

The History of the Old Catholic Movement within Catholicism

The history of the Old Catholic Movement within Catholicism is significant for our faith community because it is from the Old Catholic Church that the Ecumenical Catholic Communion received her apostolic succession and her distinctive theological orientation. This article was written by an Old Catholic Benedictine brother who lived in an Old Catholic community in Woodstock, New York. This writing is somewhat dated in that it was written and published in 1941 for a local newspaper, The Catskill Mountain Star.

Old Catholics

The vicissitudes of time and the machinations of men give words strange connotations. Often they no longer fit the mental pictures they create. When Woodstockians looked up to Overlook Mountain and saw high on its slopes the gray clad figures of a religious community rehabilitating the deserted little chapel below Mead's Mountain House, they were puzzled to hear the several young men calling themselves "Old", displaying an evangelistic enthusiasm for a faith they called "Catholic". They were completely nonplused when one of the older men of the community in overalls addressed a similarly clad younger man "Father".

With the passage of days, however, Woodstock had grown to know and like these men as they have grown to like Woodstock more and more. Through the first summer Sundays the bell that echoed down the mountainside from the Church of Christ-on-the-Mount called increasing numbers to worship with the young "Old" Catholics and with the advent of winter a place of worship had to be found in the village. Then in an old red barn, adjoining the Woodstock Country Club on the Saugerties-Woodstock road, whose hand hewn beams and weathered boards teem with memories and the romance of bygone days, they prayed for the common healing of the ills of humanity together with people who have been previously unchurched, dechurched or never-before churched. But with the exception of those with whom their activities have grown, and the friendly folk with whom they visit, the paradox of "Old" and "Catholic" and "young" and "evangelistic" still remains.

Except for the fact that "they never past a collection plate" at Saint Dunstan's Church but believe instead in laboring with their own hands at crafts that are both beautiful and practical many good folk still know little of their past, their

future hopes, their unique doctrinal and ecclesiastical position or of their modern and adaptable approach to the world's problems. To let them know that in the first place "Old Catholicism" is not merely a local and new cult but a long existent world wide "Movement" — that their ministrations are not bound within the limited horizons of creed and denominationalism but extend to the boundless need of people weary of religious disunity and eager for a genuine expression of Christ-likeness, is their own self-desire.

To adequately portray the gray habited Benedictines of the Old Catholic Church necessitates a major historical operation. Out of the pages of Christian history one must find the path that identifies their purpose. Of the various Christian movements in America, few are as little known and as much misunderstood as the Old Catholics. The foundations of their history must be traced to the first centuries of Christianity. To identify them in the contemporary scene of Christian activities, however, means that an orientation in relation to other bodies must be made.

The division of Christendom into two great categories, Protestantism and Catholicism, is familiar to all. But while most people know more or less of the various denominations of Protestantism, what is known as the Catholic Church has its administrative and disciplinary divisions with which few people, not historians or theologians, are familiar. Holding the same essential faith, the Eastern Orthodox Church with 180 million souls and the Roman Catholic Church with its 240 million souls, each hold a different concept of administration. The Old Catholic Church is unique in that it holds the Catholic faith, being in union with the Eastern Orthodox Church, representing the Catholic Church in the western world, but disavowing the administrative peculiarities of the Latin (Roman) Church.

To hold a position of any kind obviously admits that there must be a counter position — both of which must have been arrived at through the consequences of some action in the past. The touchstone of how closely the Old Catholic movement represents primitive Christianity can only be shown by proving its fidelity to the faith of the undivided Church and through the unbroken succession of its Episcopate (Bishops).

The different conceptions of truth that people hold, like words, are paradoxical. But truth, unlike words, remains unchanging. What was truth in the Apostolic Church is truth today. All Christians should readily admit that the test of any principle of the Christian faith is to present it to the mind of the early Christian Church. It is certain that for the first nine hundred years at least, the Christian world was united in a common bond of faith.

What was Christ's Church like, then, before words like "schism", "heretic", "sect" were used by Christians to describe one another? We know that the Church was one, that its faith was Catholic in the sense best described by St. Vincent of Lerinz, "Such teaching is truly Catholic as has been believed in all places, at all times, and by all the faithful." By this test of universality, antiquity, and consent, all controversial points in belief must be tried.

Until the year 1054 AD when the first unhappy division took place, the Church was as it should be, "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic." What happened after the division of course appears differently to the mind of every individual and the truth becomes hard to discern. It is safe to say then, that the only way of proving the truth of any contemporary interpretation of Christianity, is to submit it to the examination of the common mind of the Christian Church before its division took place. Was it believed by all Christians everywhere, at all times before the year 1054 A.D.? — is the test every question of faith should meet.

The Undivided Church

The Old Catholic Movement maintains that the obvious basis of reuniting the several divisions of the Christian Church is the common acceptance of the Faith of the entire Church prior to the first division in the year 1054 A.D. from whence all the familiar divisions of today ultimately stem. This theory admits that the 16th century Reformation is not principally responsible for the "unhappy divisions" that beset the Christian religion in the western world.

What caused the first division was not a point of faith so much as it was a matter of jurisdiction and administration. History reveals that the early Church was governed by the Apostolic authority vested in all the bishops. Matters of faith and morals affecting the whole Church were brought before an

Ecumenical Council (of which there were seven universally accepted) over which the five great bishops of Christendom presided. These bishops, whose Sees represented the important cities of Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, Alexandria and Rome, were known as patriarchs in whom the Church of the ancients recognized its sovereignty.

If we are to single out the primary cause of the first division of this Church, it would be the deeply rooted objection of the Patriarch of Rome to this particular theory of Church government. Rome maintained that they and their successors held supreme authority over all Christendom as spiritual heirs of St. Peter, whom, they held, was the first Bishop of Rome and to whom, they contended, the "keys to the kingdom of heaven" were alone divinely entrusted. The four patriarchs of the Church in the East maintained the traditional belief in the administration of Christ's Church, offering for the sake of unity the title "primus inter pares" (first amongst equals) to the Roman bishop.

But with the Church of the West developing a strong belief that a kind of primacy resided in the Roman bishop by divine enactment, the breach widened into an open division and henceforth the Christian Church in the East and in the West was to be distinct and divided. In the East, to this day, the patriarchal theory of the Church's government is held, while in the West the emphasis on the personal supremacy of the Pope over all Christendom was gradually increased from the year 1054 until the final definition of Papal infallibility was decreed in the Vatican Council of A.D. 1870 as a dogma which all Christians were bound to accept as an article of faith.

In explanation of the abridged nature of these earlier chapters, the writer would plead his intention of placing before the reader's eye as a picture, as vivid and complete as possible on the state of the early Church, without touching in a controversial spirit upon the sore points of its later history. But since it has been necessary to go this far to bring to light the basic reason for the existence of the Old Catholic Movement, let it be noted, that only the salient points of early history are touched upon, and those wishing to enter more fully into details of the causes that led to the division of Christianity are asked to refer to the pages of ordinary church histories.

What is important for our immediate purpose is merely to establish the basis upon which a school of thought regarding the Church's administration developed within the Roman Church, flourishing time and again in such celebrated and glorious figures as Savonarola, Paulo Sarpi, the Scholars of Port-Royal, the so-called "Jansenists", the Church of Holland and others, to develop finally in the twilight of the nineteenth century into what came to be known as "primitive" or "old" Catholicism.

We are left free now in the following chapters to touch upon the stirring and romantic history of the Port-Royalists of France, the rise of the movement within the Church of Rome and finally the dramatic Vatican Council which culminated in the definite formation of the present Old Catholic movement whose purpose is not a new reformation from without, but a quiet restoration of the Christian Church to its original state from within.

The Free French Church

From 1054 A.D. to the very threshold of our own times, the question of defining the extent of Papal authority continually occupied the growing Catholic Church in the West. A struggle was manifested in two distinct schools of thought.

One school of thought maintained the belief that the supreme teaching authority within the Church rested in the Ecumenical Councils on the ground that all Catholic Bishops have equal pastoral authority.

The other school in opposition advanced the principle called "ultra-montanism", which maintained that the Pope was above the authority of the Councils.

During the 17th Century "ultra-montanism" found its principle resistance in the Church of France, and its principle support among the Jesuits. The Faculty of the Sorbonne proved to be a great bulwark against ultra-montane theories and championed scholars maintaining the French cause.

The entire body of French clergy drew up a declaration in 1682 A.D. in order to protect the canonical rights of the French Church against the encroachments

of the Ultra-montanists. In writing this declaration of 1682, the French clergy were mindful of the primitive teaching of the Catholic Church, restated by the Council of Constance (1414-1418), which decreed, it had "its authority immediately from Christ, and everyone, whatever his rank or position, even if it be the Pope himself, is bound to obey it in all things which pertain to the Faith, to the healing of schism, and to the general renewal of the Church." "This document," a contemporary historian says, "is an important document in the history of Old Catholicism." Its contents may be summarized under the following subheadings: (1) The Pope could not release subjects from obedience to temporal power. The authority received by the Church from God is spiritual, not temporal (i.e., "My Kingdom is not of this world."). (2) That the Decrees of the Council of Constance remain in full force in the Church. The Papal authority in no way affects the perpetual and immovable strength of the Decrees of the Council. (3) The independence of the French Church must be maintained — the authority of the Apostles must be exercised in accordance with the mind of the whole Church. (4) That the decisions of the Pope are not infallible — his "judgment is not irreversible until confirmed by the consent of the whole Church" (Jervis, Hist. Ch. France ii.p. 50).

The Declaration, signed by 34 Archbishops and Bishops and formulated under the guidance of Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, reaffirmed the position which had at all times been dear to the French Church. This document became a norm for the conduct of relations between the National churches of Northern Europe and the Roman Curia.

Italian Ultra-montane writers attacked the French clergy. In response, Bishop Bossuet wrote a "Defense of the Declaration" which so powerfully influenced belief in the principles held by the French Church that his learned opponent, Cardinal Orsi, advised the Roman Theologians to abandon ultra-montanism as a hopeless" cause.

However, the most powerful factor in preserving the "Old" Catholic tradition in France was the support of such scholars as Arnauld, Pascal, Cyran, Tillimont and others. They carried the standards of Port Royal, the envy even today of scholars, theologians, educators, and churchmen.

Francois Mauriac, whose judgment of Port Royal is obviously biased by personal predilections, nevertheless admits, in his recent book on Port Royal's most celebrated son, that "after three centuries Blaise Pascal is still alive. His slightest thought troubles or charms or irritates, but he is understood instantly. Pascal is the brother of all sinners, of all converts, of all wounded men whose wounds may reopen at any instant, of all whom Christ has pursued from afar, and who trust only in His love."

Port Royal in France was not only the vessel containing the mental and spiritual giants of its day, but it proved a major influence in preserving for our time the Tradition of the Church, that her children believe, and that the Saints knew, loved, lived, and died for.

The Heritage of Port Royal

To trace the origin of Port Royal, around which the storms of Church and State revolved in the 17th century in the controversy touching on the growth of Papal power, it is necessary to go back to the year 1204. At that date an Abbey was founded at the head of the Valley of the Rhodon near Chevreuse (about 18 miles southwest of Paris) by Eudes de Sully, Bishop of Paris, and Mathilde de Garlande, to ensure prayers for the safe return of Mathilde's husband, Mathieu De Marly De Montmorenci, who had gone to take part in the Fourth Crusade. The site of the Abbey was known as Port Royal, and it is said its name derived from a corruption of the low Latin "porra" which described the ponds and "mares" which abounded in the neighborhood.

The community of nuns of Port Royal flourished during the 14th and 15th centuries and attained certain fame, but in the 16th century the religious wars and the war with England tended to relax the discipline of all religious houses—and Port Royal did not escape from this infection of its religious life. As everywhere, in the religious houses of the time, the nuns of Port Royal became worldly and the rule of S. Benedict was forgotten, while for more than thirty years, no sermon had been preached save at seven or eight professions.

The regeneration of Port Royal came about under the guidance of Angelique Arnauld, appointed by a Papal Bull at the age of 11, in the year 1602, to be Abbess of Port Royal. Taking over the community which at that time consisted

of 10 sisters, Mere Angélique proceeded to reform it after having been “completely converted” nine years after her appointment. She succeeded in introducing vows of poverty and seclusion and re-introduced the teaching work of her Abbey after it had long lain idle. Though at first these increased austerities caused a rupture with the Arnauld family and no little trouble with the formerly ease-loving nuns, she was able to successfully heal all difficulties. Her energy and steadfastness of purpose overcame all obstacles: she not only won her family to Port Royal, but her influence made itself felt in other houses and a widespread revival of the spiritual ideal for which the primitive Cistercians were renowned took place. By the year 1626 Port Royal had increased the number of its inhabitants to more than 80.

To escape the unhealthy conditions engendered by the swamp land surrounding the Abbey, the community was required to take a house in Paris to which a body of nuns removed. The two sections of the convent were thereafter known as Port-Royal de Paris.

About 1636 A.D. a remarkable group of men—physicians, men of letters, soldiers, scholars and ecclesiasts, influenced by a friend of Port Royal, the Abbe de S. Cyran, took up their residence at Les Grange, near Port Royal des Champs, where they resolved to lead a life of self-renunciation and consecration and took for their rallying cry “Thought allied with faith”, making redemption of souls their mission. These men were the Solitaires. They took no vows, but systematically divided their time between religious exercises, literary pursuits, teaching and manual labour.

The Solitaires were regarded as forming a joint community with the nuns of Port Royal, among whom many had relatives. Among these men were Antoine Arnauld, Lemaistre de Sacy, Arnauld d’Andilly, Nicole and subsequently, Blaise Pascal, Lancelot and others. These men conducted schools called “Les Petites écoles de Port Royal” which soon acquired a great and undying reputation for anticipating in many ways modern ideas of education. In the hands of these men lay the spiritual destiny of “Old” Catholicism in France. Of them, the saintly princess, Madame Elizabeth, a sister of Louis XVI, wrote, “Their theology apart, that I do not understand, these gentlemen of Port Royal were holy persons. What a life they led, compared to ours!”

The Abbey of Port Royal was more than a convent of reformed nuns and the community of "Solitaires" more than a band of holy men gathered together from every walk of life to give themselves wholly to God. They had ideas which, supported by brilliant minds and holy lives, were considered dangerous to the pretensions of ultra-montanists, scholastics and ecclesiastical politicians. Saint Cyran had worked with Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ypres, in a study of the early Fathers in an attempt to restore vitality to the lifeless theology of the time and restore the Church to the simplicity and purity of primitive times. Jansen's work culminated in the publication of "Petrus Augustinus" in which their theories, based on the writings of St. Augustine, were expounded. Saint Cyran, however, continued to apply these theories to practice in life and the Port Royal Solitaires supported him. The Jesuits, having been severely censured in the "Augustinus" as fostering the ancient heresy of Pelagianism in the Church, exerted all their efforts to have it condemned. Five propositions were presented to the Pope as having been contained in the writings of Jansen and the request that they be condemned heretical. Though the Jesuits' plea was heeded, historians still doubt the likelihood that the propositions were ever contained in Jansen's works. The Jesuits also coined the word "Jansenist" as a term of reproach to the Port Royalists. A formulary was drawn up in which the five propositions were condemned and the Port Royalists were requested to sign it under pain of expulsion and suppression.

Richelieu, who had not been able to win Saint Cyran, whom he considered the "most learned man in Europe," to his political aims by offers of ecclesiastical preferments—in all five Sees which Saint Cyran refused—determined to use the situation to put him out of the way. Through the joint attacks of her adversaries Port Royal suffered. Saint Cyran was imprisoned on a vague charge of heresy. The nuns and Solitaires, refusing to sign the formulary that they were convinced was a false statement were several times dispersed, but their powerful defense in the brilliant language of Arnauld, the stirring writings of Pascal, and the saintly lives of the nuns and recluses held off the fatal day of the Abbey's complete destruction and earned them undying fame. To the doors of Port Royal flocked people hungry for spiritual nourishment in a desert of theological bickerings and dead scholasticism to find the peace of God even in the midst of these struggles. Marie de Gonsagne, later Queen of

Poland, had a lodging at Port Royal and subsequently offered the community a refuge from their persecutors in her kingdom.

But the Port Royalists did not flee from the ordeal. Saint Cyran, upon the death of Richelieu, was released from prison only to die shortly afterwards from the effects of the confinement. Mere Angelique died in 1661 in the midst of the battle. Jacqueline Pascal, her successor remained steadfast in vindicating Port Royal of an unjust calumination. Writing of conditions to a friend at that time, she says, "I know that it is not for women to defend the Faith, but when Bishops are as timorous as women, it befits women to be as brave as Bishops." Antoine Arnauld was stripped of his scholarly honours and died, an exile, in Holland. The combined strength of the enemy prevailed in time and the little schools were suppressed, the Solitaires dispersed, the nuns imprisoned, and finally in 1709, the Abbey was completely destroyed even to the desecration of the graves. It was said of the Port-Royalists that they led the lives of strict puritans yet were nonetheless Catholics who bowed neither before King nor Prelate in the defense of their Catholic faith. When a worldly prelate, friendly to Port Royal was described as a Jansenist, it was said of him, "What, he a Jansenist? That is impossible. To be a Jansenist one must first be a Christian."

Into All Lands

The ruin of Port Royal was a tragic and inhuman episode in the history of the ascendancy of the ultramontane party in the Catholic Church. The destruction of the abbey had been the avowed purpose of its detractors, the Jesuits, who, with the consent of King Louis XIV, thought thereby to put an end to what they contemptuously termed "Jansenism." They failed in this object. The celebrated hymnographer and historian of the Church of England, John Mason Neale in his book, "The So-Called Jansenists," could say almost 200 years later, "The spirit of Port Royal lived on, and still lives."

Pasquer Quesnel, the last of the so-called "Jansenists" connected with Port Royal, shouldered the mantle of Antoine Arnauld. Quesnel, elevated to the post of Director of the Oratorian School in Paris early in his career, was forced to flee France in 1684 with several others. They preferred exile rather than signing an anti-Jansenist formula which they regarded as a "senseless and

despotic" document and which all members of the Congregation of the Oratory were required by Rome to sign.

In Brussels he joined Antoine Arnauld and remained with him until his friend's death in 1694 and from then on he became the "oracle" of the Port Royalists. In May 1703 Quesnel was suddenly arrested in Brussels and thrown into the prison of the Archbishop of Malines who had obtained an order for his arrest from King Philip V of Spain. With the help of a Spaniard, who contrived to make a hole in the prison wall sufficiently large to admit the egress, Quesnel escaped.

Quesnel fled to Amsterdam where, after the fall of Port Royal, he continued with friends to fulfill the mission of conscientious Catholics. He died at Amsterdam in 1709 in time to witness the seeds of his mission bearing fruit. For in Holland, the means whereby Catholics cut off from the Church of Rome could cling to the Catholic Faith and maintain its primitive doctrine was at hand.

The French cause upheld by the Gallican Bishops against the growing claims of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, was to be crushed under the heel of Napoleon, who proved an unwitting ally of ultra-montanists. However, the Tradition and Episcopate of the Catholic Church was to be carried on through the Church of Holland and preserved until the day when the ultimate goal of ultra-montanism, the Declaration of Papal Infallibility, was to enslave all Roman Catholics to the will of a few and leave a portion of the Catholic flock, that adhered to the old and unchangeable faith of the Christian Church, without shepherds.

Here the intervention of the Hand of God, through the agency of Dominique Mary Varlet, Roman Catholic Bishop of Ascalon, forged the link by which Old Catholics the world over were to receive an Episcopate of undeniable Catholic authority and Apostolic succession.

The Church of Holland, which had provided shelter for many of the clergy of France from the persecution of the Jesuits, was itself to be the scene of the next stage of the struggle. With the rise of ultra-montanism the traditional right of the Church of Holland to elect its own Archbishop was in jeopardy.

The Metropolitan Chapter of the Cathedral Church at Utrecht had, from the beginning, possessed the right of electing its own Archbishop who exercised all ecclesiastical authority over the affairs of the Roman Catholic Church in Holland.

In 1697, exercising this customary privilege, the Chapter elected Peter Codde, their Vicar General and already Bishop of Sebaste, as their Archbishop. The Pope would not recognize this election and substituted a person of his own appointment, Theodore de Cock, who was expelled by the Chapter. But with the death of Archbishop Codde the See of Utrecht became vacant and Rome, refusing to accept Bishops elected by the Metropolitan Chapter, adopted a policy of withholding the Episcopate from the Church of Holland in the hope that the independent Church of Holland would submit to the will of the papacy or die a natural death.

Bishop Varlet, a French refugee in Holland, at the request of the Chapter, braved Papal censure by successively consecrating Cornelius Steenoven (1724) and Cornelius Jan Burchman (1725) as Archbishops of Utrecht. The celebrated canonist, Van Espen, defended the rights of the Chapter to elect its own Archbishop. The Church of Utrecht continues to this day in preserving an independent Catholic Episcopate in Holland whose validity has never been questioned by Roman Catholic authorities.

New Wine in Old Bottles

There were Catholics in countries other than France and Holland that opposed the growth of the new interpretation of Papal authority. In England and Ireland opposition to ultra-montanism was great. Vigorous attempts to "Romanize" these countries were inaugurated and a clear distinction was made between "Catholics" and "Romanists." "Catholics" frankly committed themselves to the rejection of Papal infallibility. In 1780 a committee of Roman Catholics in England declared that of the total number of priests in England, estimated at 360, the whole body of clergy including their four Bishops, with the exception of 110 Jesuits, opposed ultra-montanism.

William E. Gladstone in his book "Vaticanism" quotes Bishop Baine, a Roman Catholic Bishop in England in 1822, as saying, "Bellarmine and some other

theologians, chiefly Italians, have believed the Pope infallible when proposing 'ex cathedra' an article of faith. But in England and Ireland I do not believe that any Catholic maintains the infallibility of the Pope." The Pastoral Address of the Irish Bishops to the clergy and laity in 1826 declared that, "It is not an article of the Catholic Faith, neither are they thereby required to believe that the Pope is infallible." An official Catechism of the English Roman Catholics is the famous Keenan's Catechism in which, previous to the year 1870, the following question and answer were contained. "(Q) Must not Catholics believe the Pope in himself to be infallible? (A) This is a Protestant invention: it is no article of the Catholic faith."

The ultra-montanists hoped to eliminate this belief amongst the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland by a process of "Romanizing." Cardinal Wiseman "the instrument under God to Romanize England" and Manning, his successor, "he could not go too far in conceptions designated ultramontaine" were especially selected by Rome, over the objections of the local clergy, for this purpose. "Thus by the oppression of independent thought and a rewriting of history, imposed by Romanized Bishops upon a reluctant community," says a recent historian, "a process of 'changing' the thought of English and Irish Catholics was attempted." These attempts were resisted by Catholics and were unsuccessful even to the time of the Vatican Council in 1870 when several Irish and English Bishops openly opposed the new theories of papal prerogatives.

In Germany, too, under the celebrated theologian, Ignatius von Dolinger, and on the continent everywhere, "old" Catholics were strong and numerous enough to resist the encroachments of this terrifying novelty, little dreaming that the proposition so much dreaded by Catholics everywhere would be considered seriously enough to be proclaimed as a article of Faith binding upon all the faithful.

Up to the eve of the famous Vatican I Council we have shown, in the preceding chapters, the uninterrupted existence within the Roman Church of "old" Catholics struggling always to maintain an unmutilated faith in the Catholic Church. But with the curtain rising on the first Vatican Council, we enter the final phase of their struggles, a period that is, from any point of view, the most critical in the history of the papacy. On the 18th of July 1870 the

transition of Roman Catholicism into a new phase of Catholicism took place, to leave only a remnant of the faithful clinging to what the Church had always, everywhere believed—the “old” Catholic Faith, unchanged, yet progressively revealing.

The First Vatican Council

Sensing the growing intellectual freedom of Catholics everywhere, the Ultramontanists felt that only by an absolute dictatorship over the thoughts and conscience of the faithful could Rome regain its former power over the entire occidental world — a power weakened by the great Protestant Reformation. The establishment of such a dictatorship they sought, and obtained, through the agency of the first Vatican Council of 1870.

Up to the time of this Council the personal infallibility of the Pope was considered nothing more than a “pious opinion” held by a faction within the Church. The larger part of the Catholic Church so little believed in it, that when Protestants reproached them with this superstition, Roman theologians regarded it as a calumny. The Vatican Council was a bold step in an attempt to make what had formerly been regarded as a ‘Protestant invention’ into the keystone of the Catholic Faith.

Pius IX, an aging pope without much theological culture, who had been inspired by the Jesuits into sensing his own personal infallibility, accordingly, to secure the official recognition of the Church by a so-called General Council in this matter, summoned the Vatican Council to open on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8th December 1870). On that very day, fifteen years earlier, Pius IX had himself proclaimed this new dogma, and a fervid prelate, who had just returned from a visit to Lourdes, assured him: “The Pope has said to Mary, ‘You are immaculate.’ And now Mary answers the Pope, “And you are infallible.”

In the Vatican Council the representatives of the great majority of Roman Catholics, the German, French, Austrian, English, Czech, Irish and American bishops, oddly enough formed the minority. The great majority was to be found in Italian Bishops representing numerous diminutive dioceses and in titular Bishops without dioceses, whose expenses, Cardinal Schwarzenburg

said, "the Pope was obliged to pay entire, even to their very socks, so that they voted blindly at his bidding. The minority had little opportunity of voicing their opposition to the creation of the new dogma. An order of business described by a Roman Catholic Archbishop who was present at the Council as "a cursed congeries of pitfalls," precluded all free discussion.

If the minority could not be heard in Council and wished to have a memoir of their opposition printed, the printing houses of Rome were forbidden to serve them. Pamphlets mailed from out of the country were sequestered and never delivered. Anyone answering the Pope with an appeal to Christian Tradition was silenced with "I am tradition."

In a last minute appeal to the Pope, when several bishops were allowed an audience, the proud bishop of Mainz, Baron von Kotteler, fell on his knees weeping to implore the Pope not to formulate the fatal dogma of his own infallibility. Finally, when the dogma was met with its first vote, eighty-eight voted against it, ninety-one bishops refrained from voting, and sixty-two voted yea only conditionally. The opposition departed from Rome before a second vote was taken rather than be called upon either to support the hated dogma or personally offend the Pope by voting negatively.

With all opposition dispersed the ultramontanists sealed their triumph in the final vote with still two negative voices on July 18th, 1870. On that day, in the midst of one of the fiercest storms to break across the city of Rome, accompanied by thundering and lightning, while rain poured in through the broken glass of the roof near him, Pius IX rose in the darkness, and by the aid of the feeble light of a candle, read the momentous affirmation of his own infallibility. "We declare it to be an article of faith that the Roman Pope possesses infallibility in any doctrine relating to faith and morals. If anyone shall oppose this our decision, which God forbid, let him be accursed."

The storm has been variously interpreted by friend or foe, as comparable to the solemn legislation of Mt. Sinai or as tokens of Divine displeasure and approaching desolation. But whatever constructions were placed upon the circumstances surrounding the birth of the new dogma, the Western Church was indisputably bound to a new interpretation of its Catholicity. Tradition and

Scripture were no longer necessary. Instead, every Christian under pain of being accursed was hereafter to know that on any matter concerning his Faith, he would have to be content with the answer "the Pope has spoken, the cause is ended."

Causa Finita Est?

With the declaration of the doctrine of papal infallibility at the closing session of the First Vatican Council in 1870, a new condition of faith was to be imposed on all Catholics. As far as the ultramontanists were concerned, the question that stirred men's hearts within the church for centuries past was now settled—in their favor. "The Pope had spoken" indeed, but the cause was by no means ended. In fact, the real struggle was now taking shape.

There were able and learned members of the Roman Catholic Church to whom it was impossible to reconcile the new dogma with what they had always believed. The Catholic consciousness of early ages presented a theory out of which papal infallibility could never legitimately grow. The primitive theory, as the Councils of the Church made plain, placed final authority in the ecumenical council of all the bishops of the entire church and the transference of this authority from the entire body of the church to one individual was no true Catholic development at all, but a dislocation of the original constitution of the Church.

If most of the Bishops were coerced or threatened by official intimidation to accept the new belief, there were others that officialdom could not touch nor frighten. Several Bishops refused to publish the new dogma within their diocese. In America, Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis, whose speech against the new dogma was suppressed in Council, expressed the unspoken feelings of many of the bishops in the following memorable sentence. "Notwithstanding my submission, I shall never teach the doctrine of Papal Infallibility so as to argue from Scripture or tradition in its support, and shall leave to others to explain its compatibility with the facts of ecclesiastical history to which I referred in my reply. As long as I may be permitted to remain in my present station I shall confine myself to administrative functions which I can do the more easily without attracting attention, as for some years past I have seldom preached."

But once again if Bishops were to prove as "timorous as women" in the face of official displeasure, then it remained for theologians and scholars to defend the faith. Such men as von Shulte, Reinkins, Lord Acton, von Dollinger and other distinguished scholars of northern Europe continued in outspoken and fearless opposition to the new Faith of the Roman curia.

A revulsion to the new dogma arose like a swift tide amongst lay-folk and clergy throughout northern Europe where the Roman doctrine had to be enforced, if at all, with persecution where Episcopal persuasion proved fruitless.

In Bavaria public agitation rose high and priests refused to accept or publish the new Vatican decrees in their parishes. As early as three weeks after the close of the Council more than a thousand Rhenish Roman Catholics at Konigwinter, Germany, united in the declaration that "they did not accept the decrees in regard to the absolute power and personal infallibility of the pope but rejected them as contradicting the traditional faith of the Church."

Shortly before this, forty-three professors and teachers of the University of Munich, not members of the theological faculty, drew up a similar declaration, and this was followed in April 1871 by the "Munich Museum" address with eighteen thousand signers, which went to the government, its purpose being "to prevent the adoption in church and school of the new dogma and to revise the relations of church and state."

These lay-folk looked to brave men for leadership who now came to the front in the struggle for the restoration of the ancient faith. In Germany Professors Michelis, Reinkins and von Schulte, to whom were added, from Switzerland, Munsigner and Herzog, arose to champion the cause. The problem they faced was an enormous one. The Roman Church had not only cut itself in two but it had also cut one part off from tradition and the Scriptures.

The Munich Congress

The actual rebuilding of the church was far more difficult than the creation of thousand-voiced protests. How should it take shape? These men, pious Catholics, inflamed with the passion for truth, desired to remain where they

were. For this very reason genuine Catholicism, not the ultra-montanist, but the ideal Catholicism of the Church as it had always, everywhere been known was the cherished hope of their souls and the pattern after which they wanted to build. Irrevocably outlawed by the Roman Church it was not to take form outside of that body and its destiny lay in their hands.

In this sense, the Munich Congress, made up of three hundred delegates from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, with numerous guests from all Christian lands of the earth, as early as September 1871 made out this distinct program: "We firmly hold to the old Catholic Faith as attested by tradition and the Scriptures as also to Catholic worship."

They rejected the newly created dogmas of Pius IX, including that of the immaculate conception of Mary, and further declared, "We aim, with the cooperation of theological and canonical science, at a reform of the church which, conceived in the spirit of the ancient church, shall remove the existing defects and abuses, and in particular meet the just wishes of the Catholic people for constitutionally regulated participation in church affairs."

In Cologne, Germany, the following year, another congress under the direction of Dr. von Dollinger went still further in a practical direction. Under the lead of Dr. von Schulte the determinative features of the old Catholic church order were fixed. The Bishop was to have all rights common to his office, but the clergy and laity were given a voice in the direction of legislation and discipline. The Bishop was to be presiding officer of the Council but elected by it. No pastor was to be appointed who was not first acknowledged by the members of the local parish. No taxes for dispensation and appointments were to be raised. These formed the fundamental principles of the movement, apart from its allegiance to the traditional faith of the Church, which in opposition to "Roman" or "Vatican" Catholicism began to take form ecclesiastically under the name "Old Catholic."

Gather Together the Fragments

In Germany, Austria, and Switzerland reaction amongst faithful Catholics to the new Vatican decrees were swift. Entire parish communities refused to accept the new decrees and joined together in common councils to reaffirm their

faith in the Scriptures and the authentic Catholic Tradition of the Church and to decide on their future course.

Under brilliant leadership the movement rose to meet the challenge of persecution and intimidation which its larger erring sister church of Rome now leveled at it. Priests were cut off from their pensions unless they subscribed to the new dogma of Papal Infallibility which soon became known amongst them as the "hunger dogma." Boycott and social ostracism and even the arm of the state were employed by the infuriated ultramontanists in their attempts to force the submission of the recalcitrant Catholic population to their wishes. Against all this the conscientious faith of thousands of earnest Christians stood firm.

Though these Catholics preserved the faith as they had always believed it, the question that was not fearfully evident to the bishopless flock was how to continue the succession of this faith for unborn generations. It was necessary with the establishment of the Old Catholic Church order and its independent government that a bishop be chosen. But how could a legitimate bishop be obtained, since according to Catholic conception, such a one could be consecrated only by another legitimate bishop?

Here the River of History, which now and again flows wide only to break off into different channels, now flowed together again. The Catholic Church of Holland came to the aid of the Old Catholic Movement. From the time when the pope and the Jesuits had first attempted to subjugate it, the Church of Holland had withstood her trials through the years, firm in its position and preserving its sacred badge of Apostleship in the legitimate Catholic succession of her bishops.

The Dutch Archbishop, Loos, in 1872, had helped the German Old Catholics with confirmation and was willing to consecrate their bishop, but it was necessary first for the movement to have the recognition of the state. Dr. von Schulte applied to the Prussian Government and received Royal recognition, as a Catholic, for the bishop to be elected, as well as a grant of 48,000 marks for the expenses of the bishop and his administration. Old Catholicism, without this recognition of the state, would have been, in the eyes of many

European peoples, a sect, and it would have meant a renunciation on the part of the Old Catholic movement of its legal standing and its right to the same support which the Roman Church enjoyed if it had not sought this recognition. With this accomplished the delegates of the German congregations, both clerical and lay, in the manner of the ancient Church in the chapel of the City Hall of Cologne June 4th, 1873, unanimously elected Professor D. Reinkens, of Bonn, as their future Bishop. As Archbishop Loos had just died, Bishop Heykamp of Deventer, consecrated the first Old Catholic Bishop for Germany.

In Switzerland in 1876 Bishop Herzog was consecrated Bishop of the Old Catholic Movement there. Thus the scattered fragments of Christ's Church were gathered together. In time the movement developed sufficiently in other parts of the world to warrant the necessity of Episcopal supervision and gradually the jealously guarded Catholic Episcopate came to bless these faithful children of the Catholic Church of Christ in increasing numbers everywhere.

In Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Switzerland, France, Yugoslavia and Poland the movement grew and took root and Bishops were consecrated at Utrecht, Holland, for almost all these countries.

Out of the hard struggles of countless intrepid little bands of Catholic priests and laymen all the elements within the Church that rebelled against the corruption of its faith and realized the original Christian Ideal of the one Flock of Christ, were drawn together and, if at first in the shape of a small model only, assumed the form of the ancient Church again.

But the greater works of this small church were only now to begin even if its martyrs and saints, the progenitors in small numbers through the ages, lay in eternal sleep. A new spiritual impetus, an evangelical Catholic spirit was to be borne on the first winds of the twentieth century as they swept, first across Poland, then through England, France, the Balkans, and thence to America, to bring a new sense of spiritual freedom with the old and unchanging truths of Christianity—born to set the souls of all people free.

The English Movement

In England a movement began in 1908 which resulted in the formation of the Old Catholic Church in England. In that year the distinguished English priest, Dr. Arnold Harris Mathew, de jure Earl of Llandoff, who had left the Roman Church, was consecrated by the Archbishop of Utrecht assisted by all the continental Old Catholic Bishops, at the Cathedral Church of Saint Gertrude, Utrecht, on April 28th, and placed in charge of the English mission. On Saint Paul's Day, 1911, he was elected Archbishop and Metropolitan of Great Britain.

The Archbishop and his little flock in England soon found themselves in double danger. Added to the natural differences with their former brethren in the Roman Church was a campaign of persecution directed by certain elements among the Anglicans of the state Church of England, described by Dr. Willibroad Beyschleg, Professor of the university of Holland, and a noted Old Catholic historian, as those who emphatically desire to be 'catholic' but are at the same time wholly out of sympathy with Old Catholics. They were a small group of ritualistic churchmen of the established English Church on the way to Rome, while the Old Catholics were on the way from Rome.

Certain unprincipled elements of this Anglo-Catholic group exerted pressure on the Dutch Church to disavow the English Old Catholics, but without result. At one time they intended to besmirch the English Archbishop's character by elaborating on a statement made by a Roman Catholic editor that Bishop Mathew's credentials to the Dutch Church contained false statements, but the Bishops of Holland, after a thorough investigation themselves vindicated Bishop Mathew. The Roman priest himself recalled the original statement, saying that since he made it he had satisfied himself by a personal investigation that it was groundless.

The clique of English churchmen continued to use this disreputable stratagem against the Old Catholics in the English speaking world even after Bishop Mathew's death. Bishop Mathew, however, maintained a high standard of Christian tolerance and continued his work, unmoved by the persistent noisiness of his detractors who nonetheless caused him much pain.

As evidence of their confidence in Archbishop Mathew, the Dutch Bishops had him participate in every consecration of Utrecht establishing a new Episcopate

on the Continent of Europe until his death in 1919. Bishop Mathew assisted at the Consecration of Bishop Jan Michael Kowalski and two assistant Bishops for the Old Catholic Church in Poland which from that period on was to have close historical and ecclesiastical relations with English-speaking Old Catholics.

A noted author and historian, Bishop Mathew had an excellent knowledge of the Orthodox Church and established the most cordial relations between the English Old Catholics and the Patriarchal See of Antioch through his Eminence the Most Reverend Archbishop Gearrasimos Messara of Beirut, Syria, who on August 5th, 1911, received the Old Catholics under Bishop Mathew into union and full communion with the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch. Thus a genuine and practical rapprochement between the Catholics of the East and of the West was for the first time established after a breach which had lasted almost 10 centuries.

What distinguished the scholarly Archbishop Mathew and the Episcopate he established in Scotland and America from that of the continental Old Catholics was his insistence on the inviolable Episcopal authority of each national body of Old Catholics. This had been in the minds of the original Old Catholic congresses, but the German Episcopate, because of its preponderance of numbers and wealth attempted to create a small hierarchical system patterned on the Roman administration with the Archbishop of Utrecht in the position of ranking prelate or little pope. The English Old Catholics, seeing in this the possibilities of the former mistake of the Western Church with a Germanic, instead of an Italian, spiritual protectorate over the whole Christian world, restated the original Old Catholic principles of autonomy and have received the support of their Orthodox friends in this respect.

Bishop Mathew's personal contribution to the Old Catholic Movement can be summed up as a broadening of the Catholic mind to an acceptance of the necessity of the unifying of Christ's Church on the basis of the original tenets of the Christian Faith as it was once believed by all Christians everywhere, and the recognition that this can only be accomplished by complete cooperation with Christians of the Eastern Churches, whose proximity in language, in tradition, and in mind with the early Christians, makes them the ideal vehicle.

After Bishop Mathew's death the small body of Old Catholics in England remained without legitimate Episcopal supervision of their own, and until a short while ago the Church remained in the protection of the Episcopate of the Old Catholic Church in Poland. Now, cut off from their Mother-house by the European War, the English Old Catholics have placed themselves under the jurisdiction of an American Old Catholic Archbishop.

The Mariavite Order

By far, one of the most important early 19th century events in the development of the Old Catholic Movement has been the Mariavite Order in Poland. The nucleus of this movement was a community of nuns, founded in 1893 and organized under the Rule of Saint Francis for the promotion of asceticism and the moral purification of the Polish Church. These nuns were teachers in the parochial schools of Poland and greatly influenced the lives of the clergy and laity in whatever part of the nation they ministered. An order of priests, observing the Franciscan rule was added to them and in 1909 there were 68 priests and a large number of students ready for ordination.

These two communities were solemnly bound by an understanding that their work was to begin with a moral regeneration amongst their own kind within the Church — the clergy and religious orders. From the first they were actively opposed by the Polish Jesuits and at last an order came from Rome that they were to be dissolved. When they refused to break up their community life, they were formally condemned in April 1906, and in December 1906, all their members and adherents cut off from the rites of the Roman Church.

A period of bitter persecution set in, but somehow they managed to keep together and increase their numbers. The Polish peasants were stirred up against the "Mariaviten" and their woman leader, "The Little Mother," to such a degree that armed attacks were made against the followers when they gathered together in religious meetings. The Roman authorities at one time circulated a report that the Sacrament consecrated by the Mariavite priests became not the Body of Christ, but an Incarnation of the Devil, and in consequence terrible sacrileges were committed against Mariavites and several of their churches were burned to the ground.

With the growth of its numbers and in increasing necessity of Episcopal supervision for its parishes the Order at last decided to ask the Old Catholics to consecrate a bishop for them. Accordingly the bishop-elect Brother Jan Michael Kowalski and two of his brethren were sent to the international Old Catholic Congress in Vienna in 1909. Through the great Russian theologian, General Alexander Kireef, they were introduced to the delegates of the Congress. There, on the last morning of the meeting, Brother Kowalski stated the ground of his appeal and asked the prayers and sympathy of the assemblage. The Mariavite priests with their bare sandal feet and gray habits formed a striking and arresting impression in the midst of the other delegates and their genuine and simple character won them many new friends. After careful consultation the Old Catholic Bishops accepted their application and the first bishop of the Church in Poland, Brother-Bishop Jan Michael Kowalski, was consecrated at Utrecht, Holland, early in October of that year.

For the next several years, the Old Catholic Church in Poland had steadily increased. In February and March of 1909 the Minister of the Interior of the Polish government gave the Mariavite order official state recognition. Within the parishes, Churches, parsonages, schools, and other institutions were rapidly built. In the parish of Lodz in 1910, where there were already 40,000 Mariavites, four handsome Churches were built entirely through the efforts, personal and manual, of the clergy and laity.

Driven by the boycott of their Roman Catholic neighbors to depend more and more upon their own efforts, the members of the Mariavite movement soon developed a civil as well as a religious form of community amongst themselves. They worked and traded with each other, supporting one another, creating their own industries and soon, by cooperation, they rendered themselves entirely independent. Cooperation stores in villages and lodging houses in towns were organized. Hospitals staffed by their own doctors and nurses, orphanages, schools, homes for the aged, soup kitchens, milk dispensaries, fire departments, cultural activities, farms of magnificent acreage, factories — in fact all the necessary prerequisites of modern living — were developed and organized within their own groups and used to serve their neighbors.

Though this social and industrial reorganization greatly improved the position of the Old Catholics in Poland, it had to be accompanied by great personal sacrifices. In one town, Leszno, where cooperative factories on a large scale — for bookbinding, shoemaking, cabinet making, and similar activities — had been organized, several families handed over all their property to the community and put their own services unreservedly at its disposal.

Underlying the power and vitality of this movement which led to wholly new social groupings and industrial experiments was the ever present guidance of a strong and inspired leader — a woman, Mary Francis Felicia, devotedly acknowledged by all as “Mateszka.” Simple and unassuming in manner she nonetheless provoked a religio-social movement worth the consideration of the world’s serious minds. She proved to be, in the fullest sense, the “little mother” of her people.

The *Mariavite Movement was, up to that time, significantly different from any similar religious manifestation. It is in effect the working out of a practical application to life of the social significance of the Gospel. The foundress of the movement, the Little Mother, Mary Francis Felicia, believed and taught that the Kingdom of God on Earth is to be understood as a divinely human society — a society in which justice, brotherhood, equality and the general welfare of all its members prevailed. Basically, the Little Mother established her theory on the formula that for God’s Kingdom to come on earth His will must also be done.

The Mariavites believe that the curing of all social ills rests in properly relating the human element to the spiritual regeneration of family, nation and society. But since ethical theories and social realignments in themselves are not enough, they maintain that the “direct action of God” working on the human spirit is essential. “The direct action of God,” they say, “is fulfilled in the partaking of Holy Communion, which, in the opinion of the Mariavites, must be the ‘daily bread’ of men and women.” In this sense the entire religious and social life of the Mariavites centers upon the Holy Eucharist at which the faithful communicate as a means of daily regenerating the human spirit and as the first step toward the regeneration of society and the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Christianity, according to the Mariavites, is to be lived. Worship enters into every field of human activity. Its end and sole purpose cannot be found in religious gatherings held at stated periods alone. The act of worship, the liturgy, is an active and motivating experience in the lives of all who take part in it. During World War II more than 350,000 followers in Poland demonstrated the possibility of this life of faith and work even under the trying exigencies of world conflict.

Oddly enough, women play the important part in this religious movement. It was first founded by a woman who also directed its social possibilities. The administration of major communities of the movement in many parts of the country was in the hands of women. The work of the sisters had been of such beneficial influence that they have been asked by the populace of many sections to administer parochial activities. Of the total number of about 1571 religious workers, including clergy, brothers of the Order and the sisterhood, more than one thousand of them are women actually engaged in the administration of the movement. The General Chapter which meets to elect new officers and to decide the general administrative policy of the movement has an equal representation of women with votes. The Mother General of the Sisters must take part in the election of a new Archbishop as well as in all proceedings of the General Chapter.

The religious workers of the Movement were grouped into three categories. First there were the priests and members of the brotherhood who lived under the Rule of Saint Francis. The community of nuns, about 600 in number, compose another group to which were added about 400 deaconesses under the supervision of the Mother General. Under the third grouping some 500 [persons following a modified religious rule, gave their time and energies to the movement. Of this last number a great many consist of married couples voluntarily devoting their lives to buttress the work of the clergy and the sisterhood. Joy is a paramount requisite of a Christian life and the Mariavites everywhere radiate a warm and becoming mirth.

The zeal of the Movement touched the peasant populations of central Europe and awakened a living religious movement amongst them. A Pole writing of the effect this movement has on the people says, "From the surrounding

neighborhood of their habitations there would be a flood of thirsty souls eager for God and His mercy." People when they met the Mariavites turned to God with such a subsequent change in their mode of life that even the Jews were wont to say, "What kind of new Christians are these."

The Old Catholic Church under the administration of the Mariavite Order in Poland was in every way a distinct and important demonstration of the possibility of a 20th century Christian social order. From Poland their influence spread to other parts of the world where in some places it became well established. Mariavite missions were founded in Lithuania, France, England, South and North America.

Mariavites supported themselves with the labor of their own hands and offered their ministrations freely to all without salaries, mission funds are not a necessary consideration of the movement. The Church, they would say, is here to give every assistance to people both for their spiritual and material well-being; it does not have to take from them. Perhaps it might yet be said of the Mariavites everywhere in the world, as it was then said of them in Poland, "Wherever there is a Mariavite there is neither hunger nor sorrow."

In America

The growth of the Old Catholic Movement in America presents a pattern at once historically unique and tragic, revealing as it does the unfriendliness with which its participants were received and the unhealthy persecution which certain religionists have consistently leveled at it. Here in this land where at last a free religion was finding expression where such an expression was constitutionally guaranteed it was regarded with distrust and suspicion by the more Catholic-minded Protestants who felt the movement to be an "intrusion" and did everything possible to confuse its people. That the Old Catholic Church has survived the heart-breaking opposition of certain denominational Christians to whom she has held out her hands for an expression of brotherliness and understanding, and that her clergy have continued in their ministrations, undaunted by the trying circumstances into which the ignorance of their detractors often placed them, is the more wonderful. The general sentiments directed against the Old Catholic Movement by those who might have been its greatest friends was aptly summed up in the words of Frederick

Cook Morehouse, Editor of the Living Church, who wrote an editorial in that paper of January 26, 1907, concerning the first Old Catholic Bishop, "Consecrated in 1897, Bishop Kozlowski began his Episcopate against the indignant protests of American churchmen at what was deemed an act of intrusion on the part of his consecrators. No friendly hand was outstretched to meet him from the American Church (Protestant Episcopal). We had an abundance of sympathy for Old Catholics in Europe, but none for Old Catholics in America." Under this unhappy indictment the Old Catholic Movement was formed under the leadership of brave men who nonetheless could never comprehend the attitude of their Christian contemporaries who refused to understand them and yet could not let them alone to worship in the way their conscience dictated.

Stemming out of the dissatisfaction of several foreign-born groups of Roman Catholics for the temporal administration of their ecclesiastical superiors the Old Catholic Movement soon developed in America into three channels each dominated and limited by its own language. Belgians under the guidance of a former Roman Catholic, Pere Joseph Rene Vilatte, were centered chiefly in Wisconsin near Green Bay, where several parishes had been organized. Under Monsignor Jan Francis Tichy and several assistant clergymen a movement of Czech people with its headquarters at Cleveland, Ohio, was in the process of formation as early as 1890 while under Father Kozlowski in Chicago, Illinois, the largest group, mostly of Polish extraction was making rapid progress. Anton Kozlowski had accepted the Old Catholic faith along with 15 other priests who had left the Roman Church with him to guide the movement amongst American Poles. He was elected to be their Bishop and in 1897 he was consecrated in Berne, Switzerland, by Bishop Herzog, who was assisted by Archbishop Gul of Utrecht and Bishop Weber of Bonn, Germany.

At the Old Catholic Congress of Olten, 1904, Bishop Kozlowski was accompanied by Mgr. Tichy who had been sent to the Old Catholics by the American Czechs as their Bishop-Elect to pray for consecration at their hands. In 1905 Mgr. Tichy was appointed by Archbishop Gul of Utrecht as Episcopal administrator of non-Polish Slavs in the United States with the purpose of bringing them over to Old Catholicism and he was subsequently consecrated as Bishop by Bishop Kozlowski for this work. With the death of the Polish

Bishop in November of 1907, many of the Polish members of the movement fell into the defection of one of the clergy, Francis Hodur, who organized a movement now known as the Polish National Reformed Church in America.

In the meantime, a group of English-speaking Old Catholics were being gathered together by the untiring efforts of a former Roman Catholic monk, the learned Dom Augustine de Angelis (William Harding), who had organized a community of men devoted to the Religious Rule of S. Benedict at Waukegan, Illinois. This community along with the missions under its care were received into the jurisdiction of Bishop Tichy in 1907. On St. Patrick's Day, 1911, William Henry Francis, who had been elected Prior of the Community was ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Tichy and on April 20th, 1913, he was consecrated Mitred Abbot. Upon the retirement of Bishop Tichy in 1914, Mgr. Francis was appointed to take charge of the diocese.

In 1914 Monsignor Francis was elected to be Consecrated Bishop of the Diocese formerly held by Bishop Tichy whose ill health forced him to give up his duties. Since by this time relations between the American movement and the Old Catholic Church in England had been closely knit and the strengthening of the bonds existing between them was desirable the young Bishop-elect was to have gone to Europe for his Consecration. But the world war made such an undertaking impossible at the time and it was not until two years later that the opportunity of establishing the European Episcopate in America presented itself.

In the meantime a Bishop of the Old Catholic Church, consecrated by Archbishop Mathew of England, had arrived in America. He was the Right Reverend Bishop de Landas Berghes et de Rache, a prince of the house of Lorraine-Brabant who was consecrated Old Catholic Bishop in Scotland but whose relations with the Austrian Royal house marked him in Great Britain for possible internment. At the suggestion of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop de Landas came to America late in the year of 1914 with letters of introduction from that English prelate to several sympathetic Protestant churchmen. He was received with great cordiality by the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York and was a guest for more than a year within his diocese. On Tuesday, January 12, 1915, by invitation of Bishop Greer, then

Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, Bishop de Landas took part with 13 Protestant Episcopal Bishops at the Consecration of the Reverend Dr. Huse as missionary Bishop in Cuba of the Protestant Episcopal Church, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The Reverend W. E. Bentley, an Episcopalian minister, wrote in a current journal that, "the participation of Bishop de Landas in this event was of more than usual interest and importance for it was the first time since the Reformation that a Bishop who is in communion with the Holy Eastern Orthodox Church and whose Orders are derived directly from Rome has taken part in an Anglican Consecration."

In the spring of 1916, at the request of the European Old Catholic Bishops, Bishop de Landas took up residence with the Old Catholic community at Waukegan, Illinois, and, with the direct authorization of Archbishop Mathew of England, he consecrated Monsignor William Henry Francis to the Episcopate on October 3rd, 1916, in the community Church in the presence of a large congregation (friends and relatives of the present writer were also in attendance). Although Bishop de Landas was received with the greatest cordiality and respect by his many friends within Protestant communions to whom he always showed the greatest of Christian brotherliness, he received, as did all English-speaking Old Catholic Bishops, the implacable enmity of the "Living Church" group within the Protestant Episcopal Church. Hounded by their bitterly malicious attacks wherever he went, Bishop de Landas, broken spirited and confused by their constant inconsistencies, at last accepted the haven generously offered him by a community of Augustian monks at Villanova, Pennsylvania, where he retired until his death to a life of simplicity and prayer. His passing away in November of 1920 evoked this written message from the Augustinian superior to the sorrowing Old Catholic confreres of the Bishop at Waukegan, Illinois: "I do not know what was published in 'The Living Church,' but while he was with us he edified all by his humble, retiring and sincere manner of living. He sought no exemptions but performed all his duties as simply as the youngest and humblest Novice."

With the passing away of Bishop de Landas the weight of responsibility in administering the Movement was placed entirely in the hands of the young Bishop Francis of Waukegan. This young man had already distinguished himself by the exemplary work he had conducted in his missions and had

earned the good wishes and friendship of many for the Old Catholic cause. Known to the people of the vicinity in which he worked and where as a child he came to reside with his family after their arrival from Nottingham, England, he had forsaken the opportunities of the business world to minister to the uncared for, exploited immigrants working in the steel mills of the Middle-West. There in the midst of the despised "foreigners" his sympathetic understanding of their problems and his practical attempts to solve them made his mission bountiful in good works. At a meeting of the Old Catholic clergy in Chicago on January 7, 1917, when the Old Catholic Constitution was formally adopted and incorporated under the name of "The Catholic Church of North America (The Old Catholic Church in America)" Bishop Francis was elected Archbishop and the Metropolitan American See was established.

Under the guidance of Archbishop Francis the Old Catholic Movement in America was freed from the bondage of language limitations. Poles, Lithuanians, Englishmen, Italians, Frenchmen, etc., were no longer delineated in separate groups within the movement, but each in his own tongue could hereafter speak to all the brethren.

From a heterogeneous group of transplanted and isolated foreigners, the Old Catholic Movement became a cohesive one, thoroughly aware of its responsibility to the needs of the age. Like the history of the making of the American nation, that of the Old Catholic Movement has been made of up many tongues and many peoples to offer a spiritual haven of freedom and a home for all who sought refuge from the oppression of tyranny—and expression of religious liberty indigenous to the land it serves.

The Restoration Movement

As the Old Catholic Movement combines the tradition of the great spiritual leaders of the latter ages of the Christian Church it has also effectively united the factors in Catholic Christendom that Hague untiringly labored to preserve the first administrative principles of the Apostolic Church—to hold in violate "the faith once for all delivered to the Saints." The undaunted spirits of the great Christian revolutionaries, the Port Royalists, the so-called Jansenists, the Mariavites and many others have served to prove by their struggle against ecclesiastical intolerance and pharaseism, that in every age within the church

they loved the same struggle has been manifest in the lives of but a handful of people at all times—the torch they carried from age to age many have been dimmed at times but it has always been carried forward, never dropped, never entirely extinguished. Today their efforts are merged in handfuls of many people in almost every part of the world to whom the sympathetic hands of the great Oriental Christian Church lends strength.

Added to the growing Old Catholic Movement in America were the independent Portuguese Catholics under the Rt. Reverend Bishop Antonio Rodriguez of Massachusetts in 1917 and the appointment of the Rt. Reverend Joseph Zielonka of New Jersey, after his reception into union with several Polish congregations in 1924. The joint Encyclical the Old Catholic Bishops in America in 1925, in which an outline of a really Christian society was advocated, met with such approval by representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Church that the Metropolitan John Bienipotentiary-Delegate of the Holy Synod, of Russia, representing 127 Bishops and Archbishops in Russia, received the Old Catholic Church in America into union with that body in the same year. In 1933, under an agreement jointly entered into, the Orthodox Archbishop of Prague and Czechoslovakia, Savvatios, under the Orthodox Patriarch of Constanople, placed the Orthodox Czechoslovaks in America under the jurisdiction of the American Old Catholic Archbishop while at the same time Savvatios was named Protector of the Old Catholics in Czechoslovakia. Thus with a threefold rapproachment with the church of the East a practical and organize unity of a great part of Catholic Christendom has been realized by Old Catholics under a program inaugurated by Archbishop Mathew of England in 1910. Underlying the terms of this union are the fundamental principles of the Old Catholicism—An acceptance of the doctrinal points of unity prevailing in the undivided Christian Church prior to the year 1054 A.D., i.e., a belief in Seven Sacraments and in the dogmatic Decrees of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

Thus the Old Catholic Church in America though autonomous and self governed by its own synod of bishops is an organic part of the Old Catholic Church in the Western world and the great Orthodox Church of the East, united in the faith of the first century Christian fellowship and differing only in the language and customs of its different units.

The American movement under Archbishop Francis, as well as the units of the Old Catholic Church in England, Australia, Canada, unoccupied France and South America, comprise with the following church what is known as the Orthodox-Old Catholic union—The Old Catholic Church in Poland (Archbishop Jan Michael Kowalski, Felicianow, Bodzanow), The Old Catholic Church in France (Bishop Mary Mark Fatoine, Nantes). The Old Catholic Church in Lituania (Bishop Felix Taluba, Kaunas), The Old Catholic Church in Yugoslavia (Bishop Marko Kalogjero, Zagreb), The Old Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia (Archbishop Savvatos, Prague), The Old Catholic Church in Portugal and the Azores (Bishop Antono Rodriguez, Lisbon).* In all these churches the usual temporal dignities and appointments of ecclesiastical superiors are voluntarily relinquished for a common life with the lesser clergy and the laity. An evangelical spirit dominates the traditional expression of Catholic worship, the greatest distinguishment is considered to be that earned by the hard labor of one's hands in work dedicated wholly to the Glory of God.

** The status of the church in Germany is undetermined due to its extreme nationalistic characteristics. The dominant party of this Church which finds union with the "Old Roomsch Kirch" of Holland and the "Christian Catholic" Church of Switzerland has been led by its chiliastic chauvinism into the orbits of Nazi-ism and has organized itself into the "National Catholic Church of Germany." Having no official connections with the Orthodox Old Catholic Church, this group of Old Catholics have granted sought-for recognition to certain representatives of the Anglican Church, causing no little concern and confusion to the pious faithful of both the Anglican and Orthodox-Old Catholic communions.*