating progressives like Leo Cardinal Suenens in Rome. At the same time, the newspaper constantly reminded “average” Catholics that they, too, had a stake in the Council and its success: whether Vatican II accomplished anything was not only in the hands of the Fathers.
Reaction on the ground also indicates a more placid reception of the Council than the heated rhetoric of *Time* and *U.S. Catholic* constructed. The most accessible barometer of local interpretation of Vatican II, the *Telegraph*’s letters section, reflects (albeit selectively) a community that took the Council in stride, with the smattering of extreme outliers that can be expected in any group. From these letters, it is clear that Cincinnati was utterly typical in its point of closest contact with Vatican II: the liturgy. Thus, while *Time, U.S. Catholic*, and even the local *Catholic Telegraph* were untangling the implications of Roman debates over collegiality, religious freedom, and the status of non-Catholics and non-Christians, most Catholics in Cincinnati knew simply that one era of worship had passed and another had arrived. Along with it came the powder keg of racial discord, which soon would explode in the city.
CHAPTER TWO

“A SOUL SPOTLESS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD”:

VATICAN II AND RACE IN CINCINNATI

In August 1953, Benjamin Simpson, City Editor of the Cincinnati Leader, wrote to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati about an incident at Cincinnati’s Coney Island amusement park. A group of clergy affiliated with the city’s Citizen’s Committee for Human Rights (CCHR) and local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had approached the admissions gate, knowing some among them would be turned away. The black clergy were denied entrance.

Coney Island had been in the spotlight for its admission policy for several months already. In April, the City Council had voted down a proposal to ban amusement parks from discrimination in admissions. The only two councilmen who voted against such discrimination, Theodore Berry and Jesse Locker, were black. It is not clear if any Catholics were among the citizens who attended the Council meeting in order to support

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1 Coney Island was a central battleground in Cincinnati’s civil rights movement, although Catholics were not involved to the same extent that Protestants were. The amusement park’s policy of admissions discrimination, and activist efforts to overturn it, is covered in great depth in Victoria Walcott, Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), Chapter 3 “A Northern City with a Southern Exposure: Challenging Recreational Segregation in the 1950s,” 88-124.
Councilman Berry, but none served as “spokesmen” for the group. There was, however, one Jew, one Episcopalian, and one Presbyterian who supported the Councilman.²

Citing protests from several local Protestant churches (“the Evangelical Brethren Church and the Presbytery [sic] Church”), editor Simpson requested that someone provide a statement on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.³ Fr. Paul Leibold, at that time Chancellor of the Archdiocese, took up the reply: “any right thinking man understands our position has never been and will never be to discriminate against any man because of his color - it is a soul spotless in the sight of God that merits sanctity in our fold, not the color of a man’s skin or the nationality of his family.” Yet Leibold also added the clarification that “we do not feel that it is in our province to publically [sic] condemn any individual or group for not promoting a private venture or business in the same way that we might conduct it.”⁴

Sixteen years later, in May 1969, a disgruntled lay Catholic wrote to St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral rector Monsignor Francis Kennedy to vent his rage over an incident the previous Sunday: Kennedy had allowed activists to read out the Black Manifesto at the end of Mass, a demand made in churches all over the country - sometimes by interrupting services - for $500 million in reparations to African Americans to be paid by white churches and synagogues. “Shock and amazement, followed by deep disgust, was our reaction when we learned that black blackmailers had been permitted to read a so-called manifesto,” the correspondent fumed. But he then threw theology and ecclesiology into


³ Benjamin E. Simpson to “Dear Sir,” no date, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 1 (General Files) / Apostolate to the Negro, Chancery Archive of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (hereafter CAAC).

⁴ Paul F. Leibold to Benjamin E. Simpson, Aug, 10, 1953, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 1 (General Files) / Apostolate to the Negro.
the mix, proclaiming his doubt that “any group of loyal Catholics, disenchanted with what’s been going on in the Church in the name of Vatican II, would be allowed to read a manifesto in the Cathedral.”\(^5\) For this lay Catholic, conciliar reform, racial tension, and religious orthodoxy were tightly interwoven. He was not alone.

These were two strikingly different incidents. One saw a Church official demurring when offered the chance to repudiate racism publicly. The other found a priest allowing black activists (whom some considered extremist) to read a manifesto from the pulpit, a site charged with theological importance. In comparison, they seem to illustrate a massive swing in Catholic attitudes on race in less than two decades. The second incident, however, also portrays a divided church, with lay protest against racial activism backgrounded by resentment against the institutional church’s ostensible hostility to “loyal Catholics.”

By establishing this contrast and further illuminating the individuals’ perspectives underlying each of them, this chapter complicates and corrects Roger Fortin’s overly progressive account of the archdiocese’s action on race at midcentury. Although Fortin’s chronicle of the Church’s formal efforts on racism at the time is accurate – he includes Archbishop Alter ordering archdiocesan summer camps to admit black children in 1963, college scholarships for a select few black high school students starting also in 1963, and the insertion of non-discrimination clauses into archdiocesan labor contracts in 1965 - his focus on public pronouncements and institutional action overlooks the turmoil that roiled

\(^5\) Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Otto to Monsignor Francis Kennedy, May 12, 1969, Karl J. Alter Papers, Box 8 (General Files) / Black Manifesto / National Black Economic Development Conference, CAAC.
the local Church at the parish level. More importantly, his narrative leaves out entirely the connection between Vatican II and local disputes over race.

It is tempting to read the history of Catholics and race relations in Cincinnati as a morality tale of backwardness among Cincinnati’s Catholics. Yet an awareness of what were common attitudes among white Americans in the 1950s and 1960s, even among Catholics who saw the need to act on racial questions, should temper a rush to judgment. In the actual unfolding of events, few Catholics (even those who would describe themselves as “progressive” on race) acted with what in the twenty-first century would be considered racial enlightenment. With its complex - and complicated - history of racial attitudes, Cincinnati is not alone. For example, David Southern’s history of the Jesuit John LaFarge’s racial activism offers a useful comparison since LaFarge, one of the leading lights of the “Catholic Civil Rights Movement,” remained remarkably paternalistic toward blacks and altogether too optimistic about pursuing a gradual approach when the nation’s race crisis required immediate action. Thomas Sugrue notes more generally that “except for in the pages of social science […] ordinary citizens seldom hold consistent views. Their motivations vary; their ideologies shift; their sense of what is possible and impossible, pragmatic and impracticable changes with the times.” Much the same could be said about Cincinnati Catholics who confronted challenges about race. This story is not one of heroes and villains but rather of ordinary

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men and women who, while they struggled to acknowledge the essential dignity and humanity of African Americans, also refused to see sin in their own mistreatment of these brothers and sisters whom they would otherwise acknowledge as children of God. From reluctant advances by the Archdiocese on what might be called “race policy”; to Catholic service on the Mayor’s Friendly Relations Committee; to the Second Vatican Council’s call for the Church to be transformative in the world; to Cincinnati’s embrace of Project Commitment, a lecture and discussion program designed to change individual attitudes on racism; to widespread conflict over James Forman’s Black Manifesto, with its demands for half a billion dollars in white reparations to blacks; Cincinnati Catholicism’s story on race is far from straightforward. Ultimately, however, the state of affairs at the close of the 1960s was a vast improvement over what had obtained when Benjamin Simpson wrote to Paul Leibold about Coney Island.

This dissertation features the story of Cincinnati Catholicism and race for several reasons. First, race was the overriding social concern of the 1960s in most of the United States. While the level of violence and open conflict in Cincinnati did not reach the levels found in other cities both north and south, the Queen City avoided neither the riots nor the violent rhetoric characterizing the era. One person was killed in rioting after the June 1967 arrest of a black man for loitering; two died in riots following Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination in 1968.\(^9\) Both events required the intervention of the Ohio National Guard.

Second, racial questions affected the Catholic Church differently from most other religious groups in American history. The church, for instance, was one of the few not

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divided by the question of slavery at the time of the Civil War. For differing reasons, both Northern and Southern Catholics generally opposed abolition; in broad terms, however, neither regional group considered slavery to be wrong *per se.*\(^{10}\) Neither the Civil War nor broader racial conflicts resulted in Northern and Southern Catholic Churches. For one, such unity flowed from the strong doctrinal and ecclesiological definitions that comprise the Church’s hierarchical structure. Furthermore, American anti-Catholicism forged powerful bonds among Catholics in both the North and the South. The lack of a formal split does not to suggest that Church has not struggled over racial questions, though. A rich historiography has shown how the Church has attempted to “deal” with race in several ways, from establishing black parishes for ministry to black Catholics - viewed one way, benevolently paternal; viewed another, “separate but equal” - to requiring black Catholics to attend their local territorial parish, even if segregated internally.\(^ {11}\)

Compounding the anxiety surrounding racial strife was the difference between polices *vis-à-vis* race in a purely spiritual context and churches’ statements on race in civic life. To some, what happened within the confines of church walls had little to do with broader social movements, as Kevin Smith has discovered in his study of Milwaukee. Even whether or not to become involved in affairs beyond the strictly spiritual divided communities in the middle of the twentieth century, especially when such social activism threatened the existing social order.\(^ {12}\)


Third, while in most American cities race was the overriding social concern of the day, leading historians of global Catholicism argue that “the historical significance of the [Second Vatican] Council…is best examined at the combustive points where the Council’s messages, aspirations, and fears…met up most explosively with the particular circumstances of the modern world it was directed to engage” by the bishops assembled in Rome from 1962 to 1965.13 In Cincinnati, as elsewhere in the United States, race was the most combustive of these points at which the Council met the modern world. In ways both acknowledged by contemporary Catholics and in ways visible only in retrospect, how the Church responded to race at the local level indeed could not be separated from how it responded to Vatican II.

The connection between Conciliar pronouncements and activism (or resistance) at the local level is made most vivid by the Council’s admonition to the laity to take an active role in the life of the Church. After the Council, lay men and women were advised to take their rightful place among the “People of God” rather than only being led by clerical shepherds. The Council Fathers spoke on the theme repeatedly over the course of the Vatican II:

Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ.14

The lay apostolate…is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself.15

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15 Second Vatican Council, ibid., sec. 33.
Since they have an active role to play in the whole life of the Church, laymen are not only bound to penetrate the world with a Christian spirit, but are also called to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society.\textsuperscript{16}

Kathleen Cummings, Timothy Matovina, and Robert Orsi acknowledge the difficulty of drawing too straight a line between Vatican II and local events, cautioning against ascribing everything involving Catholics in the era to the Council itself: the Council’s documents were not “scripts that Catholics wherever they were simply acted out.”\textsuperscript{17} Yet even if the Council’s teachings were not scripts to be followed verbatim, they were still read by Catholics engaged in their own, particular lives, lives which helped determine how Conciliar change was embraced, resisted, and interpreted in communities around the world.\textsuperscript{18} In Cincinnati, no few lay Catholics embodied the Council’s admonitions vigorously - both in service to the cause of racial progress and against it. As seen below, the rediscovered role for Catholic lay men and women to play in the life of the Church could yield starkly different results. Some urged fellow Catholics, both lay and clerical, in Cincinnati to support racial equity. Others fostered protest against civil rights efforts.

The Council spoke also on the need for the Church, both as an institution and a collection of individuals, to engage more deeply, more charitably, and more actively with the rest of the “modern world.” The Fathers implored “Christians, as citizens of two cities [the metaphorical cities of God and of man], to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing


\textsuperscript{17} Cummings et. al., eds., \textit{Vatican II}.

\textsuperscript{18} Cummings et. al., eds., \textit{ibid.}
that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may
therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities.”19 It was by “in response to the Gospel
spirit” that the Council Fathers meant Christians should apply their faith to the problems
of broader society. This chapter lays out the many contributions by individual Catholics
to address societal crises, taking up the Council’s call and applying it to contemporary
racism. Institutionally, however, Cincinnati Catholicism was more ambivalent, seeking
always to discern first what its “earthly duties” might be, rather than offering early
support for racial justice movements originating outside the Church.

Many Cincinnati Catholics viewed the reforms of Vatican II and racial reform in
America as deeply connected. Cummings, Matovina, and Orsi note that the relationships
between the myriad constituencies in the Church, whether determined by religious state,
race, gender, sexual orientation, or any other identifier “were implicated in the others, so
that to pull on any one strand in the web was to set all of them moving.”20 The same was
true for Catholics’ positioning in their broader communities beyond church walls and
parish boundaries. For some, the linkage between the Council and race mandated
expending terrific energy in the cause of racial justice. For others, the epochal shifts in
the Church brought about by Vatican II were but the theological blow of a one-two
punch, with the civic-sociological second strike delivered by Catholic activism to end
discrimination. For those men and women who looked askance at the change going on all
around them, it was simply too much. The Council had shaken the Church to its

19 Second Vatican Council, Gaudium et spes, sec. 43.

20 Cummings et. al., eds., Vatican II.
The solutions may not have been ready-made, but religion did make an attempt. While the Second Vatican Council did not address race at any appreciable length, two of its documents did speak of a reinvigorated laity. When post-Conciliar Catholics in Cincinnati engaged the city’s racial strife, it was these two documents - *Lumen gentium* and *Gaudium et spes* - which framed the Church in which they operated and to which they referred frequently as their moral locus. Although neither offered a clear plan either for solving racial problems or for defending the extant American social order, the two documents did lay out the terms on which post-Conciliar Catholics would grapple with questions of race.

*Lumen gentium*, the Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, offered the world a vision of the Church that stood in direct contrast to the *societas perfecta* of past centuries. It was Chapter Four of the constitution that attracted the most attention in the wake of its November 1964 promulgation after a landslide vote. The chapter was devoted to the laity; to be a lay Catholic was to be “in the world,” as it were, working alongside other lay Catholics and non-Catholics.

One of *Lumen gentium*’s clearest attempts at reinvigorating the role of the laity was its declaration that lay Catholics took part “in the salvific mission of the Church itself.”

Thus it proclaimed that lay Catholics were responsible for fostering the salvation of the world alongside the clergy and religious.

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21 Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, sec. 33. Chapter 5 of the Constitution, on the “Universal Call to Holiness,” moved from Chapter 4’s outline of lay activity to a deeper sense of the laity’s inmost being; there, the Fathers wrote “all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the...
Without mentioning the problem of American racism directly, *Lumen gentium* admonished Catholics in such a way as to, in effect, shut down resistance to the Civil Rights Movement in general. Lay people were to “remedy the customs and conditions of the world, if they are an inducement to sin, so that they all may be conformed to the norms of justice and may favor the practice of virtue rather than hinder it.”\(^{22}\) Given that many Americans found no conflict between contemporary racism and the nation’s founding principles of God-given dignity as citizens, many Catholics would have felt no compunction to address racial problems even with this teaching. But another admonition had the potential for a more direct effect on lay Catholics: “the laity should…promptly accept in Christian obedience decisions of their spiritual shepherds, since they are representatives of Christ as well as teachers and rulers in the Church.”\(^{23}\) As this chapter explores, this line hinted at a smoldering crisis of authority in the American Church, one which would erupt into conflict between clergy and laity over civil rights.

A year after *Lumen gentium*, the Council Fathers passed *Gaudium et spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. The document was the culmination of John XXIII’s desire to make the Catholic Church more relevant to the modern era, to preach the Gospel in a way newly accessible to a world that many surmised had begun to look askance at the guarantees of truth offered by the Church. In this constitution the Council Fathers tore down barriers between the Catholic Church and the rest of the world by declaring that the Church “experiences the same earthly lot fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society.” *Lumen gentium*, sec. 40.

\(^{22}\) *Lumen gentium*, sec. 36.

\(^{23}\) *Lumen gentium*, sec. 37.
which the world does.”\textsuperscript{24} But some of \textit{Lumen gentium}’s ambiguity crept into \textit{Gaudium et spes}, as well. The Council Fathers conceded that “Christ, to be sure, gave his Church no proper mission in the political, economic, or social order”; as a result, “it happens rather frequently, \textit{and legitimately so}, that with equal sincerity some of the faithful will disagree with others on a given matter.”\textsuperscript{25} It is important to recall that race was not within the purview of the Council \textit{per se}. Archbishop Alter individually and the American bishops collectively issued statements on race during the 1960s precisely because there had seemed to be no clear answer from the institutional Church. Yet the Council Fathers resonated with the \textit{Zeitgeist} of the global West when they wrote that contemporary developments in human rights had sparked movements “to bring about a politico-juridical order which will give better protection to the rights of the person in public life.”\textsuperscript{26} In the United States, these movements needed to inspire internal change at the individual level; “by strengthening basic convictions as to the true nature of the political community and the aim, right exercise, and sphere of action of public authority.”\textsuperscript{27} In other words, personal conversion was necessary to heal the nation’s communal racial wounds.

John McGreevy’s \textit{Parish Boundaries} maps the intra-Catholic conflict that took place over desegregation in the northern United States (where, following Victoria Wolcott’s lead, I place Cincinnati).\textsuperscript{28} McGreevy highlights the difficult position that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{Gaudium et spes}, sec. 40.
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Lumen gentium}, sec. 42 and 43. Emphasis added.
\item \textsuperscript{26} \textit{Lumen gentium}, sec. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Lumen gentium}, sec. 73. The Constitution did not recommend only personal conversion, however; at multiple points it implored communities to enact legislation and other governmental structures to guarantee fundamental human rights and participation in the community (\textit{e.g.}, \textit{Lumen gentium}, sec. 75).
\end{itemize}
many bishops found themselves in with regard to where their flocks lived: how could they convince white Catholics concerned with black families’ ostensible effect on property values that racial opposition was contrary to the Gospel?

This chapter also takes advantage of renewed academic interest in the intersection of race and religion. Karen Joy Johnson has begun exploring the ramifications of this connection for periodizing Catholic participation in the civil rights movement. For historians of Catholicism, Johnson notes the Second Vatican Council did not represent, as she puts it, “a watershed moment” for interracialist Catholics. Instead, “the Council’s emphasis on the role of the laity in the church and of the church in the world only sanctioned and strengthened Catholic interracialists’ means and goals, which they had pursued for three decades.”

The events unfolding in Cincinnati’s civil rights struggle confirm Johnson’s thesis applied to this city. Johnson’s narrative also repositions the story of interracial action on the Catholic laity rather than the clergy. Finally, she notes that at midcentury interracial activism often appeared alongside interfaith initiatives and ecumenical cooperation, with these three elements mutually supporting each other. As this chapter shows and as Roger Fortin’s history of the archdiocese briefly mentions, all these elements were present in Cincinnati.

This chapter accomplishes two goals. First, it describes the contemporary racial “policy” of the institutional Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. That policy evolved from

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avoiding public involvement to public endorsement of desegregation and an end to
racism. Second, it narrates the growing involvement of the Catholic laity in the civil
rights movement. For Catholics in Cincinnati, that involvement included activism both
within the Church and in civil organizations with no institutional connection to religion.

At first glance, the fact that the Second Vatican Council said next to nothing
about race while many American Catholics were deeply involved in the civil rights
movement suggests that the two were unrelated. Moreover, even the source base on
contemporary racial activism suggests a weak linkage between the two: when Catholics
in Cincinnati talked about their work on race, rarely did Vatican II enter the conversation.
But to conclude that Vatican II played no role in influencing Cincinnati Catholics’
decision to insert themselves into one of the twentieth century’s most important social
movements oversimplifies the people and events in question. Rather, that Catholics had
become so involved in the life of the city and the lives of their black neighbors - most of
whom were not Catholic - indicates that the Council’s call for an activist laity succeeded.

II

The extent to which that personal conversion eventually called for by Lumen
gentium was needed in the United States was abundantly clear in Telegraph coverage on
race. The newspaper drew on several themes to denounce racism in (mostly) uncertain
terms. The editors connected acts of racism with a lack of patriotism, calling support for
segregation an essentially un-American activity.\(^3^2\) It was a short leap from un-American
to outright Red, as the paper asserted in 1961: “The pipe-swinging hoodlums in Southern

\(^{32}\) This linkage aligns with the work of Mary Dudziak in her Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 12.
cities did their country as much injury as a boat-load of Communist agents. The real evil of race hate...goes much deeper than public relations. It is wrong because it makes a mockery of our country’s reputation as the land of the free.”

At the height of civil rights activism, the newspaper focused especially on the necessity of religious leadership in the movement. In one sense, it is not surprising that the *Telegraph* would raise religious leadership as key to civil rights. Its editors doubted whether any other motivation could have faced with peace the violence of segregationists. The call for religious guidance was not a hobbyhorse of only the *Catholic Telegraph*, as the National Catholic Welfare Conference itself urged Catholics nationally to join “interfaith efforts to push for the enactment of critically needed legislation in the fields of employment, housing, health and welfare.”

The newspaper, which itself had earlier indulged in the racism that characterized so much of America in the early twentieth century, knew well that the Civil Rights Movement had not ended with federal legislation in the middle of the decade. The editors put it bluntly when they wrote “the struggle for freedom is not ended. The scars of racial injustice remain and, as the President as indicated, Negroes and Whites must now

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36 Roger Fortin quotes the description of blacks as “lazy, ignorant, depraved Negroes that have given rise to the race question in the south” in a 1909 editorial. Fortin, *Faith and Action*, 241. Fortin characteristically puts as bright a shine on the occasion as possible, writing that “but this editorial was not typical. Even though the diocesan paper generally endorsed segregation, it did not as a rule write condescendingly or derogatorily of blacks.” The notion of the Movement as essentially unfinished became mainstream with the publication of Jacquelyn Dowd Hall’s “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91 no. 4 (2005): 1233-1263.
work together to wipe out the handicaps created by generations of racial prejudice.”\(^{37}\)

Looking back on the year 1970, the newspaper noted that “some gains have been made in education and politics, but in employment, housing and economics a black man in our society continues to suffer badly simply because he is black.”\(^{38}\)

For their part, the American Catholic bishops’ organization issued public declarations on race in 1958 and 1963. While in 1958 the bishops pushed for thoroughgoing reform in American society to address racism and segregation, they were pragmatic about the timeframe of such reform and the route the nation should take. In “Racial Discrimination and the Christian Conscience, they called for “concrete plans” that were “based on prudence” rather than sloganeering.\(^{39}\) Significantly, however, “Catholics were not being urged to become proactive agents of racial justice.”\(^{40}\) Paul Leibold’s letter to Benjamin Simpson was consistent with the bishops’ lack of urgency on racism. Roger Fortin suggests “by its silence [the archdiocese of Cincinnati] probably helped fan racism.”\(^{41}\)

Five years after “Racial Discrimination and the Christian Conscience” and a full decade after Fr. Leibold’s cautious letter to Benjamin Simpson, the National Catholic Welfare Conference issued a ringing condemnation of race that entirely subverted

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\(^{41}\) Fortin, Faith and Action, 312.
Leibold’s claim that what the Church taught from the pulpit on race did not necessarily apply to who businesses should allow in the door.

Or did the 1963 statement go quite so far? One point the document, “On Racial Harmony,” asserted “we must provide for all equal opportunity for employment, full participation in our public and private educational facilities, proper housing, and adequate welfare assistance when needed.”\footnote{National Catholic Welfare Conference, “On Racial Harmony: A Statement Approved by the Administrative Board, National Catholic Welfare Conference,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Website, Aug. 23, 1963, accessed Nov. 11, 2016, \url{http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/upload/On-Racial-Harmony.pdf}.} Later on, the bishops wrote “we should do our part to see that voting, jobs, housing, education, and public facilities are freely available to every American.” Conspicuously missing was any mention of private dealings: the bishops made no attempt to answer whether it was permissible for shopkeepers, dining wait staff, or amusement park workers to discriminate on the basis of race. The closest they came was a brief line in paragraph four, which said that the principles of individual rights “apply to all forms of discrimination and segregation based on prejudice.” The clarification was perhaps a nod toward business, but the committee who composed the statement went no further. The priorities of 1963 continued what the bishops had said in 1958: addressing racial discrimination meant addressing violations of voting rights, equal access to housing, equal educational opportunities, and discrimination in employment.

A month before the National Catholic Welfare Conference published its 1963 statement, Archbishop Karl Alter authored a letter to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati on race. He ordered it read from every pulpit the following week as a guide forward after recent public demonstrations and as an explicit endorsement of a national civil rights
His letter was remarkably balanced, containing a wealth of subtle messages to the Catholics of Cincinnati. While acknowledging the depth and severity of the United States’ problems with racism both historically and in the present, and while also admonishing the archdiocese that “no good will come from merely looking backward, nor from efforts to arouse emotions in dramatic fashion,” he quietly endorsed - or at least did not denounce - public demonstrations as an inevitable result of public and governmental apathy on questions of race, “no matter what we might think of the prudence and ultimate effectiveness of such demonstrations.”

Picking up on the NCWC’s 1958 statement and foreshadowing the 1963 declaration, Alter rejected the notion that civil rights was a matter for the political realm only. In fact, he wrote, addressing systematic racism was the duty “especially” of Catholics. While joining the civil and the religious in searching for solutions, Alter also acknowledged that the Church - or at least some members of it - had played a role in past discrimination. Here he walked a thin line. On the one hand, he could assert that the Archdiocese had never maintained an explicit policy of discrimination in either churches or schools; on the other, “in some other church-related institutions [this absence of discrimination] was not always equally true.”

The majority of Alter’s letter forcefully argued for a Cincinnati future marked by integration and fair treatment. But as with Paul Leibold’s 1953 letter to Benjamin Simpson, he hedged. In a version of what Tomiko Nagin-Brown has called “racial pragmatism,” Alter made an appeal to the self-interest of Cincinnatians who, whether ascribing to racist beliefs or simply riding the contemporary wave of racial fear, felt

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43 Karl J. Alter, public letter to the archdiocese, July 16, 1963, Catholic Interracial Council (General File), Catholic Telegraph Archives (hereafter CTA).
tempted to flee their neighborhoods when “threatened” by integration. The archbishop specifically called out “block busting” real estate agents and other “operators” who goaded homeowners into selling because of increasing black residency. Questions of justice and dignity aside, “the people who desert their homes without necessity inevitably incur economic losses. If they would agree to remain where they have established their homes, they could preserve the character of their neighborhoods and maintain fair values.”

Two questions arise immediately from Alter’s conciliatory advice. First, what did he mean by “necessity” when referring to property sales? And second, what did he mean by “character of their neighborhoods”? His mention of “fair values” is sensible enough: neighborhoods with high turnover tend to have either artificially low or artificially high prices. But “necessity” and “character” are two other things altogether.

There is a way to read Alter’s admonition in a more charitable light. His advice lay most of the blame for real estate sell-offs on “operators” who “stampeded” homeowners. Alter’s advice also acknowledged racism among recipients but argues that the fearful tide of black homebuyers feverishly warned of by real estate agents was not, in fact, impending. Thus Alter did not necessarily suggest that a large number of black mortgage applicants constituted a “necessity” to sell, but rather sidestepped white homeowners’ potential racism, assuring them that their fears, however unjust, also were unfounded. The archbishop’s soothing aligned well with the “racial pragmatism” put on

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44 Tomiko Nagin-Brown, Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2. I write “version” because Nagin-Brown’s definition is much narrower, in which racial pragmatism “privileged politics over litigation, placed a high value on economic security, and rejected the idea that integration (or even desegregation) and equality were one and the same.”
display by Alter’s episcopal colleagues in 1958. Ultimately the admonition was entirely
typical of Alter, who recognized the very real problem of racism but was
temperamentally disinclined to confrontation.45

The archbishop’s letter ended on a practical note that bore all the weight of his
authority as pontifex to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. While “no body or group of people
has ever passed suddenly, by a mere act of will or by legislative decree, from one cultural
level to a higher one” - in other words, a civil rights act was not, on its own, able to bring
about the personal conversions on race necessary to eliminate racism in the nation - it
would be “false and disloyal to the mandate of Christ” not to “safeguard, promote, and
sanction the great social virtues.” The cause of racial justice in Cincinnati would falter if
Catholics did not change their own hearts and minds on the matter and encourage others
to do the same.

III

Beyond religious leaders imploring for individual conversions to racially
progressive attitudes, Cincinnati offers a useful case study to analyze how religious
believers contributed to public organizations. One of the most significant of these
intersections in the early part of the 1960s was the Mayor’s Friendly Relations
Committee, a body incorporated in 1943 “to advise, consult with and assist the Mayor,
City Council and the City Manager, and all Departments of the City of Cincinnati on all
matters involving racial, religious or ethnic prejudice or discrimination,” as well as “to do
everything practicable which, in the judgement of the Board of Trustees, should be done

to eliminate prejudice and the practice of discrimination against individuals or groups
because of race, color, creed, national origin or ancestry, in the City of Cincinnati, and to
adjust frictions in human relations in the interests of the public welfare.\footnote{46} By the 1960s,
the MFRC’s mission focused almost entirely on questions of race.

The archdiocese played an incidental role in the organization during the 1960s
through the participation of Father (later Monsignor) Lawrence Walter, who headed the
Committee’s housing committee.\footnote{47} The contribution was incidental rather than intentional
as Walter is not described as a representative of the archdiocese in the Committee’s
records. Walter, a staunch advocate of open housing, correctly identified lenders as the
main culprit in contemporary segregation in owned housing.\footnote{48} The priest, who was
involved in employment desegregation, also took a leading role in negotiations between
employers, the city and federal governments, and trades unions. His greatest achievement
in this capacity was the aversion of a demonstration - which very well could have turned
violent - in the summer of 1963 over a lack of black hiring on the construction of a new
federal building at 550 Main Street downtown. In a series of summits over the early
summer the trades unions and contractors involved had agreed to nondiscrimination
policies, although Walter was disappointed that the city’s nondiscrimination policy in

\footnote{46} In 1965, the MFRC reorganized itself into the Cincinnati Human Rights Commission. The
archival research for this chapter did not include a survey of CHRC materials at the University of
Cincinnati. In any case, as the decade wore on it becomes extremely difficult to identify the Catholic
members of the CHRC Board of Commissioners, in the apparent absence of their prominence in the
Catholic Interracial Council (whose papers were examined for this chapter) or status as clerics (making
their identification easy). “Who We Are,” Cincinnati Human Relations Committee Website, accessed Nov.
11, 2016, \url{http://www.chrc.us/whoweare.html}; MFRC Articles of Incorporation, cited in MFRC letter to
City Council Committee on Housing and Urban Renewal, May 21, 1962, MSS 580 Urban League of
Greater Cincinnati Records 24/7, Cincinnati Museum Center Archive (hereafter CMCA).

\footnote{47} MFRC Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, Apr. 25, 1962, MSS 580 24/7, CMCA.

\footnote{48} MFRC Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, May 10, 1962, MSS 580 24/7, CMCA.
contract bidding was essentially unenforceable. 49 Marshall Bragdon, the executive director of the MFRC, heaped praise on Walter for maintaining open lines of communication between construction firms and the Cincinnati chapter of the NAACP, which had threatened a demonstration, even as it seemed at one point that a public disturbance was unavoidable. 50

Bragdon’s report on Walter’s success made two salient points about victories in Cincinnati race relations. First, while Msgr. Walter was frustrated with the legal framework surrounding employment discrimination, the improved relations hammered out between business and NAACP leaders proved that “half the battle is persuading Negro youths that now they have a chance.” 51 As in other areas of the country, so also it was in Cincinnati: both prior to and after the Civil Rights (1964) and Voting Rights (1965) Acts, it was often at the community level that white racism was most clearly observed, rather than assuming legislative remedies actually produced meaningful results on the ground. 52

The MFRC also had lent its weight to a countermovement in the city’s East College Hill neighborhood against a blaze of panic selling that had threatened to drain white families out of the neighborhood in May. The impending run on housing was anomalous: in a 1963 meeting between MFRC East College Hill Housing Sub-Committee members and a College Hill resident, the resident described the area as one

49 MFRC Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, July 24, 1963, MSS 580 24/8, CMCA.
50 “Executive Director’s REPORT for May, June & July 1963,” MSS 580 24/8, CMCA.
51 “Executive Director’s REPORT for May, June & July 1963,” MSS 580 24/8, CMCA.
historically “of racial integration and stability.” In later community meetings attended by MFRC members, a College Hill Human Relations Committee was formed by representatives of five neighborhood churches - both Protestant and Catholic - with the purpose to “maintain College Hill as a good place to live, where Negro and white families have lived amicably for many years” and “to promote the further development of such an atmosphere in College Hill, that people of all races and creeds may live together in peace and harmony.” Another point, which directly touched a nerve running through fraught race relations, also anticipated Archbishop Alter’s advice to jittery homeowners: the committee intended “to allay the fears of some residents in regard to the current change in the racial composition of our neighborhood.” This goal is explained no further and can be read in two ways. Did the neighborhood group seek to assure white residents that not “too many” blacks were moving into the neighborhood? Or did they aspire to true racial harmony through convincing white residents that even many black families moving in was nothing to fear? In either case, the Committee also appealed to residents’ sense of economic responsibility to one another, as “if ‘panic’ sets in and large numbers of houses are dumped suddenly on the marke [sic], sale values are bound to decline.”

Second, Bragdon was well-aware that the types of struggles faced in Cincinnati were not unique in the United States, or even in the North; in the introduction to his report on Lawrence Walter’s employment summit, Bragdon proudly boasted that in avoiding a demonstration (and possibly an ensuing riot) “Cincinnati met a problem which

53 “Chronology - College Hill Neighborhood Panic,” May 21, 1963, MSS 580 24/8, CMCA.
54 “Fact Sheet for Neighborhood Meetings sponsored by the College Hill Human Relations Committee,” MSS 580 24/8, CMCA.
flared into violence in Philadelphia in May.”55 Bragdon himself was not a native of Cincinnati - he was from Minneapolis - and his employment as the executive director largely had turned on his knowledge of the Massachusetts school project on race known as the “Springfield Plan.”56

Bragdon, and the MFRC in general, was well aware that harnessing the social capital of Cincinnati’s religious community was essential to the Committee’s mission. In a letter to the City Council Committee on Housing and Urban Renewal, sent in May 1962 in protest of racist lending practices, the Committee claimed that “this drastic doctrine of segregated living” was “so unlike the American invitation to folk of every faith and nationality to come, build, and enjoy an intermingled community.”57 The fact that the Committee had an interfaith and ecumenical membership did not go unremarked. When Lawrence Walter was elevated to the rank of Monsignor in 1962, it was the Jewish Charles Posner who made a motion for the Committee to congratulate Walter and the Baptist Reverend William Mosley who seconded it.58 Too, the Committee remained apprised of events in Cincinnati’s religious community and how they might advance civil rights causes: Monsignor Walter reported in July 1963 that the Archdiocese had sent Archbishop Alter’s six-point program on civil rights to 650 local Protestant ministers and 100 Jewish leaders. The statement was intended, Walter said, “to give the timid more

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55 “Executive Director’s REPORT for May, June & July 1963,” MSS 580 24/8, CMCA.


57 MFRC Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, May 10, 1962, MSS 580 24/7, CMCA.

58 MFRC Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, Sept. 26, 1962, MSS 580 24/7, CMCA.
backbone and [to] encourage the councils on racial justice and civil rights in the Catholic community.”  

By 1963 the necessity of religious cooperation and contribution to Cincinnati’s civil rights struggle was a given. Bragdon’s public reports as executive director in the early 1960s were full of nods to religious leaders and organizations who accomplished a great deal in local race relations. Cincinnati attorney Leonard Slutz remarked to the MFRC on church-related institutions’ involvement in civil rights that “such progress in this border city is vital.” Bragdon pointed briefly to an event within the Archdiocese that surely had been much more momentous in Catholic circles than his report blurb made it seem: without naming the parish, Bragdon said that in 1961 the parish had shuttered “its ‘mission’ chapel for Negroes, making one worship, one family. White communicants tell us there is new strength, spirit and pride.” It was not uncommon in the early 1960s for Catholic dioceses to designate particular churches as “mission” parishes or parishes reserved for blacks, on the grounds that white racism necessitated a separate worship space for blacks. Such a combined parish, with peaceful relations between whites and blacks, was far ahead of its time.

Bragdon’s write-up of MFRC involvement in a series of Catholic and Protestant women’s meetings on race problems in the fall of 1962 bears the strongest witness to the Committee’s understanding of how crucial religion was to racial harmony. The meetings

59 MFRC Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, July 24, 1963, MSS 580 24/8, CMCA.
60 “Executive Director’s Report for April 1961,” MSS 580 24/7, CMCA.
61 “Executive Director’s Report for March 1962,” MSS 580 24/7, CMCA.
62 See, for example, Steven Avella’s discussion of Samuel Cardinal Stritch’s policy in the Archdiocese of Chicago. This Confident Church: Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).
made obvious to Bragdon one of the central paradoxes that would throw Catholics’ race projects into deep turmoil later in the decade with Project Commitment. Bragdon noted that events such as the women’s meetings “pulled many participants two ways. Their church and conscience spoke one way; their neighbors, and a part of their own feelings, oppositely.” Addressing such a divide would become the key goal of Project Commitment when it began in Cincinnati in 1967: explaining the Church’s teachings on race and equality in a way that Catholics would find irresistible, even in the face of strong social pressure to maintain *de facto* segregation. Bragdon, however, was less aware of the same fissure running through religious organizations on just this question, as he idealistically mused that “religion can…help the individual to find a better answer than he can find alone.” Certainly many a believer had consulted his or her religion in Cincinnati, coming up with a clear answer in favor of segregation. Religion provided no ready-made solution for race relations in Cincinnati or elsewhere.

IV

The attitude and policies of the institutional Church *vis-à-vis* race in Cincinnati were at times forward-looking, at times reluctant (if not entirely unmotivated); some among the Church were deeply involved while others were indifferent or actively opposed racial projects. It is therefore difficult to interpret this period - just prior to Vatican II, during the Council, and the years after - in a straightforward manner, even with the contribution of the Vatican II documents that had the potential to address American racism. Part of the Cincinnati Church’s inertia likely was political expediency,

63 “Executive Director’s Report for September 1962,” MSS 580 24/7, CMCA.
with church officials testing the winds of public opinion before making any sort of outward move; part of it undoubtedly lie in the very human composition of the Church’s leadership: especially in structures that supported top-level leadership with little in the way of critical feedback, the vagaries in even one individual’s thoughts (such as those of an archbishop) easily could become translated into institutional-level policies and attitudes.

Unsatisfying from a narrative standpoint - there is little institutional progress on racism over the middle decades of the twentieth century - the story of Cincinnati Catholicism grappling with race nonetheless represents well the entire nation’s halting, reluctant steps toward racial equality. In 1953, archdiocesan policy clearly was to support racial equality in the abstract; public statements on race relations that might cause discomfort to certain individuals, though, were out of the question. By 1958 the American bishops finally spoke out on race, including with the participation of Archbishop Alter through his work on the NCWC Administrative Board. But even that document was noncommittal, praising racial equality without offering any meaningful plan to redress the grievances of African Americans. Eight years later Alter wrote a forceful, and public, denunciation of racism, specifically calling on all of his flock to embrace racial equity in their own lives; just one year later, however, a woman begged for Alter’s help by preaching a message of racial equality, using his authority as bishop to teach Cincinnati’s Catholics the moral deficiencies of racism. Instead of receiving a sympathetic response, she was brushed off by a busy vicar general who could console her only with blasé encouragement: “We must keep working at it.”
That state of affairs obtained for most of the 1960s; in the hearts and minds of some Catholics, it undoubtedly obtained long after. But in 1968, three years after the close of the Council, great change was afoot, and Archbishop Karl Alter could thank Detroit’s John Cardinal Dearden for the tools to start fighting racism in Cincinnati. Yet the lead up to this change was deeply contentious. Cincinnati Catholics showed themselves spoiling for a fight.

Race offered many lay Catholics the motivation to call into question the Church’s institutional positions. Through race, Catholics in Cincinnati asserted themselves as leaders not only in their own church but also in the broader community as people of faith and social consciousness. In these ways, they took up the call of Vatican II and began exercising their role as full members of the People of God. Put simply, through race, the Cincinnati laity asserted itself in ways new not only to their own church but to the Cincinnati community. Assertion does not necessarily imply resistance or rebellion; however, the openly defiant correspondence of lay Catholics with their spiritual shepherds manifested a clear sense of independence.\(^{64}\) Through debates about race, we can better understand Cincinnati Catholics’ early stirrings toward lay autonomy and public, cooperative efforts with both non-Catholics and non-Christians.

One organization within the archdiocese, the Catholic Interracial Council, lends local weight to the historiographical consensus that Vatican II accelerated and affirmed many reforms already underway around the world. Even before Gaudium et spes or Lumen gentium, the CIC was an active force for racial progress in the city. The CIC was well aware of how far Cincinnati Catholics had to go when it came to race; one member

wrote in the Council’s newsletter in 1963 that “when the question of social justice…is brought in public and private dialogue the practical Catholic is often like a statue on Easter Island.”65 Here was the heart of the matter, as Archbishop Alter would later proclaim: legislative solutions and formal anti-racism efforts were all well and good, but without meaningful interior change there would be no real progress. The newsletter published an excerpt from a recent article in the Interracial Review in which Jesuit author Gerald Kelly advocated “an explanation of the interior spirit without which there can be no genuine and lasting improvement of race relations.”66 Furthermore, not only were legislative solutions insufficient; in some cases, the law could be used to attack anti-racism initiatives. In those instances, a Council member wrote, “when our enemies attack with the solicitude of justice and our defense seems to reside on sand; then we must pray and study to face with courage our problems.”67

The CIC did not avoid publicizing the internal divisions fracturing the Church in Cincinnati and elsewhere in the United States over race. One newsletter quoted an anonymous layman as frustrated with the clergy and throwing into dramatic relief what Kevin Smith has found in Milwaukee - namely, the reluctance of many to engage in social issues from the pulpit: “once in my life - just once - can’t the pastor get mad about racism, as he does about birth control, or steady dating?”68 Later, the newsletter carried an article from Santa Monica on a Father Du Bay, who felt “Catholic lay and clerical

65 “PPL,” “Random Sample,” Catholic Interracial Council News 3 no. 12 (1963), MSS 774 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Cincinnati Branch Records 66/12, CMCA.

66 Catholic Interracial Council News 4 no. 24 (1964), MSS 774 66/12, CMCA.

67 Peter Paul Loyanich, “To Face with Courage,” Catholic Interracial Council News 5 no. 36 (1965), MSS 774 66/12, CMCA.

68 Catholic Interracial Council News 3 no. 15 (1963), MSS 774 66/12, CMCA.
leadership in the field of civil rights is still lagging” in 1965.69 In the same issue, the newsletter reported on the removal of a priest from his position as parish assistant in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, apparently as punishment for criticizing James Francis Cardinal MacIntyre for “lack of leadership on civil rights.” The newsletter did not criticize Archbishop Alter, however; in late summer of 1965 it “applauded” the bishop’s “magnificent Labor Day message,” which “clearly enunciated a policy of non-discrimination in building contracts.”70 The Council may have been pursuing a strategic policy of keeping in His Grace’s good graces, as shortly after this praise came an exhortation for lay Catholics to write to Alter with expressions of approval. These would be necessary, the newsletter said, because “you may rest assured that those who do not approve will make their opinions known in one devious way or another.”

The CIC understood interfaith and ecumenical relationships as essential to racial justice. With no introduction or commentary, the editors of Ave Maria magazine were quoted: “In looking for a common ground for understanding between Faiths, we Christians must constantly remember that we may well be the only copy of the New Testament which most Jews will ever Read [sic].”71 Because the CIC’s very purpose was to address racism, prioritizing better relations with Jews means the Interracial Council saw an interfaith rapprochement as key to their racial agenda. Later on, CIC president Sanford Wright would cast the organization as an active engine of interfaith and ecumenical engagement, writing that “Through the CIC the Church steps out of its little

69 Catholic Interracial Council News 5 no. 36 (1965), MSS 774 66/12, CMCA.

70 Catholic Interracial Council News 5 no. 36 (1965), MSS 774 66/12, CMCA.

71 Catholic Interracial Council News 3 no. 15 (1963), MSS 774 66/12, CMCA.
‘Catholic Corner’ and enters the larger community with the light of truth and the fire of love to lead with the experience of the ages…our Protestant and Jewish brothers are most cooperative. In fact, it has been Protestant and Jewish groups who have given almost all the enlightened cooperation in community efforts.”

Vatican II generally did not appear in the CIC’s newsletter while the world’s bishops were in Rome, beyond a mention of welcoming Archbishop Alter home from Vatican II’s third session. Earlier the CIC had lauded a lecture given by Hans Küng, Swiss theologian, *peritus* at Vatican II, and rising star among the Catholic intelligentsia, at Cincinnati’s Music Hall. The talk, titled “The Church and Freedom,” had been “a profound intellectual experience.” Küng traveled widely in the periods between sessions of Vatican II and spoke to packed auditoriums at many of his stops. By 1965, the CIC was (at least implicitly) taking up *Lumen gentium*’s call to “remedy the customs and conditions of the world” by joining an ecumenical and interfaith demand for City Council to make housing discrimination illegal. Thus although the CIC was operating before it became clear that Vatican II would become tied up with race at the local level, it nonetheless served as an institutional vehicle for implementing the official reforms called for by the Council Fathers. After 1965, the CIC’s activities could move from the passions of a relatively small group of local Catholics to entering the mainstream of contemporary Catholic racial activism.

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72 Sanford Wright, *Catholic Interracial Council News* 4 no. 27 (1964), MS 774 66/12, CMCA.

73 *Catholic Interracial Council News* 4 no. 28 (1964), MS 774 66/12, CMCA.

74 *Catholic Interracial Council News* 3 no. 15 (1963), MS 774 66/12, CMCA.

Even while others narrated ongoing conflict with the Church, Cincinnati Catholics were directly responsible for racial advances in Cincinnati in at least one way. Project Commitment, which was carried to Cincinnati by a layman who had heard about it at the National Catholic Council for Interracial Justice Convention in 1967, burst onto the Cincinnati racial justice scene in 1968.\textsuperscript{76} Martin Cassidy, chair of the Cincinnati Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men’s Social Action Committee, proposed implementing John Cardinal Dearden’s Project Commitment in Cincinnati; Archbishop Karl Alter approved the plan in February 1968. In early press reports the Project was described as existing “to communicate the Church’s teachings on racial justice and the pressing need for their application to every parish.”\textsuperscript{77} Such a definition revealed contemporary attitudes on the Church’s stance on race: the problem was with a misunderstanding of Church teaching in the parishes, not the teaching itself. Some proponents of the Project acknowledged this gap. Cassidy himself criticized the institutional church in that “it has become glaringly apparent that high-level statements, superlative as they are, are far from enough - that the vast majority of people still feel no strain on their consciences from the existence of segregation and discrimination in American society.”\textsuperscript{78}

Project Commitment set out to address this cognitive dissonance by fostering a sense of personal responsibility for healing the community’s - if not the nation’s - racial

\textsuperscript{76} Anne Tansey, “For a change in black and white attitudes,” \textit{Catholic Herald-Citizen} (Milwaukee, WI), Oct. 4, 1969, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 11 (General Files) / Catholic Interracial Council of Cincinnati / Project Commitment, CAAC.


wounds. Despite origins as a program to “communicate the teachings of the church on racial justice to local parishes” - a relatively top-down, one-way affair - Project Commitment stirred deep introspection among Cincinnati Catholics. At each meeting of the project, participants gathered into discussion groups for the duration of a lecture series. They would listen to a speaker on the meeting’s chosen topic, followed by an opposing view from another speaker. The discussion groups would then begin a conversation guided by a set of circulated questions. What each table was expected to discuss ranged from the obvious to much more penetrating and thought-provoking matters: “In what ways are children affected by attending all white (all-Negro) schools? Are textbooks used by your children examples of the white man’s view of the world (history, literature, social science)? Until open housing is a reality, what can be done to decrease the effects of de facto segregation in the schools? What is the responsibility (of the Church, pastor, principal of the school, parents) regarding de facto segregation?”

Other questions were intensely personal, grating on the open nerve of racism: “What are some of the common current stereotypes of minority groups in our metropolitan area? (Jews? Negroes? Catholics? Women? the poor?)”; “If you live in an all-white neighborhood, and a Negro wants to buy your home, do you feel you must protect your neighbors from this purchase? Why do you believe this?”

79 Fortin, Faith and Action, 314.
80 “‘Project Commitment’ Test Slated in De Sales Deanery,” Catholic Telegraph, Nov. 30, 1967.
81 Anne Tansey, “For a change in black and white attitudes,”
82 “Moderator Discussion Guides,” Karl J. Alter Papers Box 4 (Belmont Avenue Series / “Project Commitment (Human Relations) 1968—,” CAAC. Emphasis original.
Beyond potentially emotional discussions, Project Commitment fostered concrete action and personal reform among participants. In doing so the Project embodied the Council’s call for the laity to engage the world directly in their everyday lives, interacting not only with like-minded co-religionists but changing the very landscapes in which they operated. Participants were offered a brief guide.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where do I go from here?</th>
<th>And what do I do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I go home</td>
<td>And I discuss my views with my spouse and children and we act as a unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to work</td>
<td>And my associates get the benefit of what I have learned and feel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to Church</td>
<td>And my Pastor and co-religionists are kept aware of the relevancy of my views to the practice of religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to my friends</td>
<td>And they match their views with mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to the store</td>
<td>And the storekeeper realizes that my views on human relations apply to his employment and services practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to Civic Meetings</td>
<td>And my neighbors get my views on the conduct of our community in the field of human relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to the Bank</td>
<td>And the lending people get another opinion that only the color of money is significant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With this combination of interior scrutiny and public-mindedness, Catholic officials were well aware that a program like Project Commitment would face resistance in some quarters. After the first meeting of the program, in the archdiocese’s St. Francis de Sales Deanery, the chairman of the Catholic Commission on Human Relations sent the priests

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83 “Moderator Discussion Guides,” Karl J. Alter Papers Box 4 (Belmont Avenue Series / “Project Commitment (Human Relations) 1968—,” CAAC. Emphases original.
in that deanery a set of sermon outlines for their use in the near future. The sermons would explain what Project Commitment was about and encourage parishioners to attend future sessions. The guide’s suggestions speak volumes about the anticipated reception: homilists were advised to be “quiet, humbly prayerful, factual, non-emotional, non-accusatory, POSITIVE” while delivering the sermons, which would be heard mostly by “suburbanites and other middle and upper-middle class groups.”

That these priests should proceed so cautiously was part and parcel of contemporary race activism within Cincinnati Catholicism. Just after Project Commitment officially began in late February 1968, the president of the Catholic Interracial Council wrote to Archbishop Alter to thank the bishop for his support of the program. The weight of episcopal approval was all the more important to “those of us who work in the interracial apostolate,” men and women “very often ‘turned off’ as ‘those radicals’.” The backing of ecclesiastical authorities was crucial for those racially conscious Catholics who felt themselves treated as outsiders by their co-religionists.

By many reports, Project Commitment was wildly successful from the start. In Cincinnati it was piloted in the St. Francis de Sales Deanery, which included 32 parishes. Over the course of eight meetings in early 1968, a thousand Cincinnatians

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84 Fr. James E. Shappelle to “Dear Father,” no date [likely early March 1968], Karl J. Alter Papers Box 4 (Belmont Avenue Series) / “Project Commitment (Human Relations) 1968—,” CAAC.

85 “The Church’s Teaching on Interracial Justice,” appendix to Shappelle to “Dear Father,” undated [likely early March 1968], Karl J. Alter Papers Box 4 (Belmont Avenue Series) / “Project Commitment (Human Relations) 1968—,” CAAC.


87 While it would not come into force for another decade and a half, the 1983 Code of Canon Law defines deaneries in a way recognizable during this dissertation’s timeframe: “§1. Every diocese or other particular church is to be divided into distinct parts or parishes. §2. To foster pastoral care through common action, several neighboring parishes can be joined into special groups, such as vicariates forane [or
gathered to discuss “race relations; Negro history; examination of the causes of prejudice; poverty and its social consequences; the rights and wrongs of housing; power and its use; discrimination in education and employment; and the responsibility of lay people, the church and communities in the current racial struggle.” Cincinnati Mayor Eugene Ruehlman took part in the discussions, as did members of the City Council and other high-level officials.

One of the Project’s greatest strengths - or what gave Project Commitment its broad appeal - was the network of relationships that crossed Christian denominations, Christianity and Judaism, and religion and secular life. Glenmary Father Superior Robert Berson directly attributed the potential success of “any program of racial justice” to ecumenical partnerships; the Project’s advisory council, named by the Catholic Commission on Human Relations, included heavy Catholic representation alongside the Cincinnati public school superintendent, the director of the Ohio Valley Council - Union of Hebrew Congregations, a public school assistant principal, an attorney, a social worker, and a representative from the Boy Scouts of America.88 Even beyond the topical breadth of Project Commitment, the composition of its presenters pointed to the necessary diversity of racial justice activism. The very first presenter in the Project’s lecture series was Reverend Otis Moss, Jr., pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in nearby Lockland.89 Moss was followed by Catholic clergy, Protestant clergy, Jewish community deaneries].” Code of Canon Law, Vatican Website, canon 374, accessed Nov. 11, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/__P1C.HTM.

88 “‘Project Commitment’ Test Slated in De Sales Deanery,” Catholic Telegraph, Nov. 30, 1967; “Discrimination in Housing, Jobs, Schools Major Targets of Human Relations Project,” Catholic Telegraph, Jan. 25, 1968. Respectively, these representatives were Dr. Paul Miller, Rabbi Charles D. Mintz, Harold Powell, Peter Randolph, Joseph Smithmeyer, and Irwin Williams.

leaders, businessmen, and non-profit executives. To judge by the roster alone, Project Commitment was the Archdiocese of Cincinnati’s strongest ecumenical effort in its history.

Of course, the Project’s success was not unqualified. Several men and women wrote on their own behalf and on behalf of anonymous others to express their disappointment that at the program in the Cathedral deanery, “the issues that should have challenged each of us have been obscured by irrelevant information, watered down, and superficially presented.” To explain what various organizations were doing to combat these problems was fine; the authors, however, wanted individuals to be challenged to make real differences in the community.90 Alter’s own stance on Project Commitment did little to put such fears to rest. His public statements on the project betray either a lack of understanding of its purpose or an approach so hands-off that he little knew what to do with the enthusiasm of the people involved. When the program began in February 1968 he was quoted in the same Catholic Telegraph article as first calling for a racial version of “something like the Marshall Plan which at the end of the Second World War rescued Europe from misery and despair.”91 At the same time, however, “Archbishop Alter acknowledged that ‘the present program [Project Commitment] does not envision immediate action of a concerted or of a specific nature.’”92 In hedging, the archdiocese

90 Lucille Y. Chanay, Jerry D. Mershon, Dennis Kay, Carol H. Bauer, Rebecca Velasco, and Eddie L. Sellers to Monsignor Miller, Archbishop Karl J. Alter, Father Busemeier, Mr. Martin Cassidy, Dr. Albert F. Anderson, Jr., and Most Reverend Edward A. McCarthy, n.d.. Karl J. Alter Papers Box 11 (General Files) / “Catholic Interracial Council of Cincinnati / Project Commitment,” CAAC.


continued its policy of general support for racial equity without committing itself in any
definite direction.

One of the Project’s own coordinators wrote to Alter in February 1969 to express
his concerns that Project Commitment may have done more harm than good, either
wasting energy “preaching to the already converted” or turning off those who had been
on the fence, so to speak, before the Project’s beginning. “We were too often told that we
whites are guilty of causing and continuing the racist policies and practices running
rampant in our country. We were too often accused of using the word, ‘nigger.’ Such
speakers…were too emotionally involved, too free with one-sided opinions, and not very
adept at stating facts.” Alter concurred, washing his hands of responsibility for any
failure on the Project’s part. Without endorsing the coordinator’s specific grievances, he
said he was “in complete agreement with your reaction with regard to the total program
and its ultimate resulting values.” Moreover,

In the beginning I emphasized that the Project was put into the hands of
the laity, largely at their own request. I stated that at the opening of the Project
here in Cincinnati and in Dayton I would merely give approval in a general way
to the Project, make an appearance and speak favorably concerning its ultimate
purpose as an educational effort.

From time to time I have entertained doubts as to the composition of the
audience or participants in the respective deaneries…you yourself seem to have
some doubts as to whether we are reaching a group of people already committed,
and feel that there is even some possibility that some of them may have been
alienated from our ultimate purpose and objective by the emotional and
overzealous attitudes of a number of the speakers.93

Where Alter provided only generalities and a weak endorsement, Project speakers offered
concrete, and achievable, goals for racial progress. The first presenter, Reverend Otis
Moss, laid out some preliminary steps. Moss was an especially significant member of

93 Archbishop Karl J. Alter to Gerald Shawhan, Feb. 6, 1969, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 4 (Belmont
Avenue Series) / “Project Commitment (Human Relations) 1968—,” CAAC.
Project Commitment because his participation drew Cincinnati’s struggle for civil rights into the larger, national history of black liberation. Moss was regional director for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and marched on Selma with King. When addressing Project Commitment, Moss exhorted participants to:

Invest some of your capital in Negro Savings and Loan associations…use your capital and your economic holdings to promote justice. Establish departments or chairs on African affairs and non-Western studies in your colleges and universities. Build housing programs that will be proving grounds for democracy. Check every building program under the Catholic domain and insist that black employees constitute a large percentage of the work force. Use the resources of the church to put business franchises in the hands of black people. Revise your text books to include black people. Revise your religious art in such a way that it does not promote racism. Get your definition of ‘black power’ from black people and not from the white press.94

Two of Moss’s calls for improvement - education and housing - proved to be especially poignant for Project participants. At that first session, some members of the discussion groups noted that “the Catholic Church is greatly at fault in not taking a greater role sooner in social justice”; beyond that, though, the Catholic classroom could also be “a breeding ground for prejudice.”95 Avondale Community Council president Bailey Turner, who was making a presentation at a Project Commitment session at the very same moment when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, was a staunch advocate for what might be called “equality of effort”: that is, integration did not just imply blacks becoming more like whites. He implored his audience to “stop looking at integration as a movement from black to white. Maybe we’d like you to integrate our neighborhoods.” These surely were strong words even to an audience of racially progressive whites. It was


one thing to welcome black families into white neighborhoods; it was quite another for white families willingly to move into black neighborhoods.

Conflict also emerged between speakers presenting at Project Commitment sessions, beyond stating opposing viewpoints. Bruce Green, then president of the Cincinnati NAACP, defended black power as essentially well-intentioned but also as entirely uncompromising. Green described black power as “the American black man…refusing to be ‘nigger’ in a white society.” In no uncertain terms, he bluntly confronted the whites in the audience: “black power is not yours to accept or reject.” Bailey Turner echoed Green in the fall in less aggressive terms, calling black power “a genuine search for love and psychic independence - an attempt to give meaning and significance to the black psyche. It is an effort to be a man, whether white folks approve of it nor not.”

By contrast, Father John Kelley, a white Marianist priest, characterized the Black Power movement otherwise. In a remarkably tin-eared presentation to Project Commitment in December 1968, Kelley called Black Power “an adolescent phase of insolence and arrogance typifying groups which are only arriving at their sense of power.” Kelley apparently was unaware of his repetition of some of the oldest tropes raised by whites against blacks - the “uppity” black who did not know his or her “place” in society, a hunger for power, and a manifest immaturity. At best, Black Power was but one stop on the path to equality; here again Kelley suggested the movement may be “a

96 “Dr. King’s Death Moves Commitment Participants,” Catholic Telegraph, Apr. 11, 1968.
97 “Commitment Speakers Take up Human Dignity, Open Housing,” Catholic Telegraph, Nov. 21, 1968.
development necessary before they can play their proper role in the total American society.”

Project Commitment was not a circle of self-affirming civil rights activists. What civil rights meant, how blacks would gain fair treatment in public and private life, and the attitudes of all involved presented substantial challenges to Cincinnati’s Catholic community. Yet from a perspective of discerning how the Second Vatican Council’s meaning was understood, or even created, at the local level, what is more important is that Catholics were having these debates at all. Divisions crossed the ordination line, with highly progressive and deeply conservative racial attitudes spread throughout both the laity and the clergy. The fact that both groups spoke out so strongly - sometimes eloquently, sometimes not - proves the degree to which the Council’s call for engagement with the modern world was heard in Cincinnati. With a laity willing to take significant public stances, even in defiance of clerical leadership, it was clear that the Council had wrought great change in the Queen City.

The letter of one Cincinnati laywoman in 1967 illustrates well the depth of Cincinnati’s race problem, which Project Commitment could rectify only partially, at the close of the 1960s. In those turbulent years, fueled by a simmering mixture of Church reform and racial conflict that largely obviated older dynamics of clergy-lay, male-female, white-black relationships, Cincinnati often was on edge.

Mary Alfkin’s letter to Archbishop Alter, clearly written in the heat of a racially-charged moment, stands in stark contrast to Alter’s paternal benevolence to women as shown in his earlier correspondence with the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women. Her letter is at times clear and at others more forceful:

Dear Archbishop, Your Grace,

Only a real sorrowful heart compels me to write to you today before I assist at the Sacrifice of the Mass.

If you are looking for reasons still for the conflicts, I’ve found, it is lack of LOVE. Every opportunity I get with my neighbors, relatives and friends, I see this ‘hate of the person, instead of the action’. No one even thinks back as to ‘why-why’ they are driven to such terrible things.

If I ask, ‘have you even driven through their quarters?’ ‘Oh, they WANT to live that way.’ That was a cover up, now we are getting it loud and clear.

For God’s sake, help us. Give us loud and clear directions. When I heard yesterday a good Church going, helping member of our Church say yesterday [sic], ‘I’ll never love one of them as long as I live.’ it [sic] made my heart heavy, and I mean it.

If you want suggestions, I still think every parish should do something positive and take a family out of the ghetto and help them. This couldn’t help but show our love, our lack of it.

We could also have an extra BIBLE service each week to find out what is CHRIST’S way.

Every one of your followers, at the end of the year should be asked to send you what positive action they have done to prove their LOVE. These would also bring about new ideas from other people.

So many GOOD PASTORS, and I mean really GOOD, do not even believe yet they have a problem [sic]. The people in Reading [a Cincinnati neighborhood] feel not one bit of compassion for their neighbor in close Lincoln Heights, perhaps [sic], you with all of your experience can think of something to develop this in your Good People.100

Edward McCarthy, one of Cincinnati’s auxiliary bishops and Vicar General for the archdiocese at the time, responded to this heartfelt plea. His note was typically noncommittal: “It is, of course, a complex problem without easy solutions. Attitudes surely will not be changed over night [sic]. Frustrating as it is however, we must keep working at it.”101

100 Mary Alfkin to Karl Alter, July 25, 1967, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 11 (General Files) / Catholic Interracial Council of Cincinnati / Project Commitment, CAAC.

101 Edward A. McCarthy to Mary Alfkin, July 31, 1967, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 11 (General Files) / Catholic Interracial Council of Cincinnati / Project Commitment, CAAC.
In terms of mid-twentieth century correspondence between lay Catholics and the institutional Church, such letters are not all that remarkable: it was not uncommon either for men and women to write to the chancery with specific concerns or for those men and women to be sent a noncommittal acknowledgement. But given the timing of the woman’s letter, this particular correspondence opens a crystal-clear window onto contemporary Cincinnati Catholicism.

Alfkin balanced old-school deference (“Dear Archbishop, Your Grace”) with forceful demands (“For God’s sake, help us.”). Her begging for instructions maintained the hierarchy of authority in the Church while calling Alter out for his apparent lack of action. Perhaps most instructive is her searing indictment of otherwise “good Catholics” - her “good Church going, helping member of our Church” and “GOOD PASTORS, and I mean really GOOD” - as out-and-out racists. Aside from being written a few years after Vatican II closed, the specific dating of the woman’s letter is significant. She wrote to Archbishop Alter in late July 1967, in the middle of what Malcolm McLaughlin recalls as the “long, hot summer” of urban discontent across the United States. McLaughlin notes an “intangible sense of menace” that permeated many Americans’ minds at the time. That phrase aptly describes Alfkin’s letter. What more could push her to write to His Grace the Archbishop of Cincinnati with denunciations of friends, family, neighbors, and fellow parishioners as racists? What besides the palpable, yet “intangible sense of

102 Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 80. Massingale applies this description to the twenty-first century American Church, explicitly saying that “white” and “racist” arise from cultural assumptions rather than overt attitudes. However, Alfkin displayed a remarkable nuance in pointing out the tension between being a “good Catholic” and vowing never to love “one of them” - i.e., an African-American.

“menace” would lead Alfkin to suggest that Catholics submit an annual “good deeds” report to prove they were sufficiently progressive in their racial outlook?

Lay demands for non-compromise on racial justice within the Church could be much stronger even than those made by Alter’s watchdog correspondent. When in 1968 the Archdiocese decided to officially support Project Commitment, one woman wrote to Bishop McCarthy outraged that the Church had not been doing more already. “When is the Church going to realize IT’S TOO LATE TO EDUCATE THE MASSES….Why aren’t you organizing the Catholics who are already committed to wanting to help solve the terrible injustices in our society, into a militant group who will actually work towards changing the structure of our society. [sic]”

An element of tribalism appeared in this impassioned letter, too, suggesting none-to-subtly that those who were not interested in movements like Project Commitment were not, in fact, “real” Christians: this woman wrote that lectures on race were fine and well, but that there was no time left to spend “convincing Catholics that they should be Christians.”

There were more measured voices, to be sure. Another letter to Bishop McCarthy, this one from later in 1967, was deeply personal, illustrating well the moments of individual reform that brought Cincinnati Catholicism to embrace racial progress (the author specifically noted that in coming to recognize structural racism and acting to change it, “private person-to-person [contact] is best.”). Recounting a conversation

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104 Mrs. Frank Swift to Edward McCarthy, Feb. 29, 1968, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 11 (General Files) / Catholic Interracial Council of Cincinnati / Project Commitment, CAAC.

105 Ralph Irvine to Edward McCarthy, Dec. 7, 1967, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 37 (General Files) / Race-Related Questions / Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, etc., CAAC.
with a Cincinnati priest, layman Ralph Irvine confessed “I’ve changed. I wouldn’t pretend to you that I was any kind of champion of this cause [racial progress] or any cause. But God is always at work in souls in this world, ever getting closer when He can.” Essentially, the man had never considered racial questions before and openly considered himself to have been more or less apathetic previously. Once he devoted some thought to the matter, however - once he had been “educated,” that process that Mrs. Swift later would deride as a massive waste of time - he could see the need to address racial conflict. The man’s hopeful musings on a proposed recreation center reveal the necessary intellectual shifts that Catholics would need to experience in order to embrace a new racial order: “Back to that center again, sort of a West End colored men’s Fenwick [a majority-white Catholic club in Cincinnati]. A so-called white guy might get a work out [sic] there, as a few so-called darker skins do at Fenwick...they’d never burn such a place down. They might write ‘Soul Brother’ on the side door windows. Maybe this would be the break-through - - maybe a pilot idea in America.”

Irvine’s closing paragraph tells us the most about the deep processes that Catholics in the postconciliar era were experiencing. He neatly, and plainly, sums up the connection between Vatican II and American racial strife that has lain dormant for so long:

I wish our people weren’t so conservative. I was once! What changed “it” I don’t know. HOLY SPIRIT, I guess. We’re all “The Church” and this thinking is only as per Vatican II. Myself, I’m far from religious enough and I know it. Well, I’m oriented right, but I’m not too good. I’m just the average pleasure-loving, sports-minded, glory-loving American male. But I’m kind serious about all this. God has me interested & He is pressing. I’m not my own fella anymore.

The Church’s programmatic efforts to address racism had borne fruit - at least, they had in this man. For others, the situation was more complicated.
A central focus of lay opposition to any institutional acknowledgement by the Church was the public reading of the Black Manifesto, one nearly-violent occasion of which was covered widely in Cincinnati newspapers in May 1969. Activists read out, or tried to read out, the Black Manifesto across the country that late spring; several churches in Cincinnati were targeted for disruption or peaceful presentation of the document.\textsuperscript{106} The Manifesto, authored by civil rights leader James Forman and presented first at the April Black Economic Development Conference in Detroit, demanded monetary reparations in the sum of $500 million to be paid by “white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues”; in terms deeply evocative of the nation’s slave-owning past, Forman reminded audiences that the sum amounted to but “15 dollars per nigger.”\textsuperscript{107} Forman himself had taken over the Black Economic Development Conference, which had been sponsored by the National Council of Churches, the Episcopal Church, and the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, to discuss the economic dimensions of black power. Forman, however, sought more direct action, submitting the Manifesto for public voting and interrupting services himself at New York’s Riverside Church on May 4 to read the document out.\textsuperscript{108} Cincinnati was targeted by other activists for the same purpose. From May to August, the Church struggled to address the

\textsuperscript{106} See Appendix A for full text of the Manifesto.


Manifesto in a unified way. While Archbishop Alter sought to impose a unitary response across the archdiocese, the Manifesto became an occasion for deep conflict within the local Church and even within several groups who were concerned with race relations. The most important result of the Black Manifesto vis-á-vis Catholicism was its exposure of serious ideological and political rifts among and between the clergy and laity of Cincinnati.

The first recorded appearance of the Black Manifesto was at the cathedral of the archdiocese, St. Peter-in-Chains, on Sunday, May 11. Marvin Gentry, a representative of the Black Economic Development Committee, entered the cathedral just before Mass began to ask permission of cathedral rector Monsignor Francis Kennedy to read the Manifesto. Kennedy agreed, suggesting Gentry do so at the end of Mass. Kennedy admitted that “this is an unusual procedure,” but added “this is an unusual time.”

The affair was peaceful. Kennedy reported that the black delegation sat through Mass “in a respectful manner;” Kennedy then asked the congregation to “listen with respect” to what Gentry had come to say. Reaction among the congregation was not generally negative; Kennedy observed wryly that “he saw seven persons walk out, but he noted that this was fewer than the number that usually finds it necessary to leave before the final hymn has been sung.”

The next weekend, May 18, six black activists entered St. Mark Church - a predominantly black parish - and asked during Communion to read the Manifesto. The pastor, Precious Blood Father Gregory Moorman, took Msgr. Kennedy’s lead and asked if the group would wait until the end of Mass to do so, which they did. Many more of the

109 “Black Given Pulpit To Ask ‘Reparations’,” Catholic Telegraph, May 15, 1969, Black Manifesto subject file, CTA.
congregation left this time, however, with an estimated 50 out of 300 in attendance leaving before or during the Manifesto’s reading. Moorman later reported that most of the parishioners he had spoken with about the incident - parishioners of a majority-black church - were “rather disturbed by it”; “they were brought up with the idea that their church is a sacred place.”

Exactly the opposite happened at nearby Dayton’s Sacred Heart Church. There, a group of activists entered the church during the homily, demanding that they be allowed to read the Manifesto immediately. A scuffle broke out, resulting in parishioners restraining the activists while waiting for police to arrive. The pastor, Father Roger Griese, reported that he had given instructions that activists were to be allowed to read the Manifesto after Mass, but that no such permission had been sought.

Archbishop Alter reacted swiftly and strongly. Father Griese was instructed to file charges of disruption of a lawful assembly against three of the activists. In a letter to his clergy, Alter blasted the Manifesto as “nothing short of a disaster” which “alienates the good will that has been built up in recent years and greatly discourages the Christian people, who have been among the best friends of the Black Community’s true interests.” He took particular exception to the Manifesto’s argument for the collective guilt of white Americans, an idea that Alter thought was “repudiated by the facts of


112 “Three Charged After Attempt To Read Black Manifesto In Church,” NC News Service (Domestic), May 22, 1969, Black Manifesto subject file, CTA.

113 Karl J. Alter to the Clergy, Diocesan and Regular of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, May 22, 1969, Black Manifesto subject file, CTA.
history.” He ordered that in the event of a disruption of Mass by activists, the church organist should begin playing “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name” while the congregation awaited the arrival of duly notified authorities.

Many among the Cincinnati laity concurred with Archbishop Alter; some felt more strongly that the Manifesto had no place in churches: recall Robert Otto’s letter to Monsignor Kennedy in 1969 decrying the Black Manifesto being read in St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral. Otto’s letter was but one of many. Another layman plaintively wondered “When, where, how and why do we owe the blacks anything?” The man ratcheted up the rhetoric by speculating that if the Black Manifesto and other, similar activities were permitted on an ongoing basis, “we will be having mass [sic] underground as in the early days of Christianity.” Whether permitted by priests as a moment of peaceful protest or forceful intrusions into sacred spaces, readings of the Black Manifesto assumed a place in a series of contemporary events that found the sacred and the more broadly social blending. Just as the appearance of priest brothers Daniel and Philip Berrigan burning draft cards in the summer of 1968 set Catholics arguing vehemently over Vietnam, so did the Black Manifesto do the same one year later in Cincinnati.

Those opposed to the notion of racial equality as advanced by the institutional Church and other organizations (e.g., the MFRC and Project Commitment) did not believe themselves holding to anything less than reasonable positions. One G. M. Wurzelbacher wrote to Archbishop Paul Leibold as late as 1970 to demand an accounting for Leibold’s

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115 Cummings et. al., eds., *Vatican II.*
support of open housing legislation. Wurzelbacher looked to history and the animal kingdom to dispute the notion that blacks and whites might live amongst each other. After all, had not humans throughout most of history lived in societies “none of them integrated and all of them segregated?” And since in the animal kingdom the various species made their living spaces separately from other species, then surely “God in his wisdom willed and designed a segregated world.” Wurzelbacher found it “difficult to explain how our clergy of all denominations can take leadership in bringing about an integrated world.”

Wurzelbacher’s letter typifies the deep, internal fractures marring both individual Americans and the nation at large when it came to race, with general support for an end to discrimination colliding with a fear of being in close proximity in the home to actual black people. The man explicitly wrote that his letter concerned open housing rather than “fair play, equal rights to make a living, and numerous other things which concern our racial problems.” As several scholars have pointed out, living space presents a moment ripe for racial friction. Whether blacks can patronize the same movie theater as whites is one thing, according to this logic; living next door to whites is quite another.117

Despite assurances that the concerns were purely in housing, the usually mild-mannered Archbishop Leibold had no patience for Wurzelbacher’s reasoning. In the context of the rest of his correspondence and public pronouncements, the archbishop’s reply to Wurzelbacher was entirely out of tune with how Leibold usually addressed either

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116 G. M. Wurzelbacher to Paul F. Leibold, Mar. 19, 1970, Paul F. Leibold Papers Series 1.7-02-13 Lay Associations 1/10 Apostleship of the Negro, CAAC.

lay Catholics or clergy: clearly, Wurzelbacher had gotten under Leibold’s skin and set the archbishop fuming. His response included no exhortation to better understand the dignity of Wurzelbacher’s fellow humans, no explanation of why blacks ought to be welcomed into communities via open housing, no attempt to win Wurzelbacher’s heart and mind. Instead, Leibold’s refutation took the form of a point-by-point demolition of Wurzelbacher’s argument; even if not Biblically or scientifically accurate, the archbishop’s letter nonetheless conveys a deep disgust for Wurzelbacher’s racism. As far as history went, “you did not go back far enough - I still believe we are all descended from a common set of parents.”¹¹⁸ He did not even dignify the animal logic with a serious effort, saying only “human beings live by reason, animals by instinct, so that comparison limps.” Finally Leibold, who wielded his episcopal authority rarely and never with fanfare, here deployed both the Church and the state to tell Wurzelbacher to silence himself and, in effect, to deal with it on his own: “As Catholics we would accept the teaching authority of the Church which clearly teaches equal rights. As citizens we should obey the just law of the land.”

Some opposed to contemporary racial developments were more measured in their expression, although their writing betrayed an ignorance of the structural problems inherent in American race relations. One lay woman wrote to Archbishop Alter toward the end of his tenure to express her outrage that the authors of the Black Manifesto were demanding monetary contributions: “what right has anyone to demand monies that really comes [sic] from Catholic Institutions and contributions?⁴¹¹⁹ Unremarkable was the

¹¹⁸ Paul F. Leibold to G. M. Wurzelbacher, Mar. 23, 1970, Paul F. Leibold Papers Series 1.7-02-13 Lay Associations 1/10, CAAC.
threat to withhold her own financial contributions - itself a telling indicator of lay 
willfulness to defy institutional authority - at collection time on Sunday. Her closing 
lines, however, highlight a widespread misunderstanding (or willing ignorance) among 
many white Americans at the time: “Have any of these people ever been taught that you 
work to earn & you save what little you care to have[?]”

Others opposed themselves to Archbishop Alter entirely. Marianist Brother 
Joseph Davis, who was then vice principal at the Archdiocese’s Chaminade High School, 
wrote a lengthy critique of Alter’s letter that he sent to local and national newspapers. His 
criticism was methodical and withering, exposing massive gaps between positions on 
civil rights within the archdiocese.120 Davis was fully on board with the idea that 
demands for black civil rights constituted a revolutionary moment, caricaturing Alter’s 
comments “as though they might well have been written by an Anglican bishop about a 
small band of radical militants seeking to intimidate and stir up to violence the early 
colonialists in this country.”121 He was at his most eloquent, though, when he explicitly 
defended the idea of a black revolution:

The Archbishop’s “Observations” fail to judge the Manifesto and its promulgation 
in the context of a revolution. As desireable [sic] as it may be, change does not 
always take place in a peaceful atmosphere. Nor does it always respect the wishes 
of the preservers of the status-quo or hold sacred what they hold sacred. 
Revolution happens when extensive and profound change in social conditions is 
sought. Revolution happens when society, failing either to observe or respond to 
the signs that change is demanded, retreats to its secure ground of law and order,

119 Helen Popp to Carl [sic] J. Alter, May 13, 1969, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 8 (General Files) / 
“’Black Manifesto’ / National Black Economic Development Conference (1969),” CAAC.

120 Davis, who was black, had already become publicly critical of Archbishop Alter’s racial 
policies by this time. Joseph Watras notes that in early 1969, Davis and two others organized themselves 
into a body called Black Catholics in Action, criticizing the archdiocese as “willing to do only as much to 
advance desegregation as would be popularly acceptable.” Politics, Race, and Schools: Racial Integration, 

121 Joseph Davis, S.M. to Karl J. Alter, June 2, 1969, Black Manifesto subject file, CTA.
and utilizes all its possible force to protect it against radical elements. Revolution happens when society says be patient and go slow, while the aggrieved proclaim that they will no longer wait.

In Davis’s opinion, the archdiocese’s policy of patient, steady work toward racial equality was not enough. Davis condemned also Alter’s suggestion that public proclamations like that at Sacred Heart Church would damage “goodwill,” as though blacks bore responsibility “to remain respectful and ingratiated to the white community.” The vice principal also cited the veracity of collective responsibility of white society as beneficiaries of structural racism; more biting, though, was his accusation that the Church itself had furthered racism in the United States: “History records the Church’s tolerance for slavery, its erection of segregated institutions and its specially tailored ministry to the black community. There is little or no recorded evidence of a direct challenge through power to the racial values of white America.” This latter failure was all the more appalling, in Davis’s eyes, for the frequent use of the pulpit to publicize things like fish fries and bingos with nary a word spared for the suffering of black Catholics and black Americans in general.

Davis linked the Archbishop’s racial comments to broader problems in Catholic history. He noted that “it is precisely because the Church is tied to the economic order of America that it cannot afford to alienate white society by creative and realistic programs to combat racial injustice.” Finally, he returned to the Church’s own culpability but drew in Judaism also - he noted that the Church had historically condemned all Jews as “Christ-killers” - wondering how Alter could reconcile original sin with the then-present generation’s absence from Eden while simultaneously washing his hands of specific acts

of racial injustice. Davis ended on a biting note: “Fortunately Archbishop Alter’s ‘Observations’ are only opinions. They do not and cannot constitute official teaching.”

Davis was technically correct, and his comments were the most voluble protest of archdiocesan policy and stance to date. As a member of a religious community the vice principal enjoyed some protection from the potential ramifications of his letter, and he exposed far deeper rifts in the local Church than private letters sent to Alter by frustrated lay Catholics could have done. Chapter Four, on the 1971 Synod convened by Alter’s successor, treats the archdiocese’s official response to these accusations and its attempt to move beyond its racist past. As that event would show just two years after Davis’s incendiary letter, it was only by weaving together contemporary civil rights efforts and the reforms launched worldwide by the Second Vatican Council that Cincinnati Catholicism came to grips with the reality of racism and attempted a program to solve it.

Not all opposed to the Black Manifesto opposed better race relations, of course. One oddity that helps make this point is a letter written to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati’s Senate of Priests, a consultative body that advised the Chancery on various matters, from a lay woman in Detroit. The author had herself worked to better race

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123 Joseph Davis, S.M. to Karl J. Alter, June 2, 1969, Black Manifesto subject file, CTA.

124 Kathleen Ovies to “The Priest Senate,” Nov. 5, 1969, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 8 (General Files) / “Black Manifesto” / National Black Economic Development Conference (1969),” CAAC. It is unknown why the woman opted to write to Cincinnati when she was based in Detroit. Given the close relationship between Project Commitment in each city, perhaps she knew people in Cincinnati and chose to vent her frustration when she saw priests from that diocese had signed the statement. In any case, her missive spelled out in terms even clearer than the language used by the Archdiocese itself to take a middle path between denial of any problem at all and simply throwing money at it. Interestingly, Ovies was entirely mistaken that the statement of support for the Black Manifesto had come from Cincinnati’s Senate of Priests; rather, it seems several priests from Cincinnati had attached to their name to a statement written by another organization. Archbishop Leibold wrote back personally, in his typically unpolished style, to clarify that the statement “was NOT issued by our Diocesan Priests Senate, they are a fine group of priests. It was issued by a self appointed group who call themselves the Priests Association. There were about 20 priests who signed the statement out of one thousand priests in the Diocese. I think you might find 2% of irresponsible nuts in almost any group. It is so sad to see them get the publicity will [sic] the 98% of
relations in her own archdiocese (ruled by the legendary John Dearden and the source of Cincinnati’s own Project Commitment) and sympathized with the abiding pain felt by American blacks. But supporting the Manifesto was “a very bad, harmful mistake.” She objected to the Manifesto’s maintenance of an “us and them” mentality; more importantly, however, she feared that giving money to the organizers of the Manifesto, as demanded in the document, would give white churches a sense of moral superiority without requiring any actual change on their own part. Her passionately forwarded solution echoed the editorial board of *The Catholic Telegraph*:

The only way the Negro will have justice is when every man is willing to be completely Christian. This is the tedious, frustrating way of the followers of Jesus Christ. It means changing the hearts of men. It means gathering people block by block to open their housing to black families in loving acceptance. It means convincing real estate firms to share listings with black realtors. It means convincing people that each one of them has to be sure that they work at losing their prejudice. Convincing families that they have an obligation to help their children know black children - live with them, learn with them, play with them, so that their souls are not subject to hate.

The woman, Kathleen Ovies, thus embraced the personal conversion commended by the American bishops’ 1963 statement but carried it a step further. Rather than opposing the Black Manifesto *in toto*, as some Cincinnati Catholics did, she saw the kernel of truth within the document. By arguing for the bishops’ advocacy of thoroughgoing societal reform while simultaneously (if only implicitly) approving of the sentiments driving the Manifesto, Ovies acknowledged to an even greater extent than the bishops the depth of America’s contemporary racial problems. Only by being “completely Christian” did Americans stand a chance of overcoming the centuries-old racial divide.

 faithful ones are not heard from.” Leibold to Ovies, Nov. 10, 1969, Karl J. Alter Papers Box 8 (General Files) / “‘Black Manifesto’ / National Black Economic Development Conference (1969),” CAAC.
Alter retired in 1969; Paul Leibold, formerly chancellor, was called back to Cincinnati from his first episcopal posting in Evansville, Indiana. Recall that in 1953 Leibold had espoused a personal commitment to racial equality but sidestepped the opportunity to denounce racism in public life. By 1971, he felt comfortable writing to an enthusiastic correspondent that society “should be directed to curing todays [sic] evils with todays [sic] instruments.”

The occasion upon which Leibold made this comment was bizarre. His correspondent, local man Oliver Cousins, had forwarded Leibold a copy of a letter titled “Food for Thought, Survival [sic] and Salvation” that Cousins had written to a priest acquaintance. That letter originally had been written to, among others, “His Holiness Paul of Cincinnati,” the Reader’s Digest manuscript department, and President Nixon. In it Cousins ranged widely from communists in the Church, to satanic forces sabotaging the vision of Pope John XXIII, to Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s “noosphere.” Most importantly, however, Cousins claimed that contemporary worries over historic black slavery - a primary concern of the Black Manifesto - were far overwrought since, after all, whites’ enslavement of blacks had brought Christianity to a people who otherwise would not have learned about it (or so Cousins argued).

Cousins went further. Not only had white slavers at least endowed slaves with Christianity, but whites in 1971 should feel no guilt. And finally, blacks had been saved

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125 Paul F. Leibold to Oliver A. Cousins, Feb. 10, 1971, Paul F. Leibold Papers Series 1.7-02-13 Lay Associations 1/10, CAAC.

126 The nomenclature is mixed. Paul Leibold would have been formally addressed “His Excellency,” with “His Holiness” an honorific reserved to the pope (who also happened to be named Paul in 1971).

127 Oliver A. Cousins to various, Jan. 29, 1970. Paul F. Leibold Papers Series 1.7-02-13 Lay Associations 1/10, CAAC.
by the merits of the white culture into which whites had assimilated them: “God’s specific purposes was…to use Whites to have Blacks see the Light of God’s Mind and Truths.”

Oliver Cousins, it should be noted, was black.

Leibold’s response was careful yet clearly showed that the bishop was interested in what Cousins had to say. His letter indicates also that he had moved beyond his 1953 reticence. Leibold cautiously noted that “in proposing such a Thesis [sic] we have to be very careful that we do not seem to justify the evil of slavery and subsequent suppression of the black man because of the way it could fit into God’s Providential hands.” But Cousins had clearly set Leibold thinking; the bishop also pointed to the Roman conquests of Germanic tribes and the colonization of South America as instances in which Christianity had arrived under violent auspices.

VI

When considering race in 1960s Cincinnati, the Catholic response was varied (to say the least). From an institutional standpoint, vacillation ruled the era: public pronouncements in favor of civil rights indicated a willingness to support racial progress while private commentary and situational responses reined in any real contribution. Especially during the Archbishop Alter years, the archdiocese’s top priority was to keep the peace, ensuring institutional stability while cautiously acknowledging the basic dignity of blacks. Put another way, the end goal was to save (white) face. Throughout the period, though, the institutional Church at no point denied the essential equality of blacks,
especially from a theological standpoint: skin color made no difference in the Christian triumph of salvation.

This hedging aside, the institutional Church (and its public face the Catholic Telegraph) also maintained consistently the necessity for personal conversion to a more equitable approach to race. Even while Archbishop Alter supported legislative solutions to legal discrimination in the early part of the decade and the Telegraph lauded the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, both reminded Catholics that law was meaningless without the commitment of white Catholics to treat their black neighbors with dignity in everyday life. From worshiping alongside each other at Mass or negotiating home sales without the irrational fear of black “infiltration” of white neighborhoods, it was clear that all Cincinnati Catholics must become like Ralph Irvine, who was “not his own fella anymore” after considering the recent Vatican Council, racial strife on the ground in Cincinnati, and the need for racial justice.

Furthermore, that personal conversion came about explicitly as a result of Catholic engagement with non-Catholic organizations and individuals. In this way the Cincinnati Catholic community enthusiastically picked up the call of Vatican II to become leaven in the world, furthering the Church’s “salvific mission” by working with Protestants, Jews, and civic institutions to ameliorate racism. The broad attendance and speaker composition of Project Commitment, along with the much-lauded Catholic contribution to the Mayor’s Friendly Relations Committee, attested to just how crucial was ecumenical and interfaith engagement on questions of race.

In retrospect, one might also identify a darker underside to this increase in lay activism and willingness to grapple with social problems of the era. As this chapter’s
vocal antagonists have shown, many among the Cincinnati laity saw institutional and individual efforts toward racial equality to be of a piece with the far-reaching reforms flowing from Rome in the Vatican Council. For some, it was simply too much: first the Latin of ages disappeared from the Mass, then black activists were reading manifestos from the pulpit while His Grace Archbishop Alter told them what they could and could not do with their own real estate.

Examining contemporary struggles over race in the context of postconciliar reform recognizes the epoch-changing nature of societal change experienced by Catholics in Cincinnati at midcentury. Depending on one’s perspective, such massive evolutions in American society and the Catholic Church could be necessary steps on the road to racial equity, or ever-further shuffling into theological disorganization by yielding to the tyranny of activists. Thus the tensions of both Vatican II and racial conflict came together in Cincinnati. The result was neither a well-woven tapestry pleasing to the eye nor the near-impossibility of a Gordian knot. A newly-invigorated laity took the lead on addressing the simmering racial crisis of the day while some of their brothers and sisters found new courage to write to their ecclesial superiors with denunciations of racial projects. The Cincinnati Catholic community would have to wait until 1971, when the Archdiocese convened its sixth Synod, to sort itself out on race and religion.
I was walking along a street near my house, and had to pass a small grocery store located in our neighborhood. There was a small boy - perhaps six years old - looking through the picket fence that surrounded the store. As I passed, he began to chant: “Nigger, Nigger, Nigger, Nigger.” You may not believe it; but this was the first time I could remember anyone calling me a “Nigger.” And my response still surprises me; I retorted to the boy, “You Christ-killer!” And the little boy burst into tears, and I have felt badly about it ever since.128

A discussion of race leads naturally, in the Cincinnati context, to a discussion of faith - specifically, that of the city’s Jewish community. Cincinnati draws into a three-way dialogue the city’s white Catholics, white Jews, and black Christians (few of whom were Catholic).

Hostility toward white Jews by black Christians sprung from a number of sources. One such source arose with Jews’ broad public acceptance as white by white Christians in the early twentieth century.129 This process found one barrier between white Jews and white Christians lowered as yet another was built between white Jews and black Christians: continuing the personal reflection that begins this section, Horace Mann Bond wrote “the existence of a common white oppressor frequently leads the Negro to consider the Jew as just another variety of white man who is out to take advantage of him and who seldom varies from the sentiments and attitudes and exploitative activities of all of the other white people he knows.”130 Outside of the Black Muslim community, Bond

128 Horace Mann Bond, “Negro Attitudes toward Jews,” Jewish Social Studies 27 no. 1 (1965), 3-4. Bond was relating a 1916 episode from his childhood in Atlanta.


suggested, what often appeared to be antisemitism on the part of blacks was unconscious, simply a rejection of white domination in American society.

Bond’s run-in with the Jewish child at the grocery store exemplified another source of black Christian - white Jewish tension: the economic relationships between Jewish business owners and black clientele. As Cheryl Lynn Greenberg has noted, blacks historically interacted with Jews from a position of economic inferiority. Bond quoted some of his own associates as saying things like “some Jews have bought up that urban re-development land and are putting up shoddy apartments they call ‘Nigger housing’”; “the Jews have a stranglehold on the liquor stores in this town”; and “there’s a Jew for you” when a Jewish restaurant owner upheld segregation at the wish of white customers.

Finally, black Christian - white Jewish tensions could spring from religious misunderstanding, as little Horace Bond’s invective response - “Christ killer” in response to “nigger” - shows. Recall that one of the Second Vatican Council’s landmark accomplishments was to argue against the notion of Jews as perpetually damned Christ killers, an idea which can result from a reading of Scripture not grounded in historical criticism. Especially in John’s Gospel, a lack of contextual knowledge of references to “the Jews” can lead one to interpret all Jews as responsible for Christ’s death; the legendary curse supposedly imparted on Jews for all time as a result persisted for centuries, too, operating even in the mind of a child in 1916.


This chapter lays the groundwork for the broader significance of Chapter Three by illustrating evolutions in the racial outlook of white Christians toward black Christians at midcentury. In Chapter Three, the dissertation will explore racial projects as a practical bridge between white Christianity and white Judaism in Cincinnati, an attempt at real racial and religious harmony that obtained uniquely in this city.
CHAPTER THREE

“MISHIGOYEM MUSHROOMS CON VINO BLANCO”:
CATHOLICS AND JEWS IN CINCINNATI

I

In October 1940, Cincinnati Archbishop John T. McNicholas preached to Catholics gathered at a Holy Name Society rally. He took as his subject the treatment of Jews, declaring unequivocally that it was “nothing less than insanity and inhumanity to promote hatred of the Jewish race. They are our brothers in God.” But there was a certain qualification to McNicholas’s words. “Every Jew, like every other member of the human race, was redeemed by the blood of the Lord Christ.” The archbishop thus maintained the Church’s claim on universal jurisdiction over all of humanity and simultaneously rooted the basic dignity of world Jewry in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Two decades later, on March 27th, 1959, the barque of Peter shuddered. As the Good Friday liturgy proceeded in St. Peter's Basilica, the man chanting the service arrived at a particular prayer, one within a series of intentions for various segments of humankind. To this one, though, the congregation would not say "Amen," and neither would they genuflect and rise as they had for the preceding groups. The man chanted "Oremus et pro perfidis Judæis / Let us pray also for the faithless Jews."

1 John T. McNicholas, sermon at Cincinnati Holy Name Society rally, Oct. 13, 1940. Quoted in The Catholic Telegraph-Register Oct. 18, 1940, Jewish Community Relations Committee MS-202 42/12, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (hereafter AJA).
And the pope said stop.

John XXIII, who had been elected only months earlier and had spent his career as nuncio to several European countries observing the rise of the Nazi menace and helping Jews escape to safety, stopped the liturgy and asked the man to chant the prayer again. Only this time, he was to leave out perfidis. The omission went against centuries of describing Judaism as “faithless.” Catholics in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati were informed of the event a week later with an assurance that the Universal Church would reflect John’s impromptu, but earth-shattering, liturgical revision beginning in 1960.

Seven and a half years after the Holy Father’s interruption of the Good Friday service, the Catholic Church would officially embrace John’s unscripted rejection of anti-Semitism, even though the man himself had died in 1963. The assembled bishops of the Second Vatican Council approved Nostra ætate, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, by an overwhelming majority. Within the document was an implied rejection of the old charge of deicide, a condemnation of anti-Semitism, and an expression of regret for the centuries of abuse inflicted upon Jews by Christians: “God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues.” The Declaration goes on to happily “await the

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3 “Deletes ‘Faithless’ From Prayer for Jews,” Catholic Telegraph-Register, Apr. 3, 1959, MS-202 42/12, AJA.

day” when all of God’s children “address the Lord in a single voice” - with no mention of conversion or recognition of Christ as the Messiah.

The Declaration’s fourth chapter (Appendix 2) made five major advances in Jewish-Catholic dialogue. First, it acknowledged the origins of Christianity within Judaism itself, “already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets.” Second, it positioned the Church as something of a later addition to an extant People of God. Third, even though “Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation” - in other words, many Jews did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah – it stated “God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers.” In one of the most startling shifts in emphasis in all of Catholic theology, the Council declared Jews cherished by God despite rejecting the Gospel.

The fourth provision specifically quashed the centuries-old charge of deicide against the Jews: “what happened in [Jesus’s] passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today.” Thus the Council Fathers repudiated the longest-standing criticism of global Judaism, that the cry of the crowd in the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew was binding upon all Jews thereafter.

The Council also implicitly rejected the interpretation of the fourth gospel as intrinsically anti-Semitic. Finally, the fifth provision of Nostra ætate was blunt, almost clunky in its

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5 “Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles.” Ibid., sec. 4.

6 Verses 24 and 25 supply the self-inflicted “curse”: “And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made; taking water washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and our children.” Matt. 27:24-25 D-R (Douay-Rheims Bible).

7 The literature debating whether or not the Gospel according to John is anti-Semitic is both too extensive and too theologically advanced to rehearse here. Glenn Balfour provides one succinct reconciliation of the evangelist’s repeated references to “the Jews” as those seeking Jesus’ destruction,
attempt at totality: “the Church…decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.”

Aside from the necessity of discussing *Nostra ætate* in any narrative of Vatican II, why should what the Council said about Jews feature so prominently in the contemporary history of Cincinnati? Cincinnati provides a key model for Jewish-Catholic exchange because of the historical and contemporary significance of the city’s Jewish community. Congregation Bene Israel is the oldest Jewish congregation west of the Allegheny Mountains (1824).8 A group of German Jews split off from Congregation Bene Israel in 1840, eventually founding Congregation B’nai Yeshurun.9 Thirteen years later that congregation voted Isaac M. Wise, a leading light of American Reform Judaism, its senior rabbi. By 1858, Congregation B’nai Yeshurun was the second largest in the United States.10

In addition to building an exuberant Byzantine-Moorish temple for the congregation at Eighth and Plum Streets - directly across Plum from St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral - Wise founded the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, “the umbrella body of the Reform Movement in North America.”11 He began also Hebrew Union

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10 Ibid.

College, “what is the now the oldest rabbinical school in the Western Hemisphere” and described by Jacob Rader Marcus as “an American school that set out to foster an American type of religion.” The school has since grown to include campuses in Los Angeles, New York City, and Jerusalem. Finally, at the close of the nineteenth century, Wise founded also the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis. Most importantly for this chapter, in 1854 he founded The American Israelite, a national organ for Reform Judaism which Marcus describes as “designed to win friends and harass enemies.” Wise created the newspaper, the oldest English-Jewish weekly in the United States, to be “devoted to the religion, history and literature of the Israelites.” In the 1930s, the paper switched its target audience from the United States at large to Cincinnati only, as many other Jewish communities had begun printing their own newspapers. The American Israelite provides a bridge between the national and the local, as it was published in Cincinnati and was catered for the local community, but featured news of both international and national interest. In this way it was analogous to The Catholic Telegraph. Although the Israelite’s coverage of the Council was mostly through wire service or unsigned syndicated columns, rather than in-depth commentary as available in The Catholic Telegraph, how those columns covered the Council and what they understood to be the

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15 The Israelite’s local-only audience was new only as of the 1930s. Prior to then, the newspaper had a national audience. Ibid.
Council’s priorities offer a distinction from how the event was covered in other publications.

Wise’s core contribution to American Judaism was his championing of the Reform movement in the United States. When Wise arrived in Cincinnati at the middle of the nineteenth century, American Reform was still in its infancy: the Reformed Society of Israelites for Promoting the True Principles of Judaism had coalesced in Charleston, South Carolina in only 1824. This was, in the words of Marcus, “an attempt to synthesize Americanism and Judaism,” with members ready to “remove their hats…opt for art music, a short service, less Hebrew, more English, and a sermon.” Perhaps most importantly, “they rejected the traditional hope of return to Palestine; the United States was their Promised Land.”

However, Marcus casts Wise as something of a timid innovator, “pathetically eager to demonstrate his loyalty to the United States” but proposing only reforms that remained “within the ambit of traditionalism.” By the middle of the twentieth century, American Reform Judaism was a blend of Orthodox practices with leftward social expectations and mores:

The skullcap was donned by many and the prayer shawl too…Hebrew was cultivated. Bar and bat mitzvah became de rigueur. Bowing and swaying in prayer became more accepted, and much talk of an optional code of Jewish law was heard [as opposed to a lack of law before]. At the same time, the movement embraced some radical departures from tradition: Gay and lesbian congregations were admitted into the Union of American Hebrew Congregations…Spirituality

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17 Marcus, The American Jew, 86.

was not dominant; religion was now primarily a form of Jewish ethnic identification. Reform remained a liberal religious movement.\footnote{Marcus, \textit{The American Jew}, 341.}

If Catholics had “arrived” by the end of World War II, then Jews were close on their heels. And Cincinnati, still a powerhouse of Reform Judaism at midcentury (despite a later move to New York of the UAHC and CCAR headquarters), was an epicenter of Reform engagement with the social crises of the day and the historic process of “Americanizing” Jews - in fact, Hebrew Union College president and Cincinnati native Dr. Nelson Glueck was among the clergy who offered a prayer at John Kennedy’s inauguration in 1961. Cincinnati would remain a site of Jewish progressivism even beyond the period of this dissertation, with the president of Hebrew Union College ordaining in Cincinnati the first American female rabbi in 1972.\footnote{Elaine Woo, “Alfred Gottschalk dies at 79; a leader of Reform Judaism,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, Sept. 13, 2009, accessed Nov. 14, 2016, \url{http://www.latimes.com/local/obituaries/la-me-alfred-gottschalk13-2009sep13-story.html}. The woman, Sally Priesand, was only the second woman ever ordained a rabbi. Avi Hein, “Women in Judaism: A History of Women’s Ordination,” Jewish Virtual Library, accessed Nov. 14, 2016, \url{http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/femalerabbi.html}.}

Most importantly, Reform Judaism was far more open to exchanges with non-Jews than either Conservative or Orthodox iterations of the faith., with some Orthodox viewing Reform Judaism as merely “a steppingstone to Christianity.”\footnote{“Catholics & Jews: How Close?” \textit{Time}, Nov. 22, 1963, 57.}

In Cincinnati, the significance of \textit{Nostra ætate}’s effect on the Jewish-Catholic relationship varied depending on the issue under discussion. At the highest level of theological discourse, local conversations were dominated by informative discussions of the Second Vatican Council’s influence. While some local leaders and prominent voices visiting Cincinnati expressed hesitancy or even anger at \textit{Nostra ætate}, on the whole...
Cincinnati greeted the Declaration with casual interest. In Cincinnati, *Nostra ætate* was neither messianic nor apocalyptic. It neither heralded a golden age of Jewish-Catholic friendship nor incited local protests by Catholics against the Church’s apparent reversal of the assumption that all Jews were damned. Instead, because of the Jewish community’s long history in Cincinnati, and because that community was largely of the Reform “branch” - the expression of Judaism most amenable to cultural assimilation and least concerned with distinguishing itself from non-Jews - *Nostra ætate* was commented upon as a welcome result of Vatican II but not as a document with the potential to reshape longstanding partnerships and the shape of mutual objectives between Catholics and Jews interested in addressing the city’s social ills. More simply, *Nostra ætate* was an academic *imprimatur* on extant, practical, and generally productive friendships. When Catholics and Jews did disagree on fundamental beliefs, those beliefs pertained to the relationship between the state and religious bodies. As far as theology went, or even the socio-cultural divides weaponized by anti-Semites elsewhere, Catholics and Jews in Cincinnati accepted their differences and moved on to more pragmatic connections.

On social problems such as racism (treated below), those Jews and Catholics active on civil rights projects within their own faith traditions found themselves in substantial, if not total, agreement, even gathering into a local interreligious committee to address Cincinnati’s social crises. They found each other around the same tables at the Mayor’s Friendly Relations Committee (see Chapter Two), serving together on civic bodies. And the Catholic Church in Cincinnati imparted to the city’s Jewish community the rhetorical tools of Project Commitment - although, as this chapter reveals, the Archdiocese was given little to no credit for its implementation of the program, then or
since. In contrast to the Catholic Church in Cincinnati, the city’s Jewish leadership
guided Jewish lay men and women to a closer embrace of blacks and racial activism:
instead of relying on activist laity to do the public, and sometimes difficult, work of
improving race relations, Cincinnati’s rabbinate and other prominent individuals took a
leading role in turning the city’s Jews to a more progressive stance. As Reform as a
denomination had historically pressed at the boundaries of Jewish theology, so did
Reform leaders in Cincinnati discern the signs of the times and take up causes they felt
would advance social equity rather than favoring the *status quo ante*.

The strongest point of disagreement between Cincinnati’s Catholics and Jews was
neither racial nor theological. It was political, philosophical, and constitutional, with
majorities in each faith interpreting the separation of church and state in diametrically
opposing ways. This disagreement challenges both the traditional narrative of Will
Herberg, who described the United States as a nation characterized by its “faith in faith,”
and more modern iterations, such as Kevin Schultz’s description of Catholics and Jews
holding Protestant America to its promises of pluralism.22 Because Catholics and Jews
fought so strongly - and publicly - over the First Amendment to the Constitution, the
major point of conflict between the two in Cincinnati was how best to be an American,
how properly to hold in suspension one’s religious and civic identities and
responsibilities. The tool one would expect Vatican II to use on the relationship between
Catholics and Jews - *Nostra ætate* - had no bearing on these questions. And the document
that could have had an effect - *Dignitatis humanæ* (Declaration on Religious Liberty) -

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America to its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
made no discernible difference to Catholics or Jews, since both groups agreed on the separation of Church and state but disagreed on the nuts-and-bolts implications of that separation, especially as it pertained to taxation and education. Ultimately, the generally placid state of affairs between Catholics and Jews in Cincinnati prior to the Council, the lack of significant change wrought on Jewish-Catholic exchanges by *Nostra ætate*, and the continuation of the same citizenship-based disputes after Vatican II indicates that, paradoxically, in Cincinnati - a city made significant here by its Jewish population - the Council meant very little to this key relationship. Vatican II’s influence was felt elsewhere, and strongly so, but not on Jewish-Catholic relations, where one would expect this epochal event to work wonders in Cincinnati.

Of the greatest significance to these points of agreement and contention is just how little the Second Vatican Council features in dialogue over those elements that would affect Cincinnatians in their daily lives. While the Council was mentioned from time to time, it was not upheld as the driving force behind the city’s interreligious commission, Jewish-Catholic dialogue on race, or the ongoing dispute over the First Amendment. The passage of *Nostra ætate* was an important moment, to be sure, and Cincinnati’s Catholics and Jews were aware of its broad significance. There were disagreements over the Declaration - especially sporadic Jewish criticism of its apparent temerity, or the perception that it absolved the Jews for acts they had not committed - but these disagreements were restricted to the academic realm, and those involved in such disputes were not those already engaged with Catholics on pressing social questions: in blunter terms, they were not seeking better Jewish-Catholic connections to begin with, and *Nostra ætate* did little to motivate them to do so. For these critics, *Nostra ætate*
simply confirmed Catholicism’s intransigence and spiritual presumption. On the other hand, to those men and women long engaged in social action alongside Catholics, the document was an interesting endorsement of activities already underway. Few were surprised by its appearance, and apparently, even fewer changed much in their lives as a result - there was no need to, as the bonhomie the document was intended to foster had been thriving in Cincinnati for some time by December 1965 when the Declaration appeared.23

Despite national coverage of ongoing disputes over the future of Jewish-Catholic relations in the 1960s - Time covered Roman intrigue over Nostra ætate extensively - and some limited, local examples of criticism, in the main Cincinnati Catholics and Jews expressed little animosity toward one another. When one can identify friction between the two communities, it was not under religious or theological auspices; instead, disagreement pertained to methods of social activism and interpretations of the relationship between religious groups and the state. Jews and Catholics did not hesitate to criticize each other - though usually such criticism was quite charitable - for the positions they held. On specific matters of religion, the groups were remarkably peaceful; even in the American Israelite, the most vehement protestations against the document’s perceived...

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23 Roger Fortin relays the comical occasion in 1903 on which a prominent Jewish businessman in Cincinnati offended the Catholic community with part of a reception he threw for his son and new daughter-in-law. Women dressed as Catholic nuns served as ushers; “when the party was at its height the dancers threw off their sisters’ habits, appeared in pink tights, and performed Oriental dances.” A group of Cincinnati Jews formally apologized to Archbishop William Elder for Goldsmith’s indiscretion; Elder promptly assured them he felt no ill will toward the city’s Jews despite the offensive display. Roger Fortin, Faith and Action: A History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1821-1996 (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2002), 230. Fortin notes also the refusal of The Catholic Telegraph to acknowledge the persecution of Jews in Germany until the Second World War was underway, going so far as to describe Adolf Hitler as a “practical Catholic” and to assign blame for any Jewish suffering to Jews themselves. Once the war began, however, the paper reversed course entirely. Fortin, ibid., 299.
shortcomings were couched in concessions that it still lauded an advance in Catholic perspectives on Judaism.

In order to best understand how the Council changed - or did not change - Jewish-Catholic interaction, it is necessary first to survey the Cincinnati environment prior to the Council. This survey is accomplished by tracking the Catholic Telegraph’s publications on Judaism before 1962. The chapter then examines how the Telegraph began addressing the Jewish community during the Council and continued that coverage after 1965. This coverage is compared with the American Israelite’s attention to the Council, which focused especially on the lead-up to and promulgation of Nostra ætate.

The dominant characteristic of this local press coverage is the copacetic relationship between Catholics and Jews, with what criticism of Nostra ætate that did appear being far less vociferous than what appeared in national publications or was voiced by a select few Jews in the city. The chapter contrasts this peaceful, almost unthinking theological relationship with the much more productive dialogues on race and school aid. These two elements reveal, by their contrast with the lack of theological disputes, that in Cincinnati Jews and Catholics were far more concerned about practical elements of citizenship. On school aid, they disagreed sharply. On race, they largely found themselves in agreement; it was here that the two communities of believers joined most actively. The racially progressive Catholics of Chapter Three owed a debt to Cincinnati’s Jews for leading the way on religious activism vis-à-vis civil rights, as it was Jews who initiated the joint projects that would draw these faith traditions together in civil society.
II

Using Cincinnati as a case study begins to redress the existing historiographical gap in contemporary Jewish-Catholic exchange. The historiography on Jewish-Catholic dialogue in general, and on it in the United States, is remarkably thin. While theologians have enriched the field, historians have neglected to approach it. Even as the American Catholic historical establishment seeks a better integration with American historiography writ large, to this point it has overlooked Catholics’ rapport with Jews and thus misses a key religious component of Catholics’ history.24

John Connelly argues that the Church’s new attitude on Jews in *Nostra ætate* was a “revolution,” the endpoint of decades of theological development rather than a surprise turn of events in the mid-1960s.25 Against the tide of German anti-Semitism in the 1930s and 1940s had stood a startlingly small cast of characters, the most important of which were Karl Thieme, Johannes (later John) Osterreicher, and Dietrich von Hildebrand. These scholars later played a central role in overcoming among the Council Fathers the notion of Jewish eternal damnation from Matthew 27. In particular, Osterreicher ensured that Thieme’s argument against anti-Semitism, which relied on a new interpretation of the Greek of Hebrews 11 and did not require the conversion of Jews to Christianity, survived counter maneuvers by the Roman Curia in 1964 that attempted to include a hope for conversion in the final version of *Nostra ætate.* Connelly’s work is the most serious

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treatment of *Nostra ætate* by an American historian so far; yet as this chapter shows, in local contexts (such as Cincinnati), *Nostra ætate* was no revolution.

More developed is the historiography on Jewish-black relations in the United States, to which an examination of contemporary Jewish-Catholic dialogue inherently relates in Cincinnati. Cheryl Lynn Greenburg’s *Troubling the Waters* charts the Jewish-black relationship over the twentieth century as a reflection of the growth, dominance, and eventual fading away of liberalism as the nation’s guiding principle. Greenberg rejects several one-dimensional narratives of Jewish-black relations, including the “golden age” narrative in the twentieth century in which Jewish-black cooperation succeeded because of mutual self-interest and recognition of shared suffering at the hands of white, Christian society; the notion of Jewish “infiltration” of the civil rights movement to increase Jews’ own prestige; and the argument that it was only elite blacks and elite Jews who cooperated at all, manipulating their own masses to advance an elite agenda. Instead Greenberg takes elements of all these arguments, concluding that “there are multiple ‘Jewish-black’ relations.” Most importantly for this chapter, Greenberg notes that even as blacks and Jews overcame the tensions brought about by the economic inequalities of the 1930s and 1940s - Jews moving out of urban areas but maintaining business interests therein, made almost every Jewish-black interaction one predicated on disparities of economic power - Jews preferred institutional, peaceful engagement on civil rights questions rather than disruptive tactics of social disturbance. 

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this model extraordinarily well, particularly with its high Jewish participation in civil rights organizations. Furthermore, following on from Chapter Two, Cincinnati’s *American Israelite* published nothing on the Black Manifesto in Cincinnati itself and only criticism of the document at the national level. Combined with Greenberg’s description of Reform Judaism’s civil rights activism as “far more extensive and durable than that of the Conservative or Orthodox,” it becomes clear that Cincinnati is the model of Reform Jewish approaches to racism *par excellence*.30

In one of the few studies that specifically examines Catholic and Jewish racial attitudes in comparison, Gerald Gamm interrogates why Catholics remained in Boston neighborhoods at midcentury when blacks began moving in while the city’s Jewish community left.31 John McGreevy’s summarization illustrates simply the reason why: “Catholics poured holy water on the church building at dedication ceremonies; Jews emphasized sacred (and moveable) texts.”32 In other words, the Catholic parish was territorial and immoveable, while the synagogue was a mobile congregation of Jewish persons which could move wherever the people moved. Catholics resisted black integration into neighborhoods; Jews simply left.33 By the middle of the twentieth century Cincinnati’s blacks were drawn to the same suburbs to which Jews had moved decades earlier; when these families began purchasing property, many Jews - even those


otherwise proud of their ostensibly progressive racial views, as discussed below - left. Archbishop Alter’s reassurances on housing values (see Chapter Two) indicate that, for those who did not decamp to different neighborhoods, Catholics in Cincinnati fit this mold while highly suburbanized Jews did not.

Finally, Lila Corwin Berman argues that even as Detroit’s Jews moved away from the urban core of the city over the twentieth century, they maintained economic, political, and even emotional ties to that urban environment. She suggests that the historical processes that delivered Jews to American cities demanded close attention to the urban core (in her case, Detroit) despite the vast majority of the city’s Jews living in the increasingly distant suburbs. While Cincinnati’s Jews were not so concerned about the downtown region as a space, they did show a keen interest in ensuring that those who lived there enjoyed racial equity.

The historiography on American Jewish-Catholic relations at the “ground level,” so to speak, is essentially non-existent. Thus Cincinnati, with its Reform Jews who engaged with blacks and Catholics, exquisitely details how those exchanges unfolded at the local level.

III

To properly gauge the significance of Pope John XXIII’s bold proclamations and the later, formal teaching of Nostra ætate, it is important to understand both the American and Cincinnati context in which these developments were received. A. James Rudin offers what could be called the “classical” narrative of contemporary Jewish-Catholic

relations. He wrote in 1986 of the “3:00 AM rude awakening” perceptions between Catholics and Jews: in other words, what one would have thought of the other had one been startled awake at 3:00 AM with little time to formulate a more carefully considered response.35

In this classical narrative of the pre-council years, Catholics viewed Jews as perhaps venerable predecessors but ones whose continued existence was somewhat puzzling.36 Even for those Catholics appalled by the memory of the Holocaust on the eve of Vatican II, supercessionism – the idea that Christianity had obviated the need for and purpose of Judaism – was the order of the day. And as the centuries from the Christian Church’s founding wore on and Christians exhibited an attitude ever more hostile towards Jews, Jews “lost faith” in the essential goodness of Christians, seeing that deed had trumped creed.37

In Rudin’s telling, European emigration had the crucial effect of abstracting anti-Semitic attitudes to a general perception of Judaism’s “wrongness.” As the North American colonies became the United States and the new country grew to hemispheric and later global importance, both Jews and Catholics found themselves beyond the social pale and excluded from full acceptance into American society. Thus a “pragmatic co-existence” sprang up between the two faiths. Even so, “the perceptions that had been shaped in nearly two thousand years of history still existed in America. Mutual suspicion


36 Rudin, ibid., 9.

37 Rudin, ibid., 11-12.
and theological bias still combined to keep Catholics and Jews separated and
distrustful.”³⁸

But this situation did not obtain in Cincinnati. There was more common ground
on which Cincinnati Catholics and Jews met, particularly on racial questions. Panels,
lectures, and joint gatherings intended to clarify the origins of Cincinnati’s black poverty,
unrest among the black community, and white complicity in creating those two
conditions began in the 1950s and gained momentum into the next decade. Both
communities would offer their own contrition and invite black leaders, known in
Cincinnati and nationally, to deliver the “black perspective” and outline ways forward.

On the other hand, the question of public support for private education was a
deeply contentious one between Cincinnati Catholics and Jews. Most Jews favored a
strict separation of church and state; Catholics generally argued in favor of some state
support, especially through subsidy programs whereby school districts would help fund
the “secular” components of private education. Jews interpreted the First Amendment to
require that the state or any other public entity must not fund private education in any
form. Catholics drew a diametrically opposed lesson: state support for religious education
merely respected the religious beliefs and educational choices of American citizens. The
split between Catholics and Jews reversed the coalition the two faiths had formed with
certain Protestants a century before to remove religion, in the form of Bible readings,
from public schools.³⁹

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(Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2002), 121.
This blend of opposition and unity characterized Jewish-Catholic exchange in
Cincinnati at midcentury, with none of the baggage described by Rudin.\textsuperscript{40} This was the
atmosphere into which the Second Vatican Council intervened into the lives of Cincinnati
Catholics and Jews, delivering \textit{Nostra ætate} to faith communities already experiencing a
remarkable amount of concord on some questions, but discord on others. Assessing
Jewish-Catholic dialogue in Cincinnati yields results even a nonspecialist might suspect:
some successful endeavors and some breakdowns in communication. On the whole,
however, Jews and Catholics in the city each made conscious efforts to move closer to
one another in terms of mutual understanding and worked together to solve some of the
most pressing social problems of the day.

The general goodwill between Jews and Catholics in Cincinnati and the lack of
Catholic comment upon the Council Fathers’ Jewish deliberations does not mean that
\textit{Nostra ætate} was meaningless in Cincinnati, of course. And some individuals in
Cincinnati did express strong opinions about the document’s content. The lead-up to
\textit{Nostra ætate} was not effortless at either the international or the local level. In May 1962,
Maurice Perlzweig, then head of the World Jewish Congress, wrote to Archbishop Karl
Alter to discuss a memo the Congress had submitted to Augustin Cardinal Bea, a leader
in the Church’s outreach to non-Catholics and non-Christians. That memo drew on the
confluence of still-extant accusations of “ritual crimes” committed by Jews (along with
other public, unapologetic expressions of anti-Semitism), threads of contemporary

\textsuperscript{40} That Rudin’s narrative would differ so markedly from conditions on the ground in Cincinnati
could be all the more remarkable for his academic pedigree: Rudin received his rabbinical ordination from
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, although his biographical materials do not mention
whether that occurred in Cincinnati or another of the institution’s campuses elsewhere. “About Rabbi
Catholic theology which acknowledged the rift between Catholicism with an eye toward healing said rift, and the historic movements of John XXIII toward a theological and social *rapprochement* with global Judaism.\(^{41}\) Perlzweig knew that the memo, if made public, could cause some embarrassment among the American episcopate; therefore, he wanted to explain to Alter the Congress’s reasons for submitting the memo and to discuss the matter in general. In a blatant stroking of Alter’s ego, Perlzweig wrote that he was seeking out “some outstanding leaders of the Church” to meet, hoping that Jewish Community Relations Committee head Charles Posner could arrange an appointment. Ultimately, Alter left for Rome for the impending Council and was unable to meet with Perlzweig.\(^{42}\)

Alter’s response to Perlzweig’s request, in which the archbishop regretted missing the chance to meet, included a clear indication of the archbishop’s mind on the problem of anti-Semitism but also showed that he was not quite aware of just how deep was the divide between the two faith traditions. He was concerned that relations between the two remain “cordial” due to the Judaism’s foundational relationship to Christianity. However, he argued that most of the “antagonism” between Christians and Jews in history could be attributed to unnamed “political and social factors.”\(^{43}\) Alter decried anti-Semitism but detected no theological divide. Perlzweig wrote to Posner again after the first session of the Council, pessimistic about the future of Jewish-Catholic relations. He was not

\(^{41}\) Nahum Goldmann and Label Katz to Augustine Cardinal Bea, Feb. 27, 1962, MS-202 42/17, AJA.


\(^{43}\) Alter to Perlzweig, May 31, 1962, MS-202 42/17, AJA. There is no response from Perlzweig to Alter’s explanation in the Jewish Community Relations Committee records.
confident in the ability of the Fathers - “these poor bastards,” “rather less than normally human” - to achieve much of anything.44

Contrary to the fears of Maurice Perlzweig in 1962, the Council Fathers did achieve something by late 1965. Yet not all Jews were satisfied with the results. Some of that discontent manifested in Cincinnati. Just after Nostra ætate passed, rabbinical literature scholar Samson Levey told the JCRC that, instead of capitalizing on the enormous potential to mend Jewish-Catholic injuries embodied in John XXIII, Paul VI had essentially scuttled any chance at an effective declaration on Judaism at the Council. Levey said that Paul’s 1964 trip to the Holy Land was an attempt to excuse the alleged silence of Pius XII during World War II; Levey suggested that his audience “might have known that the final pronouncement would not be as strong in tone and as conciliatory in nature as the original schema [the draft of Nostra ætate], because from his inception as Pope, Paul VI indicated very decidedly the direction in which he was moving.”45 In his response to Levey’s presentation, Alfred Gottschalk argued at the same meeting that Nostra ætate was self-serving. The rabbi, who had graduated from the Cincinnati (and original) campus of Hebrew Union College, became dean of HUC’s Los Angeles campus, and would later return to Cincinnati as the entire College’s president, described the presence of Jews as observers at the Council as “an affront to the dignity of the Jewish people,” a meddling with Catholic theology “unbecoming” to a tradition that had no business asking the Catholic Church for any sort of concessions.46

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44 Perlzweig on Alter: “He is clearly a man devoted to the old-fashioned virtue of discretion, and he practices this almost to a fault.” Perlzweig to Charles Posner, Jan. 4, 1963, MS-202 42/17, AJA.

45 Samson H. Levey, “Presentation at Community Relations Committee Meeting December 17, 1965 on the Ecumenical Council’s Statement on the Jews,” MS-202 42/17, AJA.
itself was one thing; what galled Gottschalk was the role that Jews had played in its crafting and passage. The rabbi was not opposed to innovation, even reforms considered revolutionary: in 1972, one year after becoming president of HUC, Gottschalk himself ordained in Cincinnati the first American female rabbi. However, he had also experienced, during his European childhood, some of the viciousness with which German Christians had treated Jews. He would recall the beatings delivered even by “my friends” on the day when some Christians observed the memory of a boy ostensibly murdered by Jews centuries earlier.\textsuperscript{47} To ask the Church to say anything conciliatory about Jews, regardless of the Church’s own will to do so, dishonored the Jewish past as far as Gottschalk was concerned.

These were academic arguments, however, and do not necessarily reflect the attitudes of Catholics and Jews over the course of the pre-, during, and post-Vatican II era. Local media, as elsewhere in the dissertation, offer a glimpse into the attitude of the “average” Catholic and Jew in Cincinnati.

The \textit{Catholic Telegraph} examined the Church’s relationship with Jews over the whole timeframe of this dissertation, although with little attention to theological differences. In early editorials by, Jews did not feature prominently.\textsuperscript{48} When they did appear, there was no mention of their beliefs; instead, they were viewed as different by virtue of their opinions \textit{vis-à-vis} civil society.


\footnote{Elaine Woo, \textit{ibid..}}

\footnote{I am defining “early coverage” as that before the years of the Second Vatican Council (i.e., 1954 to 1961).}
For example, in a 1955 editorial favoring “released time” from public schools so Catholic students could receive religious instruction, rather than learning from a quasi-Common Core religious curriculum, the editors noted that Jews were among those who had proposed such a “‘lowest common denominator’ set of truths for public education.” The newspaper argued the next year that the Jews of B’Nai B’Rith, which opposed “released time” for any students in any tradition, “don’t seem to understand that the American idea of Church-State separation has never meant that the State should subsidize secularism at the expense of religion.”

Catholic awareness of Jewish opposition to school aid extended beyond Cincinnati. Dr. John J. Kane, then head of the University of Notre Dame’s Sociology Department, spoke at the National Community Relations Advisory Council meeting in the summer of 1956. There he predicted “an increase in interreligious tensions arising out of differences on public and private education.” The NCRAC later advised all Jewish community relations groups in the United States to oppose religious school aid. The group was connected to Cincinnati: C. E. Israel, chairman of the Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Committee, was elected to the NCRAC Executive Committee at the same meeting featuring John Kane. Israel’s influence over Cincinnati Jewish

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community relations continued for some time, as he was re-elected to his chairmanship three years later.  

The *Telegraph* also portrayed both Catholics and Jews as victims of harassment in American and global society, grouping anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism under the same bigoted umbrella. The editors noted in January 1960 that a recent spate of anti-Semitic vandalism reminded the world that “racism did not die with its Nazi prophets”; bigotry was alive and well, including that directed against Catholics. 

These examples are not simply typical of a larger sample; very few of the *Telegraph*’s editorials spoke about the Jewish community in the pre-Council years. What little was said by the editors, however, overshadowed *Telegraph* reader contributions. Not until 1961 did the *Telegraph* publish a reader letter having anything to do with Jews or Judaism; even then, the first mentioned Jews only in passing in relation to school aid. The second suggested only that the fate of Soviet Jews would foretell that of other religious groups. 

During the years of the Council itself (1962-1965), the *Telegraph* engaged Judaism much more seriously. Over these four years the editorial board did not shy away from disagreeing with positions staked out either by Jewish organizations or individual Jews but, *contra* earlier coverage, the newspaper developed for readers the significant theological and sociological ties between Catholic Christianity and Judaism in the twentieth century United States.

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School aid occupied the editors for years on end. They picked up often on the Jewish opinion on state support for religious schools, offering a platform to grapple with the relationship between American Catholics, American Jews, and the basic principles of civic society.

In the summer of 1962, one Fr. Joseph Fitzpatrick warned at a Milwaukee symposium that the question of school aid threatened to drive a wedge between Catholics and Jews.57 Arnold Rose, another speaker at the symposium (and Jewish), argued that Jews’ “ancient experience is that religion thrives best when the secular state leaves it alone.” Catholics and Jews both favored robust religious communities in civil society; they differed only on how those communities ought to relate to the government. The Telegraph offered its own assurances that despite the divergence in approach, American Catholics did not seek to use the state to impose their own beliefs on others.

Just weeks after reporting on the Milwaukee symposium, a gathering of Jewish leaders both secular and religious from around the country met in Cincinnati to discuss public education. One topic of discussion for the group was the notion of “shared time,” a sort of reversal of “released time”: in “shared time,” students from parochial schools would attend public schools only for instruction in non-religious subjects. The National Community Relations Advisory Council, a sort of consultative body for Jewish community relations groups around the country, did not want even to study the question and firmly opposed shared time. The Telegraph’s editors expressed a desire for Cincinnati’s own Jewish Community Relations Council to at least consider shared time in Cincinnati. How the editorial closed was striking, indicative of a warming of relations.

On the rejection of “shared time” outright, the editors wrote that “Catholics have a long way to go in making clear to others in the community the essential value and the American character of parochial schools.”58 Such a concession was remarkable: the struggle moving forward would not be only gaining concessions from state and federal legislators, but also waging a public relations campaign to show how parochial schools were valuable contributors to the community rather than religious institutions to be tolerated.

By early 1964, the *Telegraph* not only could acknowledge respectfully the logic behind Jewish opposition to school aid but also actively some of the blame for fueling that opposition:

> The underlying reason for Jewish opposition to public school aid for parochial schools has nothing to do with the promotion of secularism. It is rooted in the tragic experiences the Jewish people have had in Christian centuries in the past. The centuries of oppression of Jewish minorities by Christian rulers and peoples have made the Jews wary of Christian intentions. Add to this the fact that they have fared best in secular or religiously-neutral nations and one can understand why they so vigorously opposed any development which they feel might make the state less secular…Our most convincing argument will be to show in our daily relations with them that we are as genuinely concerned about their rights as we are about our own.59

The admission came almost two years before *Nostra ætate* was promulgated by the Council Fathers, officially repudiating centuries of anti-Semitism. In Cincinnati, at least, the institutional Church was aware of its own failings. Almost exactly a year later, at least one Cincinnati Jew had caught the self-admonishing bug, too, writing to the *American*

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Israelite to chide the JCRC for its intemperance in opposing the Ohio School Bus law: “Can we not point out the arguments contra without invective and bitterness?”60

At the other end of the Council, the newspaper greeted with joy the creation of a commission by the American bishops to dialogue with Jews.61 A subcommittee of the Bishop’s Commission for Ecumenical Affairs, the new group sought to “work with Jewish groups in the interest of interfaith understanding…to advance mutual knowledge and respect…to promote Biblical studies and to encourage and sponsor Jewish-Catholic meetings.”62 The Telegraph’s editors wrote that the body would allow Catholics and Jews to explore “a growing awareness…of the rich spiritual heritage which they [Catholics] share with the Jews,” coming to see local Jews as brethren in God.63

The newspaper’s excitement over the creation of the commission far outshone the editors’ comments on Nostra ætate itself, which were minimal. When the Council Fathers passed the document, along with several others, in late October 1965, the following editorial said “it was the new vigor and life in the Church that the Pope sought chiefly to emphasize at the promulgation meeting last week.”64 Despite defending press coverage of Nostra ætate’s passages on Judaism - the Telegraph cited unnamed critics who thought such emphasis inappropriate - little was said about this otherwise “revolutionary,” to use John Connelly’s term, document on the Church’s relationship with non-Christians. Yet the newspaper’s neglect of Nostra ætate in its editorial stance is telling and entirely

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consistent with its previous coverage of Judaism: in Cincinnati, Jews and Catholics differed far more on questions of civil society than theology. A document affirming Jews’ non-damnation therefore had little influence on contemporary exchanges.

*Telegraph* reader contributions about Jews were infrequent during the Council, although there was a general recognition of the importance of Jewish-Catholic exchange as the groups approached their citizenship from faith perspectives. Malcolm B. Chandler, executive director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews’ Cincinnati-headquartered Southern Ohio region, wrote to disagree with Eugene Lipman and Albert Vorspan. The two had concluded in *A Tale of Ten Cities* that “the National Conference of Christians and Jews has accomplished little.”65 Chandler showcased 25 “Dialogue Groups,” including one in Cincinnati with its own television program, around the United States. Rather than determining a “common religious denominator,” the Dialogue groups functioned as ongoing summits to anticipate disagreements between American faith traditions. “In this aim,” Chandler wrote, “the program has been to date extremely successful.”

A particularly vivid letter that spoke of Jews came from Dan Kane, a lay leader in the archdiocese, in the fall of 1964. Kane decried the amount of energy that Citizens for Educational Freedom was putting into a proposed Ohio Fair Bus Bill, which would allow state funds to be used for busing students to Catholic schools.66 Kane was concerned, too, about the “indifference and antagonism toward fellow Christians, Jews, agnostics, and atheists” exhibited by partisans for the bus bill, who apparently had little interest in the

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opinion of non-Catholics. In Kane’s characterization, the “problem” with Jews perceived by the CEF and their allies had little to do with the Jewish faith itself but concerned the fact that Jews - like other Christians, along with agnostics and atheists - were not Catholic. Or, in Kane’s own words, those “who follow their consciences.” Thus the problem was not anti-Semitism per se but rather the continued belief, in some quarters of the Church, that nothing outside Catholicism could contain or convey truth.

Perhaps Kane was overly concerned about bad feelings on the part of non-Catholics. A few months later, as the Church prepared for the final session of the Council, Rabbi Gunther Lawrence of the New York-based Central Conference of American Rabbis wrote to congratulate the newspaper on recent coverage. School aid had come into question yet again. The Telegraph had reported on the Cincinnati meeting of the Conference in June, where the rabbis had discussed the strict separation of governmental funding for education and religious schools. Lawrence thanked the newspaper “for the excellent coverage, especially on an issue which we know you basically oppose.” Far from Kane’s non-Catholic angry at the energy put into government support for religious education, Lawrence hailed the atmosphere of open discussion, calling the Telegraph’s report of the Conference meeting “in the true spirit of fair play and represents the presentation of various views on a controversial question.”

The Telegraph’s editors’ attention to Judaism dropped off sharply after the close of Vatican II and the excitement over Nostra ætate had faded. In 1966 the editors wrote favorably about a presentation that John Tracy Ellis had made on the potential for Jewish-Catholic partnerships “to improve the lots of urban slum dwellers in today’s society.”

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The Telegraph agreed with Ellis wholeheartedly, prodding “the children of the slum dwellers of yesterday” to help those who had filled the void after Catholics and Jews had earned their way out decades previously.

In one instance, the earlier bonhomie and willingness to disagree respectfully with the general Jewish opposition to school aid was replaced by a standoffish tit-for-tat lashing out - again, however, not on theology but on questions of religion and education. The editorial board reacted to an article in the American Israelite expressing satisfaction at the Supreme Court’s recent decision in Lemon v. Kurtzman. In an 8 to 1 decision, the Court had determined that subsidies provided to parochial schools in Pennsylvania and Rhode Island were unconstitutional, as both involved “excessive entanglement between government and religion.”69 The editors especially took issue with the Israelite’s characterization of salary supplements as “creamy subventions”:

Subvention is a fairly uncommon word for what usually is called state aid. But creamy? That suggests richness, doesn’t it? Fat? Smooth?

No. Creamy is hardly the word for the very limited kind of aid the state has provided to nonpublic schools, or for what the schools are seeking. Breadcrusts [sic] would come closer, if we stay among the metaphors of the table.70

Ultimately, the Telegraph’s editors essentially told the Israelite to butt out: “If a child learns about God along with arithmetic, all the state need be concerned about - or the Israelite - is that he learning about arithmetic.”71 The editorial board was exasperated that, once again, American Jews did not seem to understand why Catholics were owed

71 Ibid., A-4.
state school aid, and issued yet another call for Catholics “to make known our
convictions - patiently, clearly and with charity.”

Once Nostra ætate was promulgated, the newspaper published a veritable
avalanche of letters on Judaism when compared to earlier years. Aside from minor
protests over education, most readers exhibited a contentment with post-conciliar
progress. One reader did write in December 1966 that “Catholic parents should ask their
Jewish neighbors to call a halt to the discrimination being promoted by Jewish leaders
when it comes to education and welfare benefits for the parochial school children,” in
response to the American Jewish Congress filing suit against New York’s Elementary
and Secondary Education Act of 1965.72 Yet others were more copacetic. In June 1967
Judy Silver and Gordon Geller wrote to thank the Telegraph for publicizing a vigil held
in support of Jews in the Soviet Union and protesting the Soviet government’s treatment
of them. They closed wistfully, writing “On the night of May 18, ecumenism did surely
reign.”73 When the Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati (MARCC)
formed in 1968, Marilyn Scott praised the organization for its push to “throw off the
impediment of fragmentation and become a potent force to demand dialogue with the
community power structure.”74

Still others lumped Catholic attitudes toward Jews in with perspectives on other
groups. Elizabeth Gerrity wrote during the summer of 1968 to remind fellow readers that
“we are all God’s children and that He has made room for all who love him, red, yellow,

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74 Marilyn Scott to Editor, Catholic Telegraph, Nov. 28, 1968.
black and white.” She wondered why more people weren’t aware that Jesus, and more or less everyone around him, was a Jew, “and a footnote in my New Testament reads, ‘The Jews will all be converted by the end of time.’” In this final comment Gerrity echoed Archbishop McNicholas almost thirty years before, each repudiating anti-Semitism on the basis that Judaism would eventually fade away. Despite her implicit supercessionism, Gerrity feared “a terrible day of reckoning for those of us who condemn our brothers and sisters of other races.”

IV

On the other side of the Jewish-Catholic relationship, the *American Israelite* covered Cincinnati Catholicism periodically, if not obsessively, before, during, and after the Council. The vast majority of this coverage was either editorially positive or reporting on positive interactions. The civic realm, dealing with questions of religious liberty and the just ordering of society, found Catholics and Jews frequently in agreement. As early as 1954 Archbishop Karl Alter was congratulating Jews on their tercentenary in America; Alter “rejoice[d] that together we can mutually share an equal liberty before the law.”

Four years later Albert Goldman, president of the Cincinnati Board of Rabbis, noted that his organization was joining the Catholic bishops of Ohio as well as the Ohio Council of Churches in opposing a proposed right-to-work law. Archbishop Alter and Nelson Glueck, president of Hebrew Union College, both signed a telegram to Nikita Kruschev.

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in December 1962 protesting the Soviet Union’s treatment of Jews. In later, the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati voted to participate in Project Equality, which had resulted from religious institutions’ “pledge to combat employment discrimination by dealing with those companies and firms that operate on the basis of fair play and equality.” Among other signatories was the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. At a less formal level was a commitment to plurality and diversity in common society; a senior at the College of Mt. St. Joseph wrote to Rabbi David Hachen of Rockdale Temple in 1969 to thank him for helping, by a talk he gave at the college, to draw her out of the “Catholic Ghetto environment.” The woman told that rabbi “though we do not share common beliefs, thank you for showing us that these differing beliefs do not prevent us from sharing some common ideas and methods about realizing our common ideal.”

Yet just as reported in the Catholic Telegraph, the American Israelite published extensively on the sole hindrance between Cincinnati Catholics and Jews: state support for private education. This sector was among the most persistent across the entire timeframe of this dissertation. In the fall of 1955 Robert Segal, who would later write also on the Council, reacted to a fiery speech given by James Francis Cardinal McIntyre warning of state encroachment in education that “raw historical experience has taught us [Jews] to work to preserve the fundamental principle of the separation of Church and State…We are vitally concerned with religious education in its appropriate settings - the Synagogue and the home.” When the Archdiocese of Cincinnati began planning its

Marian High School, it applied for an exemption from the city’s building permit fee; the Council of Churches and the Jewish Community Relations Committee opposed the exemption as a constitutional violation.82 The JCRC opposed on similar grounds President Lyndon Johnson’s plan to subsidize private education as ammunition in his “war on poverty”; in a statement, JCRC leaders Harold Goldstein and Murray Blackman said “it would indeed be tragic if in the attempt to cope with one evil we substituted others, namely the violation of the First Amendment and the destruction of our whole system of public education.”83 In addition to subsidizing the schools themselves, the Cincinnati Jewish community also opposed the transportation of parochial students on public school buses, which to the JCRC was as much a “violation of the constitutional principle of the separation between Church and state” as funding going directly to schools.84

Yet the sharp divide over education did not dissolve other, stronger bonds between Catholics and Jews in Cincinnati. In fact, when the *American Israelite* wrote on matters of direct, interfaith exchanges, the relationship between the two faith traditions emerges as one of mutual respect and even admiration. Alfred Segal, who wrote also for the *Cincinnati Post* as “the Conscience of Cincinnati,” authored some of the most sentimental - sometimes saccharine - odes to interfaith harmony. In April 1956 Segal perused an early copy of Hebrew Union College Professor Samuel Sandmel’s book *A

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82 “Ask Council To Wave All Accredited Schools’ Building Fees Here,” *American Israelite*, Apr. 18, 1963, 1. The Jewish representative, Charles Posner, suggested that if the Archdiocese received its exemption, then other, non-religious schools would be entitled to building exemptions as well.

83 “President’s Plan for U.S. Aid to Parochial Schools Opposed by CRC As Threat to Church-State Wall,” *American Israelite*, Feb. 6, 1964, 1.

Jewish Understanding of the New Testament; Segal praised the book because Sandmel was “willing to look through windows out of which other people search for God in their own way.” Narrating what his friend McCarthy experienced as a Catholic, Segal wrote that

from his own window, my friend McCarthy is sure he sees God…in the Catholic concept, with the one McCarthy knows as God’s son, at His side…But I don’t quarrel with McCarthy. If by what he sees in his own window, McCarthy feels lifted up to the eminence of the stars, that’s all to the good; so much the better for McCarthy.86

The Catholic man ostensibly felt similarly; in a likely-fabricated response, Segal had McCarthy saying

It’s a familiar scene I see from your window. I see Mt. Sinai…I see the lightning and thunder, and Moses coming down with those tablets…The Ten Commandments, that is. The Commandments are yours and ours, too. It’s like being heirs to the same estate, isn’t it? You the Jew, I the Christian. You and I…Let’s shake on that, Segal.87

While the language is cloying in its sentimentality from the distance of half a century, it is nonetheless remarkable for its timing - almost a decade before Nostra ætate, six years before the start of Vatican II, and three before Pope John XXIII even announced his plans to convoke an ecumenical council. Professor Sandmel would go on to become provost of Hebrew Union College and participate in academic dialogues on ecumenism in theological education, calling his own institution a “miniature ecumenical movement” because of its interfaith student body.88

The *American Israelite*’s editors had conveyed their condolences to Catholics upon the death of Pope Pius XII. Foreshadowing none of the speculation over the pontiff’s ostensible inaction on or even collusion with the Third Reich before and during World War II, the *Israelite* characterized Pius as “a man of peace” who had “served the cause of peace with vision, with courage, with devotion.” The editors also credited the pope with having saved thousands from the Nazis.⁸⁹ In early 1964, in the intersession between Vatican II’s second and third meetings, the editors eulogized another prominent Catholic by printing a lament at the death of Jesuit Father Gustave Weigel, who had worked at the international level for improvements in ecumenical and interfaith relations.⁹⁰ Weigel had been scheduled to speak at the Cincinnati Jewish Community Center Forum that spring. After the Council had concluded, perhaps no interfaith event was more emblematic of contemporary enthusiasm than an interfaith thanksgiving service at St. James of the Valley Catholic Church in nearby Wyoming, Ohio. In the *Israelite*’s advertisement for the event, no Catholic clergy appeared; instead, a sermon by the Rev. Otis Moss (see Chapter Two, above) was noted, along with “the Service” by Rabbi Greenberg.⁹¹ If concurrent debates over the relationship between the state and religious schools stood in the way of Jewish-Catholic friendship, mutual respect, and cooperation in Cincinnati, one could not gather as much from *The American Israelite*. In terms of faith the two communities interacted as esteemed equals without abandoning their own faiths, clearly able to set aside their discrete differences over constitutional questions.

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In more specifically Conciliar news, *The American Israelite* covered Vatican II well from 1961 to 1965, publishing mostly syndicated columns. Speculation on the Council Fathers’ attempt to address Judaism dominated the newspaper prior to *Nostra ætate*: would a full-blown apology for centuries of abuse result? Would the Council Fathers say anything meaningful? Or would the forces of anti-Semitism win out? The newspaper’s coverage suggests a Cincinnati Jewish community well aware of the Council’s Jewish implications but little concerned with much else related to Vatican II.

The *Israelite* published *Nostra ætate* in full on October 21, 1965. It was a long time coming as far as many Jews were concerned. Robert Segal wrote in his “As We Were Saying” column in the summer of 1964 that the Church owed the Jewish world a repudiation of its anti-Semitism. He also cautioned against premature gratitude for knowing the Council Fathers were discussing such a document. He quoted favorably an editorial in the *American Jewish Congress Weekly* that said a statement by the Fathers repudiating anti-Semitism “should be recognized as an act of historic justice, which will elicit from Jews the deepest satisfaction, but does not put them under any special obligation.” Segal drew on the words of the Reform rabbi Leon Feuer, as well, who hoped Jews would stop making public requests for a Council document on Judaism; such embarrassing demands were “an insult to the memory of Jewish martyrdom.” In other words, Segal, the *Weekly*, and Feuer were saying, the Catholic Church simply needed to step up and correct a longstanding wrong. Once *Nostra ætate* did pass, Segal remained stoic: “Measure the tears shed over [the death of Jesus] with the sorrow - not so much in

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93 Segal, *ibid.*, 1, 15.
Christian circles, but in Jewish families - over the murder of millions of Jews because of religious teachings."94 He would, however, end on a somber but positive note: “This is good for the Church and good for all of us.”

Most significant in the Israelite’s coverage were its editorials, ranging from hopeful optimism to disappointment. The editors reprinted comments from a Catholic newspaper editor in November 1963; he hoped that 6,000,000 letters would be written by Catholics to their bishops in support of a document on anti-Semitism to help atone for the Holocaust.95 The Israelite’s editors concurred heartily.

One month later, the editors observed that despite the failure of the Fathers to pass a declaration “even the presentation of the document to the Council constitutes a noble forward step.96” By the next fall, the paper took a harder line: the Church owed the world a declaration. They cited with concern comments by Elmer Cardinal Ritter, who understood the draft declaration to lay the blame for Jesus’ death at the hands of “humanity and not the Jews alone.” Such a qualification meant that “the ‘Christ-killer’ slander against the Jews will continue to echo down the years.”97

Once the Council had approved a draft declaration, the Israelite acknowledged the good deed; insistence that it was long overdue remained: “the Jews have waited some 2,000 years for this simple act of justice. It is impossible to estimate accurately how

many thousands of Jews have died on the rack, by the sword, in concentration camps and in countless other ways, as a direct or indirect result of the charge of ‘Christ-killers’. “98

When it finally was passed by the Council Fathers and became binding on Catholics, the Israelite’s editors lauded the declaration but expressed frustration that the word “deicide” still was missing.99 They suspected John XXIII never would have allowed such an omission. In the final assessment - the paper’s last editorial word on Vatican II - Nostra aetate was “a great stride toward final discharge of an obligation upon the Roman Catholic Church to instruct her members…to lead the way in abandonment of this age-old, unchristian [sic] flagellation of innocent millions of non-Christians.”100

Cincinnati Jews had many opportunities to learn about the Council as advertised in The American Israelite. As early as 1962, Rockdale Temple’s senior rabbi, Murray Blackman, was bringing his congregation up-to-date by preaching on the Council during services.101 In March 1964, the Jewish Community Center hosted Father Donald Campion of America magazine to lecture on “Catholic Adjustments In the Sixties.102” The Center also hosted a discussion group on interfaith relations.103 The possibilities of what Vatican II might say on the Jews were considered with humor, too. Just a few pages before the advertisement for the discussion group, the American Israelite carried an ad

with a recipe for Mishigoyem Mushrooms con Vino Blanco, intended to stoke sales of an Italian-Kosher cookbook: “the authors have flavored the writing with Grandmother Slipakoff’s unusual individual language, again hoping they have helped to hold two generations together, at least until the latest Ecumenical Council’s program can be put into effect throughout the world.”

Events surrounding the Council’s statements on Judaism ramped up as the fourth session wound down. Once the Council passed *Nostra ætate*, the Isaac Wise Center offered a two-week series on Vatican II by Rabbi Samuel Wohl. At the same time Rabbi Blackman spoke on the Council yet again at Rockdale Temple. At the close of Vatican II, CBS affiliate WKRC aired a discussion on the Council’s statements on anti-Semitism and religious liberty. The program featured national religious leaders, including Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee, Wayne Cowan of *Christianity & Crisis*, and Fr. Donald Campion of *America* magazine. Another Catholic, James O’Gara of *Commonweal*, hosted. Through both print and the small screen, Vatican II became real for Cincinnati’s Jews.

Yet in the middle of the twentieth century, how the *Israelite* covered Catholicism was far more significant for what the paper said about race than it did about the Ecumenical Council. By 1965, what the Council Fathers were achieving (or not) in Rome was something of an academic discussion among the editors and columnists of the paper;

104 The ad defined mishigoyem as people who “think Bar Mitzvah is the name of an Israeli ranch.” “The Perfect Gift for the Holidays!!” *American Israelite*, Nov. 12, 1964, 13.


much more relevant was how Catholics had responded to Cincinnati’s racial crisis even before Vatican II and, by the time of the Council and beyond, joined in with Jews to correct longstanding racial inequities. In this way, what Nostra ætate actually accomplished in Cincinnati was minimized: the document did not enter into the mutual partnerships on racial projects, which had been underway for some time and continued long after the Council. By the same token, the Declaration also was absent from Jewish-Catholic conflicts over state support for education, the same issue that had divided Catholics and Jews for decades.

As the Israelite’s advertisements showed in the 1950s and 1960s, Jews in Cincinnati had no shortage of opportunities to learn about race; if they took advantage of these opportunities, they would imbibe a message always of racial progress. It is tempting to dismiss the archival evidence pointing to these events as so much bureaucratic administrivia: in few cases are the texts of lectures available or reactions of attendees preserved. However, a broad overview of the events offered by Jewish participation in interreligious and civic racial projects definitely characterizes Cincinnati’s Jewish community as heavily invested in the racially harmonious future of the Queen City.

Sermons were a particularly powerful vehicle for racial messages, and they were delivered frequently on racial topics. These occurred all during the timeframe of this dissertation, starting in 1955 with Rabbi Dr. Victor Reichert’s sermon at the prominent Rockdale Temple on “The Problem of Prejudice”. Such sermons gained steam the following decade; in March 1963 Rabbi Murray Blackman preached at the same temple on several articles that had recently appeared in Commentary and Congress Weekly on

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“the American Negroes’ plight.” He presented “The Jew and The Negro” a few years later, offering “A New Look for 1966.” At Amberley’s Temple Shalom in fall 1964, Abraham Citron, the director of the JCRC, spoke on the “Negro-Jewish Confrontation.” Citron’s successor, Myron Schwartz, followed up two years later with “Evolving Jewish-Negro Relations.” But Temple Sholom hosted a truly historic event in February 1968, when the Rev. T. X. Graham, pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, preached from the Jewish pulpit on “The Unfinished Business of Brotherhood.” The sermon came from what the advertisement called “one of the bright new faces in the Negro and religious communities of Cincinnati.”

Jews heard about relations with blacks beyond the temple, too. In 1957 the Jewish Community Center’s Forum Lecture series hosted none other than Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., described by the Israelite then simply as “Negro leader”; C.E. Israel, chairman of the forum, proudly recalled the Forum’s previous invitation of Horace Caton in 1941. “There was a great question at the time about having a Negro speaker,’ said Mr. Israel. ‘For one thing, there was only one hotel in Cincinnati where he could stay.’ The 1963 Midwest regional seminar of Habonim, the Labor Zionist Youth organization, was held in Cincinnati. The president of the NAACP, then William Bowen, and the Rev. Otis Moss

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114 “Forum Programs Attract Many Through Years,” American Israelite, Nov. 21, 1957, 12.
both spoke on civil rights; Robert Perlzweig, then executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Committee, spoke on “The Jew and the Negro.”

Furthermore, Cincinnati Jews did not only learn about race relations from passive events like lectures or sermons. While still in a minority of the population, Cincinnati Jews engaged heavily in civic efforts - not just those of their own creation - to address racial crises. One can see this most clearly in Jewish participation in the Mayor’s Friendly Relations Committee, introduced in Chapter Two, and the numerous other organizations for racial progress based in Cincinnati. For example, when Cincinnati Mayor Robert Taft appointed a new and renewed Board of Trustees to the MFRC in 1957, the appointees included C.E. Israel (who served on the Jewish Community Relations Committee), Charles Posner (also served on the JCRC), Harold Goldstein (on the JCRC, as well), Arthur Spiegel, Rabbi Fishel Goldfeder, and Rabbi Albert Goldman. Extensive Jewish staffing of the MFRC would continue until the organization’s demise in 1965; the Israelite reported on Charles Posner’s reappointment in 1962, along with that of Rabbi Murray Blackman and others. In the final year of its operation before dissolving to yield to the new Cincinnati Human Relations Commission, the MFRC was led by S. Arthur Spiegel, who took the chairman’s post from another Cincinnati Jew, Joseph Leinwohl. When the new Human Relations Commission did


117 “Named to MFRC,” American Israelite, Feb. 8, 1962, 10.

118 “S. Arthur Spiegel Named Head of Mayor’s Friendly Relations Committee,” American Israelite, Jan. 21, 1965, 1 and 4. At the same event Msgr. Lawrence Walter was appointed treasurer of the moribund MFRC.
finally appear, it was a Cincinnati Jew - Eugene Sparrow - who served as its acting executive director.119

Charles Posner provides a vivid example of broad Jewish engagement in civic and racial projects even as an individual. He had come to Cincinnati from Indianapolis in 1950, where he had been executive director of that city’s Jewish Community Relations Committee. In Cincinnati he chaired the Intergroup Agency Council and served on the MFRC, the JCRC, the Cincinnati NAACP, Hillel, and the ACLU. He left Cincinnati and its JCRC in 1963 to become associate director of the Jewish Federation - Council of Greater Los Angeles.120

Ira Gissen, in 1958 the Area Director of the American Jewish Committee, sat atop the massive conglomeration known as the Intergroup Agency Council. The IAC was composed of the leadership of the Jewish Community Relations Committee, the regional office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the MFRC, the Urban League, Fellowship House, the NAACP, and the American Jewish Committee.121 One month later, Cincinnati hosted the Inter-City Human Relations Conference, drawing attendees from nearby Indianapolis and Louisville, to consider “such problems as discrimination by hotels, motels and restaurants, as well as the effects of local population movements upon the relations existing between religious and racial groups.”122 In addition to attendance by ACLU, NAACP, and Urban League conferees, Jewish involvement in the conference was


extensive, with Charles Posner (JCRC) and Ira Gissen in the Cincinnati contingent. The regional NCCJ attended, as did a delegation from Louisville. From Indianapolis came the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council.

This 1958 “3-City Parley,” as the Israelite put it, was part of a pattern of organizations, individually devoted to promoting unity or ending discrimination in some particular way, coming together to address the barriers erected by systems of oppression American society. 11 such organizations sponsored the city’s first “Freedom Fair” in the late spring of 1963; the event would offer “program resources…to promote intergroup relations.” Supporters crossed racial, gender, and religious lines, with sponsorship coming from the Cincinnati B’nai B’rith Council, the Councils of Catholic Women and of Catholic Men, the NAACP, the JCRC, the American Jewish Committee, the NCCJ, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, the MFRC, the ACLU, and the Urban League.

The MFRC came to Jews, too, with leaders making multiple appearances in Cincinnati synagogues and other Jewish-organized events. Executive Director Marshall Bragdon spoke on “What Every Jew Should Know about Judaism and Race Relations” at Temple Sholom in February 1957; Alvin Wesley spoke on open housing at the same temple in November 1963 and delivered “an overview of the Negro’s problems in Cincinnati” to the Teen Social Action Group of the Jewish Community Center the following January. 123

The pulpit, the lecture hall, and civic organizations: these were the sites of Jewish engagement with race in the 1950s and 1960s. They were not obscure events, as they

were advertised frequently in the *American Israelite* and were delivered or hosted by the elite of Cincinnati Jewry. Yet in Cincinnati, a Jew did not learn about race only from *Israelite* ads for local events: the paper published plenty on specific racial questions as Cincinnati grappled with this most contentious social question of the day.

No Cincinnati Jew enjoyed a taller pulpit than Alfred Segal, writer for The *Cincinnati Post* who also published in the *American Israelite*. Segal was well-regarded by a vast swath of the Cincinnati community. In his *Post* column Segal assumed the character of Cincinnatus, writing as “the Conscience of Cincinnati,” as a citation awarded jointly by the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Junior Chamber of Commerce read.¹²⁴ By 1955, when he was given the award, Segal had been writing for the *Post* for over two decades, preaching “good will, understanding, tolerance.” He was commended by one minister for his achievement in growing such a large “congregation” while avoiding the more typical necessity of having to live alongside them like a pastor.¹²⁵

Segal’s attitude on race, visible in his column “Plain Talk” in the *American Israelite* from 1954 to 1959, was nuanced (although it engaged Christianity broadly rather than only Catholicism). One Christian woman wrote to him complaining that the family of her daughter’s Jewish boyfriend teased the Christian girl for being a *shiksa*. Despite assuring readers that he hated “intolerances of all kinds and gets mad at the discriminations against Negroes,” he refused to denounce the young man’s family. “Can you blame them [the boy’s Jewish family and friends] much that they are prejudiced…I


will not expose Jews that way to the public. I’ll tell about them in my Jewish column [the
woman wanted Segal to denounce the teasers in his Cincinnati Post column], where the
matter belongs and where their opinion can be approached directly.”

He noted in late 1954 that Cincinnati’s Jews were moving out of one of their
historic enclaves, Avondale, ahead of black entry; this, Segal argued, was exactly what
the Jews themselves had done earlier in the century as they left “the West End tenements
so many of us used to live in.” Lila Corwin Berman has identified this process
precisely - “succession,” whereby a neighborhood’s population shifts “naturally” - and
Segal roughly equated Jews and blacks by casting Cincinnati blacks as the quasi-new
Jews in Avondale. Five years later, Segal would acknowledge the insidious side of this
movement when a woman wrote to him, wracked with guilt over moving out of her
neighborhood because blacks were moving in. Segal’s correspondent knew Christians
were up to the same thing but displaced no blame onto them: “What’s the matter with us
all…Jews and Christians…all children of God, as they say? Please tell me Mr. Segal.”
Segal had no consolation for her; in fact, he admitted that he was not entirely confident
he would not be tempted to move if a black family moved into a neighboring house. He
wrote with candor: “You see, this Segal who at times writes loftily in the spirit of
brotherhood, also may make exceptions as to his brothers.” He closed on a note as
depressing as it was poetic: “Jewish and Christians…run away from neighborhoods and

127 Alfred Segal, “Plain Talk,” American Israelite, Nov. 25, 1954, 1, 3.
128 Corwin Berman, Metropolitan Jews, 49, 66.
set up God elsewhere…away from neighborhoods they don’t approve of racially.”¹³⁰ For Segal, the spirit was willing, but the flesh - or the bank account - was weak.

Beyond Alfred Segal, the *American Israelite’s* other coverage of racial activism and interfaith exchange revealed areas both of broad agreement with Catholics but also serious fracture from them. As early as 1955, the paper carried a notice published by Webster Posey, chairman of the Committee on Coney Island and president of the Cincinnati NAACP, protesting incomplete coverage of a meeting of the Committee by one of Cincinnati’s daily newspapers. The article incorrectly suggested Jewish leadership of the committee. Rather than playing down the Jewish contribution, Posey pointed up the group’s interfaith foundations, explaining that the meeting had included a Protestant, “an important individual of the Catholic faith,” someone from Fellowship House, Posey himself, and a local ACLU leader.¹³¹ In doing so Posey foregrounded the necessity of interfaith action to address racial strife. Religious believers should confront America’s race crisis, Posey argued both in the abstract and inasmuch as the simmering conflict threatened not just American blacks but everyone: “Intolerance and segregation and barriers hurt Jews as much as they hurt Negroes; they hurt Protestants and much as they hurt Catholics. When a human being is hurt, God does not look first to see which color his skin may be, or the manner in which he worships God, or the wealth which he may or may not possess. Those who seek to walk in the path of the Lord should and can do no less.”

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¹³⁰ Alfred Segal, *ibid.*, 5.

Some areas of commonality were relatively mundane - the February 1956 “Inter-Faith Choir Festival” at the Wise Center (the historic Plum Street Temple, built by Rabbi Isaac Wise in the 1860s opposite St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral), for example, which featured a “well known Negro group” called the Mighty Trumpets, the Catholic Choral Group of Granville, and the Wise Temple Choir - while others were more substantial. Already in 1956, Cincinnati’s Jewish and Catholic youth were addressing the problems of and potential solutions to racial strife. The *Israelite* reported in April that two units of Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA), the Jewish young men’s organization, had put on a “Panel of Americans” comprised of University of Cincinnati students. The panel, which included one Catholic, one Protestant, one black student, and one Jew spoke at a meeting of Cincinnati’s B’nai B’rith Lodge #4 on “racial and religious brotherhood.”132 The discussion period which followed the panel’s presentation received no further treatment in the article, although the unnamed authors wrote that the youth who “presided in place of our officers…did an outstanding job.”

While the headline and article read like so much mid-century social calendar filler, “Lodge 4” was an important institution both in Cincinnati and beyond. B’nai B’rith began in New York in 1843; six years later, Cincinnati Jews charted what was then only the fourth lodge of the organization. Under the then-rules of the organization, the international headquarters of B’Nai B’Rith was wherever the president happened to live,

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with the result that Cincinnati held that claim to fame 1855-1856 and for a stretch between 1925 and 1938.  

Most interesting among the *Israelite*’s pre-Vatican II coverage of interracial and interfaith relations in its November 1958 broadside against Walter Langsam, then president of the University of Cincinnati. The *Israelite*, which as a representative press of many contemporary Jews favored an uncompromising division between church and state, took strong issue with Langsam’s references to American majorities and minorities:

> But Dr. Langsam holds that through “misinterpretation” of separation of church and state, “our nation virtually has become a fosterer of non-religiousness.”
>
> “Democracy,” says Dr. Langsam, “used to mean, at least for most of us, the will of the majority. I am afraid that in some way we are beginning to make it the will of the minority. Instead of carefully and properly protecting the rights of the minority, we are slowly but surely changing our way of life so as to make it conform to the will of the minority. We are compromising our faith and the faith of our children so as not to hurt the feelings or pride of those who profess a different faith or no faith at all.”
>
> Those are strange words indeed for the president of a municipal university. Speaking in that capacity, he is ill advised to talk of “our faith” to his students of ALL FAITHS.
>
> At just whom is he driving when he observes that “we are compromising our faith and the faith of our children so as not to hurt the feelings or pride of those who profess a different faith or no faith at all”? When the president of a municipal university speaks of “our faith” as in competition or conflict with “a different faith,” just which religious denomination does he mean by “our faith”? Which faith is “a different faith”? Are members of “a different faith” members of his student body?

The editors were particularly aghast at Langsam’s vague reference to a minority in the United States seeking to impose its agenda on the “majority” of Americans. Fear mongering out of paranoia at this minority was especially inappropriate, the *Israelite* wrote, when “we live in a day when members of 4 minorities (Catholics, Jews, Negroes,
and Unitarians) have seen their homes or schools or places of worship bombed or threatened with bombing by a well-organized band of terrorists."134

Why the editors chose to include Catholics in their list of minorities is not explained. Contemporary census data makes the inclusion bewildering. Catholics were nearly twenty percent of the total estimated 1950 United States population of 157 million.135 Two years later, there were nearly 30 million Catholics in the United States out of an estimated total of 74 million believers of all religions, putting Catholics at approximately forty percent of the American religious population.136 In Ohio’s Hamilton County alone, of which Cincinnati is the county seat, Catholics were a clear majority of religious believers and nearly a third of the county’s total population.137 Thus Catholics were a minority in terms of a population split simply between Catholics and non-Catholics; if all other traditions and denominations are accounted for discretely, however, Catholics were far from a suffering group of outnumbered papists. For whatever reason, however, the Israelite joined not only with Catholics but also with blacks against some perceived threat to their continued existence.

Later, however, the American Israelite published some equivocation on Catholic racial attitudes, especially as the Council pushed Catholics to engage broader society

134 “The Role of the President of a Municipal University,” American Israelite, Nov. 20, 1958, 12.


137 Jones et. al., Religious Congregations & Membership in the United States, CD-ROM. Catholics were approximately 59% of the county’s religious believers and 29% of the county’s total population.
more actively than in past generations. Robert E. Segal, for example, was a native Cincinnatian who lived in Boston and wrote on race and interreligious exchange, among other topics. Reporting on the recent book *A Tale of Ten Cities*’ argument that “the dwindling influence of high-minded Protestantism” was redounding to the benefit of “a strong pulsating Catholic and Jewish coloration in our urban communities,” Segal hoped that residents of this (curiously-named) “Triple Ghetto” of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews could overcome religious differences and tend to “the great unfinished business of saving not only individual souls but the souls of entire communities.”138 Two years after his “Triple Ghetto” column he criticized heavily James Francis Cardinal MacIntyre and John Cardinal Krol for their intransigence against racially progressive movements. Segal lauded Fr. William H. DuBay, who had publicly denounced MacIntyre for the cardinal’s “failure to exercise moral leadership among the Catholics of the diocese [of Los Angeles] on racial discrimination.” Krol did not respond sufficiently, in Segal’s estimation, to the largely Catholic harassment of the Baker family in Philadelphia’s Folcroft neighborhood.139

However, Segal knew that the Catholic hierarchy was not a monolith and did not condemn bishops across the board. He praised Bishop Hugh Donohoe, Archbishop Joseph McGucken, and Bishop Walter Kellenberg for their racial activism; he glowed over a speech given by Richard Cardinal Cushing - who would go on to become a champion of the Jews at Vatican II - for his 1964 Pentecost message, “one of the most incisive and effective statements on civil rights issued by any American religious


Segal also acknowledged Jewish complicity in discrimination and wrote “now, more than ever, we need to join with Protestant and Catholic leaders in quickening America’s new determination to full justice to all seeking education, housing, jobs, economic advancement.”

After Vatican II, Segal’s keen observation of the American Catholic scene also perceived a conflict between bishops and the laity. Commenting on a faculty revolt at Minnesota’s St. John’s University, Segal saw a split between “the yesterdays of authoritarian rule and the emerging tomorrows of expanding democratic practices.” He perceived the simmering conflict within the Church in the postconciliar era, which he described as “the agony characterizing the movement of thousands of Roman Catholics into a new era of dedication to racial justice, international peace, and enduring human understanding.”

By 1967 Segal was disappointed that despite the publication of guidelines for Jewish-Catholic dialogue by the American bishops, a poll found that since 1952 there had been a 14% increase “in the number of Jews who feel that Catholics look down on Jews.” He wondered how long would “Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani and likeminded, extremely conservative prelates be able to hold power in a Church through which the fresh winds churned by Ecumenical Council Vatican II blow so briskly?” Segal was aware, too, of that other wedge - school funding - fearing that “the fracture of a principle

140 Robert E. Segal, ibid., 1, 3.
142 Robert E. Segal, “As We Were Saying,” American Israelite, Apr. 20, 1967, 1, 16.
of conscience to achieve any end - including the highly laudable objective of religious
education - is a grievous mistake, certain to haunt our posterity.”

Yet other, local Jews were keen to build interfaith bridges to racial progress. Even
before the passage of *Nostra ætate*, the Executive Director of the Jewish Community
Relations Committee, Abraham Citron, tried to establish an interfaith group to address
contemporary social problems. Citron’s project resonated with the lay involvement on
race in Chapter Two: when he began exploring the possibility of a committee in 1964,
Citron turned to a lay Catholic to represent the Church. Citron was visionary in his
projection for an interreligious committee. He contacted a small group of men and
women, most (if not all) of whom must have been aware of his ideas, in the spring of
1964 as a sounding board for what he thought interfaith cooperation might accomplish.

And, crucially, even while rumors were rife that the Council was going to say something
about the way Jews had been treated by Catholics over the centuries, he made no claim to
victim status - in fact, he implicated both himself and all of society in creating unjust
structures and situations. His very first “thesis of interreligious cooperation” was that “we
live in a world which we have made dangerous, hungry, hate-ridden, enslaved,
materialistic, purposeless, lonely and ugly; in which men are alienated from God and
from each other. “Even while rumors were rife that the Council was going to speak on
Judaism, Citron had no aspirations to a theological *rapprochement*. Instead, he

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144 Abraham F. Citron to “Some of the Concerned,” May 1, 1964, MS-202 43/1, AJA. Among
those apparently “concerned” were three Catholics (including one priest), five Protestant clergymen, two
rabbis, and one lay Jew. I have been unable to determine the religious affiliation of Robert J. Coates, whom
Citron listed as “Ohio Civil Rights Commission.”
envisioned “a social problem ecumenism” oriented toward issues of concern to everyone.\textsuperscript{145}

Citron contacted several members of the Cincinnati religious establishment to discuss assembling an organization. He wrote to Dan Kane, who led the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men; Reverend Richard D. Isler of the Cincinnati Council of Churches; and lay Jew Harold Goldstein, asking each to bring a delegation to the Carousel Motel on September 24. Anticipating institutional resistance, he told Kane and Isler to assure their groups that they would be representing only themselves.\textsuperscript{146} Whatever hesitancy Kane and Isler may have felt, each brought a healthy contingent to the Carousel in September. The meeting was sufficiently successful that Monsignor Francis Kennedy, administrator of St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral (later site of a reading of the Black Manifesto), agreed to host the next meeting.\textsuperscript{147} The group attracted criticism immediately. The \textit{Cincinnati Enquirer} ran an editorial before the committee next met, arguing that religious leaders ought to stay out of politics. Monsignor Kennedy and one of the Protestant clergymen were tasked with authoring a response to the \textit{Enquirer}.\textsuperscript{148}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{145} Abraham Citron, “Theses of Interreligious Cooperation on Social Problems,” Apr. 21, 1964, MS-202 43/1, AJA. Emphasis mine.
  \item \textsuperscript{146} Abraham Citron to Dan Kane, Aug. 11, 1964; Abraham Citron to Richard Isler, Aug. 11, 1964 MS-202 43/1, AJA. Citron’s uneasiness was not assuaged a few months later as he pondered which other organizations in the United States might be good models for one in Cincinnati. He wrote in January 1965 that if the committee met as individuals (rather than official representatives of their religious traditions), “we can get away with this.” Notes on letter from Abraham Citron to Interreligious Planning Group, Jan. 12, 1965, MS-202 43/1, AJA.
  \item \textsuperscript{147} Minutes of the Interreligious Committee, Sept. 24, 1964, MS-202 43/1, AJA. As might be expected of the first gathering of a nascent organization, nothing of practical value was accomplished; however, the group did agree that it was significant to draw out the differences between each faith tradition so as to best understand how to attack problems on which they agreed. This was a body well-aware of the deep theological splits between themselves and differing hierarchies of priorities but nonetheless moved forward - a full year before \textit{Nostra ætate}.
  \item \textsuperscript{148} Minutes of the Interreligious Committee, Oct. 22, 1964, MS-202 43/1, AJA.
\end{itemize}
Citron was aware of other efforts between Jews and Christians to ameliorate the same problems that confronted Cincinnati. Writing to the committee in January 1965, he drew their attention to the foundation of the Greater Cleveland Conference on Religion and Race, co-sponsored by the (Protestant) Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, and the Jewish Community Federation. Enquirer criticism notwithstanding, the Cincinnati committee forged on. In early 1967 members the JCRC discussed an “outreach” program to Cincinnati Catholics through the archdiocesan school system. Catholic teachers were seen as an entrée to the rest of the Cincinnati Christian community. Dan Kane and Monsignor Earl Whalen, both of Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men fame, were “very enthusiastic.” The program, by Anti-Defamation League Director of Interreligious Curriculum Arthur Gilbert, was set for April 13, 1967 at the Cincinnati Terrace-Hilton. 1,000 teachers had been invited, with between 350 and 500 expected to attend. Gilbert’s talk was built around Nostra ætate’s content and reception. Gilbert acknowledged some Jewish reticence to receive the document with open arms and blamed it on understandable Jewish mistrust of the Church because of past abuses and, in a twist, partially also on “the average Jewish layman’s lack of knowledge of his Jewish beliefs and heritage.” Despite these obstacles, Gilbert recommended taking what was on offer, “this opportunity for inter religious dialogue.”

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149 Minutes of “Meeting Held with Bernard L. Rosenberg and Rabbi Bruce K. Cole,” Jan. 19, 1967, MS-202 43/2, AJA.

150 Minutes of “Meeting with Rabbi Murray Blackman, Bernard L. Rosenberg, Rabbi Bruce K. Cole,” Jan. 20, 1967, MS-202 43/2, AJA.

151 “Notes on Meeting…Noon Lunch at JCRC Office,” Feb. 7, 1967, MS-202 43/1, AJA.

152 “Luncheon Meeting of the Jewish Community Relations Council,” Apr. 13, 1967, MS-202 43/1, AJA.
Yet among these attempts at Jewish-Catholic cooperation on racial problems, most successful of all was Jewish participation in Project Commitment (see Chapter Two). The American Israelite covered Project Commitment several times over the course of 1968, especially during the summer. The specific focus of each session indicates how Cincinnati Jews conceived of solutions to the city’s race crisis or what speakers told them ought to be solutions. Of particular urgency, according to Commitment speakers, were housing, personal attitudes, and employment - much the same as the elements on which Commitment speakers focused in the pilot project covered in Chapter Two.

In July 1968, Avondale Community Council President Bailey Turner, who had also spoken to Project Commitment participants in April, laid out some of the key transformations that would be necessary for improved race relations at a session for Cincinnatians in the Amberley, Golf Manor, Kennedy Heights, Pleasant Ridge, and Roselyn neighborhoods. Beyond the rather obvious admonition that whites needed to abandon “fear and apathy” and respect “black persons as human beings,” Turner hoped blacks themselves would “abandon a self-hatred inflicted by white persons; achieve self-love; then move on to love for white persons, and find their own identity and self-respect while achieving security through economic security.” Turner moved into more controversial territory by observing that “it depends upon all of us to determine whether this [racial justice] is to be achieved violently or non-violently”; blacks “must learn to be aggressive. The black people must become a power bloc.” While Myron Schwartz tempered the evening’s presentation by suggesting that emotional responses to racial problems be corrected with the “factual components” of attitude and legislated behavioral

norms, Turner pressed on by informing the gathering that blacks “prefer now that ‘our white friends stand aside and say to the black persons: “it’s your show. If you need us, call us, for money, etc.”’.”

Perhaps more significantly, however, how Project Commitment was reported provides a startling revelation of the nature of the project and how it unfolded across the city. As discussed in Chapter Two, Project Commitment was “imported” from the Archdiocese of Detroit. A pilot program was run in the St. Francis de Sales Deanery; other programs later appeared across the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. While the specific wording of the Project’s goals changed slightly over the course of its programming, it always was presented as a Catholic initiative to which Protestants, Jews, and the civic community in general had been invited.

This Catholic focus is almost entirely absent from the Israelite’s coverage: the word “Catholic” appears only once in the ten articles on Project Commitment, with an additional mention of a Franciscan priest at one session.154 When a sponsor for the program is attributed at all, it is Cincinnati mayor Eugene Ruehlmann (with the slightly different title “Project on Commitment”).155

It is unclear why Israelite coverage did not credit the Archdiocese of Cincinnati with Project Commitment and its popularity. One Robert Helmick, who chaired one of the Project sessions covered by the Israelite, advised “those present to start their own


Project Commitments in their neighborhoods and places of worship.”

Although the only reference to Project Commitment in the finding aid to Ruehlmann’s papers at the University of Cincinnati is in specific connection to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, other articles about the mayor make no such mention. The Cincinnati Chamber awarded Ruehlmann one of its “Great Living Cincinnatians” awards in 1998; he is described therein as having founded “Cincinnati’s Project Commitment.”

Ohio senator Robert Portman repeated the attribution when he addressed the United States Senate three days after Ruehlmann’s death. Finally, the University of Cincinnati’s conferral of an honorary doctorate on Ruehlmann in 2011 included his ostensible establishment of “Cincinnati’s Project Commitment to reunite the community.”

Even given the reasonable conclusion that the Israelite merely was reporting on Project Commitments inspired by the Catholic “version” but nonetheless unaffiliated with the Archdiocese, the discrepancy remains remarkable. A search of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County’s database of the city’s two daily newspapers returns only one result for Project Commitment - and that single result is reported as a Catholic initiative.

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160 The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County maintains a “Newsdex,” which indexes the city’s daily newspapers for a number of years. However, pre-digitized editions are indexed from the
In the final assessment, the *Israelite’s* coverage of Project Commitment as almost entirely non-Catholic, and the widespread public memory of the Project as an accomplishment of the mayor’s office, together mean that the Catholics of Cincinnati have not received the credit properly owed them for introducing Project Commitment to the city. It was only in their own newspaper that the Project’s substantial engagement with race from a Catholic perspective was reported in any detail. There were common elements between the Archdiocese’s “version” and apparently different “versions” found elsewhere in the city - the Rev. Otis Moss spoke at other programs within the Project, for example – so that the Church had begun Commitment in Cincinnati was publicly known to some extent.\(^{161}\) Thus, while the conclusions of Chapter Two describe something of a draw - strong lay engagement with racial questions while the local hierarchy remained relatively aloof - broadening the perspective to include wider coverage reveals that the Church in Cincinnati was instrumental in a citywide increase in awareness of racial problems, especially among religious believers, for which it did not receive credit even at the time.

Despite Alfred Segal’s close attention to, and personal admissions concerning race in the 1950s, the *American Israelite* published remarkably little on the Black Manifesto, which appeared soon after Project Commitment unfolded throughout the city. The paucity of coverage is especially noteworthy given that the document was presented (or attempted to be presented) at several Cincinnati churches and received a fair amount of manual inspections of each edition, with the result that the Newsdex is less complete than a fully digitized repository.

of coverage in the local news. The *Israelite* published but one article and two columns on
the Manifesto during the summer of 1969. The two columns, though from syndicated
authors, do provide good analysis of the Manifesto and insight into contemporary Jews’
thoughts on it.

The first article introduced and reproduced a joint statement opposing the
Manifesto by the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations
Advisory Council. The two groups opposed the Manifesto both for its means and its
demands, even while conceding that religious organizations had failed in their ambit to
address racism in American society.\(^{162}\) Rather, the two Councils argued, the state should
tend to the structural causes of blacks’ suffering in the United States, via systems
supported and urged on by religious institutions.\(^{163}\)

One week after the joint Councils statement appeared in the newspaper, the
*Israelite* ran a syndicated column called “Between You and Me.” Columnist Boris
Smolar predicted a split between the American Jewish Committee and the Interreligious
Foundation for Community Organization, of which the AJC was a member.\(^{164}\) The AJC
objected strongly to the chain of events by which $50,000 voted by the IFCO for a black
economic development conference had funded the creation of a manifesto demanding
$500 million in reparations.\(^{165}\) Marc Tanenbaum, the national “superstar” of Jewish-
Christian relations, AJC representative, and IFCO president, told the IFCO board that the

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\(^{165}\) Smolar, *ibid.*, 1.
AJC objected to the Manifesto’s “ideological principles” and “rhetoric.” The board - “among whom there is a large proportion of black people” - declined to state a position on either the Manifesto’s principles or rhetoric. The conflict only escalated when the Rev. Lucius Walker, executive director of the IFCO, told Tanenbaum that he (Walker) actively supported the Manifesto. If Smolar followed up on this tense situation, the *Israelite* did not publish the column. In July, Robert E. Segal’s regular column “As We Were Saying” provided something of a “time out” in the conflict over the Manifesto, acknowledging the basic sense of each side’s approach. While noting that “the prospects of finding the cash [$500 million in reparations] laid on the barrel head aren’t good,” Segal reminded readers that “there has been plenty of surprise and upset and cries of ‘go slow, go slow!’ for everyone. Yet progress, not retrogression, appears on the scoreboard.”

And that, as far as *The American Israelite* was concerned, was that. There were no lofty statements from Cincinnati Jewish leaders, no debates among readers, no narratives of near-violent confrontations in synagogues as had happened in several area Catholic churches. Even while Cincinnati Jews showed some concern for the issues laid out in the Black Manifesto, a document and a movement that had caused so much uproar in the Catholic community, they appeared little troubled in their daily lives.

V

For Cincinnati’s Jewish community, the Vatican II era was a time of greater engagement with Catholics on racial questions. This community of believers engaged

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166 Smolar, *ibid.*, 1.

heavily with the conceptual implications of the Council, frequently learning what the Council Fathers were doing in Rome and how those deliberations might affect Jewish-Catholic relations.

However, the Council did not play an enormous role in the shifting relationship between Catholics and Jews on the ground in Cincinnati. Indeed the Council was, as far as the connection between these two communities was concerned, entirely subsumed in the more pressing matter of addressing the city’s simmering racial conflict. While some Jews, both local to Cincinnati and visiting from elsewhere, spoke on the *Nostra ætate* for good or for ill, the most productive moments of this period involved mutual projects of racial harmony that made no reference to Vatican II.

Of course, the period also saw the continuation of constitutional tensions under the rubric of public aid for private education. *Nostra ætate* did nothing to assuage these concerns in Cincinnati. It was on this - not accusations of deicide, not centuries of global anti-Semitism - that Cincinnati’s Catholics and Jews fought most vehemently. A century before, when immigration was at its highest tide, Catholics and Jews necessarily found themselves beyond the Protestant mainstream of American society, demanding their rights under a constitution that forbade the establishment of a state church. By the middle of the twentieth century, they still agreed in principle; in practice, however, and on what the implications of that First Amendment would be, these believers clashed sharply.

By the end of this dissertation’s timeframe, Cincinnati’s Catholics and Jews enjoyed more harmony than they ever had before. Working together on the city’s racial crisis - on which Jews showed much more public leadership than Catholics - helped forge that bond. It would not be until the 1971 Synod VI of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati that
the church in this border city would formally reassess its relationship with Judaism and provide a programmatic interpretation of *Nostra aetate* for Cincinnati’s Catholics. Between the Council itself and Synod VI, however, Catholics and Jews continued their extant partnerships on social issues - now with the blessing of the Council Fathers - living out as utterly normal the ostensibly revolutionary proclamations made at St. Peter’s Basilica in October 1965.
CHAPTER FOUR

“A NEW PENTECOST OF UNDERSTANDING AND HARMONY”:
THE SIXTH SYNOD OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI, 1971

I

“We need now to stand firm in our profession of and devotion to the faith of our Church, that faith perennial and unalloyed, which is safeguarded by the charism of the Magisterium which Christ conferred on His Church.”

Citing Pope Paul VI, Cincinnati Archbishop Paul Leibold spoke these words during the homily he delivered at Mass for the convention of the Archdiocesan Synod of 1971, the sixth in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati’s history. Cincinnati’s lay Catholics, some of whom appear below, understood Vatican II and Synod VI to be intrinsically linked. Some viewed this continuous process of reform as a positive accomplishment of modernization; others lumped the numerous reforms together as a step too far. Either way, the new “mission of the Pilgrim Church,” as phrased by Synod Coordinator Fr. John Cavanaugh, would be considered at the Synod in eleven key ways through the Synod’s formal documents. In the planning stages and aftermath of the Synod, Catholics in Cincinnati would express gratitude; object to the Synod’s processes and outright existence; believe the voice of the laity had been fully heard; and fear that the Synod was a process

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controlled by the clergy and a chosen few “elite” lay Catholics. In this, Synod VI was also much like Vatican II: ignored by some but earthshaking, in good and bad ways, for many.

James Coriden notes that diocesan synods historically served to draw out how the decisions of provincial councils were to be applied in local dioceses. Lawrence Jennings, dating diocesan synods as far back as the sixth century, says similarly that they often “served to remind the diocesan clergy of the accepted ecclesiastical regulations.”3 Later, the events often became “routine and passive meetings”; despite the attempts of Pope Gregory XI to combat such passivity, diocesan synods remained pedestrian affairs until the Church was challenged by the world-shaking events of the Protestant Reformation. Yet again, however, synods lapsed, with periodic resurgences in response to contemporary needs from place to place in Europe.4 “Routine and passive” describe well Cincinnati’s 1954 Synod V, discussed in the introduction.5

Jennings’s musings on the state of the diocesan synod just before Vatican II, along with its potential for rebirth after the Council, illustrate well the degree to which Catholicism had experienced a shift in its existential self-understanding. The *societas perfecta* of the preconciliar Church believed that “truth had only to be imparted [from Rome] and accepted [locally]; the dominant hierarchical model of Church was well able to ensure the internal ordering of particular Churches [i.e., dioceses].” On the other hand, “the advent of the ecumenical movement, the research of liturgists and biblical scholars,

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4 Jennings, *ibid.*, 323-324.

5 Jennings, *ibid.*, 323-324.
the Catholic action efforts of laity to inject the Christian message into streams of culture and work, the shattering impact of two horrific wars in a Christian Europe, all profoundly affected the Church’s understanding of her own proper vocation.\textsuperscript{6} The situation in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati was no different in these respects, as this dissertation has shown in preceding chapters. All of this synodal history led, in general terms, to Cincinnati’s sixth synod: a local translation of central reforms, a reminder of existing legislation and regulation, and a reconsideration of the Church’s role in modern society.

A discussion guide from late 1970 noted that

\begin{quote}
with the decrees of the Second Vatican Council and their subsequent implementation, all previously enacted synods [in Cincinnati] needed revision. In keeping with the spirit and teaching of the Second Vatican Council, (the bishops) have added a new dimension to the preparatory process, namely - all the people of God, priests, Religious, and laity - were invited to participate in the drafting commissions, in the discussions, and in the voting. This development not only meets the needs of our times more realistically but also expresses in action the Council’s reaffirmation of the sharing of the total People of God in the mission of the Pilgrim Church.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

Pat Rossi expounds upon Vatican II’s elevation of the bishop as the sign of unity in local churches, with dioceses functioning as complete and self-contained units.\textsuperscript{8} This focus on the local bishop was a significant de-centralization of authority in the Church, counter to the hyper-papalism of the First Vatican Council’s definition of papal infallibility.\textsuperscript{9}

However, understanding authority to have devolved, in part, from the Holy See to

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
diocesan bishops after the Council sidesteps the role of the laity in the local Church, a role lauded in the above excerpt. Many Catholics, even those attentive to the deliberations and results of Vatican II, continued to look past their own bishops to the Bishop of Rome for the last word, as at least one Cincinnati Catholic firmly claimed. For others, decentralization in the Church meant merely that “the boss” was closer to home. Thus while Vatican II spoke highly of the laity and its vital role in the life of the Church, it devoted far less attention to lay Catholics than it did diocesan bishops. It fell to diocesan synods - such as Cincinnati’s Sixth Synod - to untangle the renewed understanding of the laity’s purpose.

Cincinnati was among the few American dioceses actively pursuing a synod in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Its inspiration - the synod held by the Archdiocese of Detroit - also spawned a synod in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, which was also held in 1971.\(^\text{10}\) Timothy Kelly’s work on Pittsburgh’s synod is the most extensive treatment of post-Conciliar synods yet published by historians; even Leslie Tentler, whose history of the Archdiocese of Detroit is the field’s standard for institutional, diocesan histories, devotes only a few paragraphs to Detroit’s 1969 Synod.\(^\text{11}\) As Kelly’s research shows, the synod itself became a procedural site at which the institutional reforms of Vatican II came to be hotly contested.

In some ways, Pittsburgh’s synod differed sharply from that of Cincinnati. Some priests in Pittsburgh, for instance, fought bitterly against lay involvement in a synod, with

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one suggesting that such inclusion would result a synod incomplete “until 1990.”\footnote{Kelly, The Transformation of American Catholicism, 244.} In Cincinnati, on the other hand, the hierarchical Church included the laity in the synod process enthusiastically from the beginning. Pittsburgh provided no opportunity for large-scale voting, with parish-level suggestions for synod document revision simply making their way to Bishop John Wright, who would himself revise the documents according to his own tastes and promulgate them as chief lawmaker of the diocese; Archbishop Paul Leibold presided over a synod convention that hosted nearly 3,000 voters in the Cincinnati Convention Center in May 1971.\footnote{Kelly, ibid., 245.} Some of the content of the synods differed, as well, with strong lay support for married priests in Pittsburgh while the Cincinnati synod ultimately determined to support priests who left the ministry for marriage.\footnote{Kelly, ibid., 251.}

Yet in other ways, the attempts of Pittsburgh Catholicism to incorporate Vatican II via a synod were similar to the process in Cincinnati. These similarities are strongly suggestive of the general tensions - some creative, some less so - that shaped American Catholicism after Vatican II. As discussed below, for example, there was a simmering fear in both Cincinnati and Pittsburgh that the laity’s feedback would be ignored in favor of the opinions of priest-experts who would “really” determine the final shape of the synod documents.\footnote{Kelly, ibid., 246.} Furthermore, in both places, the active support of the diocesan bishop was key to the success of the synod process. Although Cincinnati had the enthusiastic support of Archbishop Paul Leibold from start to finish, the departure of Bishop Wright to head the Holy See’s Congregation for Clergy in 1969 led to Wright’s
replacement by Vincent Leonard, who was much less convinced of the need for reform and the potential of a synod to accomplish anything.\footnote{Kelly, \textit{ibid.}, 267.} For Pittsburgh, “the heady promise of lay consultation proved short-lived, and the synod ended with dashed lay hopes and a great deal of bitterness on the part of those laywomen and laymen most active in the synod preparations.”\footnote{Kelly, \textit{ibid.}, 271.}

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati made quite sure to describe Synod VI as a natural product of Vatican II, simply instantiating the teachings of the Council - especially on the involvement of the laity in the life of the Church - at the local, rather than the universal, level. Furthermore, Cincinnati’s lay Catholics, some of whom appear below, understood Vatican II and Synod VI to be intrinsically linked. Some viewed this continuous process of reform as a positive accomplishment of modernization; others lumped the numerous reforms together as a disastrous departure from an already-functioning church. Either way, in Cincinnati the Sixth Synod of 1971 was perceived to be nearly contiguous with Vatican II of 1962-1965.

Cincinnati’s Synod spoke clearly to the two relationships described in Chapters Two and Three. On local Jews, the Synod confirmed Catholicism’s friendship with the Jewish community and formally committed the local Church to partnership and collaboration moving forward. On the mostly white Church’s connection to local African Americans, Catholic and otherwise, the Synod articulated a racial policy, itself an achievement, as the institutional Church had not done so to that point. Black Catholics had previously authored an approach for the Church to adopt, and those charged with
drafting the Synod documents both imported those guidelines in toto and proposed a renewed attempt to address racism in the community.

The Synod spoke to other concerns, as well, and in doing so it mirrored the Second Vatican Council’s encouragement to engage local society in a way that Catholics had not done before (if they had, it had not been as part and parcel of their faith). As Vatican II spoke highly and often eloquently of non-Catholics, reversing the centuries-old trend of councils pronouncing anathemas, so did Synod VI turn outward and admonish Cincinnati Catholics to take their faith to their communities and engage the world.

II

Synod V had passed into history sixteen years earlier when Synod VI was announced at the Assembly of the Archdiocesan Council of the Laity on May 3, 1970. Leibold and the Cincinnati laity received top billing for Synod VI, but the Synod’s roots extended into the final years of Archbishop Alter’s reign, when the newly-established Archdiocesan Pastoral Council began debating whether and how Vatican II had pushed for diocesan synods.18 The Synod Committee of the APC felt the 1954 Synod was “based on ‘pre-Vatican II’ attitudes… and did not reflect the spirit of the Church today.”19 In early 1968, Committee member William Blum sent out a report on the prospects for a new synod. He reported that committee members felt the 1954 Synod had, in its deliberations on the clergy, seemed mostly to “legislate matters of conscience. Some of


19 “Summary of Prior Activities of the Synod Committee of the Pastoral Council,” in Al Herman to Pastoral Council Synod Committee, Mar. 21, 1969, Synod VI 1971, 7/9, CAAC.
the statutes seemed unduly restrictive and negative. Others seemed unnecessary. It was noted with curiosity that no sanctions were provided for violation of the synodal provisions. This last was particularly egregious since individuals on the Committee were personally aware of contemporary situations that violated Synod V.

But Blum’s report was highly significant for its suggestion that Synod VI depart from historical precedent. Blum noted that because the Code of Canon Law had yet to be revised, “a traditional, primarily legislative Synod…should not be scheduled until the changes in the Canonical Code are known.” After all, it would be enormously wasteful to apply a code of canon law to Cincinnati conditions if the code were due to be revised soon after. However, Blum noted with interest that the Archdiocese of Atlanta had recently concluded its own first synod; that synod, instead of being “primarily legislative” as Synod V 1954, had consisted “of a survey of the conciliar [Vatican II] documents and of suggestions of their applicability to the Atlanta Archdiocese.” A similar synod could be planned for Cincinnati, Blum suggested, relying on a rhetorical tool that had become enormously popular after Vatican II: a different style of synod might be justified by the Council which “itself was a departure from previous Councils, in that its emphasis and tone is Pastoral [sic] rather than definitive and legislative.” In other words, since Vatican II had broken the ecclesiastical mold, then other institutions


within the Church should feel less apprehensive about moving forward in unprecedented
directions.

Blum knew he may have been on thin ice. Alter himself had created the
Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, of which the Synod Committee was a component, just
after Vatican II; however, Blum had “the impression that he [Alter] originally
contemplated, and still thinks of, a Synod of the traditional, legislative type.”
Furthermore, fully aware of and holding to the previous evaluation of the 1954 Synod,
Blum felt “it would be neither prudent, politic nor necessary to indulge in too much
criticism of the 1954 Synod…bring overly-critical [sic] may be misinterpreted as an
affront to His Grace who promulgated it, or to our priests who participated in formulating
the Synodal recommendations upon which His Grace acted.” Instead, Blum suggested
arguing that any perceived deficiencies in Synod V be explained away by their lacking
the benefit of Vatican II, still eight years off when Synod V closed. And in an indication
that at least one Cincinnati Catholic understood the extent of Vatican II’s reforms, he
wryly observed that if Synod V “had anticipated the spirit of Vatican II in its 1954
decrees, it would have probably been declared heretical upon its promulgation.”

Yet fortunately for Blum, Alter later agreed that the Synod V model may have
lost its utility. He gradually saw more and more the need for renewal, but stopped short
of endorsing the type of project that became Synod VI under Archbishop Leibold. The
Synod Committee forged ahead in laying out several options for the future, including
waiting for the revision of canon law before acting at all; recommending a “Renewal

24 William L. Blum to Al Herman, Jan. 22, 1968, Synod VI 1971, 7/9, CAAC.
25 Alter to William L. Blum, Jan. 25, 1968, Synod VI 1971, 7/9, CAAC.
Synod”; “patching up” the documents of Synod V and holding a Synod VI later; recommending both a “Renewal Synod” and a “Canon Law Synod”; and finally a sequence of patching up Synod V, holding a “Renewal Synod,” and also a “Canon Law Synod.”

Alter’s wishes were obviated by his 1969 retirement. Into his shoes stepped Bishop Paul F. Leibold, who had just recently concluded a synod in his previous diocese (Evansville, Indiana). There the synod delegates had voted on documents on Church Affairs, Organizational Services, Community Affairs, Youth, Finance, Family, and Education; the document on Community Affairs was rejected, as would happen with the Cincinnati Synod’s Document on Education. From the Evansville Synod arose new institutions such as the parish council and the diocesan council; while these bodies already existed in Cincinnati, the Queen City’s synod would refine and reorganize them.

When then-Bishop Leibold had formally promulgated the Diocese of Evansville’s Third Synod, he reminded his flock that “no one would be so naive or unrealistic as to say we have a job completed today. We are started. Now we must build together.” As it turned out, the Church in Evansville would have to build together without Leibold, who would soon be recalled to his native archdiocese as archbishop. With the experience of Evansville’s synod under his episcopal belt, Leibold sought to include as wide a cross-

26 “Outline of Discussion at the Meeting of the Synod Committee of the Pastoral Council in Dayton, Ohio on March 9, 1969,” in Al Herman to Pastoral Council Synod Committee, Mar. 21, 1969, Synod VI 1971, 7/9, CAAC.


28 Leingang, ibid., 8.
section as possible of Cincinnati Catholicism in Synod VI. And as far as Leibold was concerned, the debates over a canon law or a renewal synod of Archbishop Alter’s day were over: it was full speed ahead on a renewal synod for Cincinnati. Once concluded, Synod VI gave “the priests and people of the archdiocese a sense of direction and a concrete set of tasks as they tried to implement both the directives and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.”

III

In contrast to the 1954 Synod, Synod VI - with Leibold’s enthusiastic endorsement - received massive coverage in the local (and especially Catholic) press. The announcement of the Synod was received well; Leibold was quoted as saying the Synod would help implement “a new diocesan program…that relates to the thrust of Vatican II.” More specifically, Synod VI would help “bring the total people of God” - in other words, both clergy and laity - “into church life.” The same Dayton Journal Herald article cited one Dayton business leader’s praise of Leibold: “I’m very impressed with the archbishop. He is real and human. The funny part of it is, he believes this stuff and he can project it. He actually wants to hear from the people.” The paper also presented the Synod as a true innovation in the history of local Catholicism, citing “black control of black parishes” and “greater participation of women in liturgical celebrations and nonterritorial parishes” as particularly noteworthy.


Leibold himself described the synod, in both process and content, as an opportunity to highlight the role of the laity in the postconciliar Church. His choice to formally announce the synod within the first assembly of the then-new Archdiocesan Council of the Laity was not accidental. At greater length, he explained during his announcement that

Conforming to the Conciliar thrust, which is pastoral in nature, we will rather plan to develop guidelines which will serve to lead our people to the ideal of Christian perfection, rather than legislate them in that direction. This is also in the spirit of the servant Church, seeking to express ways and means by which we can best serve the People of God of this area. So both the material considered and the formulation of this material will be in the form and spirit of Vatican II.”

Leibold’s close linkage of Synod VI and Vatican II was echoed throughout the preparatory process by other voices. Synod Coordinator Fr. John Cavanaugh published an editorial in the Telegraph in October 1970 explaining that Synod VI was “in keeping with the spirit and teaching of the Second Vatican Council,” especially with its inclusion of both clergy and laity. “This development,” he wrote, “not only meets the needs of our times more realistically but also expresses in action the Council’s reaffirmation of the sharing of the total People of God in the mission of the Pilgrim Church.”

As with the Dayton Journal Herald, the secular press in Cincinnati also took an interest in the synod process. Ben L. Kaufman, longtime religion reporter for the Cincinnati Enquirer, wrote an admiring article on the Synod and Archbishop Leibold in October 1970. Kaufman framed Leibold as both eminently approachable and a bold


33 “Total Involvement Asked For Archdiocesan Synod,” Catholic Telegraph, n.d., Synod VI 1971 8/1, CAAC.

innovator, balancing his apparent lack of an agenda for his episcopate with the hope of parlaying his synodal experience in the Diocese of Evansville into success in Cincinnati. Kaufman wrote on a scale both mundane and transcendent, describing Leibold as a man “who makes his own breakfast and is his own chauffeur every day” yet who wanted “to bring Christ into the individual lives of the people of the diocese.” The bishop’s humility came in for special attention, with Leibold claiming he did not have the confidence to say “I know the answer to all these things” and admitting his perception that the archdiocese “is really two dioceses and should have another bishop in the Dayton area.”

For the accomplishments of the Synod itself, Leibold hoped it would simultaneously bring Vatican II into the lives of the Archdiocese’s half a million Catholics - a number Kaufman repeated throughout the article, emphasizing just how much of the area was Catholic - and counter some of the confusion sown by priests who had criticized the Church harshly and then left the ministry. On that subject, Leibold abandoned his characteristic mildness, implying that those clerical critics who either petitioned for dismissal from the clerical state or simply stopped working were traitors: “They [the priests] don’t have to live with the confusion they left behind…That confusion is a greater evil than their defection.” He further called those men’s motives into question, saying that even as they criticized the Church for not listening to the views of its own front-line troops, those priests themselves were insensitive to the laity over whom they exerted such influence. Leibold hoped the Synod would address even such major problems, however sporadic, as it would bring to life “‘the message of the Second Vatican Council,’ of renewing ‘all things in Christ.’”

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Some education on the purpose of the Synod itself, zoomed back from its finer-grained accomplishments, was necessary, as well. The Archdiocese went so far as to outline a film strip - although archival sources do not indicate whether it was ever actually produced - to educate viewers. Conceived of as a dialogue between an announcer, an old man, a young man, a little boy, and a woman, the short film offered a short history of synods and what Synod VI would accomplish in Cincinnati.

“Translating” Vatican II to the local context arose as a top priority for the Synod; restricting itself to “only questions which touch the particular needs of the clergy and people of the diocese,” the archdiocese could “be responsive to the changing needs of the people.” The connection to Vatican II was explicit: “just as the new Code of Church Law called for a Synod in 1920, so too the Second Vatican Council calls for a Synod, here and now, in 1970.” The ambition reached the pinnacle of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, with the film’s producers claiming that no less than Pope John XXIII himself had “opened not only the windows of the Roman Church [with Vatican II], but also the doors of diocesan synods to laymen.” The film placed little overt emphasis on how Synod VI, despite breaking new ground by including heavy lay participation, was still essentially a clerical production. The film did not comment on the disconnect between its enthusiasm for the lay contributions and the fact that synodal decrees meant little until “signed and officially promulgated by the Bishop…ultimately, it is the Archbishop who makes the decisions that guide the course of the Church, but many will have shared in their making.”

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36 “Film Strip - Synod 1971,” Synod VI 1971 7/6, CAAC.
IV

Despite the canonical fact of Leibold’s ultimate authority over the Synod process and any resulting legislation, the collaborative process of ending up at the voting assembly in May 1971 was highly detailed and publicized frequently.\textsuperscript{37} It drew on the drafting and revision processes seen in the Second Vatican Council but widened to include a broad cross-section of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In this, Synod VI departed from Synod V dramatically: there was every effort on the part of the institutional Church to include as many voices as possible in drafting Synod VI’s documents, as opposed to the highly circumscribed subset of clergy who wrote Synod V.

The process was divided into three phases. Phase One, scheduled to last from June to September 1970, saw committees composed of diocesan clergy, religious, and lay Catholics draft documents on the Synod’s topics (the organization of the diocese, clergy and seminarians, religious, laity, worship, education, missions, ecumenism, communications, social action, and temporalities [legal and financial matters]).\textsuperscript{38} As part of this drafting process, the Catholic Telegraph solicited suggestions for the future of the archdiocese; the synod’s central committee also distributed surveys to 100 pastors for distribution and collection “to report possible trends among lay people and increase interest in the Synod.”\textsuperscript{39} The results of these solicitations aided the topical committees in


composing the initial drafts of the synod documents. The content of these documents ultimately was determined by “expert representatives” chosen for the committees from “the total People” (i.e., a representative cross-section of local Catholicism).  

In Phase Two, the draft documents assembled by the synod committees were sent to the Priests’ Senate, the Pastoral Council, the Archdiocesan Council of the Laity, and the Sisters’ Advisory Council in November 1970. These bodies, totaling almost 700 people, offered comments on the drafts and sent them back to the synod committees for revision. The comments provided by the clergy, religious, and lay Catholics as part of Phase Two provide a clear window onto the thinking of the contemporary Church.  

The comments offered by the Priests’ Senate, the Pastoral Council, and the deanery groups hinted at still-simmering conflicts within the Church in Cincinnati, as would be amplified during the parish review process and after the Synod Assembly in May 1971. James Ryan, for example, observed that among the documents “some of them seem to attempt high sounding phrases at the expense of clarity.” On the other hand, a different reviewer wrote, the length could pose a barrier to their even being read to begin with: “There ain’t no way there are going to read [sic] all those documents for a parish discussion” unless the archdiocese provided a condensed version.

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40 “Film Strip - Synod 1971,” Synod VI 1971 7/6, CAAC.
41 Fortin, Faith and Action, 360.
42 “Film Strip - Synod 1971,” Synod VI 1971 7/6, CAAC.
43 While another program, the “Speak Up Weeks” in parishes during the latter half of Phase Two, catered to an even wider cross-section of Cincinnati Catholicism, the archival record from that program is too unwieldy and incomplete to incorporate here.
A technical matter like length carried further implications as Cincinnati debated the nature of the postconciliar Church. James Koehler opined that the documents’ length was regrettable yet necessary in order “to bring this message of renewal…to educate the adult catholic [sic] who is so traditional bound.” Sister Mary Rosine Allegeyer counted herself as among this past-oriented generation by critiquing the drafts’ negligence of Mary. Acknowledging that such devotions were viewed as passé, she nonetheless was “anxious to keep at least some of the heritage of devotion to Mary that once enriched our spiritual lives.” One concerned priest found it hard to believe the synod documents were even being taken seriously: “I keep asking myself if all the extreme and radical suggestions and odd questions received by the Archbishop or the Chancery Office were put into the various documents to see if the priests and people of the Archdiocese would throw them out.”

In the far-flung Sidney Deanery, some of the priests “thought that the documents were ‘a lot of hot air.’”

Others feared confusion. Mary Louise Heig drew a line between the “educated lay person” and their “less educated” counterpart, who “would be lost” in the discussion of such advanced concepts as “chrisma” [sic]. Layman Robert Cissell suggested adding a

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49 “Reactions of the Priests of the Sidney Deanery,” n.d., Synod VI 1971 10/2, CAAC.

50 Mary Louise Heig [spelling approximated], “Synod Documents’ General Evaluation Sheet,” Nov. 19, 1970, Synod VI 1971 10/2, CAAC.
glossary to avoid problems of misinterpretation or outright ignorance over such terms as “commonality,” “presbytery,” “collegial,” “exegetes,” “monotheism,” and more.\textsuperscript{51} While some comments were vaguely valedictory and offered little in the way of substantive suggestions, others arose from close readings. Mrs. Richard L. Boyle, who served as the secretary of the Archdiocesan Council of the Laity, served up an alphanumerical soup by noting that “LA-9 (38) and AO-14 (86) and (87) seem to me to be contradictory to AO-10 Section C. AO-10 Section C also seems contradictory to AO-11 Section D.\textsuperscript{52} This deep cross-referencing had real substance, however, especially in her critique that the Priests’ Senate functioned as the Board of Diocesan Consultors to advise the bishop, without lay representation: “Canon Law stipulates a minimum of six priests on the Board but says nothing about the possibility of having Laity and Religious on the Board.” For some, Boyle commented, it was far less than optimal to have “a group of Priests [sic] between the Pastoral Council and the Archbishop.”

Foreshadowing its eventual rejection at the Synod Assembly, the draft document on education was the \textit{bête noir} of multiple readers. Bob Friedman, for example, put it mildly when he related that some members of his review committee “were very disappointed in the documents [sic] many omissions and the lack of vision as to the future needs of education in the archdiocese.”\textsuperscript{53} Fr. Malcolm Grad, who had also disliked the clergy document, reserved his greatest dudgeon for the Document on Education:

\begin{quote}
Seriously John [Fr. John Cavanaugh, synod coordinator], the Education Document is bad. It is almost inconceivable that a group of intelligent persons
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{53} Bob Friedman, likely to Fr. John Cavanaugh, n.d., Synod VI 1971 10/2, CAAC.
could have spent several months and ended up with something as bad as they did. Either they are blind to recent thought and debate or they didn’t want to spend too much time on their Document. I wonder if it wouldn’t be well to ask the Archbishop to form a new committee to draft something that would be comparable to the other documents. In any case, we must all work to get it rejected if it can’t be revised.54

These comments, disparate though they were, were considered by the drafting committees in order to move on to the second part of Phase Two, when the revised documents then made their way to further study sessions for the laity, vowed religious, and priests from January to April 1971. The most significant component of this process was the parish-based Speak-Up Weeks. The Archdiocesan Council of the Laity noted in February 1971 that “attendance at the [Speak Up] WEEKS has been good but it could be better.”55 A series of twenty questions about each document was provided at the events in order to guide the discussion. Some of the questions were intended to confirm or provoke thorough reading, such as “What is a Vicar General, an Episcopal Vicar, and a Dean?”; “What is a Pastoral Council?”56 Others were more searching: “What responsibility does the State have? (Toward Catholic education.)”; “Many blacks believe the Catholic Church is a white man’s Church. As a result some Black Catholics are asking for greater control by them of parishes which are all, or predominantly, black. Is this a reasonable request?” And finally, some of the guiding questions probed the intra-Catholic conflicts that had sprung up directly after Vatican II, such as “Is it beneficial to provide for a variety of styles of worship to satisfy all the people of God in the Church?”


56 “20 Questions: Based on the Eleven Preliminary Documents of the 6th Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati: For Study and Discussion Use,” Synod VI 1971 1/1, CAAC.
The vowed men and women in the archdiocese received particularly intense treatment in the question guide. Two Sisters of Charity requested that responses to these discussion questions be sent to their motherhouse west of the city. How religious fit into the life of the Church, and the complexities thereof, is evident from the questions. For example, the “in-between” status of women and men religious emerges from “Do you think Religious: sisters, priests and brothers, are different from other kinds of Christians?” Asking “Does the vow of chastity have any value in our American culture?” was an incredibly multivalent question, reflecting both on religious life and contemporary American society. Other questions left little doubt as to what the inquirer preferred for an answer: “Should individual Religious be permitted, with the approval of their superiors, to pursue new apostolates and new ways of serving mankind?” Even if one were to have qualms about new apostolates, one could hardly disagree with “new ways of serving mankind.”

The results of the parish Speak Up Weeks are not available in toto; only a selection of formal responses, made to the draft document on Temporal Affairs, has been preserved. In one sense, however, specific reactions are beside the point: for Synod VI, for the first time in the history of Cincinnati Catholicism and one of the earliest times in American Catholicism, the laity were invited to contribute directly and systematically.

Phase Three concluded the practical component of the synod process in May 1971 with the presentation of the twice revised documents to the Synod Convention for final voting by almost 3,000 elected delegates. The Synod assembly did vote down one

57 “20 Questions: Based on the Eleven Preliminary Documents of the 6th Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati: For Study and Discussion Use,” Synod VI 1971 1/1, CAAC.

58 “Film Strip - Synod 1971,” Synod VI 1971 7/6, CAAC.
document - that on Education - which then had to be revised yet again; however, there was no doubt that Archbishop Leibold would ratify the final documents as they were, which he did in October 1971 in a Mass formally concluding the Synod and commemorating the Archdiocese’s sesquicentennial.

V

Although not done so by the committees charged with drafting and revising the documents, the synod’s eleven final documents can be grouped into three basic units: documents dealing with the structure of local Catholicism (“Archdiocesan Organization,” “Communications,” and “Temporal Affairs”); documents explaining the theological implications of Vatican II (“Clergy and Seminarians,” “Religious,” “Laity,” and “Worship”); and, finally, documents on how the Church would live out its role in various communities (“Education,” “Missions,” “Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations,” and “Community Affairs”). These documents spelled out a Church much changed from 1954, with drastically different emphases and concerns for the future of the Church evident in 1971. The influence of Vatican II is pervasive; indeed the Council furnished much of the “source material” for Synod VI, and the footnotes for the Synod documents are full of references to the documents passed by the Council Fathers.

Many of the documents’ descriptions of contemporary Catholic life and prescriptions for the future are relatively pedestrian, even unsophisticated. Yet such a lack of sophistication is crucial to precisely why Synod VI represented a momentous occasion. The Synod’s documents were not composed entirely by experts in their respective disciplines (although some drafting committee members did have training in
particular fields). In seeking to include as broad a cross-section of local Catholicism as possible in the Synod’s planning, drafting, and execution, the Church ensured that the documents would be written both by and for all, appealing to the highly well-read and the “average” Catholic alike. At times, the documents are dense; they contain multiple passages that, in retrospect, appear hopelessly naïve or awkwardly saccharine. Yet they also offer moments of lucid reflection and penetrating insight. In Synod VI the Archdiocese sought both to come to terms with Vatican II and chart a way forward. That process, at some points difficult and at others more natural, comes to life vividly in the documents ultimately promulgated in May 1971.

The first “structural” document, that on Archdiocesan Organization, drew extensively and explicitly on the reforms of the Second Vatican Council; of the synod document’s 32 endnotes, 21 referred to the Council. The document’s achievements lay in new understandings of the laity’s role in the local Church, bringing to a formal conclusion the evolution of the various lay organizations and councils that had structured lay participation in years past such as the Council of Catholic Men, Council of Catholic Women, and so on.

The document’s drafters moved directly to technical questions. Paragraph 8 tacitly acknowledged that Catholics no longer were bound to attend their territorial parish should “good reasons” dictate otherwise. Form had to be followed - the receiving pastor had to assent, while the previous pastor merely needed to be informed - but otherwise, affinity was all that was required.⁵⁹ In practical terms this permission likely approved

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⁵⁹ Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Archdiocesan Organization,” sec. 8, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.
extant patterns of parish attendance; in theory, however, it signaled the official end to the “parish boundaries” that had dominated Catholic life for so long.60

While the diocesan bishop retained ultimate power, the laity were formally included in consultative roles. The Synod mandated that each parish have a Parish Council “to share in the decision-making of the parish and assume a rightful share of the responsibility of implementing such decisions.” In addition to liturgical matters, the parish school, and construction, the Parish Council would enjoy some control over the parish purse strings, too.61 This development was not entirely novel to the archdiocese, as even before Archbishop Alter the institutional Church had realized the utility of freeing the clergy for spiritual leadership while the laity tended to temporal affairs.62 In Synod VI lay Catholics received representation on the Deanery Council, which oversaw that administrative unit (a deanery) that coordinated parishes and served as a clearinghouse below the diocesan but above the parish level.63

Finally, lay Catholics - at least six and up to over 23 - found a place on the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, to be established after the Synod.64 The APC would “assist and advise the Archbishop in both spiritual and temporal matters relating to


63 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Archdiocesan Organization,” sec. 46, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.

64 *Ibid.*, sec. 69. “Up to 13” accounts for the five at-large members, appointed at the archbishop’s discretion, one non-voting member from each archdiocesan commission (11 in total), and “such other members as the Pastoral Council may determine.”
pastoral activity and apostolic work.” They would also find their own organization, the Archdiocesan Council of the Laity, more formally incorporated into the diocese alongside the Priests’ Senate and Sisters’ Advisory Council. One the one hand, this was a matter of placing them on the organizational chart and drawing a few new lines connecting the ACL to other bodies; on the other, the incorporation was a vivid signifier that the laity advised the archbishop - at least in theory – on par with the clergy and women religious.65

The document also broached a question of authority laid out by Synod V. Whereas that earlier synod dictated the daily life of junior priests in parish settings, Synod VI decreed that only “certain traditional pastor and associate-pastor relationships will remain in the future.”66 Rather than the older model of priests serving for years - or even decades - before receiving their own pastorates, Synod VI imagined a structure by which that relationship obtained only in the early years of a new priest’s ministry. Furthermore, the Synod acknowledged the very real personnel needs of large parishes but suggested that “a system of co-pastors or one of team ministry” may be appropriate in some cases.67 Absent from the suggestion was whether the drafters had in mind decreasing vocations and increasing departures from priestly life, both necessitating new models of parish staffing.

The Synod made at least one achievement with its Document on Communications by referencing publicly Inter mirifica, Vatican II’s own Decree on the Media of Social Communications. Inter mirifica rarely surfaces in the historiography; among the

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65 Ibid., sec. 78 and 79.
Council’s documents, it ranks near the bottom in terms of appreciable influence on Catholic media. The Cincinnati Document did little beyond offer vague recommendations that most would consider obvious (including this banality on public relations: “actions speak louder than words”) and to which few would object (“She [the Church] must listen sensitively to the needs and demands of those about her.”). An attempt to “get with the times” is evident elsewhere, as with the Document’s earnest recommendation that “the archdiocese should use every appropriate means to foster and encourage film study at every level [of education].”

The Document was not without merit or practical outcomes. It established both an Archdiocesan Commission on Media Communications and an Archdiocesan Media Communications Office. However, achievements of the Document on Communications were hobbled by a lack of innovative thought and evidence that the Church in Cincinnati merely was adopting media standards long taken for granted in most other sectors of society; by 1971, most would not register as remarkable the Document’s closing admonishment: “In all relations, internal and external, individual to individual and group to group, it is essential that all communications will be carried on with truth, with accuracy, with completeness, with fairness, with timeliness, with impartiality, and with charity.”

The Synod’s most pedestrian document contained the seeds of the most thoroughgoing reform: the Document on Temporal Affairs, “the material tools of

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68 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Communications,” sec. 3 and 53, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.


mission” - assets both liquid and otherwise. The drafting committee on Temporal Affairs echoed the fifth century Christological debates in the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon when it wrote “just as spirit and body cannot be separated in the human person, so the Church’s concern is not limited to man’s spirit.” Bequests, physical structures, and clergy stipends may have looked like so many numbers on balance sheets, but those numbers facilitated the Church’s mission in society and guaranteed the provision of services. The spiritual may have been loftier than the temporal, but without temporal organization the spiritual risked becoming inaccessible. While Synod V laid out highly detailed rules for who could administer what in parish life, Synod VI took a more expansive approach, understanding temporalities as the underpinning of a parish’s spiritual life and ordering the local Church’s temporal affairs in such a way as to promote both spiritual growth and shared governance.

Among the Document’s many recommendations and aspirations was a renewed, and detailed, involvement of the laity in administering those “material tools of mission.” The five paragraphs devoted to the laity comprised but a small proportion of the overall document yet their import was vast. The document noted early on the practical benefit of lay participation in the archdiocese’s temporal affairs as “lay persons, by reason of their particular viewpoint and interest, as well as their individual education, training and experience, have an especially valuable service to offer, and a corresponding responsibility to make those services available.” Drawing on the expertise of lay

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71 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Temporal Affairs,” sec. 3, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.


Catholics would facilitate a more equitable, and commonsensical, division of labor, especially in parish life. In the past, the pastor had been the final word on things both spiritual and material in the parish, often having heavy involvement in financial and legal matters. The Document reminded readers that pastors’ responsibilities were, first and foremost, spiritual. Any attention given over to administration necessarily was attention taken away from priests’ spiritual duties. Therefore, the Document decreed, “it is possible that the heavy responsibilities of temporal administration be more fully shared with willing and able members of the laity. In fact, it is imperative both for the pastor and the people. Their own spiritual needs demand it. His heavy responsibilities demand it. The over-all needs of the Church dictate it.”

There was a more theoretical and theological basis for lay involvement, too, and that was the Second Vatican Council’s *Lumen gentium* (Constitution on the Church). *Lumen gentium* spoke highly of “the dignity as well as the responsibility of the layman”; that responsibility included initiating projects and policies directly, rather than responding solely to the demands or requests of the clergy. The Synod envisioned at least one area where this initiative might be exercised: the hiring of “trained lay administrators,” staff who essentially would take over the administration of the parish in order to free pastors and other priests for purely spiritual obligations. As with many

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76 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Temporal Affairs,” sec. 44, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.
other of the Synod’s recommendations, there was no actual structure laid out for implementing such a scheme.

Another group of Synod documents treated more explicitly theological questions. The Synod’s brief Document on Religious illustrates a contemporary Church unsure of the role of vowed men and women, especially as those men and women related to the diocese. The Document opens with an important reminder that religious life “is not an intermediate one between the clerical and lay states”; rather, religious could come from both states (religious priests from the clerical state, non-ordained but vowed men and vowed women from the lay state). For generations many lay Catholics had lumped religious in with the clergy, but the Document on Religious corrected that misconception. And while religious were involved in various endeavors, be they education, spiritual contemplation, or service to the sick, they all “[strove] to give witness to the ideal Christian community.”

Contemporary reform within religious communities found acknowledgment in the Document, which assured readers that as “religious communities find themselves seeking new expressions of their life style and their services so as to embody for the contemporary world the gospel counsels and virtues,” they did so in the spirit of “true conversion” rather than “change for change [sic] sake.” Later, the Document conceded that perhaps even a state of “crisis” existing in American vowed religious life;

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77 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Religious,” sec. 1, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.


“adaptation [to modern conditions] is often a cause of confusion to [religious] and others.”

The hand of diocesan officials on the drafting committee is visible in the assertion of authority over men and women religious. That relationship between religious orders and diocese bishops long had been contentious, especially in dioceses in which communities of “pontifical right” - answerable, in theory, only to the pope - operated. In the Synod’s document, major superiors were reminded of their duty to inform the archdiocese of new initiatives among religious congregations; in what one suspects was a compromise between religious and diocesan committee members, readers are told “these religious do not see themselves as independent of the Church’s apostolate, but freely offer their skills and experience to all in need.” To those religious who held explicit exemption from diocesan authority, the Document offered a weak reminder that they were still accountable to the pope.

For those without that exemption, religious were reassured that the archbishop would “respect the internal government or structure of religious communities so long as these communities pursue their approved goals.” But what constituted an “approved goal”? This was a point of strong contention, a conflict that played out all over the United States. The Synod had a clear idea of such goals, declaring that religious should work

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84 The most famous - or infamous - example is the dispute between James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, Archbishop of Los Angeles, and the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in the 1960s over
toward countering “injustice such as racism, war, ignorance, abortion, and divisions among men.”

Outside of these endeavors, religious apparently strayed into non-approved territory. There was little a diocesan bishop, including the Archbishop of Cincinnati, could do if he took issue with other activities; however, the Document on Religious attempted to include new ministries, new modes of interaction with the world by religious, while also holding on to whatever authority over religious remained in the wake of Vatican II’s call for reform in religious life.

The laity took pride of place in the synod’s formal publications, offering the starkest contrast from Synod V in which the laity appear only as subjects of clerical action. The Document on the Laity offered theological reflections on the vocation of lay Catholics and suggestions for how they might contribute to the Church. The document was extraordinarily ambitious and laid the groundwork for a Catholic worldview and Catholic lifeway that would be instantly recognizable even to the 2016 Catholic in Cincinnati.

The drafters of the document trod carefully on the balance between clerical authority on the one hand and the autonomy of the laity called for by Vatican II on the other. In one paragraph the reader finds the startling demand for unnamed “structures which impede trust and freedom” to be either “revised or demolished.” In the next, the need for authority is reaffirmed provided it is exercised by “service and love,” terms which can be defined in almost any way.

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the IHM’s self-directed efforts at internal reform. See, for example, Colleen McDannell, The Spirit of Vatican II: A History of Catholic Reform in America (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 146-147.

85 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Religious,” sec. 9, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.

86 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Laity,” sec. 8, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.
The document provides ample evidence of some areas in which the institutional Church was concerned that authority over faith and morals might be under siege. Marriage and sex were high on the list of areas in which to enforce magisterial authority. Although naming very few other, specific publications of the institutional Church, Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae vitae*. In a passage on married life, the drafters argued that *Humanae vitae* “is proposed as an authentic expression of the ordinary magisterium of the Church, and is to be understood as in accord with the dogmatic tradition of the Church concerning the assent due the teaching of the ordinary magisterium.”

On first reading, the Document’s mention of *Humanae vitae* seems final: it is to be assented to without reservation. However, a closer reading suggests that the drafters sought to avoid an outright condemnation of contraception - likely in acknowledgment that many couples who otherwise considered themselves faithful Catholics already were using contraception on a regular basis, with or without qualms. The Document’s sentence is torturously constructed, calling *Humanae vitae* only *an*, rather than *the*, “authentic expression of the ordinary magisterium of the Church.” Furthermore, it does not conclude with a simple and final call for Catholics to assent to the document completely; rather, it circuitously argues the encyclical be understood within the

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88 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Religious,” sec. 16, Synod VI 1971, CAAC. Two entries from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published in 1983, clarify what was meant by “ordinary magisterium.” Sec. 2033 notes “the Magisterium of the Pastors of the Church in moral matters is ordinarily exercised in catechesis and preaching, with the help of the works of theologians and spiritual authors.” Sec. 2034 clarifies that “the ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him teach the faithful the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope for.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican Website, accessed Nov. 11, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P74.HTM.

framework “concerning the assent due the teaching of the ordinary magisterium” - leaving quite the space for assent expected, or preferred, but not required.\(^\text{90}\)

The drafters stopped short of an explicit endorsement of *Humanae vitae* in both spirit and letter. After married Catholics, the document envisioned youth as key to the project of adapting the Church to the needs and demands of the modern world. The introduction to this idea was as tone deaf as it was prescient of the need to retain a youth increasingly disaffected with formal Church affiliation:

> The “peer group” influence is almost unassailable. A program of “youth helping youth” can probably best give direction to the life of the young who need help; it can make the best sense possible out of the very real contradictions of life, and help “turn on” the “turned off.”\(^\text{91}\)

However, as with so many other areas of Catholic life touched on by the Synod, the document was vague: the closest the drafters got to a meaningful strategy was to suggest religious teachers link their classroom materials to “action, discovery, liturgical celebrations and the experience of a true Christian faith.”\(^\text{92}\)

The confusion and vagaries of the document itself were, in turn, projected onto the modern world. In describing the present state of global affairs, the drafters perhaps unwittingly described the source of their own imprecision; they noted that “each year, each decade, finds the complexity of modern life developing with geometric progression…more and more we have come to see ourselves and our cultural world as essentially unstable, as temporal and changing, in short, as historical.”\(^\text{93}\)


\(^\text{91}\) Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Laity,” sec. 22, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.


general dividedness fractured Cincinnati Catholics from one another by “economics, race, and life-styles.”94 Out of this confusion came the document’s most meaningful reflection on the present and future: “Most of us live in a White, urban/suburban, middle-class world; many do not. But we must avoid making our particular cultural pattern and its moral judgments into the only pattern of Christian living.”95 This essentially negative admonition was balanced by the positive recommendations made later in the Document on Community Affairs.

As with the laity, the intervention of Vatican II meant that Synod VI’s declarations on worship had no analog in Synod V. And as the Cincinnatians who expressed themselves so clearly in Chapter One on liturgy well understood, the Church’s public worship was an element that occasioned intense reflection in the post-Conciliar period. This was no less the case with Synod VI than the editorial pages of the Catholic Telegraph and private correspondence sent to the chancery discussed above. The drafters of this document evidenced a clear awareness of contemporary debate over the state of liturgy in the archdiocese. While much of the document provided a comprehensive explanation of worship’s significance, it not-infrequently dismissed those who looked askance at liturgical reform.

By the second paragraph the drafters noted that liturgical worship was historically conditioned.96 This matter-of-fact description was, in itself, a political statement: some Catholics disaffected by postconciliar liturgical reform, like those in Chapter One,


96 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Worship,” sec. 2, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.
disagreed with the very notion that the liturgy should adapt to contemporary circumstances (not understanding, or at least not acknowledging, that the very liturgy whose passing they mourned had itself been conditioned by history). However, the Document did acknowledge that experiencing change could be jarring. In a brilliant rhetorical move, the document describes the pain of liturgical “reform and adaptation is a sharing in the pain of the saving life and death of Jesus.” Setting aside the disturbing parallel of experiencing Mass in English and the crucifixion inflicted on the historical Jesus, this claim achieved both a reconciliation and a dismissal. Those who found the reforms difficult to accept but nonetheless persisted in Mass attendance could consider themselves closer to Christ; on the other hand, those unwilling to shoulder such a burden were rejecting the very sacrifice demanded by their faith. Seeking to assure both those “disturbed by the understanding of the Church which is implied by the new rites” and those who felt “frustration at a liturgy which ought to be renewed,” the Document pointed to education as the answer. Once both groups best understood “the Christian life,” they would look forward to Sunday Mass as a privilege rather than a mere obligation.

In addition to suggesting a number of general reforms (e.g., encouraging Mass in private homes when expedient), some of the specific practices recommended by the Document suggest a snapshot of contemporary Catholic worship. These practices were recommended for study and possible implementation by the to-be-formed Archdiocesan

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97 Ibid., “Document on Worship,” sec. 3.


Commission on Worship. Receiving communion at each Mass attended; receiving communion in the hand, while standing; more frequent concelebration of Mass by multiple priests; greater variety in some of the Mass’s prescribed prayers; and “the use of media and the performing arts” during Mass all were commended. The Document noted that none of these practices was then in place but clearly tilted toward implementing them in the foreseeable future.

Beyond such explicit recommendations, the Document waded into contemporary debates over music and space, as well - recall the sharp conflict over music in Chapter One. The Document was careful not to recommend any particular style of music, favoring instead “the real musical need of…people at worship” at the parish level, whatever that may mean. Whatever was chosen for a given Mass or parish, the document observed loftily “music is not neutral. It either adds to the effectiveness of the celebration or it does not, in which case it is superfluous.” What churches ought to look like received much more pointed advice, with an admonition that “competent personnel…insure the artistic quality of the sacred space used in worship.” Quality was one thing, and style was quite another. But the Document provided the ruling key, which was “our Christian responsibility to alleviate the ever present problem of poverty.” In other words, no prescription for traditional or more modern layouts, decorative elements, and so on was made; whatever a parish chose, it had to be cost effective to free up resources to alleviate poverty.

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100 Ibid., “Document on Worship,” sec. 28.
103 Ibid., “Document on Worship,” sec. 60.
The Document on Worship, then, was among the Synod’s longest for good reason. As Chapter One discussed, how Catholics worship and have worshiped historically touches the most vivid component of what “being Catholic” looks like. It is in the liturgy that Catholics invoke their most explicit connection with the divine. In the postconciliar period, debates over how this worship took shape were bound to crop up; while Synod VI made an effort to deal with those debates, it did so in a heavy-handed manner that set the agenda for local liturgy with few line-items reserved for those unsure of Vatican II’s goodness in this particular way.

The Document on Clergy and Seminarians offers another sharp contrast from 1954’s Synod V. But even more than illustrating the disparities between two discrete historic moments - 1954 and 1971 - the differences evident in the Synod VI bear witness to the thoroughgoing reform of the Church accelerated by Vatican II and the extent of reform in what was, in “Church time,” the blink of an eye.

The Document on Clergy and Seminarians differed not only from Synod V’s rumination on the priesthood but also from other documents within Synod VI, especially by its depth and theological complexity. Echoes of the Christological debates in the early Church over whether Christ was human, divine, some combination of the two, or fully both - the latter triumphing over the newly-heretical others - resound early in the document:

The priest’s office is unique, for it is both cultic and prophetic. The Christian priests exercises this dual role, not as two divorced functions, but as a single expression of cult and prophecy, each of which relies on the other for its full meaning and power.104

104 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Clergy and Seminarians,” sec. 5, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.
The depth of the document’s interrogation of the role of the priest sets up later recommendations, intertwining with other Synod documents, on the need for lay Catholics to resume some of the roles ostensibly accreted to the clergy over the centuries. Blending the high and the practical, the document notes “The cultic role makes particular demands on the priest. While these demands may be unlimited in terms of their spiritual importance, they are quite limited in terms of hours of the priest’s day.”

Even more dramatic are the contrasts from the description of clerical life offered by Synod V. A key consideration in the post-Council, local Church was how parishes were to be staffed; on this matter, the Synod was explicit, recommending that “seniority not be a primary factor in making these assignments.” Although the Document did not spell out exactly what other factors would go into parish assignments (and assignments to other service), it did try to account for the desires of the priest and the people he would be serving. Above all, in matters of job placement “a spirit of obedience, sacrifice and cooperation is to be expected.” Junior priests could also expect a loosening of restrictions around the rectory; in the post-Synod era “pastor and associates [will] share the facilities of their parish home as fellow-workers and brothers.” Furthermore, the Synod did not seek only to protect or liberate junior priests; generous employment conditions were recommended for all priests, including an income sufficient to obviate the need for stipends or “stole fees,” adequate vacation time, and a retirement lacking in

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neither material nor emotional support. ¹⁰⁹ Most generous, however, was the Synod’s concern even for those priests who left the active ministry, a group which grew in the post-Conciliar years more quickly than prior to Vatican II. The Synod characterized those men as needing “the care and concern of their brother priests and laymen” and even went so far as to appoint a subcommittee of the Priests’ Senate “to study and put forth guidelines for the assistance, employment, and readjustment of priests who are on leave or who have been laicized.”¹¹⁰

Even prior to becoming a priest, men in training for the priesthood were encouraged to engage the non-seminary world more directly as better preparation for their service among living communities. The drafters of the Document laid the burden for change on “a time of rapid change such as ours, when the training for an effective priest demands a knowledge and practical experience in many different areas.”¹¹¹ There were limits to what this new concept of seminary training was to achieve, however, with potential seminarians being assured that the seminary still existed primarily to produce priests for diocesan service - not “primarily to fulfill his [the seminarian’s] own needs.”¹¹²

As with other documents, much of that on Clergy and Seminarians was vague even it its hopefulness and high aspirations - ecumenical dialogue with other seminaries,


for example - but its concrete proposals evidenced a massive paradigm shift from how the local Church conceived of itself a decade and a half prior. The Document’s overall thrust can be summarized with its hope that a priest not be “a stranger to the human experience and condition”; indeed, Synod VI could be characterized as helping the whole of local Catholicism broaden its vision so.113

Finally, the Synod addressed how Cincinnati Catholics ought to live out their faith as members of social communities. The Synod’s Document on Missions was as short as it was insubstantial, fitting in with the rest of Synod VI much like Inter mirifica fit into the rest of Vatican II: not-unimportant in its content, but also not advancing a compelling thesis. The Document assessed honestly its ambitions, calling its guidelines neither “revolutionary” nor “unrealistic.”114 Among those guidelines was the vague suggestion that “the people of the archdiocese…become more familiar with these societies [Pontifical Mission Aid Societies], adopt positive attitudes toward them, and assist with the attainment of their goals.” .115

The Document did note that “mission work is also distinct from ecumenism.”116 In fact, the Synod saw ecumenism as a helpmeet to mission work, acknowledging the “possibility of some cooperation with Protestant Christians in proclaiming the Gospel to unbelievers.”117

\[\text{113 Ibid., “Document on Clergy and Seminarians,” sec. 103.}\]

\[\text{114 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Missions,” sec. 15, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.}\]

\[\text{115 Ibid., “Document on Missions,” sec. 17, 35, 41.}\]

\[\text{116 Ibid., “Document on Missions,” sec. 11.}\]

\[\text{117 Ibid., “Document on Missions,” sec. 11.}\]
The section of the Document with the most potential was visited only briefly. The document’s drafters coopted the language of liberation theology, saying that “in an age of ‘liberation movements’ this section of the Synod puts in first place the liberation of the missionary spirit and character of Christians, the liberation of Christ Himself, who is imprisoned, held back, denied contact with the world by every sin, by every act of cowardice, by the apathy and untimely silences of Christians.”118 Rather than focusing on economic and political structures that oppressed various peoples, however, the Document on Missions managed to link “liberation” with “making mission awareness and activity almost like a heartbeat in the life of every Christian.”119

The Synod’s Document on Education contained several kernels of potentially explosive thinking; it was the only Document rejected by the Synod Assembly in May 1971, although the voting record provided only tallies and not reasons for its rejection. It thus offers some indications of key conflicts within Cincinnati Catholicism.

The Document on Education’s most contentious recommendations were merely reiterations of extant policies and plans. For example, it advocated the consolidation of Catholic schools “where feasible” (without defining feasibility), the recruitment of lay staff to replace disappearing religious, and public funding for Catholic schools.120 The Synod saw it as “reasonable for Catholics to expect assistance from federal, state and local governments for those secular portions of education mandated by the state.”121

120 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Education,” sec. 42, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.
phrasing was significant, coming after decades of debate over complex schemes by which Catholics schools were reimbursed for teaching “secular subjects,” students were released to public schools for those subjects, and so on (such as the Pennsylvania and Rhode Island systems, discussed above in Chapter Three).

The Document also made two significant observations. First, the quality of Catholic schools’ religious education was called into question “in some areas of the archdiocese.”122 In fact, the religious programming in some schools was so bad that the Synod recommended parishes take up the slack and provide religious education otherwise lacking in Catholic schools. Interestingly, the drafters held one foot firmly in the past, claiming that while methods of religious education might change, “the goals of religion are fixed.”123 Finally, perhaps backing off from its intransigence ever so slightly, the Document ends with a clear call to Vatican II: “God has not given revelation as a dead letter but as a life to be lived. Institutionally, then, the Church need not be tied to any moment in time to any particular way of acting as if it were a final formula for success.”124

Second, the Synod noted that lay instructors and administrators were on the rise.125 The Document conceded that this was an expensive situation, imploring parents to remember that lay teachers and administrations each had “a unique contribution” to make. The question of lay / religious staffing was tied to that of public support: as

schools lost the subsidized labor provided by religious, more and more of the financial burden for Catholic education was placed on parents. The pittances afforded men and women religious had been tolerated because of the community support they enjoyed; no such network existed for lay teachers, whose higher salaries resulted in higher tuition.

As with the Document on Missions, little change was foreseen by the Document on Education. One can understand the frustration of parents affected by the recommended consolidation (read: closing) of some schools; one also sees the Church’s continued demand for public assistance in full force here. However, as with other elements of the Synod, there was little of lasting significance. Meaningful change in that category was reserved for the Documents on Ecumenism and Community Relations.

Combined with the Document on Community Relations, the Document on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations represents Synod VI’s rough analogy to Vatican II’s Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: what did it mean to be a Church in a place with believers of other faith traditions? In this Document, some of the richest theological fruit of Vatican II was harvested in Cincinnati.

How the Synod defined ecumenism was a sharp turn from centuries past and certainly from the circumscriptions of Synod V. Referencing Jesus’ prayer in John 17 that “they all be one,” the Document surmises that “He [Jesus] prays for more unity, not necessarily for more uniformity.”126 Thus the historic wish among Catholics for everyone else to “come home” to the Roman Catholic Church was repudiated: “Ecumenical

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126 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations,” sec. 1, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.
dialogue, as such, does not have for its object the making of ‘converts’ from one form of Christianity to another.”

As *Nostra ætate* did concerning the Jews, the Document on Ecumenical and Interfaith relations admitted Catholic fault for ongoing divisions. “By remaining separated,” the drafters wrote, “we deny to those who are not Christians that full Christ-intended witness of the one people of the Spirit-sending Christ.” And in a complete reversal of the near-denial of “mixed” marriages in Synod V, the Document acknowledged the pain felt by some Catholics (and, presumably, their spouses) resulting from “our religious prejudices.” Pastoral advice offered to couples preparing for marriage, in which one spouse was not Catholic, was to be “positive rather than negative,” with the Synod acknowledging a tendency in the past for the Church to treat one or both individuals as “disloyal to their church.” These were important admissions that other faith traditions might hold some element of truth - or Truth - acceptable to Catholics.

The Document was not all positive, however. There were hard rules to ecumenical and interfaith events. For instance, while Catholics were permitted to “take part in common responses and hymns” of non-Catholic liturgical worship, “intercommunion [i.e., Catholics receiving Communion in non-Catholic Churches and *vice versa*] is not

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128 Ibid., “Document on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations,” sec. 5
129 Ibid., “Document on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations,” sec. 5
permitted by the present discipline of the Roman Catholic Church.”132 Ministerial roles, either involving the Eucharist or otherwise, could not be exchanged across denominations.133

These new directions in ecumenism were important enough. Even more groundbreaking, however, were the Document’s sections on other faiths. The Document made enormous strides toward openness to the city’s religious community in its substantial section on “interfaith relations and relations with non-believers.” In practice, this meant Jews.134 The Document recognized Cincinnati’s uniqueness in the American religious landscape, declaring that “because of the presence of an active Jewish community and a leading Hebrew seminary in Cincinnati, our relations with Judaism are of primary importance.”135

While other Synod documents were abstruse, vague, or so sentimental as to be meaningless, the section on Judaism was highly instructive. It offered a straightforward but nuanced explanation of the differences between “branches” of Judaism:

The authenticity of Orthodox Judaism is premise on continued adherence to the full range of Jewish observances as they have been created with preservation being the keynote. Conservative Judaism acknowledges much the same principles as those of Orthodoxy but also recognizes a certain developmental character of tradition and, with great caution and respect, will pass judgment on certain traditional rulings of the past. Reform Judaism recognizes the preservative, the developmental and the innovative as all part of the Jewish tradition.136


134 The Document recommended, rather weakly, that “Present day culture brings certain concepts and practices from other religions into our everyday vocabulary and experience: for example, yoga exercises, meditation practices and cultural expressions derived from Hinduism or Zen Buddhism. We should try to gain a deeper knowledge of these practices.” Ibid., “Document on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations,” sec. 46.


As Ben Kaufman in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* had reported at great length, the Document pushed Catholics to disavow “mutual monologue” disguised as true dialogue. And most significantly: “the intent of conversion is excluded.” The Document made another self-deprecatory gesture by admitting that religious education had sometimes, even to the then-present, humiliated the Jews; such teaching was to end. Finally, the Document echoed *Nostra ætate* by repudiating supercessionism - the notion that Christianity had “superseded” Judaism with the ministry and death of Jesus - and affirming “the permanent significance of the Jewish people in God’s plan for mankind.” And even more directly than Vatican II, the Synod rejected the centuries-old idea of Jewish condemnation for Christ’s death:

The Jewish people is not collectively guilty of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, nor of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah. The Jewish people is not damned, nor bereft of its election. Their sufferings, dispersion, and persecution are not punishments for the crucifixion or rejection of Jesus.

What the Document on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations accomplished for the Church’s view on non-Catholics and non-Christians was echoed in the Document on Community Affairs for Cincinnati’s black community. The Document’s provisions are particularly significant in light of Chapter Two, with Archdiocesan officials hesitant to take a definitive stance on race and a laity vociferously divided between racial activists and intransigents. By contrast, early in this Document the Synod taught that “too often we

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138 Ibid., “Document on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations,” sec. 37
wait to react to leadership and positions assumed by others.”142 The time had come, instead, for the Church to become that leadership: “the Church can, and sometimes should, publicly take positions on the moral issues proposed by political candidates, political parties, and officials of civil government.”143

The Church was foreseen to take a leading role in several specific areas, including “poverty, racial injustice, and the absence of peace.”144 On racism, the issue of housing offered a particularly clear path to justice. The Synod acknowledged that Catholics had a responsibility to see that “human and Christian values” take priority over the heretofore “over-riding emphasis on economic values.”145 This dictum was especially poignant, as it simultaneously acknowledged the real-market effect of black entrance into white neighborhoods but implored Catholics to face squarely any discomfort with this movement - Christian charity demanded Catholics not flee in the face of black home purchasing.

The Document’s general nods toward racism, and even specific admonitions pertaining to racial discrimination, were fleshed out in a section dedicated specifically to “Black People.” It laid out in short form the history behind racial discrimination, cast in terms intended to make vivid the contemporary racial disparity within the Church:

Black people, historically, occupy a unique position in American society. This position was based on a theory that Black people are inferior because they were

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142 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Synod VI, “Document on Community Affairs,” sec. 5, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.

143 Ibid., “Document on Community Affairs,” sec. 11.

144 Ibid., “Document on Community Affairs,” sec. 10. Preceding these elements was a jarring endorsement of tax reform, intended to resolve “the issues of a broadened and equalized tax base, and a cost and benefit relationship that takes into consideration the tax payers’ ability to pay.” Ibid., “Document on Community Affairs,” sec. 9.

introduced into this country as slaves and is continued today by their visibility because of their color. No other ethnic group has such roots in American history. Unconsciously, at least, many Americans still retain a “slave mentality” toward Black people; this mentality has infected even the Church. The result of this attitude has been that the Catholic Church has been viewed by many, especially Blacks, as a White racist institution. As a result, approximately 1,000,000 Blacks are Catholics out of a population of roughly 23,000,000 Black people. In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati about 5,000 Black people are Catholic in a total Catholic population of 500,000 Catholics.146

One group had begun considering what to do about this numerical disparity: the National Conference of Black Lay Catholics, which met in August of 1970. That Conference had made eleven recommendations toward ameliorating racism and its effects in the contemporary Church. After the essential “free and open access to all facets of the Church for all Black people,” the Conference made other detailed recommendations. The NCBLC recommended that black people “control” black parishes through the appointment of black pastors and lay leaders. The Conference recommended also the development of a discrete, black diaconate. In the event that a black parochial school faced closure, the archdiocese was not to do so unless the black community was involved in the decision making process.147

At those schools that were to remain open, education was to be easily available to black students, with financial assistance offered if necessary. And regardless of enrollment, Catholic students should learn about “African heritage and of the achievements of the Afro-American.” Blacks were to be included on the Archdiocesan Board of Education so as to “reflect the desires of the Black community”; in the classroom, the forecasted trend of predominantly white teaching staff needed to be

reviewed “by the appropriate parish groups.” Finally, “each Black parish should be encouraged to have a liturgy reflecting the Afro-American heritage. The Document on Community Affairs ranged widely across other topics, including abortion, addiction, prison reform, relations with Appalachian migrants to the city’s urban core, relations with Hispanics, and gender. But it was with its directives on race that the Synod displayed the most change in Cincinnati Catholicism. In this way more than any other, the Synod charted a course for Cincinnati Catholicism to embrace the “responsibility to bring the witness of the Gospel to bear upon the social structures of [the Christian’s] time and place.”

VI

On the day of the formal Synod Assembly, nearly 3,000 Cincinnati Catholics, guests, and ecumenical observers gathered at the Cincinnati Convention-Exposition center to vote on the final drafts of the synod documents. Ten of the eleven documents passed with no trouble, all garnering at least a majority of outright “Accept” votes and all counting no less than 93% combined “Accept” and “Accept with Reservation” votes. The Document on Education, however, was rejected outright, with “Reject” tallying a plurality with 45% “Reject,” only 30% “Accept,” and 25% “Accept with Reservation.” It was rewritten before the synod’s guidelines became law in the archdiocese in October 1971 (see Table 1).

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<td>1116</td>
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That day’s keynote address was delivered by Theodis Gay, a lay man. He pointed up the responsibilities and rights of the laity, whose primary need at that moment was “an acceptance by the hierarchy of the laity in the decision-making process within the areas of its special competence.”

His most vivid remark was an imagination of “the concept of co-responsibility” in the Church, which resulted in an organizational diagram more akin to concentric circles than the pyramid of the last generation’s *societas perfecta* in the Church.

There was an additional twist, however. Gay was black:

We will hear, for example, from approximately five thousand souls in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati alone that they have been denied, or at least genuinely

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152 “Official Results of the Voting on the Synod Documents at the Archdiocesan Assembly,” in *Sixth Synod, Archdiocese of Cincinnati*, xv, Synod VI 1971, CAAC.

believe that they have been denied, free and open access to all facets of the Church community - its sacraments, its religious orders, its schools and seminaries, its hospitals, yes, even its cemeteries. These five thousand souls will tell you that you have denied them and their children, you and your children an awareness of an appreciation of their heritage. You see, the voices of these souls often have not been heard, and when heard, often ignored, for to a large number of the people of the Church community these voices did not come just from five thousand souls but from five thousand black souls.\textsuperscript{154}

Knowingly or not, with these words Gay harkened back to Archbishop Leibold’s own hands-off attitude, then as chancellor, toward the racism of Coney Island in 1955; to the archdiocese’s unwillingness to commit forcefully to meaningful change, as an institution, at the height of the civil rights era; and to the discussion questions debated just months before, when Cincinnati Catholics were told some felt the Church was a white, racist institution - now what were they going to do about it?

When Leibold took the pulpit during the day’s Mass, he kept to the loftier aspirations of the Synod. Recognizing contemporary conflict but also the hope for future success, he implored his flock to not “belabor the upheavals that exist in the Church today, all indeed but reflections of problems that afflict men everywhere.” Instead, he preached, the Church “must arouse all her members to activity and fidelity, that with mature minds they may confirm and intensify her call to spread the good news of salvation.”\textsuperscript{155}


The Cincinnati laity, either at the invitation of synod leaders or of their own accord, offered extensive commentary. The reactions recorded by lay Catholics to the Synod included negative responses to either the content of the documents or the synodal process as well as messages of gratitude, revealing a diversity within the Cincinnati laity. Everyone got a hearing, as Leibold read all of his mail personally.\footnote{Ben L. Kaufman, “Progress of ‘Synod ’71’ Pleasing to Archbishop Leibold.”}

One woman, who described herself as “a young mother,” succinctly connected Vatican II and Synod VI by beginning Synod officials “for ‘heavens’ sake no more changes it [sic; presumably, the Church] has changed enough.”\footnote{Mrs. Jane Shoke to “Dear Sirs,” Nov. 3, 1970, Synod VI 1971 12/4, CAAC. Emphasis original.} She wrote that in 1960, “I was proud to be a Catholic but not today…confusion and frustration plague me daily.” The woman was especially vexed by the teachings imparted to her children in catechism classes, which contradicted what she taught them at home.

While this “young mother” saw the baby being tossed out with the bathwater, a senior at Mt. St. Joseph College wrote to an official with concerns in January 1971 that the Church had simply lost relevance in the contemporary day. The student, Susan Surkamp, sounded the alarm on “the absolute GRAVITY of this situation that young, educated, progressive Catholics particularly face today.”\footnote{Susan Surkamp to “Dear Sir,” Jan. 26, 1971, Synod VI 1971 8/9, CAAC.} She predicted that “disintegration is imminent” unless the Church made “some effort toward establishing a definite character or at least some tangible humanistic goals.” She advocated “community
centers” over parishes, liturgical celebrations favoring “love, ecumenism, and brotherhood” (despite arguing that “THE LITURGY IS SO SECONDARY” to other priorities), and “a Church that opens its door to all types of people.”

Three concessions qualified Surkamp’s proposals. First, her inability to attend the Synod was “an exposure of my priorities to a certain degree” - in other words, she was choosing not to go.159 Second, she described herself as “presently a Catholic….I am not sure what I will be in the future.” Third, while describing her ideal liturgical celebration, she admitted that she did not attend Mass weekly.

One lay man took a wider view of discord over the Synod and even embraced it. After reciting a litany of disputes and various practices he had observed, he wrote to Archbishop Leibold that he felt “we are headed to a divided church and I think it should be so. One for those who want to keep rules and regulations…and not go along with all the crazy changes and one for the Modern, mod [sic] young people (who seldom go to church anymore because they are told in school it is not necessary anymore).”160 He even pointed to the Jewish faith, with its “Modern Jew and the Orthodox,” as a model for the future of the Catholic Church: “only then will we have happy Catholics.”

Even more even-handed was a missive to Archbishop Leibold from Mrs. Marilyn Franzen, who sent Leibold extensive observations on the Synod draft documents in February 1971. Franzen is as good an example of the well-educated, post-Vatican II lay Catholic as one might wish to find in the archive:

I do not have the theological background or classical composition techniques to present what I truly feel about the Synod documents. I have, however, studied the

159 Susan Surkamp to “Dear Sir,” Jan. 26, 1971, Synod VI 1971 8/9, CAAC.

documents of Vatican II and I read as much as I can on Church affairs. I read both the secular press and the Catholic press. I am very interested in the outcome of the Synod. Since it is the first time the laity were invited [sic] to help, I felt, not only what a great privilege [sic] it was, but what a great opportunity to give an opinion. Some of us are very concerned about the inroads of the modern philosophies in this diocese.161

Franzen worried that even the clergy were partially responsible for this state of affairs but asserted her fidelity to the pope - perhaps even, if necessary, over that of Leibold himself: “If confusion ever invades this diocese and I do not know what to do, I will take refuge and guidance from the directions of the Holy Father and work my way down. If the Bishop agrees and supports the Holy Father, I will listen to him. Otherwise, I will resist.”162

Infighting was endemic in some parishes. After opening with the complaint that he was “so tired of getting a sermon on Synod 71 which in my opinion is just a waste of time,” William Walters moved on to blast the parish Speak Up Weeks as similarly wasteful.163 He decried a too-long discussion on the proper time to baptize an infant, a “ridiculous” question when “there are so many more questions to be answered in the Catholic Church.”164 Such wasteful introspection, Walters argued, aimed to please a segment of the Church that did not even support the Church’s own agenda; conversely, “the people who do the giving (God knows you need them) are getting fed up with all these changes and dropping out.”165

161 Marilyn Franzen to Archbishop Leibold, Feb. 9, 1971, Synod VI 1971 12/4, CAAC.

162 Marilyn Franzen to Archbishop Leibold, Feb. 9, 1971, letter section “Communications,” 4, Synod VI 1971 12/4, CAAC.


After the Synod itself, praise for the process, the planners, and the Archbishop rolled in. A nun wrote to Archbishop Leibold that “the Holy Spirit was surely very close to you and all your very faithful co-workers,” although her wish for Leibold’s long life “to see the fruits of the Synod” would go unrealized. A lay woman, Judy Olberding, saw in the Synod a thorough mix of the benefits of American democracy and the divine assurances offered the Church by Christ. She found “something tremendously moving about the great numbers of people excising a voting franchise.” Hearkening to the early republic, she wrote “I truly believe the Spirit of God moves through the masses and I’m enough of a Jeffersonian democrat to trust the people’s vote.”

Not everyone was so happy. Signed only with initials, someone wrote to complain sarcastically to Archbishop Leibold just after the Synod. “With the results of the Synod now published, I as a conservative Catholic, will now have my say. The lunatics are running the asylum - Hail [sic] to the chief! If you think the results represents [sic] the thinking of TRUE Catholics, think again…P.S. This was the best railroad job this side of Washington.”

Another lay Catholic complained that Leibold had not devoted sufficient attention to the concerns of those opposed to the Synod documents by voting against them or for them “with reservations.” The man thought Leibold may have “missed that portion of

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166 Sister Mary Felicitas Sherry to The Most Reverend Archbishop Paul Leibold, May 18, 1971, Synod VI 1971 8/9, CAAC. Leibold died suddenly in the late spring of 1972.

167 Judy Olberding to Archbishop Leibold, May 19, 1971, Synod VI 1971 8/9, CAAC.


169 Edwin A. Cook to His Excellency Paul F. Leibold, Oct. 29, 1971, Synod VI 1971 8/9, CAAC. Cook’s late submission was the result of his own misunderstanding: the Synod’s documents were formally
the Vatican II documents” that required bishops to listen to the concerns of all the faithful, including “those who do not agree with your liberal outlook.”

Leibold’s response, prodded perhaps by the man’s persistence – he had sent a second letter when the first went unacknowledged - was characteristic of the bishop: generally reasonable, but indulgent of his impatience with criticism. He explained that the Synod documents had met approval by a clear majority, even without the reserved votes. He further told man that he believed “the whole Synod process was an open expression of our sincere effort to hear and care for every segment of the flock…It is, on the other hand, quite evident to anyone dealing with human beings, that we are not going to please everyone no matter how seriously [sic] we try - Christ surely did not.”

Leibold’s response was capped off with a passive-aggressive closure: “Praying that you may find peace joy strength and consolation [sic] in your faith despite our gross failure in your eyes.”

As many lay Catholics in Cincinnati criticized the Synod, so did clergy and vowed religious. One priest questioned the very nature of the synod, implying it had been insufficiently explained. “What has the force and formulation of law?” he asked, as

promulgated (i.e., made official) at a Mass in October for the archdiocese’s sesquicentennial, having been revised since their passage at the Synod convention in May. Leibold pointed this error out in his response of November 5. Letter to Dr. E. A. Cook, Nov. 4, 1971, Synod VI 1971 8/9, CAAC.

170 Paul Leibold to Dr. E. A. Cook, Nov. 4, 1971, Synod VI 1971 8/9, CAAC. Emphasis added.

171 While non-ordained, but vowed, religious (i.e. brothers and sisters in religious congregations) technically are laity, this was not a distinction often noted at the time, and these men and women typically were grouped in with the clergy as far as the rest of the laity were concerned.
well as “what is guide-line [sic] and directive?” The Archdiocesan Conference of Major Superiors of Women wondered “how binding are the Synod Documents?”

Style came in for critique, as well. One pastor believed that the comprehensive drafts “were not merely reformatory, but were revolutionary.” Another priest bemoaned the lack of engagement on the part of students. Whether too long or too short, “indifference concerning the contents of the documents” plagued the priest’s classroom efforts. He bitterly noted that youth were all too happy to criticize the Church but had little to offer by way of suggestions for improvement. A pastor in nearby Kettering predicted that his parishioners “will not accept the Synod,” because “they [his parishioners] feel that they have the right to change anything - Doctrine incl [sic].”

Who controlled the synod process did not go unnoticed by archdiocesan clergy, either. The same priest who felt the documents were “revolutionary” feared that the drafting committees would be unreceptive to critique. Looking to the end of the process, after the Synod documents had been voted on and formalized, the Major Superiors of Women thought it would be “necessary to emphasize now the responsibility

172 Martin T. Gilligan to Father John L. Cavanaugh, Nov. 12, 1970, Synod VI 1971 12/4, CAAC.
175 Albert A. Reed to Synod 1971 Office, Jan. 12, 1971, Synod VI 1971 12/4, CAAC.
of implementing the Synod Documents and to designate the person or groups responsible for these duties."\(^{178}\)

At least one woman religious expressed concern that not all women religious’ opinions were being received. Although she signed her name to the letter submitted to the Synod Coordinator, she told Fr. Cavanaugh she had submitted her concerns to her superior anonymously “as I felt it would not receive her consideration coming from one of my insignificant status in the community; nor have I courage to confront Sister because of my lack of education and ability to speak my thoughts.”\(^{179}\) The sister believed others in the community suffered the same fear. More importantly, however, she argued that “Sister Salley [the superior] does not reflect the thinking of many Sisters here, nor do we ever hear what the Sisters Advisory Council is doing in our name.”

It was not only sisters who worried over authority. Some parish priests saw a threat to their office in the synod documents. One wrote bluntly that “I foresee a clear and present danger to the office of the pastor.”\(^{180}\) The draft documents, to him, contained “a built-in frustration and sense of uselessness,” with lay leaders in parishes elevated to such a status that they could dominate personally unfavored pastors “even though that dislike may be engendered the by very fidelity of the priest to what the Church believes and teaches.” At another parish, the situation was the opposite: lay Catholics felt there was no “use in our saying anything. The priests and bishop will do what they want any way.”\(^{181}\)


\(^{180}\) Illegible name, St. Dominic Church, n.d., Synod VI 1971 12/4, CAAC.
Despite the complaints and concerns of both lay and clergy, Synod VI could rightly be considered a success: a wide cross-section of the archdiocese had contributed to its documents’ drafting and revision, either directly or indirectly; thousands of lay Catholics had participated in its actual approval; and the scope of its documents, if not the content of each one, was comprehensive. Synod VI was initiated as an attempt to “bring Vatican II” more fully to Cincinnati, and in that it succeeded.

The ACL’s Bulletin in November 1971 opened with a recounting of the Mass for the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati on October 23; during Mass, Archbishop Leibold put into force the provisions of Synod VI. The Council knew well that the process did not end there, however, and the editors noted “now we begin to live Synod ’71!”

Archbishop Leibold said that the months ahead were crucial for studying the Synod Documents; “The better we understand the Documents the more effective will be our response to the various phases of implementation.”

How effective that response was is beyond the scope of the present work, which ends its enquiry in 1971 with the close of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati’s Sixth Synod. Yet the trajectory of Cincinnati Catholicism seems, as of 1971, to have been conceptually similar to that of its “partner in synodality,” Pittsburgh, and Kelly’s final word on Pittsburgh’s synod applies equally well to the Queen City in Ohio:

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181 Jim Shappelle to John [Cavanaugh], n.d., Synod VI 1971 12/4, CAAC. The letter is marked as having been acknowledged by Bishop Leibold on Feb. 6, 1972, but this is almost certainly an error, as the Synod process had been over by nearly five months in February 1972.

The laity responded energetically to Bishop Wright’s sincere request for consultation on pastoral aims and structures for the diocese…The extensive consultation that Wright implemented for the synod promised a new, more egalitarian Church. The bishop sought to change the diocesan legislation as the parishioners wanted it changed…the synod endorsed a heightened lay position within the diocese, reformed diocesan programs, and pulled many laymen and laywomen into more active roles within the Church. It encouraged the laity to view the Church in ways largely unfamiliar. It suggested that the Catholic Church was potentially a democratic institution, responsive to the needs and desires of its adherents. In the course of its deliberations, the synod asked for and received thousands of proposals from the laity on ways to reform the Church which shed a great deal of light on lay desires and perceptions in the immediate wake of the Second Vatican Council. Whatever its ultimate limitations for lay empowerment, it enabled the laity to speak to future generations about their concerns in [1971].

Although the Cincinnati laity had been reminded several times that their bishop remained the sole arbiter of diocesan legislation - to describe the contemporary Church as “democratic” would be an exaggeration - the process and execution of Synod VI brought home, in concrete form, Vatican II to Cincinnati.

In terms of the two most conspicuous aspects of local Catholicism treated here, Vatican II made historically bold statements about Judaism and said almost nothing on race. Those priorities were completely reversed in Cincinnati, with little concern for any novel pronouncement on Judaism but a desperate need for guidance on how Catholics ought to engage contemporary racism. At the same that it instantiated the Second Vatican Council in Cincinnati, Synod VI offered a local corrective to Vatican II’s universal proclamations. In confirming (and affirming) the status quo ante of Jewish-Catholic relations while also charting a clear path to more harmonious race relations, Synod VI provided for Cincinnati what Vatican II had not. By doing so, Cincinnati proves not only

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183 Kelly, The Transformation of American Catholicism, 271.
that the local scale merits as much scholarly attention as the universal, but that indeed the local is crucial to the ultimate significance and effectiveness of the universal.

Leibold died suddenly in 1972, complaining of a severe headache the day before when he delivered the commencement address at Xavier University. He suffered a massive stroke that evening and died the next day. He was replaced by rising star Joseph Bernardin. Cincinnati’s bishops since Bernardin - Daniel Pilarczyk (1982 to his 2009 retirement) and Dennis Schnurr (2009 to the present) - have made waves within American Catholic circles, but neither man to the extent or popularity of Bernardin. More telling, perhaps, is that there has been no Seventh Synod. In contrast to earlier generations, bishops are not advised on any particular frequency for synods; the Code of Canon Law requires only that a synod be convoked “when the diocesan Bishop…judges that circumstances suggest it.” Circumstances have not, apparently, suggested so in Cincinnati for over forty years.

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CATHOLICISM IN CINCINNATI WAS MUCH CHANGED WHEN SYNOD VI CLOSED AND WAS PROMULGATED IN LATE 1971. THE LOCAL CHURCH RESEMBLED ITS 1954 SELF VERY LITTLE. FROM THE EARLY, AND CLOSE, COVERAGE OF VATICAN II AND A WILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE THE COUNCIL FULLY HAD COME DEEP DIVISION AMONG THE CITY’S CATHOLICS OVER SUCH ELEMENTS OF CATHOLIC LIFE AS LITURGICAL WORSHIP. NOT ONLY HAD THE COUNCIL “AGGIORNAMENTED” THE CHURCH; VATICAN II HAD, BY PUSHING THE LAITY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND THEIR WISHES, ENGENDERED PUBLIC DISPUTES OVER MYRIAD REFORMS THAT FOUND SOME CATHOLICS RE-ENERGIZED AND OTHERS EXHAUSTED BY THE PLETHORA OF CHANGES THAT SEEMED TO BE ROLLING THROUGH THE CHURCH. SYNOD VI FORMALIZED MANY OF THESE REFORMS, BUT IT DID NOT QUELL THE DISPUTES THAT HAD

been unfolding since the First Sunday of Advent of 1964 and, among some groups, continue today.

The aspect of Cincinnati Catholicism perhaps changed least by the Council was the local Church’s relationship with Jews. Although there had been a great deal of energy expended during and immediately after the Council on explaining to local Jews what the Church was doing in Rome, little changed from the start of the Council to its conclusion and beyond. Synod VI institutionalized at the local level what Nostra ætate had declared globally in 1965, but even the local codification of Church policy vis-á-vis Judaism simply ratified the status quo ante - which is precisely how Nostra ætate had been greeted in Cincinnati from the start. Therefore Synod VI did not offer a notable improvement in Jewish-Catholic relations; it could not have, as those exchanges had been proceeding peaceful for years already.

On race, the Catholic Church in Cincinnati had undergone enormous changes between 1954 and 1971. Race found no mention in the 1954 diocesan synod; by 1971, it engaged enormous amounts of energy as racial equity was enshrined in archdiocesan legislation as a non-negotiable expression of the faith. Vatican II was indirectly responsible for this transformation, largely by virtue of its encouragement to the laity to engage with the modern world and become agents of change in their communities. Some Cincinnati Catholics viewed this as a refreshing invitation to live out their faith, while others feared the previously “safe” space of their faith had been infected with the inappropriate concern over race that was spreading through the nation. By 1971 older models of white ministry to black Catholics - overtly tending to a minority flock, in other words - had given way to aspirations for black leadership and ownership of the future.
Yet as future bishops would learn, not even Archbishop Leibold’s crowning achievement of Synod VI could right all the wrongs of systemic racism.

Paul Leibold had been present at Synod V in 1954. It is impossible that the event did not pass through his mind as the preparations for Synod VI unfolded and the convention itself found thousands of lay Catholics actively engaged in the future direction of Cincinnati Catholicism. Looking back on his priestly life, his service to the Church, and his vision for the future, Leibold would have understood in 1971 that the Church in Cincinnati had changed drastically from when he had indicated his *placet* vote, kissed Archbishop Alter’s ring, and departed the sanctuary of St. Monica’s Cathedral during Synod V of December 1954. Yet his guidance over the most significant local event in archdiocesan history paid off little in personal terms for Archbishop Leibold, as the formal promulgation of Synod VI’s decrees in October 1971 was still fresh on the Ohio native’s mind when he went to his eternal reward in the spring of 1972.

II

Joseph Bernardin had been a priest for fourteen years when Pope Paul VI made him auxiliary bishop of Atlanta under Archbishop Paul Hallinan in 1966. His election as NCCB / USCC general secretary came two years later. In addition to the administrative talent Bernardin honed in Atlanta and Washington, D.C. (the headquarters of the NCCB), the young bishop also came to Cincinnati with ecumenical and interfaith credentials: he served on the Interreligious Committee of General Secretaries, which had Protestant and Jewish members.²

² Blau, *ibid.*, 38.
Bernardin enjoyed national prominence during his tenure as Archbishop of Cincinnati, prior to being called to replace Chicago’s John Cardinal Cody in 1982. Yet the attention Bernardin garnered while shepherding the Queen City stemmed mostly from his leadership of the NCCB rather than his service to Cincinnati. He was elected president of the Conference in 1974, serving until 1977.3 His service to the Catholics of Cincinnati was entirely overshadowed in the national press by his position in the NCCB. In that capacity, Bernardin spoke as representative of American Catholics, never receiving more publicity than during the 1976 presidential campaign, when Catholic leaders took presidential candidate Jimmy Carter and the Democratic Party to task for not supporting a constitutional amendment to ban abortion.

Public furor started when Bernardin decried as “inconsistent” Carter’s personal opposition to abortion but refusal to support a constitutional amendment to that effect.4 Even after meeting with prominent bishops in the summer of 1976, Carter would not reverse his party’s commitment to access to abortion (although he clarified that neither would he oppose a campaign to amend the Constitution).5 Speaking out against Carter and the Democratic Party put Bernardin and the rest of the Catholic hierarchy in a bind. Despite declaring that “the church…does not endorse or oppose particular parties or candidates,” Bernardin’s defense of the American Church’s opposition on certain issues - i.e., abortion - was taken by many to be an implicit endorsement of Republican President

3 Tim Unsworth, I Am Your Brother Joseph: Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 62


Gerald Ford. Unhelpful, as well, was Bernardin’s cautious remark that the NCCB was “encouraged” by Ford’s support for a Constitutional amendment that would put the question to the states, even though the archbishop laid out how Ford’s stance was still problematic. Moving into the fall, Bernardin made explicit yet again the Church’s essential neutrality in the presidential election. Despite his earlier assurances, the NCCB had “gotten a considerable amount of mail, some of it supportive and some of it not supportive”; while some of the correspondents seemed to think “we have endorsed one candidate over another[,] we have not done this.” Others felt the Church had no right to comment on the question to begin with, as doing so was a violation of “the enduring significance of the state-church jurisdictional demarcation,” as Harvard professor Martin Kilson put it in a letter to the New York Times. In any case, Ford was unsuccessful in his bid to be elected president and no ban on abortion was forthcoming. Bernardin remained a vocal champion of the unborn, publishing a lengthy editorial in the Times in early 1978 condemning proposals to increase the availability of and education on contraceptives as an answer to increasing teen pregnancy and subsequent abortions.

The archbishop argued that educating teenagers on contraception would nudge them toward sexual activity. Some readers took to the letters pages to attack or defend

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Bernardin, with one doctor saying the archbishop was “as unqualified to offer such
dvice [on teen sex education] as a non-swimmer to teach a course on swimming” and
that “the quaint notion that education in contraceptive techniques will motivate young
people to precocious sexual activity is absurd.”¹¹ Brenda Becker responded by calling the
doctor’s criticism a “cheap shot to the thousands of teen-agers, Catholic and otherwise,
for whom Dr. Weisman’s ‘unattainable goal of abstinence’ is a day-to-day reality, chosen
out of a commitment to purity.”¹² Becker closed by observing “if there’s one thing harder
than struggling through adolescence celibate, it’s having some adult tell you indulgently
it can’t be done.”

Other national coverage of Bernardin was less sensational. The archbishop was
often called upon to comment on the contemporary state of American Catholicism, which
many perceived to be in decline. Among those was priest-sociologist Andrew Greeley,
who warned that “if Rome wants to salvage American Catholicism - and the money
which has historically come from it - it is going to have to retire a considerable number of
mitered birdbrains,” this last a barbed criticism of unnamed bishops.¹³ Greeley recently
had concluded a survey of the American Church; the survey highlighted “school closings,
fewer worshipers, declining financial support, nuns and priests exiting from the active
ministry, [and] challenges to traditional authority” as indicators of ill health in United
States Catholicism. Bernardin admitted that the survey provided “valuable and important
data” but offered no comment on his own flock in Cincinnati. Even while the NCCB

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contended with the objective findings of the Greeley report, the Call to Action conference met in Detroit in 1976 to consider the future of the Church. Among other concerns, the conference collectively expressed its support for divorced and remarried Catholics, married priests, and female priests. Bernardin said publicly that the conference’s vocal proponents, which he called “special interest groups,” were not representative of American Catholicism.

In his role as NCCB president, Bernardin also stood in the sightline between the American media and the Holy See, from where he did not always toe the Vatican line entirely. Bernardin maintained an open mind about some of the Call to Action group’s arguments, for example, expressing support for “continued dialogue” on women in the priesthood despite the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s definitive declaration of such ordinations’ impossibility. Bernardin also stood between the Vatican and individual American bishops like Carroll Dozier of the Diocese of Memphis, Tennessee. Dozier had come under Vatican scrutiny for offering general absolution in a communal service - instead of absolving individual Catholics in one-on-one confession - in late 1976. As head of the NCCB, Bernardin had received the official word of Rome’s disagreement; although he agreed that “personal confession and absolution was the ‘ordinary way’,” Bernardin said also that the Memphis ceremony was Dozier’s call.


Bernardin’s biographers have done no better to explain the bishop’s time in Cincinnati. Tim Unsworth, after criticizing some of Bernardin’s Queen City predecessors as “old-school triumphalists who led princely lives,” notes little beyond the fact that in Cincinnati the archbishop moved from the palatial episcopal residence to a suite in the diocesan seminary.17 Bernardin’s friend Eugene Kennedy takes a similar tack to Unsworth, noting that the episcopal residence “bore history in its every overstuffed couch and heavily draped window.”18 Kennedy also relates Bernardin’s later move to “a three-room suite on the top floor of the diocesan offices in the heart of the city,” on Eighth Street, although Kennedy’s commemorative edition on Bernardin mentions Cincinnati only as a chronological stepping stone to Chicago.19 Even when discussing Bernardin’s personal life, his biographers neglect Cincinnati as meaningful in itself. Unsworth mentions Bernardin’s mid-1970s struggle with maintaining his own prayer life, while Kennedy cites a Cincinnati priest characterizing Bernardin as exceedingly cautious in his public statements (“were he asked to offer grace before a banquet dinner, he would read it from a three-by-five file card”).20 The most distinctive characterization Roger Fortin offers for Bernardin’s time in Cincinnati is that the bishop “helped revitalize and reorganize the archdiocese.”21 Most egregious is the total absence of Cincinnati from the

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compilation *A Blessing to Each Other*, which treats Bernardin’s contributions to Jewish-Catholic dialogue in Chicago.\(^ {22}\)

The Cincinnati press covered Bernardin extensively, although as with the national press the coverage dealt often with the archbishop’s activity with the NCCB and his role as a national spokesman for the American Church. Coverage by the *Enquirer* and the *Post* showed Bernardin to cross what *Time* and *U.S. Catholic* may have understood a decade before to be opposing camps: while Bernardin was willing to discuss married priests, he made clear in early 1977 that women would not be ordained (his previous commitment to dialogue notwithstanding) and reiterated the Church’s stance on homosexual acts.\(^ {23}\) Unlike his predecessors, Bernardin was not all-in on public support for private education, supporting levies for public education in some instances and maintaining neutrality in others.\(^ {24}\) Ultimately, the element that earned Bernardin the national spotlight - his consistent opposition to abortion and later broadening of that view to a full range of life issues - was covered extensively in the Queen City.

Remarkably, Bernardin’s status as a national leader may have made a substantial contribution to Cincinnati’s slide even further away from the spotlight. When Leibold introduced the notion of a post-Vatican II synod in 1970, Cincinnati was a leading


archdiocese for having done so. During the Bernardin episcopacy, both the archbishop and his flock knew the toll his time with the NCCB was taking; in one newspaper article, he vowed to spend more time in Cincinnati, hoping to be “much more involved on a personal basis now in various activities of the archdiocese” after the end of his presidency.25

From a narrative standpoint, Bernardin marks a clearly discernible shift in both local and national Catholicism. With his episcopacy the distinctive characteristics of Cincinnati Catholicism discussed in this dissertation - the Church’s engagement with race, Catholic dialogue with Jews, and local interpretation of Vatican II - faded as the Church in the 1970s found itself adrift amongst declining mass attendance, a seeming exodus from the priestly and religious life, and increasing willingness on the part of lay Catholics to disregard the doctrinal guidance of the clergy. As Bernardin fought very public battles over abortion at the national level, it became clear to Americans both Catholic and otherwise not only that Catholics were struggling to understand their own place in American society once again but that lay Catholics were increasingly alienated from the clergy - and on no issue as much as birth control.26 If Archbishop Leibold’s tenure was marked by an excited energy in the local Church to discover itself anew after the Second Vatican Council, that energy dissipated into anxious grasping for purpose as Bernardin began his stint as chief shepherd of Cincinnati. By situating oneself during

25 James L. Adams, “Archbishop Bernardin will be more visible here,” *Cincinnati Post*, Nov. 11, 1977, 8.

26 “Despite their steadily diminishing numbers, a good many Catholics in 1965 were still obedient to Church teaching. (The rate of diminution was impressive: by 1970, fully 68 percent of Catholic wives in their childbearing years were limiting their families by a means other than abstinence or rhythm.)” Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Catholics and Contraception: An American History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004, 220.)
Bernardin’s episcopacy and “looking backward,” it becomes eminently clear how the
death of Archbishop Leibold marked the passing of the Vatican II era in Cincinnati.

It was not until Bernardin left for Chicago in 1982 that his status as a leader in Jewish-
Catholic dialogue began to grow.

Cincinnati’s city newspapers made only few mentions of him interacting with Jews
during Bernardin’s time in the Queen City, including his critique of a United Nations
resolution that called Zionism “a form of racism and racial discrimination.” Both city
papers reported on Bernardin’s receipt of an award in 1980 for “work in civic and
humanitarian affairs” conferred by the National Council of Christians and Jews’ Southern
Ohio District, although what Bernardin had achieved precisely was not mentioned.

Roger Fortin, the archdiocese’s most recent historian, says nothing at all about
Bernardin’s relationship with the city’s Jewish community.

The fading of race from the archdiocesan narrative may involve a degree of
exhaustion and frustration. Black Catholics still felt isolated from the Church in general,
citing ongoing racism by white Catholics and Bernardin’s apparent neglect of race and
poverty. Bernardin had fended off criticism in the summer of 1976 that the proposed
merger of two predominantly white schools would “cloak the archdiocesan leadership in
‘robes of racism’ by leaving out a nearby predominantly black school. It was not until


28 “Christians, Jews honor 3 with awards,” Cincinnati Post, May 9, 1980, 5b; “NCCJ will honor
three Cincinnatians for their roles,” Cincinnati Enquirer, May 9, 1980, A14. An article several days later
said “Three religious leaders will receive awards today for promoting ‘justice, amity, understanding and
cooparation among those of differing races, religions and ethnic backgrounds’,,” but again said nothing on
Bernardin’s actual contributions. “3 Receive Ecumenical Awards,” Cincinnati Enquirer, May 13, 1980,
D3.

29 Fortin, Faith and Action, 389.
1982 that Bernardin wrote “The Heresy of Racism,” an essay published in *The Catholic Telegraph*.\(^\text{31}\) There Bernardin argued that “the idea of racism is in fundamental contradiction to some of the most basic doctrines of Christianity.”\(^\text{32}\) Despite such arguments, the Church had failed to fully address racism among its flock; just the year before, charges of racism had been directed at Bernardin personally.\(^\text{33}\) The Archdiocese’s seeming lack of concern for blacks would carry over into the episcopacy of Daniel Pilarczyk, who headed the diocese upon Bernardin’s departure for Chicago.\(^\text{34}\)

III

Roger Fortin describes the history of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as “a success story.”\(^\text{35}\) Setting aside the question of whether historians ought to make such judgments, especially when an institution and the people who comprise it are still living, it is more appropriate to call this story one of struggle, contestation, and, ultimately, growth. Through the response of Cincinnati’s Catholics to reform movements in both American society at large and in their own faith tradition, the perennial struggle of reconciling the


\(^\text{34}\) Fortin, *ibid.*, 390.

\(^\text{35}\) Fortin, *ibid.*, 390.
deepest personal commitments and beliefs with conflicting arguments on both faith and citizenship becomes apparent.

Conflict over race reveals the deepest split dividing Catholic from Catholic and “progressive” from “conservative” in this period. At the same time that Vatican II was reforming what seemed to be every aspect of Catholic life, it offered little by way of direction on the American racial crisis simmering (and sometimes boiling over) across the country. Many lay Catholics, invigorated by the Council’s call to engage with society, worked for racial equity; some of their co-religionists, equally emboldened by the Council’s wish for the laity to speak their minds, made it clear that they wanted no part of the contemporary push for an end to structural racism, denying there was a problem to begin with or disclaiming personal responsibility. In well-publicized ways, race became a unifier between Catholic and non-Catholic, with many religiously-motivated racial projects being inherently ecumenical and interfaith. Yet it does not seem that white Catholic opposition to racial projects extended also to opposition to working with Jews toward civic goals: while those same Catholics opposed to racial equity may also have favored state aid for school and thus departed from their Jewish neighbors and co-citizens, it does not appear that Jewish opposition to state aid was ever understood to be intrinsically linked to their support for racial harmony. On race, as on school aid, the split between Catholic and Catholic on the one hand and Catholic and Jew on the other was based on differing interpretations of community and civil society - not on the basis of faith.

However, notions of civil society and faith did collide when the institutional Church attempted to address the contemporary racial crisis. As seen in the public
statements of Archbishop Alter and the private correspondence of Auxiliary Bishop Edward McCarthy, the Cincinnati hierarchy attempted a delicate balancing act between public support for racial equity and the stability of parishes and institutions that might otherwise be upended by fast changes to the racial order. In this balancing act we see most clearly the struggle and contestation mentioned above, with the Church making clear (and sometimes bold) statements favoring an end to segregation and discrimination, while on the other hand taking a severe attitude vis-à-vis the Black Manifesto and any other racial activism that smacked of radicalism. The impassioned open letter sent by Brother Joseph Davis to Archbishop Alter, assuring the prelate that only some sort of revolution would bring about meaningful racial change, was indicative of the sharp emotions and deep turmoil that rocked the local Church in the 1960s.

Synod VI institutionalized the Church’s efforts to address racism, largely by abandoning notions of white ministry to blacks and instead encouraging and facilitating black leadership and responsibility for black communities. Yet years later, during the episcopacy of Joseph Bernardin, not even these far-reaching guidelines had achieved their intended purpose, and black Catholics felt shut out from the life of the archdiocese. While the local Church had grown through its support for Synod VI and the racial aspects of its mandate for the future, still it would struggle for years to come to affect that personal conversion called for by Archbishop Alter years prior.

More peaceful was the development of relations between Catholics and Jews in Cincinnati. If there was a widespread sense among local Catholics before Vatican II that their Jewish neighbors were responsible for the death of Christ before (“deicide” was the term hotly contested in St. Peter’s Basilica during the Council), that belief has not
survived in the archival record. If Cincinnati’s historic Jewish community felt oppressed by their Catholic fellow citizens, that feeling, too, is absent from the sources available to historians today.

To be sure, not everyone was entirely sanguine over *Nostra ætate*. Some felt the Church had no right to say anything about Judaism to begin with; others resented the implication of the Church “absolving” the Jews of something that only a select few individuals had perpetrated almost two millennia before; still others felt betrayed by their own co-religionists asking the Catholic Church to make an intervention into the history of Christian-Jewish relations, as though Jews needed Catholicism’s approval in any way. Yet ultimately Cincinnati’s Jewish community charitably viewed *Nostra ætate* as a welcome - if overdue - corrective to centuries of Christian oppression of Jews worldwide and moved on with their everyday lives in Cincinnati, where they had experienced little Catholic mistreatment.

Yet there was discord. Many Catholics, as well as the archdiocese as an organization, supported some form of governmental aid for students in parochial and central Catholic schools. More specifically, “Catholics contended that such social services as bus transportation, health services, lunches, textbooks, and vouchers should be regarded as ‘civic benefits’ and be made available to all children.”\(^{36}\) Teaching students in Catholic schools was said to save the public school system tens of millions of dollars. These sorts of aid systems, according to local Catholics, did not represent state sanction of religion but rather guaranteed freedom of educational choice without having to pay once for public schools via taxes and then again through private school tuition.

Cincinnati’s Jews - like many of their coreligionists across the country - disagreed entirely. For them, any state subsidy for private education was a blatant breach of the wall separating church and state. Once that wall was breached, they contended, it was but a few short steps to preferential treatment of certain faiths at best and governmental control of religious education at worst. Cincinnati’s Jews vehemently protested against school aid on grounds both constitutional and preservative of their own educational autonomy.

Missing from disagreements over educational funding, however, was any sense of religiously-based biases. Neither group hesitated to name the other in defending its own position, yet at no point were either Catholics or Jews castigated as un-American, untrustworthy, manipulative, or self-interested - all accusations that had been made against both Catholics and Jews over the course of American history. Instead, the disagreements turned on interpretations of citizenship and the connection between personal faith and public entitlements.

When Archbishop Karl Alter concluded Synod V in 1954, the Church in Cincinnati was stable as far as its institutions were concerned. All that needed doing was fine-grained revisions of archdiocesan legislation. By the end of the 1960s, it had become clear that the local Church needed to experience a lengthy process of introspection toward the goal of fulfilling the promise of Vatican II at the local level. Although that process was characterized largely by consensus and collaboration, some Cincinnati Catholics yearned for an earlier era and felt betrayed by their “progressive” co-religionists. Ultimately, however, with Synod VI Catholicism in Cincinnati grappled with the internal reforms of the faith, with its relationship to non-Christians in the city, and
with its historic and contemporary attitude to racial minorities - all questions that have exercised local Catholicism to a greater or lesser degree to the present day. With a better understanding of Cincinnati Catholicism, which this dissertation has striven to provide, one might call this story not the history of success but, rather, lived history in its truest sense.
APPENDIX A

THE BLACK MANIFESTO

We the black people assembled in Detroit, Michigan for the National Black Economic Development Conference are fully aware that we have been forced to come together because racist white America has exploited our resources, our minds, our bodies, our labor. For centuries we have been forced to live as colonized people inside the United States, victimized by the most vicious, racist system in the world. We have helped to build the most industrial country in the world.

We are therefore demanding of the white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues which are part and parcel of the system of capitalism, that they begin to pay reparations to black people in this country. We are demanding $500,000,000 from the Christian white churches and the Jewish synagogues. This total comes to 15 dollars per nigger. This is a low estimate for we maintain there are probably more than 30,000,000 black people in this country. $15 a nigger is not a large sum of money and we know that the churches and synagogues have a tremendous wealth and its membership, white America, has profited and still exploits black people. We are also not unaware that the exploitation of colored peoples around the world is aided and abetted by the white Christian churches and synagogues. This demand for $500,000,000 is not an idle

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resolution or empty words. Fifteen dollars for every black brother and sister in the United States is only a beginning of the reparations due us as people who have been exploited and degraded, brutalized, killed and persecuted. Underneath all of this exploitation, the racism of this country has produced a psychological effect upon us that we are beginning to shake off. We are no longer afraid to demand our full rights as a people in this decadent society.

We are demanding $500,000,000 to be spent in the following way:

1. We call for the establishment of a Southern land bank to help our brothers and sisters who have to leave their land because of racist pressure for people who want to establish cooperative farms, but who have no funds. We have seen too many farmers evicted from their homes because they have dared to defy the white racism of this country. We need money for land. We must fight for massive sums of money for this Southern Land Bank. We call for $200,000,000 to implement this program.

2. We call for the establishment of four major publishing and printing industries in the United States to be funded with ten million dollars each. These publishing houses are to be located in Detroit, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New York. They will help to generate capital for further cooperative investments in the black community, provide jobs and an alternative to the white-dominated and controlled printing field.

3. We call for the establishment of four of the most advanced scientific and futuristic audio-visual networks to be located in Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland and Washington, D.C. These TV networks will provide an alternative to the racist
propaganda that fills the current television networks. Each of these TV networks will be funded by ten million dollars each.

4. We call for a research skills center which will provide research on the problems of black people. This center must be funded with no less than 30 million dollars.

5. We call for the establishment of a training center for the teaching of skills in community organization, photography, movie making, television making and repair, radio building and repair and all other skills needed in communication. This training center shall be funded with no less than ten million dollars.

6. We recognize the role of the National Welfare Rights Organization and we intend to work with them. We call for ten million dollars to assist in the organization of welfare recipients. We want to organize the welfare workers in this country so that they may demand more money from the government and better administration of the welfare system of this country.

7. We call for $20,000,000 to establish a National Black Labor Strike and Defense Fund. This is necessary for the protection of black workers and their families who are fighting racist working conditions in this country.

We call for the establishment of the International Black Appeal (IBA). This International Black Appeal will be funded with no less than $20,000,000. The IBA is charged with producing more capital for the establishment of cooperative businesses in the United States and in Africa, our Motherland. The International Black Appeal is one of the most important demands that we are making for we know that it can generate and raise funds throughout the United States and help our African brothers. The IBA is charged with three functions and shall be headed by James Forman:
(a) Raising money for the program of the National Black Economic Development Conference.

(b) The development of cooperatives in African countries and support of African Liberation movements

(c) Establishment of a Black Anti-Defamation League which will protect our African image.

1. We call for the establishment of a Black University to be funded with $130,000,000 to be located in the South. Negotiations are presently under way with a Southern University.

2. We demand that IFCO allocate all unused funds in the planning budget to implement the demands of this conference.

In order to win our demands we are aware that we will have to have massive support, therefore:

(1) We call upon all black people throughout the United States to consider themselves as members of the National Black Economic Development Conference and to act in unity to help force the racist white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues to implement these demands.

(2) We call upon all the concerned black people across the country to contact black workers, black women, black students and black unemployed, community groups, welfare organizations, teacher organizations, church leaders and organizations, explaining how these demands are vital to the black community of the U.S. Pressure by whatever means necessary should be applied to the white power structure of the racist white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues. All black people should act boldly in
confronting our white oppressors and demanding this modest reparation of 15 dollars per black man.

(3) Delegates and members of the National Black Economic Development Conference are urged to call press conferences in the cities and to attempt to get as many black organizations as possible to support the demands of the conference. The quick use of the press in the local areas will heighten the tension and these demands must be attempted to be won in a short period of time, although we are prepared for protracted and long range struggle.

(4) We call for the total disruption of selected church sponsored agencies operating anywhere in the U.S. and the world. Black workers, black women, black students and the black unemployed are encouraged to seize the offices, telephones, and printing apparatus of all church sponsored agencies and to hold these in trusteeship until our demands are met.

(5) We call upon all delegates and members of the National Black Economic Development Conference to stage sit-in demonstrations at selected black and white churches. This is not to be interpreted as a continuation of the sit-in movement of the early sixties but we know that active confrontation inside white churches is possible and will strengthen the possibility of meeting our demands. Such confrontation can take the form of reading the Black Manifesto instead of a sermon or passing it out to church members. The principle of self-defense should be applied if attacked.

(6) On May 4, 1969 or a date thereafter, depending upon local conditions, we call upon black people to commence the disruption of the racist churches and synagogues throughout the United States.
(7) We call upon IFCO to serve as a central staff to coordinate the mandate of the conference and to reproduce and distribute en mass literature, leaflets, news items, press releases and other material.

(8) We call upon all delegates to find within the white community those forces which will work under the leadership of blacks to implement these demands by whatever means necessary. By taking such actions, white Americans will demonstrate concretely that they are willing to fight the white skin privilege and the white supremacy and racism which has forced us as black people to make these demands.

(9) We call upon all white Christians and Jews to practice patience, tolerance, understanding, and nonviolence as they have encouraged, advised and demanded that we as black people should do throughout our entire enforced slavery in the United States. The true test of their faith and belief in the Cross and the words of the prophets will certainly be put to a test as we seek legitimate and extremely modest reparations for our role in developing the industrial base of the Western world through our slave labor. But we are no longer slaves, we are men and women, proud of our African heritage, determined to have our dignity.

(10) We are so proud of our African heritage and realize concretely that our struggle is not only to make revolution in the United States, but to protect our brothers and sisters in Africa and to help them rid themselves of racism, capitalism, and imperialism by whatever means necessary, including armed struggle. We are and must be willing to fight the defamation of our African image wherever it rears its ugly head. We are therefore charging the Steering Committee to create a Black Anti-Defamation League to be funded by money raised from the International Black Appeal.
(11) We fully recognize that revolution in the United States and Africa, our Motherland, is more than a one dimensional operation. It will require the total integration of the political, economic, and military components and therefore, we call upon all our brothers and sisters who have acquired training and expertise in the fields of engineering, electronics, research, community organization, physics, biology, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, military science and warfare to assist the National Black Economic Development Conference in the implementation of its program.

(12) To implement these demands we must have a fearless leadership. We must have a leadership which is willing to battle the church establishment to implement these demands. To win our demands we will have to declare war on the white Christian churches and synagogues and this means we may have to fight the government structure of this country. Let no one her think that these demands will be met by our mere stating them. For the sake of the churches and synagogues, we hope that they have the wisdom to understand that these demands are modest and reasonable. But if the white Christians and Jews are not willing to meet our demands through peace and good will, then we declare war and we are prepared to fight by whatever means necessary…. 

Brothers and sisters, we no longer are shuffling our feet and scratching our heads. We are tall, black and proud.

And we say to the white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, to the government of this country and to all the white racist imperialists who compose it, there is only one thing left that you can do to further degrade black people and that is to kill us. But we have been dying too long for this country. We have died in every war. We are dying in Vietnam today fighting the wrong enemy.
The new black man wants to live and to live means that we must not become static or merely believe in self-defense. We must boldly go out and attack the white Western world at its power centers. The white Christian churches are another form of government in this country and they are used by the government of this country to exploit the people of Latin America, Asia and Africa, but the day is soon coming to an end. Therefore, brothers and sisters, the demands we make upon the white Christian churches and the Jewish synagogues are small demands. They represent 15 dollars per black person in these United States. We can legitimately demand this from the church power structure. We must demand more from the United States Government.

But to win our demands from the church which is linked up with the United States Government, we must not forget that it will ultimately be by force and power that we will win.

We are not threatening the churches. We are saying that we know the churches came with the military might of the colonizers and have been sustained by the military might of the colonizers. Hence, if the churches in colonial territories were established by military might, we know deep within our hearts that we must be prepared to use force to get our demands. We are not saying that this is the road we want to take. It is not, but let us be very clear that we are not opposed to force and we are not opposed to violence. We were captured in Africa by violence. We were kept in bondage and political servitude and forced to work as slaves by the military machinery and the Christian church working hand in hand.

We recognize that in issuing this manifesto we must prepare for a long range educational campaign in all communities of this country, but we know that the Christian
churches have contributed to our oppression in white America. We do not intend to abuse our black brothers and sisters in black churches who have uncritically accepted Christianity. We want them to understand how the racist white christian church with its hypocritical declarations and doctrines of brotherhood has abused our trust and faith. An attack on the religious beliefs of black people is not our major objective, even though we know that we were not Christians, when we were brought to this country, but that Christianity was used to help enslave us. Our objective in issuing this Manifesto is to force the racist white Christian Church to begin the payment of reparations which are due to all black people, not only by the Church but also by private business and the U.S. government. We see this focus on the Christian Church as an effort around which all black people can unite.

Our demands are negotiable, but they cannot be minimized, they can only be increased and the Church is asked to come up with larger sums of money than we are asking. Our slogans are:

ALL ROADS MUST LEAD TO REVOLUTION
UNITE WITH WHOMEVER YOU CAN UNITE
NEUTRALIZE WHEREVER POSSIBLE
FIGHT OUR ENEMIES RELENTLESSLY
VICTORY TO THE PEOPLE
LIFE AND GOOD HEALTH TO MANKIND
RESISTANCE TO DOMINATION BY THE WHITE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUES
REVOLUTIONARY BLACK POWER

WE SHALL WIN WITHOUT A DOUBT
1. In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions […]

4. As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ-Abraham's sons according to faith (6)-are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild

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shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles. making both one in Himself.

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: " theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, nor did the Jews in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading. Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues-such is the witness of the Apostle. In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3:9).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by
God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

NOTES [reproduced here as in Vatican website document]

[...]


8. Cf. Eph. 2:14-16

9. Cf. Lk. 19:44

10. Cf. Rom. 11:28

11. Cf. Rom. 11:28-29; cf. dogmatic Constitution, Lumen gentium (Light of nations) AAS, 57 (1965) pag. 20

12. Cf. Is. 66:23; Ps. 65:4; Rom. 11:11-32
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