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**REFORM, INSTRUCTION, AND PRACTICE:**  
**The Impact of the Catholic Revival on the Laity in the**  
**Dublin Diocese, 1793 – 1853**

**by**

**Katherine O’Driscoll**

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF PHD  
HISTORY, SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY

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**January, 2016**

## Declaration of Originality

I, the **Candidate**, certify that the Thesis is all my own work and that I have not obtained a degree in this University or elsewhere on the basis of any of this work.

Signed: ----- Date: -----

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## **Abbreviations**

ADV	Association For Discountenancing Vice
CBS	Catholic Book Society
CCD	Confraternity of Christian Doctrine
CFA	Capuchin Friary Archive
CTS	Catholic Truth Society
DDA	Dublin Diocesan Archives
FBS	Free Book Society
HC	House of Commons
KPS	Kildare Place Society
LHS	London Hibernian Society
NLI	National Library Ireland

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MAP: 1

THE COUNTIES OF IRELAND



Source: Brian Mitchell, *A new Genealogical Atlas of Ireland* (2nd Edition, 2002), 19.

(The maps taken from Mitchell's work have been reprinted with permission)

MAP: 2

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESES AND ARCHDIOCESES OF IRELAND



Source: Brian Mitchell, *A new Genealogical Atlas of Ireland* (2nd Edition, 2002), 20.

MAP: 3

THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF DUBLIN



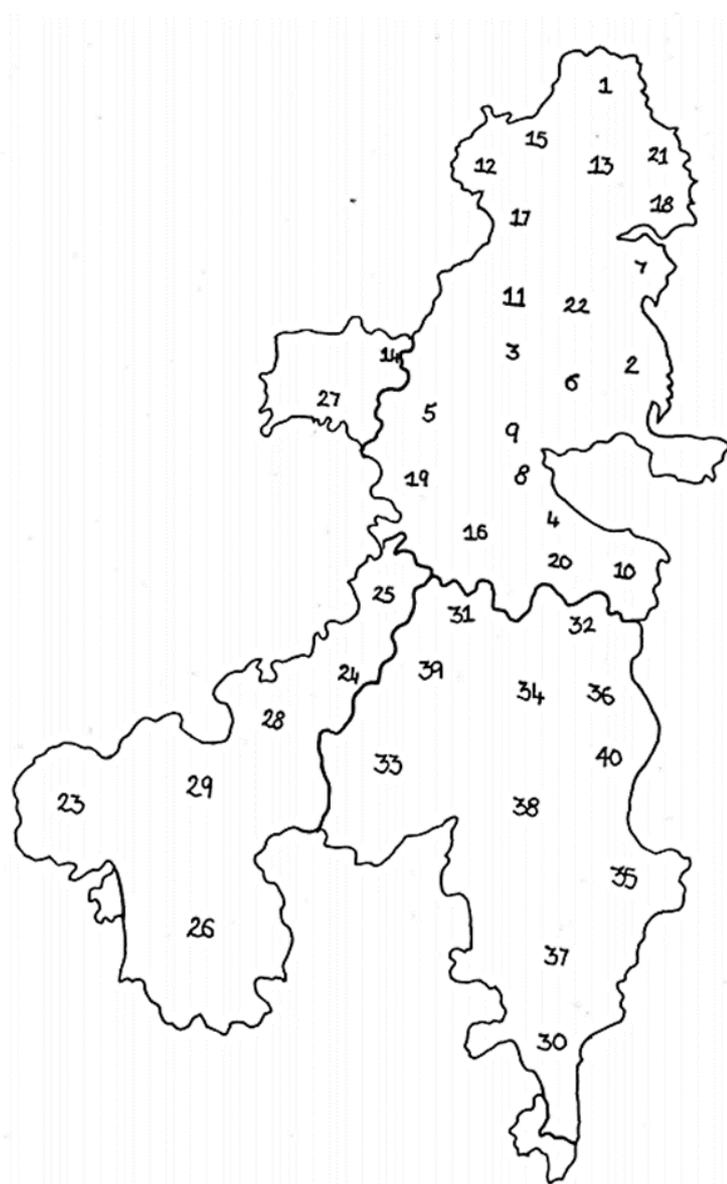
Source: Brian Mitchell, *A new Genealogical Atlas of Ireland* (2nd Edition, 2002), 20.

MAP: 4

THE PARISHES OF THE DUBLIN DIOCESE

Including Counties Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare and a fraction of Laois and Wexford

– See Appendix A.



1. Balbriggan
2. Baldoyle
3. Blanchardstown
4. Booterstown
5. Clondalkin
6. Clontarf
7. Donabate
8. Donnybrook
9. Dublin City & Rathmines
10. Dun Laoghaire
11. Finglas
12. Garristown
13. Lusk
14. Maynooth, Leixlip
15. Naul
16. Rathfarnham
17. Rolestown
18. Rush
19. Saggart
20. Sandyford
21. Skerries
22. Swords
23. Athy
24. Ballymore Eustace
25. Blessington
26. Castledermot
27. Cellbridge
28. Kilcullen
29. Narraghmore
30. Arklow
31. Blessinton (25)
32. Bray
33. Dunlavin
34. Glendalough
35. Kilbridge
36. Kilquade
37. Newbidge
38. Rathdrum
39. Blackditches
40. Wicklow

Based on Maps contained in: Mitchell, *A new Genealogical Atlas of Ireland*; James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (ed.), *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000).

## Introduction

This thesis examines how religious print and instruction advanced the Catholic revival in the Dublin Diocese from 1793 to 1853. Beginning with the 1793 Catholic Relief Act, and continuing through the episcopacy of Archbishops John Thomas Troy (1786-1823) and Daniel Murray (1823-1852) this thesis aims to track the progress of reform, the fruits of which can be seen in the Dublin Diocese by the first half of the nineteenth century. The structure of this reform corresponded to the Tridentine model of Catholicism, originating at the Council of Trent (1554 - 1563), which was primarily occupied with discipline, doctrine, and religious worship. In addition to the standards of Trent, the reform efforts sought to address the needs of the Irish Church and reflected its changing position in nineteenth-century Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

The Dublin Diocese was chosen as the focus of this study as it was arguably the most influential diocese in the nineteenth century, providing direction and leadership to the other 26 dioceses. Located in the more prosperous East, the Dublin Diocese included most of County Wicklow, sections of Kildare, a small area of Wexford and Laois, and, most significantly, the entire county of Dublin. The political and economic importance of Dublin City contributed to the standing of the diocese and the influence of its Archbishop. The conditions of the Dublin Diocese were further advanced by the administrations of progressive bishops, particularly Troy and Murray. Troy's episcopacy marked the beginning of the Catholic renewal in Dublin, which continued to flourish under the direction of Murray. Acting first as coadjutor (1809-23) and then as Archbishop (1823-52), Daniel Murray's term lasted 43 years. A firm supporter of education, Murray encouraged the formation of educational orders in the diocese, such as the Loreto Sisters and the Christian Brothers and when the national system of education was established in 1831 Murray acted as one of the commissioners. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Sisters of Charity (1812) and supported the formation of the Sisters of Mercy (1824), both of whom worked

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<sup>1</sup> As this is a study of the Catholic Church, all references to the 'Irish Church' or 'the Church' will be referring to this institution. When dealing with other denominations such as the Anglican Church the correct distinction will be made.

with the poor. During his episcopacy, Murray supervised the construction of new church buildings, encouraged the formation of sodalities and confraternities for the laity, and introduced new devotional practices. Convinced of the advantage of print he supported the development two Catholic book societies and encouraged the formation of parochial libraries. Trusted by Rome, and respected by the government, Murray was a visible figure in the first half of the nineteenth century. By the 1840s his national influence had begun to wane following disputes over national education. The significance of Murray is reflected in his papers, housed in the Dublin Diocesan Archives, which are full of information relating to diocesan and parish organisation and aspects of lay life.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis concerns itself with reform aimed at the Catholic laity examining the nature of this reform and the expectation of the Church during this period. Although carried out simultaneously, reform was aimed at two different categories of the laity. On the one hand the laity were expected to fulfil the basic canonical requirements of Easter Communion and yearly confession and to attend Mass more regularly, to send their children to weekly catechism classes, and to abandon popular religious devotions in favour of more official religious practices. At the same time, the Church was promoting religious societies, whose lay members were committed to charity and evangelisation and regularly received the sacraments, and also supporting the printing and distribution of religious books, designed to encourage either defence of the faith or more active engagement in the devotions and liturgy of the Church. This divide between minimum requirement and active participation could be seen as reflecting the social divide between the Catholic poor and Catholic middle class. However, given the emphasis placed on instruction and reading it might be more appropriate to differentiate between illiterate and literate members of the laity.

The direction of the Catholic revival was shaped by the circumstances of the time, by the activities of Protestant evangelicals, and by the development of the Catholic middle class. The unravelling of the Penal Laws and a series of concessions towards Catholics, such as Gardiner's Relief Acts (1778 and 1782),

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas O'Connor, 'Daniel Murray', McGuire, James, and James Quinn (eds.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009), 829-30; Desmond Keenan, 'Murray, Daniel (1768-1852)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed. (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19597>, accessed 10 April 2015]; Dáire Keogh, 'Troy, John Thomas (1793-1823)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed. (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27770>, accessed 10 April 2015].

the abolition of the Test Act (1780), Hobart's Catholic Relief Act (1793), and the endowment of Maynooth (1795), created an atmosphere conducive to a Catholic revival. The improved relations between the State and the Catholic Church enabled the Church to play a more visible role in Irish society, evident in the construction of new churches, and the development of Catholic schools and teaching orders. As the public role of the Church developed, so did the urgency for reform, renewal, and reorganisation. In line with Tridentine policy, already established in Europe, the hierarchical structure of the Church was reaffirmed and Bishops strove to reform the conduct of the lower clergy and improve the standards of religious practice.

During the nineteenth century, the direction of Catholic reform was partly reacting to the Protestant Evangelical movement. Evangelical organisations were actively involved in education in Ireland, particularly spiritual education, forming schools and establishing Bible societies, to distribute religious literature. The Catholic Church, in turn, sponsored the formation of Catholic book societies, and emphasised reading and self-instruction as an essential spiritual endeavour for the laity. The struggle for control of education was a major contributor to tensions between the denominations. Evangelical organisations were critical of the Church, accusing it of keeping Catholics in ignorance and superstition. Furthermore, the manners and morals of the laity were often brought into question, especially the rumbunctious behaviour that accompanied popular religious devotions. The Church began to reform the behaviour of the laity at Catholic devotions by condemning the secular activities that accompanied them, such as the feasting and merriment associated with Patterns and Stations. Outside the religious sphere, the Church became increasingly concerned with controlling public morals; this was especially evident in the Church's involvement in the temperance movement and attitude towards wakes.

The Catholic middle class, eager to demonstrate the respectability of the Catholic Church and the Catholic laity, supported Church reform and often took prominent roles in promoting reform. This can be seen in the development of charitable, devotional and educational societies, which were often reliant on the middle-class for financial support and membership. The Catholic middle class was largely composed of English speaking merchants and professionals that emerged as a recognisable group in the late eighteenth century. Through its

involvement in printing and promoting books the Church was able to provide spiritual sustenance to this group. This was one reason why the Church was preoccupied with providing religious texts and encouraging self-instruction at a time when literacy was by no means universal. By 1841 Dublin City had 75 per cent literacy; rates of literacy were lower in rural area of the Diocese, with 55 per cent in Dunlavin Co. Wicklow, 56 per cent in Athy Co. Kildare, and 60 per cent in Balbriggan in north Co. Dublin, literacy here referring to the ability to read.<sup>3</sup> By supporting the printing of Catholic books the Church was catering to the needs of literate Catholics. The influence of the Catholic middle class must also be considered when examining the reform of morals and behaviour. Although the Church's response was in part a reaction to the criticism of Evangelicals and the precepts of Trent, it was likewise a response to the tastes and sensibilities of the Catholic middle class, who were enthusiastic for such reform.

By the 1830s the religious revival was visible in the Dublin Diocese, in both city and rural parishes. Religious knowledge was an essential feature of this revival. The Church believed that the acquisition of religious knowledge, either through catechesis or private reading, was essential for reform, and it began a campaign to provide religious instruction for the laity. Sunday Schools were established to provide basic catechesis for Catholic youth with the assistance of confraternities, whose members helped the clergy in their pastoral duty. With the help of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine the Sunday school system was established throughout the Dublin Diocese, including the most remote parishes, by the 1830s. To cater for adults the Church became directly involved in print, forming the Catholic Book Society to cheaply produce Catholic books making them more readily available to the laity. The significance of print is evident from the Church's determination to provide books and from the development of libraries in the diocese. The purpose of religious instruction was twofold. First, that the laity would understand the Catholic faith and be able to explain it; second that such an understanding would lead to a desire to practice that faith more diligently. The benefit of improved religious knowledge, in terms of belief and practice, was evident in the Dublin Diocese by the growth in devotional and liturgical practices and membership of confraternities.

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<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to take the Census of Ireland, for the year 1841*, HC 1843 (504), xxiv.

Mary Heimann stresses the changing nature of the Church's expectation for the religious commitment of the laity in her article, 'Catholic Revivalism in Worship and Devotion'. According to Heimann the Church's requirements for the laity changed over the course of the nineteenth century, as did the laity's understanding of religious commitment. This change can be seen in Europe in the rise of set devotions, confraternities and sodalities, and increased participation in the Church's liturgy.<sup>4</sup> This improved enthusiasm for faith during the nineteenth century can also be seen in the Protestant denominations experiencing the Evangelical Movement during this period.<sup>5</sup> The main thrust of Heimann's argument is that while devotional and liturgical change is evident in nineteenth-century Europe with Catholic religious worship becoming more 'outwardly fervent' it cannot be solely attributed to the power of the Vatican, or at a national level the Church hierarchy. Sheridan Gilley appears to agree with Heimann. He notes that while historians tend to point towards the increased control by the clergy over the laity during the course of the century, none of the religious activities (apart from the Mass) associated with the Catholic revival were compulsory to faith.<sup>6</sup> It brings to mind the assertion of John Whyte, in relation to the electorate in nineteenth-century Ireland, 'the Irish clergy could lead their people only in the direction that they wanted to go'.<sup>7</sup> Which raises the question: were the laity passive or did they have a say in the direction of reform? In the Dublin Diocese it is evident that a section of the laity shared and supported the desire of the Church for reform. They joined confraternities, taught catechism, attended devotions, and supported the Church financially. This core-group proved to be a vital resource for the Dublin Diocese.

Much has been written about the reform of the Catholic Church in nineteenth-century Ireland. The most obvious starting point for such a discussion

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<sup>4</sup> Mary Heimann, 'Catholic Revivalism in Worship and Devotion', in Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (eds.), *World Christianities c. 1815-1914*, The Cambridge History of Christianity 8 (Cambridge, 2005), 70-83.

<sup>5</sup> Heimann, 'Catholic Revivalism in Worship and Devotion'; Sean J Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dundalk, 1985); for information relating to Protestant Evangelicals in Ireland see: Irene Whelan, *The Bible Wars in Ireland: The 'Second Reformation' and the Polarization of Protestant-Catholic Relations, 1800-1840* (Dublin, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Sheridan Gilley, 'Roman Liturgy and Popular Piety: "The Devotional Revolution" in Irish Catholicism', in Uwe Michael Lang (ed.), *The Genius of the Roman Rite: Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives on Catholic Liturgy* (Chicago, 2009), 216-234.

<sup>7</sup> J. Whyte, 'The Influence of the Catholic Clergy on Elections in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *English Historical Review*, No. 75 (1960), 239-59.

is Emmet Larkin's 'devotional revolution' theory, first proposed in 1972 in the article 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-75'. According to Larkin, the post-famine Church, under the authority of Cardinal Paul Cullen (1852-78), underwent a significant religious transformation which resulted in the Irish laity becoming 'virtually practicing Catholics within a generation'.<sup>8</sup> The devotional revolution led to a liturgical restoration, evidenced in the dramatic rise of Mass attendance in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The data used by Larkin was taken from the work of David Miller. According to Miller's estimates the average Sunday Mass attendance was 43 per cent in 1834. In his first work on this topic, published in 1975, Miller found weekly attendance to be between 20 and 40 per cent in rural Gaeltacht areas, between 30 and 60 per cent in English speaking rural areas, and at its highest in towns with some, such as Kilkenny and Drogheda reaching almost universal attendance. In the larger towns, specifically Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Limerick Miller reached a figure of 40 to 60 per cent. By the end of the century attendance had increased to a massive 90 per cent, leading Miller to conclude with Larkin that a 'devotional revolution' occurred in the interim.<sup>9</sup> In 2000 Miller revisited these figures in an essay titled 'Mass Attendance in Ireland in 1834' arguing that the figures still demonstrated a dramatic change in religious practice, defined as Mass attendance, occurred in the period following 1834.<sup>10</sup>

Since its publication, Larkin's 'Devotional Revolution' has been challenged by a number of scholars. Desmond Keenan in his book *The Catholic Church in nineteenth-century Ireland: a sociological study*, published in 1983, maintains that the reorganisation of the Church took place in the first half of the nineteenth century and was consolidated in the second. Keenan argues that the development of schools and religious orders, the building of churches, and the organisation of libraries, confraternities and devotions occurred prior to the episcopacy of Cardinal Cullen. Keenan's work surveys the development of

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<sup>8</sup> Emmet Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-75', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (Jun., 1972), 625-52, 648; Emmet Larkin, *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Washington, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> David Miller, 'Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Autumn, 1975), 81-98; David Miller, 'Landscape and Religious Practice: a Study of Mass Attendance in Pre-Famine Ireland', *Éire – Ireland*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2005), 90-106.

<sup>10</sup> David Miller, 'Mass Attendance in Ireland in 1834', in Stewart J. Brown and David Miller (eds.), *Piety and Power in Ireland 1760-1960: Essays in Honour of Emmet Larkin* (2000), 158-178.

religious practice and the role of the laity. Although a history of Ireland there is much that relates to the Dublin Diocese, with Keenan giving particular attention to the role of Daniel Murray in enacting reform. Eager to emphasise the work begun by Archbishop Daniel Murray, Keenan downplays the later role of Cullen.<sup>11</sup> Thomas McGrath in an essay titled 'The Tridentine Evolution of Modern Irish Catholicism: A Re-examination of the 'Devotional Revolution' Thesis' disagrees with Larkin's dating of the religious restoration to the latter half of the century.<sup>12</sup> Instead, McGrath sees the devotional revolution as part of a gradual process of reform being implemented in Ireland since the Council of Trent, which he refers to as a 'tridentine evolution'. He demonstrates that most of the devotions described by Larkin as 'new' were of a Tridentine origin and were present in Ireland in the early nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> McGrath insists this 'tridentine evolution' was underway with the relaxation of the Penal Laws but concedes that the Church was hampered in implementing the decrees of Trent by an inadequate ratio of priests to laity.<sup>14</sup> The reliability of the statistics used by Larkin and Miller, based on information gathered by the Commissioners of Public Instruction in 1834, has been questioned by a number of commentators.<sup>15</sup> Patrick Corish believes the figures reached by Miller were too low, and offered alternative figures of 25 to 50 per cent in rural areas and 35 to 75 per cent in the South and East.<sup>16</sup> Nigel Yates is cautious of figures for individual parishes and the interpretation of the 1834 figures.<sup>17</sup> The importance Larkin attaches to the Mass attendance figures has also received criticism. As Donal Kerr succinctly states: 'The very variable percentages which can be deduced from this report is

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<sup>11</sup> Desmond J. Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-century Ireland: A Sociological Study* (Dublin, 1983).

<sup>12</sup> Thomas G. McGrath, 'The Tridentine Evolution of Modern Irish Catholicism: A Re-examination of the 'Devotional Revolution' Thesis', in Réamonn Ó Muirí (ed.), *Irish Church History Today* (Armagh: Cumann Seanchais Ard Mhacha, 1991), 84–99.

<sup>13</sup> Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-75', 644.

<sup>14</sup> The lack of resources (priests and finances) is also identified by Larkin as a major obstacle to Church reform. Emmet Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in pre-Famine Ireland, 1750-1850*, (Dublin, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Donal Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics: Sir Robert Peel's Administration and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1841-1846* (Oxford, 1982); Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-century Ireland*; Patrick J. Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience: A Historical Survey* (Dublin, 1985). Kerr, Keenan and Corish question the reliability of the statistics, and believe the figures reached by Miller are too low, as Miller does not take into consideration those not required to attend or distance to chapels.

<sup>16</sup> Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 166-7.

<sup>17</sup> Nigel Yates, *The Religious Condition of Ireland 1770-1850*, (Oxford, 2006), 155.

no proof, however, that the people were not devout'.<sup>18</sup> James Murphy likewise argues that low Mass attendance is not related to religious commitment, as concepts of what constituted a practicing Catholic changed during the course of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the failure of the laity to regularly attend on Sunday did not alarm the clergy.<sup>19</sup> French historian Jean Delumeau cautions against relying too heavily on quantitative analysis to ascertain faith: 'One can admit the necessity for quantification in religious history, and still hold that faith and love will always retain a certain preternatural quality. At best one measures signs of faith and of collective attitudes, not the state of the soul'.<sup>20</sup>

With regard to the dating of the Catholic revival, this thesis agrees with the conclusions drawn by Keenan and McGrath; reform was underway, at least in the Dublin Diocese, prior to the advent of Cardinal Cullen and this reform was based on the implementation of Tridentine decrees. Furthermore, this thesis concurs with Keenan and McGrath's argument that the new devotional activities identified by Larkin were well-established in the Dublin Diocese by mid-century. However, these findings do not take away from the most striking element of Larkin's research, namely the surge in weekly Mass attendance at the end of the century. What is lacking from the debate surrounding nineteenth-century religion is a clear distinction between liturgical and devotional practice. The religious practices identified by McGrath and Keenan are devotional in nature, while Mass attendance is liturgical. Larkin fails to make this distinction leading him to identify improved Mass attendance, a liturgical phenomenon, as a devotional revolution. Devotional practices, or private extra-liturgical prayer, can be individual or prayed in community and are not reliant on the clergy. Liturgical practices are the set prayers of the church, and are, with the exception of the Divine Office, dependent on the priest, communal, and for the most part restricted to the church building. The Church places a different emphasis on liturgical and devotional practices. It is important to recognise the difference between these practices and to examine them separately, so as to create a more accurate narrative of Catholic reform. The standard of practice expected of the laity in nineteenth-century Dublin is at odds with modern concepts of a

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<sup>18</sup> Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*, 47.

<sup>19</sup> James H. Murphy, *Ireland: A Social, Cultural and Literary History, 1791-1891* (Dublin, 1982), 72.

<sup>20</sup> Cited in: Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914* (London, 1989), 3.

‘practicing Catholic’. While weekly Mass attendance may have been important at the end of the century, during Murray’s episcopacy he was more concerned with Easter Communion. This is evident in the parish visitation sheets where figures for Easter rather than Sunday attendance were recorded. This may indicate that it was a non-issue for the Dublin hierarchy as well as the clergy.<sup>21</sup>

Keenan and McGrath assert that the presence of set devotions and confraternities confirm a religious revival in pre-famine Ireland. While such initiatives do indicate acceptance of reform much of the evidence derives from Dublin and cannot be applied to the whole of Ireland. Regional variations played a distinctive role in the success of religious reform. Throughout the century there was cooperation between dioceses, and provincial synods reveal a shared desire for reform. Changes introduced at a diocesan level were similar but the success of such reforms varied from one diocese to the next. Nineteenth-century reform first took root in Leinster and Munster, particularly visible in towns and cities, but was slower to emerge in Ulster and Connaught.<sup>22</sup> Kevin Whelan in 'The Regional Impact of Irish Catholicism 1700-1850' addresses the uneven pattern of reform. Whelan identifies a Catholic ‘core area’ in South Leinster and East Munster, in rural areas with strong Catholic farmers and landowners, and the more prosperous towns.<sup>23</sup>

Aside from Larkin and Miller, a number of other historians provide valuable insights into the reform efforts of the Church in the nineteenth century. Desmond Keenan’s book *The Catholic Church in nineteenth-century Ireland: a sociological study* published in 1983, mentioned already, provides a survey of religion, what is most interesting to this study is the information relating to Ireland before the Famine, the development of religious practice and the role of

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<sup>21</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830-1851, Dublin Diocesan Archives. The Dublin Diocesan Archives will be referred to as DDA hereafter.

<sup>22</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine, 1798-1848* (Dublin, 1990), 56; Ó Tuathaigh states that the reform varied depending on factors within the diocese; Murphy, *Ireland: A Social, Cultural and Literary History*, 73, Murphy states that reform began in the East of the country first and it was not until the end of the century that it was at a national level; Maria Luddy, ‘“Possessed of Fine Properties”: Power, Authority and Funding of Convents in Ireland, 1780-1900’ in Maarten Van Dijk, Jan de Maeyer, Jeffrey Tyssens and Jimmy Koppen (eds.) *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finances and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe, 1773-c.1930* (Leuven, 2012), 227-246, 228. According to Luddy reform first took root in wealthier areas of Leinster and Munster.

<sup>23</sup> Kevin Whelan, ‘The Regional Impact of Irish Catholicism, 1700-1850’ in W. J. Smyth and Kevin Whelan (eds.) *Common Ground: Essays on the Historical Geography of Ireland* (Cork, 1988), 253-77.

the laity. Sean Connolly's *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780-1845* (1982), and *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (1985) provide detailed background to the condition of the Church at the turn of the nineteenth century and subsequent struggle to implement reform.<sup>24</sup> In *Priests and People* Connolly examines the, often challenging, relationship between clergy and laity, and official and popular Catholicism. Although Connolly's research has an Ulster bias, the variety of sources he has studied enables him to form a general picture of religious practice in pre-famine Ireland. Connolly's work greatly contributes towards our understanding of lay religious belief and practice in Ireland, particularly his study of patterns and wakes. Connolly supports Larkin's thesis that substantial religious change only occurred after the Famine, when the Church was better equipped to implement reform. While he does find instances of religious reform in pre-famine Ireland, such as catechesis and confraternities, he maintains the success was uneven and there is not enough evidence to demonstrate a revival. While there certainly was resistance to reform, from both the clergy and the laity, this period also witnessed a resurgence of religious activity, evident in the Dublin Diocese. A more recent work, *The Religious Condition of Ireland 1770-1850* (2006) by Nigel Yates provides a much broader view of the major denominations: Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian. Two chapters are of particular interest, Chapter four that deals with pastoral care and public worship, and Chapter six, which outlines the programme of Church building. Documenting the Dublin Diocese from its earliest beginnings until 1972 is the volume *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* edited by Dáire Keogh and James Kelly and published in 2000. Among the 16 chapters contained in this work, Keogh's essay on the life of Dr. Troy "'The Pattern of the Flock": John Thomas Troy 1786-1823' and Donal Kerr's 'Dublin's Forgotten Archbishop: Daniel Murray, 1768-1852' were the most pertinent to this thesis.<sup>25</sup> Recent studies by Larkin and Colm Lennon have highlighted the religious experience of the laity in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1998 Emmet

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<sup>24</sup> S. J. Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland, 1780-1845* (Dublin, 1982); Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*.

<sup>25</sup> Yates, *The Religious Condition of Ireland*; Dáire Keogh, "'The Pattern of the Flock": John Thomas Troy, 1786-1823', in James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (eds.), *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 215-36; Donal Kerr, 'Dublin's Forgotten Archbishop: Daniel Murray, 1768-1852', James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (eds.), *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin*, 246-67.

Larkin published an essay ‘The rise and fall of Stations in Ireland 1750-1850’ where he explored the use and benefit of Stations. In his 2006 book *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in pre-famine Ireland, 1750-1850* he revisits Stations in what is perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book.<sup>26</sup> The 2012 book *Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland: Charity, Devotion and Sociability*, edited by Colm Lennon, explores lay religious associations from the fifteenth century to the present day, however most of the essays are concerned with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>27</sup> Another interesting study is the thesis ‘Laity and Clergy in the Catholic Renewal of Dublin c.1750-1830’ by Cormac Begadon. Begadon explores the transformation of Catholic culture in the Dublin Diocese by examining clerical and pastoral reform.<sup>28</sup> There is overlap between this thesis and the work of Begadon both agree that the considerable reform was achieved in the diocese of Dublin in the early nineteenth century. Begadon has done considerable research into the development of reform in city parishes while this thesis places more emphasis on the rural parishes in the Diocese. The period under consideration also differs, Begadon begins in 1750 and completing his study in 1830, this thesis does not begin until 1793 and continues until 1853 thus different conclusions are drawn.

Print and religious instruction was central to the success of the Catholic revival. Connolly acknowledges there was an improvement in religious knowledge in the early nineteenth century. However, he concludes the Church had two methods for transmitting this knowledge: preaching and catechising. He fails to recognise the influence and extent of printing or its use by the Church as a tool of reform.<sup>29</sup> The opportunities presented by print are acknowledged by Begadon in his thesis and also in two essays for *The Irish Book in English 1800-1891*, volume four in the series *The Oxford History of the Irish Book*. The first essay: ‘Catholic Devotional Literature in Dublin 1800 – 30’ discusses the availability of pious literature and the connection between print and devotional

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<sup>26</sup> Emmet Larkin, ‘The Rise and Fall of Stations in Ireland 1750-1850’, in Michel Lagrée (ed.) *Chocs et ruptures en histoire religieuse: Fin XVIIIe-XIXe siècles* (Rennes, 1998), 21-31; Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in pre-famine Ireland, 1750-1850*.

<sup>27</sup> Colm Lennon, *Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland: Charity, Devotion and Sociability* (Dublin, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> Cormac Stephen Begadon, ‘Laity and Clergy in the Catholic Renewal of Dublin 1750-1830’ (Ph.D Thesis, NUI, Maynooth, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 93-102.

reform with Begadon concluding that developments in Catholic printing were central to the renewal of the Dublin Diocese. In ‘Catholic Religious Publishing, 1800 – 91’ Begadon provides a summary of available Catholic literature.<sup>30</sup> The most comprehensive list of Catholic print comes from the collection of articles by Hugh Fenning titled: ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest’. This bibliographical list provides a record of Catholic texts from 1701 to 1819.<sup>31</sup> However, it should be noted that he is concerned only with surviving titles. While Fenning’s bibliography is an invaluable resource for students of Catholic print, it must be supplemented with Advertiser’s Lists and notices of books to form a more complete picture of available reading material.

The primary research for this thesis relied on the papers of Dr. Murray and his secretary Dr. Hamilton; both collections are housed in the Dublin Diocesan Archives. The archives contain a wealth of primary material; those most frequently consulted were the Visitation Sheets. These sheets are large A3 size printed forms with five columns. Each column contains a request for information, from the name of the parish and terms of lease, to the number of public Masses and frequency of catechesis. At the bottom of each sheet the priest is asked to furnish a list of the most obstinate sinners in the parish and state the most frequent abuses. Night wakes, dances, and illicit marriages were cited as example of abuses. Sheets were sent out to parishes prior to an episcopal visitation with instructions for the priests of the parish to complete the form and return it to the Archbishop. In this way Murray was prepared prior to arriving at a parish. These documents were sent to the rural parishes visited by Murray in the course of his annual visitations. Each year Murray visited a number of these

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<sup>30</sup> Cormac Begadon, ‘Catholic Devotional Literature in Dublin 1800-30’ in James H. Murphy (ed.) *The Irish Book in English, 1800-1891* (Oxford, 2011), 331-41; Cormac Begadon ‘Catholic Religious Publishing, 1800-91’, in James H. Murphy (ed.) *The Irish Book in English, 1800-1891*, 371-8.

<sup>31</sup> Hugh Fenning, ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1701-1739’, *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 39/40 (1997/1998), 106-54; ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1740-1759’, *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 41 (1999), 65-116; ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1760-1769’, *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 42 (2000), 85-119; ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1770-1782’, *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 43 (2001), 161-208; ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1783-1789’, *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 44/45 (2002/2003), 79-126; ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1790-1795’, *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 46/47 (2004/2005), 72-141; ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1796-1799’, *Collectanea Hibernica* No. 48 (2006), 67-108; ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1800-1809’, *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 61 (2008), 246-324; ‘Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1810-1819’, *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 64 (2011), 209-307.

rural parishes, on average visitations were carried out in 13 parishes a year, with his busiest tour taking in 22 parishes. Most parishes received a visit from the bishop every 2 to 3 years. As one of the purposes of these rural visitations was to inspect the parish these sheets provided Murray with an overview of the progress of reform in a parish from one visit to the next. For the historian, these sheets document Murray's visits and also provide a picture of the progress of reform in the outlying parishes of the Dublin diocese. The Diocesan Archives have completed visitation sheets from 1830 to 1851, with the exception of 1832 when it seems Murray did not carry out visitations, most likely due to the cholera epidemic. There were no visitations in 1835 either but this was because Murray had visited all of his parishes in the previous three years, carrying out 49 visitations. The visitation sheets document the rise of set devotions, confraternities, parochial libraries, and catechesis and ultimately reveal the development of a Catholic revival in the rural parishes of the Dublin Diocese.<sup>32</sup>

The Dublin Diocesan Archives house a large collection of letters received by Murray and Hamilton from bishops and priests. For this study, the most interesting and insightful of these correspondences were those relating to the formation of the Catholic Book Society and the Free Book Society. The *Minute Book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops* can also be found in the Murray Collection. This hand written book contains the records of the Annual General Meeting of Bishops from 1826 to 1849. It keeps a record of attendance and a list of resolutions agreed at meetings. It also contains a transcript of a report into the condition of parishes in Ireland; this report reveals the state of pastoral care and religious practice prior to 1830.<sup>33</sup>

Another rich source are the record books of confraternities found in the Diocesan Archive and the Capuchin Archive, known as Confraternity Books. There is ample evidence that confraternities were widespread in Dublin by the 1830s, despite this the survival rate for the individual records of these societies is alarmingly low. Fortunately the records of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine at Francis Street and Halston Street survive providing information on the operation of the society in 8 city parishes. These Confraternity Books record

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<sup>32</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830-1851.

<sup>33</sup> Murray Papers, *Irish Bishops*, 1827 AB3/30/10; *Minute Book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops*, February 1826 - November 1849, DDA/Murray Papers.

the number of teachers, size of classes, and figures for weekly attendance. They also provide information about subscribers, membership fees, and the rules of the confraternity.<sup>34</sup>

An important printed source is the *Catholic Directory, Almanac and Registry of the Whole Catholic World* by William Battersby which was printed from 1836 on. Each *Directory* contained an 'Advertising Registry' with notices from Catholic Booksellers. Information relating to confraternities and devotions can also be found in its pages. The *Catholic Directory* contained a complete 'Ecclesiastical Register for Ireland' with lists of bishops and priests in each diocese. It likewise contained an 'Ecclesiastical Register' for England and Scotland and eventually a 'Continental and Foreign Register' with lists for Asia, India, Africa, North and South America, Australia, the Colonies and the West Indies. The *Catholic Directory* was designed for a wider readership than Ireland. Its 'Advertising Register' often contained notices from England, and by the 1850s the cover page was recording a selling agent not only in Dublin and London, but also America and Australia.<sup>35</sup> Other contemporary printed sources are the catalogues of the Catholic stationers, such as Richard Cross, Patrick Wogan, and Richard Grace. These catalogues contain a list of books for sale by the bookseller or printer with prices and descriptions of the titles. These lists can be found in Battersby's 'Advertising Registry', or are sometimes found at the back of books produced by that stationer. These catalogues of books, along with the booklists for the Catholic Book Society, provide a picture of the reading material available to the Catholic laity in the nineteenth century.

As this thesis seeks to explain the development of reform, it is necessary to first look at the beginning of the revival in the aftermath of the penal laws. Chapter One explores the Dublin Diocese at the close of the eighteenth century and the condition of the Church in nineteenth-century Dublin. The Tridentine origins of reform will also be briefly considered as will the development of the Protestant Evangelical movement in Ireland. By the nineteenth century the Dublin Diocese was providing religious education to children through a parish

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<sup>34</sup> Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine and Blessed Sacrament, *General Confraternity Book of Francis St. Chapel*, DDA/Confraternity Books; *Register of the Christian Doctrine Confraternity, St Michan's 1859 - 1868*, Capuchin Friary Archives, HA/SOD/VOL/1.

<sup>35</sup> William J. Battersby, *The Catholic Directory, Almanac and Registry of the whole Catholic World: with complete ordo in English, by the Catholic priest approved of for that purpose* (Dublin, 1836 – c.1870). Hereafter referred to as *The Catholic Directory*.

based network of Sunday Schools. A detailed account and discussion of this programme of catechesis is contained in Chapter Two. A discussion of adult faith formation is contained in Chapter Three. This chapter provides a history of Catholic printing in Ireland, beginning with the eighteenth-century chapel printers. By the 1820s the Church had also become a printer by forming a religious book society similar to those organised by Protestant societies. This chapter will discuss the role of print in the Catholic revival by exploring the formation of three different book societies. The Catholic Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge throughout Ireland established by the Church in 1827, the Catholic Society for Ireland founded by members of the laity 1835 but encouraged and supported by the Church, and the Church's return to print in 1899 with the formation of the Catholic Truth Society.

Changes to the religious practices of the laity will be discussed in Chapter Four. This chapter will examine liturgical and devotional reform separately. Most histories of reform in Ireland fail to distinguish between these two branches of Catholicism. This chapter will explore the reform of popular Stations and patterns and the role of reading and books in promoting new forms of piety. Chapter Five is a study of confraternities in Dublin. These associations provided an outlet for the laity to practice their faith. As most confraternities presupposed literacy there is a connection between these groups and religious print. There was a large variety of confraternities operating in Dublin by the mid-nineteenth century, catering for the various tastes of the laity. This chapter will take one confraternity, the Purgatorian Society, and use it as a case study for moral reform, the role of the laity in such reform, and the use of books by reforming societies. Although this thesis is concerned with reform in the Dublin Diocese, each issue is first discussed in general terms before focusing on Dublin.

## **Chapter One:**

### **The impact of Tridentine Catholicism and Protestant Evangelicals on reform of the Dublin Diocese**

The Catholic Church in the nineteenth century can be characterised by revival. The French Revolutionary (1789-99) and Napoleonic Wars (1803-14), and the emergence of liberalism, secularism and nationalism altered the religious landscape of Europe. Confronting these challenges to its spiritual authority, the Church began to reassert its position in Europe, and a period of renewal and reform ensued. In Ireland, the nineteenth century marked the removal of many of the religious restrictions imposed in the preceding years. In this atmosphere of political leniency, the Catholic Church was free to begin the consolidation of Tridentine reform begun two centuries before. Impatient to repair the damage wrought by the Penal Laws the Church began to construct new church buildings, establish religious institutions, and hold annual meetings, where the hierarchy agreed to create a single standard for clerical discipline and lay reform.

Reform was not limited to the Catholic Church; Protestant denominations were undergoing a series of changes as the Evangelical movement was introduced to Ireland in the late eighteenth century. Evangelicalism emphasised the authority of the Bible and the need for personal conversion. It further stressed that Christ had already atoned for sin and that faith alone was necessary for salvation. Nevertheless, missionary work was encouraged, not as a means for salvation but as a demonstration of ones commitment to faith. The growth of evangelicalism in nineteenth-century Ireland can be seen through the foundation of numerous charitable, moral, and educational societies. Evangelicals were openly critical of Catholicism and the Catholic Church responded in like manner by treating evangelicals with suspicion, which quickly developed into hostility. The Catholic Church was especially concerned about the involvement of these societies in education, seeing it as a blatant attempt to convert Catholic children. Schools run or supported by Evangelical societies promoted the reading of the Scriptures, to which the Church took umbrage. This in turn provoked the Evangelical movement to criticise the Catholic Church further, accusing it of wilfully keeping the Irish people in ignorance.

This chapter will examine the nature and intent of Tridentine reform. It will briefly outline the adoption of the Tridentine model in Europe, which came to fruition in the eighteenth century. The conditions of the Church in Ireland as it emerged from the eighteenth century will be discussed as this affected the direction of reform. This chapter will focus on the Dublin Diocese, as reform was visible in Dublin in the early nineteenth century. The activities of Protestant evangelicals must also be considered as the advancement of evangelicalism within the Protestant denominations lent a greater sense of urgency to the renewal of the Catholic laity.

### Tridentine Reform in the eighteenth and nineteenth century

Throughout the nineteenth century the Irish Church was standardising the religious practices of the Irish laity by implementing Tridentine Catholicism. This model of Catholicism was characterised by ‘the training of new clergy, the catechising of the common folk, evangelisation in the non-European world, and the combating of popular superstitions’.<sup>1</sup> The Council of Trent strengthened the hierarchical structure of the Church. The lower clergy were to be subordinate to the bishops and archbishops, who in turn were subordinate to the papacy. Furthermore, the Council established clear boundaries for parishes, confirming the authority of the Ordinary, and establishing seminaries to train priests. Such were the expectations of the Council, there was however, ‘a considerable time-lag in turning legislation into reality’ and therefore it was not until the eighteenth century that the ‘initiatives of the Council of Trent came fully into fruition’.<sup>2</sup> This delay in implementation is evident across the European landscape. In France, seminaries were not fully established until the end of the seventeenth century and the benefit of the new seminarians was not felt until the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, by the eighteenth century the French *curés* were considered the best-trained priests in Europe. Other countries such as Spain, Germany, and Poland struggled to train Tridentine clergy. Although new seminaries were formed in Spain in the eighteenth century (Spain had 45 seminaries by 1800),

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<sup>1</sup> R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge, 2005), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People: a History of European Catholicism since 1750* (Oxford, 2003), 28-9.

<sup>3</sup> Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 16.

they were small and inadequately staffed.<sup>4</sup> Even more alarming, considering their purpose, the seminaries failed to teach theology.<sup>5</sup> According to one contemporary, seminaries did not provide theological instruction: ‘since nearly all Spaniards, seeing that the peninsula was free of heretics, believed that it was not necessary to study theology, and some have been bold enough to suggest that its study is more damaging than useful’.<sup>6</sup> The Spanish clergy were regularly accused of ignorance, superstition and low morals and it was not until the nineteenth century that the clergy of Spain began to resemble those of eighteenth-century France.<sup>7</sup> The establishment of seminaries was hindered in Germany and Poland by a series of conflicts in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, which left the Church in financial difficulties.<sup>8</sup> It was not until the second half of the eighteenth century that the Church in Poland had adequate funds to maintain its seminaries.

According to the Council, bishops were to divide their diocese into: ‘fixed and proper parishes’ and ‘assign to each parish its own perpetual and peculiar parish priest who may know his own parishioners, and from whom alone they may licitly receive the sacraments’.<sup>9</sup> The formation of a parish system was integral to the restoration making it easier for the clergy to provide catechesis and the sacraments to the laity. It likewise assisted the Bishop in administering to his diocese. To ensure the clergy were properly trained in counter-reformation Catholicism, the Council decreed that seminaries be founded in each diocese.<sup>10</sup> The Tridentine priest was to be distinguished from the laity by his dress, lifestyle and education.<sup>11</sup> According to Ralph Gibson, in his work on Catholicism in France, these seminaries were concerned with training a specific type of priest:

This person was to be docile and obedient, serious-minded, modest, and reserved. He was also taught the rejection of the world. Priests were not

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<sup>4</sup> William J., ‘The Spanish Church’, in William J. Callahan and David Higgs (eds.) *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), 34-50, 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*; Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Callahan, ‘The Spanish Church’, 41.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, 30.

<sup>9</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXIV, C. 13.

<sup>10</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXIII, C. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 16; Christopher F. Black, ‘Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform’, in John Patrick Donnelly and Michael W. Maher (eds.) *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain* (Missouri, 1999), 1-26, 5; Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, 26.

supposed to socialise in a normal way, or to be friendly with their parishioners. Profane activities like visiting the local tavern, or hunting, were severely frowned upon. Clerical separateness was symbolised by the strict enforcement of dress regulations, especially the tonsure and the cassock.<sup>12</sup>

To reinforce the authority of bishops over the clergy, it was recommended that bishops carry out regular diocesan visitations, which were essentially parish inspections. Bishops were to visit their respective dioceses annually and visitations were to take no longer than two years to complete. The Council stated that the primary objective of the visitations was: 'to lead to sound and orthodox doctrine, by banishing heresies; to maintain good morals, and to correct such as are evil; to animate the people, by exhortations and admonitions, to religion, peacefulness, and innocence'.<sup>13</sup> Bishops were to use parish visitations to assert their authority in matters of faith and religious practice by encouraging the laity to diligently attend Mass and the sacraments, and discouraging sinful behaviour. Visitations were also an opportunity for bishops to exert control over the clergy and ensure they were fulfilling their pastoral duties and playing their part in the development of the Tridentine ideal.

Reform of the clergy alone was insufficient to raise the religious standard of the laity. Thus, the Council decreed that the clergy should instruct the faithful in religious doctrine. Acquiring knowledge of doctrine was an essential aspect of Tridentine reform; thus it was decreed that Sundays and solemnities be viewed as an opportunity for the presentation of doctrine. According to the Council: 'Archpriests, curates, and all those who in any manner whatever hold any parochial, or other, churches, which have the cure of souls, shall ... feed the people committed to them, with wholesome words' at least on 'the Lord's day's, and solemn feasts'.<sup>14</sup> The Council ordered the Ordinary to ensure that: 'the children in each parish be carefully taught the rudiments of the faith'.<sup>15</sup> Beyond dissemination of doctrine, the clergy were to reform popular devotions and ensure that religious practice was in line with the teachings of the Church. In the

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<sup>12</sup> Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXIV, C. 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session V, C. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXIV, C. 4.

XXII Session, the Council decreed that the clergy should encourage the laity to participate in official Church devotions only:

That no room may be left for superstition; they [the bishops] shall by ordinance, and under given penalties, provide, that priests do not celebrate at other than due hours; nor employ other rites, or other ceremonies and prayers, in the celebration of Masses, besides those which have been approved by the church.<sup>16</sup>

The Council decreed that devotions to the saints should be monitored and supervised to avoid superstitious and inappropriate behaviour among the laity. Addressing the use of relics and images, and attachment to the saints, in the XXV, and final, Session, the council declared:

... in the invocation of the saints, the veneration of relics, and the sacred use of images, every superstition shall be removed ... nor [shall] the celebration of the saints, and the visitation of relics be by any perverted into revellings and drunkenness; as if festivals are celebrated to the honour of the saints by luxury and wantonness.<sup>17</sup>

Manifestations of popular religion came under the scrutiny of reformers. The cult of the saint, belief in the curative power of relics and holy water, pilgrimages and festivals were frowned upon for the perceived mingling of religious and secular elements. Religious objects such as rosaries, scapulars and medals were used as a means of: 'avoiding injury, ill-fortune and promoting healing'.<sup>18</sup> Festivals, pilgrimages and processions were often accompanied by secular celebrations that came to be associated with unruly behaviour. For instance, the religious processions organised by confraternities, in countries such as Italy, were always followed by a feast.<sup>19</sup> However, despite the efforts to reform, devotion to the saints, especially traditional saints, remained popular in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe.<sup>20</sup> The laity continued to make pilgrimages to places connected with, or subsidiary shrines dedicated to, a saint. In addition, shrines and saints continued to be associated with visions, miracles and healing. The eighteenth century also witnessed an increased devotion to the Blessed Virgin; in

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXV, 2<sup>nd</sup> Decree.

<sup>18</sup> Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, 43.

<sup>19</sup> Black, 'Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform', 7.

<sup>20</sup> Oded Heilbronner, 'The Age of Catholic Revival', in Stephan Berger (ed.) *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe: 1789-1914* (Massachusetts, 2006), 236-247, 237.

southern France this led to a number of chapels being built to accommodate the growing number of devotees.<sup>21</sup> By the late eighteenth century the Church in Spain was still struggling to reform popular devotions. In the 1770s Bishop Bertran of Salamanca encouraged the clergy to oppose certain manifestations of popular religion in order to remove: ‘all vain and superstitious rites as well as false beliefs’.<sup>22</sup>

The Church in Europe tried to replace celebrations that were considered ‘overwhelmingly bawdy’ with more pious exercises.<sup>23</sup> According to Atkin and Tallett, the Church did not attempt to completely remove popular religious practices, but rather: ‘attempted to direct popular religiosity through the parish’.<sup>24</sup> In France, the amount of feast days were decreased and popular feast days were moved to the nearest Sunday to ensure the parish church played a role in the celebrations.<sup>25</sup> Missions were also used to centre religious practice on the parish church and promote orthodox devotions. The parish mission movement in eighteenth century Spain: ‘represented the most far-reaching effort of the Spanish church to bring a rudimentary knowledge of religion to the urban and rural populace’.<sup>26</sup> A mission was a period of intense prayer and instruction. The missions were carried out by religious orders, such as the Jesuits or Redemptorists, who dispatched priests to preach and teach in parishes. Missions could last for several weeks and drew large crowds from surrounding parishes. Confession, homilies and catechesis were all emphasized at missions. The mission movement began in France in the seventeenth century and was reintroduced in the 1830s to become ‘a recurrent high point of parish life’.<sup>27</sup> In Spain missions did not begin until the 1760s. Prior to missions, the quality of religious instruction in some parts of Spain was poor. A survey of education in Mallorca in 1747 showed that the laity knew little more than their basic prayers (the Our Father and Hail Mary) and the Ten Commandments.<sup>28</sup> An examination of the lower clergy in the diocese of Toledo in 1790 found that priests still failed

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<sup>21</sup> Nigel Yates, *Liturgical Space: Christian Worship and Church Buildings in Western Europe 1500 – 2000* (Aldershot, 2008), 101.

<sup>22</sup> Callahan, ‘The Spanish Church’, 48.

<sup>23</sup> Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, 44.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Yates, *Liturgical Space*, 101.

<sup>26</sup> Callahan, ‘The Spanish Church’, 47.

<sup>27</sup> Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 251.

<sup>28</sup> Callahan, ‘The Spanish Church’, 47.

to preach and provide adequate catechesis to the laity.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, reform in eighteenth-century Spain sought to improve religious knowledge.

Popular religious practices, which were particularly resilient to reform, resurfaced in the nineteenth century. The period from the French Revolution to the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) was a time of upheaval and turmoil for the Catholic Church. Following such change, the Church entered an era of revival as she sought to reassert its now undermined position in Europe. According to Oded Heilbronner, the nineteenth century was 'marked by a persistence of popular religious enthusiasms'.<sup>30</sup> Atkin and Tallett, who agree with this assessment, maintain that the 'slackening of clerical tutelage' during the Napoleonic era led to a resurfacing of 'forms of religious observance such as the cult of the saints, pilgrimages and the use of therapeutic rites'.<sup>31</sup> As such, the nineteenth century can be viewed as a 'second confessional era' as the Church re-established seminaries and institutions, and reinitiated reform.<sup>32</sup>

### Catholic Restoration in Ireland

During the eighteenth century the Penal Laws safeguarded the position of the Established Church by restricting Catholic participation in economic, political and social life. In terms of religious practice, there was never a concerted effort to spread the ideals of Protestantism among the Irish, or to seek conversions. In addition, the laws directed at religion had no power over private practice or personal belief. However, the Penal Laws did curtail the administrative structure of the Church by banishing the hierarchy and regular clergy, regulating the movements of priests, and preventing new appointments to parishes.<sup>33</sup> The 1697 Banishment Act ordered those exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction to voluntarily leave Ireland or face imprisonment. At the time of the Banishment Act there were only 8 bishops resident in Ireland, 4 of those bishops

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<sup>29</sup> William J. Callahan, *Church, Politics, and Society in Spain, 1750-1874* (Massachusetts, 1984), 18.

<sup>30</sup> Heilbronner, 'The Age of Catholic Revival', 237.

<sup>31</sup> Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, 118.

<sup>32</sup> Heilbronner, 'The Age of Catholic Revival', 237; Atkin and Tallett, *Priests, Prelates and People*, 85.

<sup>33</sup> 'An Act for banishing all papists exercising any ecclesiastical jurisdiction and all regulars of the popish clergy out of Ireland', *9 Will III c.1* (1697); 'An Act to prevent Popish Priests from coming into this Kingdom', *2 Ann c.3* (1703); 'An Act for registering the Popish Clergy', *2 Ann c.7* (1703).

complied with the order by leaving Ireland, and 1 bishop was imprisoned in Cork and later deported. Therefore, by 1703 there were only 3 bishops residing in Ireland.<sup>34</sup> The Penal Laws were only sporadically enforced; this allowed the Church to begin making appointments to Episcopal Sees as early as 1707 and by 1747 the hierarchical structure was theoretically restored.<sup>35</sup> Despite the absence of the hierarchy and the shortage of priests, the laity continued to practice their faith, albeit in a less ceremonial form. Devotional practices replaced liturgical rites and became the focal expression of Catholic piety. Thus, notwithstanding restrictions, the Catholic Church emerged from the penal era with its administrative structure weakened but not destroyed and its parish system and congregation 'for the most part intact'.<sup>36</sup>

Although the Irish Sees were filled by 1748, there remained a number of problems with the hierarchy, primarily non-residence, failure to implement reform, and demanding excessive amounts of money from parishes.<sup>37</sup> Complaints were sent to Rome, through Propaganda Fide, alleging certain bishops were not living in their appointed dioceses, and taking little interest in diocesan administration.<sup>38</sup> Newly appointed bishops had a number of difficulties exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Some dioceses had been without episcopal supervision for a number of decades. The Diocese of Derry was the most extreme case as the See had been vacant for almost 119 years. A further 6 dioceses had been without a bishop for over 50 years, and 8 had been without a resident bishop for more than 20 years.<sup>39</sup> After such long absences, the hierarchy had the difficult task of restoring order and discipline to their dioceses. Parish visitations were recommended by the Council of Trent to assist the hierarchy in reform, and by the late eighteenth century a number of bishops were carrying out parish visitations. Through regular visitations bishops could ensure the clergy in

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<sup>34</sup> Of the 26 Sees, 13 were already vacant, a further 5 bishops were non-resident; Maureen Wall, 'The Penal Laws, 1691-1760', in Gerard O' Brien and Tom Dunne (eds.) *Catholic Ireland in the eighteenth century: collected essays of Maureen Wall* (Dublin, 1989), 11-12.

<sup>35</sup> Wall, 'The Penal Laws, 1691-1760', 27-31.

<sup>36</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine 1798-1848*, 56; P. J. Corish, *The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dublin, 1981), 92.

<sup>37</sup> Wall, 'The Penal Laws, 1691-1760', 34; John F Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade: Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and Irish America*. (Amherst, 2002), 24.

<sup>38</sup> Wall, 'The Penal Laws, 1691-1760', 28.

<sup>39</sup> Wall, 'The Penal Laws, 1691-1760', 29-30.

their dioceses were following regulations and affirm their ecclesiastical authority as the Ordinary.

The Irish Church faced a number of challenges at a pastoral level, from shortage of personnel to problems with clerical discipline and neglect of priestly duty. One obstacle that plagued the Church until the latter half of the nineteenth century was the shortage of priests. In the eighteenth century this shortage was to be expected. By the end of the eighteenth century, with the return of religious orders, and formation of the new seminary at Maynooth, there was an increase in religious vocations. Between 1800 and 1840 there was a 35% increase in the number of priests, but in spite of this the ratio between priest and laity continued to widen.<sup>40</sup> In 1800 there was just 1 priest to 2,676 parishioners. With the continued growth in the population the ratio of priest to people was 1 to 2,996 by 1840.<sup>41</sup> The lapse in ecclesiastical authority resulted in a number of abuses among the clergy, summed up by Larkin as: ‘drunkenness, women, and avarice’.<sup>42</sup> Priests were accused of drinking to excess, gambling, participating in festive occasions, sexual misconduct, encouraging local disputes and feuds, and exploiting their priestly position by charging parishioners exorbitant fees and dues.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the condition of the Church in the eighteenth century resulted in the clergy being relegated to a purely sacramental role, and pastoral duty was for the most part neglected. Eighteenth and nineteenth-century diocesan regulations ordered priests to be attentive to their pastoral duties. Priests were called to preach and to catechise and to properly prepare the laity to receive the sacraments. In terms of conduct, the Irish clergy, similar to their European counterparts, were to be set apart from their parishioners in dress and behaviour. Through diocesan regulation, priests were told to wear clerical garb, and to don proper vestments when administering the sacraments. Priests were to avoid any gathering that could lead to scandal such as balls or races, or the festivities that followed popular devotions.

During the nineteenth century the Church began a practical campaign to repair chapels or replace them with parish churches. This campaign was crucial

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<sup>40</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 33.

<sup>41</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 33; Larkin, ‘The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-75’, 626.

<sup>42</sup> Larkin, ‘The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-75’, 38.

<sup>43</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 84-5; Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 214.

to reform. The restrictions to religious practice caused by the Penal Laws, coupled with the shortage of priests and church facilities, led to the laity fulfilling their religious requirements by participating in devotional activities such as patterns and pilgrimages. Initially hampered by financial difficulties, the construction of new churches was underway in the nineteenth century, with the period from 1820 to 1840 witnessing an extensive programme of church building.<sup>44</sup> The new parish churches provided a focal point for Catholic worship, emphasising the importance of the liturgy, particularly the Mass, over other devotions. A number of extra-liturgical devotions were held in the new churches, as oppose to outdoors or in private dwellings as had often been the case during the Penal era.

The reform of the clergy and construction of churches impacted the religious experience of the laity, by creating a unified identity within the revitalised parish structure. Reform aimed at the laity, and based on the standards of Trent, had three principal aims: to improve attendance at religious services, to replace unorthodox practices, such as patterns and wakes, with a more approved piety, and to increase the laity's knowledge of Catholic doctrine.<sup>45</sup> The reform of the laity was in a large part contingent on the reform of the clergy. It was the duty of the priest to prepare the laity for the sacraments, provide religious instruction, endorse new devotions, encourage regular reception of the sacraments, and discourage parishioners from taking part in unsanctioned devotions. Diocesan regulations informed the clergy of their duty to encourage attendance at Mass and to discourage popular devotions. However, there were no clear instructions as to how the clergy should go about this. The transformation of religious practice was a gradual process, the Church endeavoured to bring about these aims but ultimately changes to belief and practices had to come from the laity themselves. This could be seen in traditional practices such as wakes and patterns that continued in some areas despite condemnation from the hierarchy. Similarly, the success of new devotions relied on the support of the laity.

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<sup>44</sup> Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 118; Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine 1798-1848*, 56.

<sup>45</sup> Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and popular culture in Ireland, 1750-1850* (Dublin, 1997), 119.

Although the process of reform was carried out separately in each individual diocese, there is evidence of cooperation among the hierarchy. The Irish church was divided into 27 dioceses (in 1831 Galway became the 27<sup>th</sup> diocese) and grouped into four archdioceses, corresponding to the four provinces, Armagh, Cashel, Dublin and Tuam. Provincial synods were common and had the advantage of advocating the same standard of reform throughout the whole archdiocese. For instance in 1786, 1798 and 1808 the prelates from the diocese of Munster assembled, and in 1792, and in 1794 and 1796 synods for the province of Tuam were held under Archbishop Egan.<sup>46</sup> A National Synod, the first of its kind in Ireland since the middle ages, began in Thurles on the 22 August 1850. Prior to the Synod of Thurles, a large number of the Catholic hierarchy gathered at annual general meetings (AGM) held in Maynooth from 1826 to 1849. At the 1829 meeting 19 of the 26 dioceses were represented with three of the four Archbishops present.<sup>47</sup> A decade later the AGM was attended by 22 bishops.<sup>48</sup> At the AGM policies were passed to standardise discipline in all dioceses, particularly focusing on clerical discipline. On February 7<sup>th</sup> 1829 a list of 14 regulations were agreed upon. The majority of these regulations were connected with improving the public image of the clergy. For instance, it was resolved that: ‘Clergymen never appear at theatres, races, public hunts or balls’.<sup>49</sup> Priests were prohibited from withholding any sacrament to those who could not pay, ordered to preach and instruct the faithful and forbidden from receiving any payment in the confessional.<sup>50</sup> The jurisdiction of the Ordinary was emphasised. Bishops were to introduce a more rigorous selection process for candidates to seminary, to examine and approve all priests hearing confession in their diocese, and to reprimand priests who withheld the sacraments in lieu of money.<sup>51</sup> Church discipline and national education were the main topics discussed at these meetings and sub-committees of bishops were formed to investigate and report

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<sup>46</sup> Evelyn Bolster, *A History of the Diocese of Cork from the Reformation to the penal era*, 143.

<sup>47</sup> Dr. Kelly of Tuam is not mentioned in the minutes of the 1829 meeting

<sup>48</sup> *Minute Book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops, February 1826 - November 1849*, DDA/Murray Papers.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Minutes of the proceedings of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland assembled in their Annual General Meeting in Dublin, commencing on the 5 day of February 1829’, *Minute Book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops, February 1826- November 1849*, DDA/Murray Papers.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

on both of these issues.<sup>52</sup> The AGM is evidence that within the Irish Church there was a consensus on the direction of reform and a desire for uniformity.

The progress of reform varied from one diocese to the next. Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh maintains that such regional variations reflected the ‘wide differences in the material condition of the people in different areas’.<sup>53</sup> Dioceses with a higher proportion of wealthy Catholics, strong farmers in rural areas or the middle-class merchants and professionals in urban areas, tended to implement pastoral and religious reform before the poorer, mainly rural dioceses. According to Maria Luddy there was a ‘regional bias’ to the Catholic revival, taking root first in Leinster and Munster, especially in the wealthier urban centres, before spreading to other diocese.<sup>54</sup> In his research, Larkin found that the propensity for reform was higher in urban, English-speaking areas, than their rural counterparts.<sup>55</sup>

The material wealth of the Dublin Diocese enabled it to undertake building projects on a larger scale than any other diocese. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the construction of new churches and other religious buildings was underway in all 27 dioceses. This work was funded by the laity and also by sympathetic members of Protestant denominations. By 1864 an estimated £5,000,000 had been spent on Catholic buildings throughout Ireland. However, as much as 23% of the total amount was spent in the Dublin Diocese alone.<sup>56</sup>

Dioceses that included a city or large town were more likely to benefit from the emergence of religious orders. This can be seen in the dispersion of convents in Ireland by 1845. The Archdiocese of Dublin had 47 convents, 26 of these were located in the Dublin Diocese. Following Dublin, the Archdiocese of Cashel had 29 convents, 8 were located in the Diocese of Waterford. The Tuam Archdiocese had 8 convents and the Archdiocese of Armagh had only 7. In the Archdioceses of Tuam and Armagh, 11 individual dioceses had no nuns established.<sup>57</sup> A similar pattern emerges for the ratio of priests to people. Although vocations to the priesthood increased during the course of the century

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<sup>52</sup> *Minute Book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops February 1826 - November 1849.*

<sup>53</sup> Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine 1798-1848*, 56.

<sup>54</sup> Luddy, “‘Possessed of Fine Properties’”, 228.

<sup>55</sup> Emmet Larkin, *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Washington, 1984). 8.

<sup>56</sup> Grimes, ‘The Architecture of Dublin’s neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples’, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Kerr, *Peel, Priests, and Politics*, 33.

it was never enough to keep abreast with the increasing population. However, some dioceses had more favourable ratios than others, as indicated in the statistics gathered by Connolly.<sup>58</sup> Connolly found that by 1835 the Archdiocese of Dublin had a ratio of 1:2,451, followed by the Archdiocese of Armagh with 1:2,805, Cashel had 1:3,188 and Tuam had the worst ratio with 1:3,675. The Diocese of Ferns, in the Dublin Province, had the best proportion of priest to people with 1:1,941 followed by Ossory and then Dublin with 1:2,572. At the other end of the scale were Killala and Tuam, both in the Tuam Archdiocese, with one to 4,133 and 4,199 respectively.<sup>59</sup>

Apart from geographical and material conditions, the adoption of reform was also dependant on the 'enterprise of particular bishops'.<sup>60</sup> The commitment of reform-minded bishops is evident in their efforts to visit and inspect even the most remote parishes in their diocese. While there is evidence of visitations in a number of dioceses in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, as already stated, completed visitation sheets for a sustained period only survive for two dioceses (Dublin and Cashel) as indicated by Nigel Yates.<sup>61</sup> Without visitation sheets it is difficult to assess the programme of reform in individual diocese. However, from an examination of surviving records for Dublin it is clear that a religious revival was occurring in this Diocese even in the most remote parishes by the 1830s.

### The Dublin Diocese in the nineteenth century

The Dublin Archdiocese, which corresponds geographically to the province of Leinster, is made up of four dioceses, Dublin and the suffragan Sees of Ferns, Kildare and Leighlin, and Ossory.<sup>62</sup> The diocese of Dublin incorporates counties Dublin and Wicklow, a section of county Kildare, and small parts of Laois and Wexford.<sup>63</sup> At the turn of the nineteenth century, there were 46 parishes in the Dublin diocese, 9 of these within the city, 37 without.<sup>64</sup> The

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<sup>58</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 60.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine 1798-1848*, 56.

<sup>61</sup> Yates, *The Religious Condition of Ireland*, 197; According to Donal Kerr, Visitation Sheets also survive for the Diocese of Clogher. Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*, 46.

<sup>62</sup> See Map 2 and Map 3.

<sup>63</sup> The Dublin diocese comprises a section of Laois and Wexford through the parishes of Athy and Arklow. See Map 4.

<sup>64</sup> Henry Young in his 1821 *Catholic Directory* records only 45 parishes in the diocese. This is because Young mistakenly records Rush as being in the parish of Lusk, in fact it had been a

parishes on the south side of the city were dedicated to: St. Nicholas, St. Audeon, St. Catherine, St. James, Ss. Michael and John, and St. Andrew.<sup>65</sup> On the north of the city parishes were dedicated to St. Mary, St. Paul, and St. Michan. In 1823 the parish of Rathmines was constituted from the city parish of St. Nicholas.<sup>66</sup> In 1829 the parish of Sandyford was constituted from the combined parish of Kingstown, Dalkey and Cabinteely. Thus by 1830 the Dublin Diocese had 48 parishes.<sup>67</sup>

The Dublin Diocese is composed of both urban and rural parishes, each presenting a different pastoral challenge. Social variations existed in both rural and urban areas. Within the parishes outside Dublin city, parishioners were drawn from the strong farmers, small farmers and the labouring classes.<sup>68</sup> Labourers were the largest and poorest social group, often forced to travel for work. The population of Dublin city expanded dramatically in the first half of the nineteenth from 182,000 in 1800 to 285,000 in 1851.<sup>69</sup> The increase in the population contributed towards overcrowding and the development of slums. While poverty could be found throughout the diocese, the urban poor had the added disadvantage of living in close confinement, making them more susceptible to disease and ill health. Jacinta Prunty has traced the geography of Dublin's poor in her book *Dublin Slums, 1800-1925*.<sup>70</sup> She describes the squalid living conditions, development of slum areas, and the spread of infectious disease, such as cholera, typhus and smallpox. Within Dublin city the rich and poor co-existed; middle-class residence and slums could be located within the same parish. This led Jonathan Binns, in 1837, to describe Dublin as: 'a city of lamentable contrasts'.<sup>71</sup> Prunty explains: 'geographically, the distances [between the wealthy and the poor] were minimal; but socially the gulf was immense'.<sup>72</sup> Dublin's middle and merchant class were becoming increasingly literate and

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separate parish since 1730; Patrick Cunningham, 'The Catholic Directory for 1821. (By Rev. H. Young). With Introduction by Rev. W. Hawkes' *Reportorium Novum: Dublin Diocesan Historical Record*, Vol. II, No. 2, 324-363.

<sup>65</sup> The parish Ss. Michael and John, was called St. Michael until 1816.

<sup>66</sup> Initially, the parish of Kingstown was referred to as the parish of Milltown and Harold's Cross.

<sup>67</sup> A full list of the 48 parishes in the Dublin Diocese is contained in Appendix A, see also Map 4.

<sup>68</sup> David Ryan, 'That Most Serious Duty': Catholic Preaching in Ireland, 1760-1840' (University College, Galway: M.A. Thesis, March 1988), 9; Maxwell, *Everyday Life in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ireland*, 43-4.

<sup>69</sup> Ian Maxwell, *Everyday Life in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ireland*, (Dublin, 2012), 57.

<sup>70</sup> Jacinta Prunty, *Dublin Slums, 1800-1925: A study in urban geography* (Dublin, 2011).

<sup>71</sup> Maxwell, *Everyday Life in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ireland*, 57.

<sup>72</sup> Prunty, *Dublin Slums, 1800-1925*, 293.

more open to Church reform. This group is most associated with joining confraternities and becoming actively engaged in religious practice. Often the focus of these confraternities was on the reform of the poor and contact between these groups was often through the medium of education or charity.<sup>73</sup>

The Dublin diocese had a series of bishops interested in reform, including John Carpenter (1770-86), Archbishop John Troy (1786-1823), and Dr. Daniel Murray (1823-52). During his episcopacy Carpenter established regular communication with Rome. In 1780 he submitted a formal report to Rome outlining the conditions of the Church in the Dublin Archdiocese. It was the first report of its kind in over a century. He kept administrative records, including information relating to confirmations and ordinations. In 1776 he wrote an explanation of the Mass to be read aloud to the congregation before each Mass, and had it translated into the Irish language. He also had Butler's *Catechism* and *Lives of the Saints* published.<sup>74</sup> When Troy was translated to the Dublin Diocese, one of his first actions was to draw-up and issue pastoral instructions for the clergy. He established regular conferences for the priests of the diocese. Troy was concerned with the religious instruction of the laity and encouraged the formation of confraternities.<sup>75</sup> Murray was appointed coadjutor in 1809, at the request of Troy. He continued to promote confraternities for the laity. In the fashion of his predecessors, Murray emphasised pastoral duty, clerical discipline, and religious instruction. He also encouraged the development of religious orders in the diocese.<sup>76</sup> Carpenter, Troy and Murray all carried out regular diocesan visitations. Under Troy, priests were required to submit regular parish accounts. A tradition Murray continued, with parishes submitting detailed reports before each of his visits. Visitations, combined with the parish reports, allowed the Dublin hierarchy to promote and track the implementation of reform in the Archdiocese.

Two measures of the progress of reorganisation are the establishment of religious orders and the construction of church buildings. A number of new religious communities for both men and women were formed in Ireland in this

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<sup>73</sup> Ryan, 'That Most Serious Duty', 10-12; Prunty, *Dublin Slums, 1800-1925*, 293.

<sup>74</sup> Hugh Fenning, 'John Carpenter', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, 365-6; Thomas O'Connor, 'Carpenter, John (1729-1786)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed. (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74343>, accessed 9 April 2015].

<sup>75</sup> Dáire Keogh, 'Troy, John Thomas (1739-1823)'.

<sup>76</sup> Keenan, 'Murray, Daniel (1768-1852)'.

period and were primarily located in urban areas. In 1776 Nano Nagle founded the Presentation Sisters in Cork. Edmund Rice formed his first community in Waterford in 1808, which eventually became two religious orders, the Presentation Brothers and the Christian Brothers.<sup>77</sup> In 1807 and 1808 the Brigidine Sisters and Patrician Brothers were founded in Carlow at the instigation of Bishop Delaney. In 1812 Mary Aikenhead established the Sisters of Charity in Dublin. Frances Ball brought the Loreto Sisters to Dublin in 1821. In 1828 Catherine McAuley began the Sisters of Mercy, also in Dublin.<sup>78</sup> All of these orders were connected with education, providing instruction in the faith and traditions of the Church as well as a general education.

The nineteenth century witnessed an unprecedented growth in female religious vocations. This growth was not unique to Ireland but was rather reflected throughout the Catholic world. The development of new female congregations whose members were engaged in active service, instead of the traditional cloistered communities associated with female religious orders, can account for the increase in vocations. In 1801 there were 11 religious houses for women and six female orders in Ireland. By 1901 this figure had increased to 35 orders with 368 houses.<sup>79</sup> The number of nuns in Ireland rose dramatically, from 120 in 1800 to more than 8,000 in 1901.<sup>80</sup> The typical nineteenth-century nun was not contemplative, instead she: ‘taught in public schools, visited the sick and the poor in their homes, worked in hospitals and provided other forms of welfare service’.<sup>81</sup> As they relied on the financial support of the Catholic middle class, convents were established in urban settings, with the highest concentration in the ecclesiastical provinces of Dublin and Cashel.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Edmund Rice opened his first school in Waterford in 1802. In 1808 Rice and his followers adapted the rule of the Presentation Sisters as the rule for their fledgling community leading to the group first being known as the Presentation Brothers. In 1820 the community was granted permission to become an Apostolic Institute, adopting a new rule and a new name, they became the Christian Brothers in 1822. However, the community in Cappoquin and one of the communities in Cork City opted to remain Presentation Brothers and continue to follow the original rule. Thus, in Cork both Christian Brothers and Presentation Brothers operated. In 1889 the Presentation Brothers were granted permission to become an Apostolic Institute.

<sup>78</sup> Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 24-5; Caitríona Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1998), 47-53.

<sup>79</sup> Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 36.

<sup>80</sup> Tony Fahey, ‘Nuns in the Catholic Church in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century’, in Mary Cullen (ed.), *Girls Don't do Honours: Irish Women in Education in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Dublin, 1987), 7-30, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Fahey, ‘Nuns in the Catholic Church in Ireland’, 9.

<sup>82</sup> Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 37; Luddy, “‘Possessed of Fine Properties’”, 229.

By the mid-1830s Battersby's Catholic Directory listed seven friaries and nine nunneries in Dublin city. The Augustinians, Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, Discalced Carmelites, Jesuits and Franciscans were providing Mass and the sacraments, and introducing new devotions to the laity in Dublin. The Sisters of Charity had four nunneries and the Sisters of Loreto had two nunneries. The Sisters of Mercy, Presentation Sisters, and Carmelites also had convents in Dublin city. Outside the city, 10 convents could be found: the Sisters of Charity in Sandymount, Poor Clare Sisters at Harold's Cross and Kingstown, the Sisters of Mercy also at Kingstown, the Carmelites in Ranelagh, Dolphin's Barn, Blackrock and Firhouse, the Dominicans in Cabra, and the Sisters of Loreto in Rathfarnham.<sup>83</sup> The growth in religious orders, particularly the development of female congregations, greatly assisted the revival of the Church in the Dublin diocese. Archbishop Murray, witnessing the benefit of such congregations in Europe, encouraged the formation of new religious orders. Murray played a significant role in the establishment of the Sisters of Charity, Loreto Sisters, and Sisters of Mercy in Dublin.<sup>84</sup> These religious orders owed much of their success to Dublin's strong middle class who not only established these orders, but also provided a source of vocations.

In the course of the eighteenth century there emerged a 'vocal and active' Catholic middle class, comprised of merchants, businessmen, and professionals, who were politically engaged and interested in the 'Catholic question'.<sup>85</sup> Dublin had a large middle-class population. For instance 125 of the 284 delegates returned to the 1792 Catholic Convention were Dublin businessmen.<sup>86</sup> Through the Catholic Committee, and later Catholic Association, the Catholic middle class proved their interest in alleviating the civil and economical disabilities placed on Catholics by lobbying for Catholic Emancipation and a repeal of the Penal Laws.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 49.

<sup>84</sup> Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 50-51.

<sup>85</sup> Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 4.

<sup>86</sup> C. J. Woods, 'Personnel of the Catholic Convention, 1792-3', *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 57 (2003), 26-76, 28.

<sup>87</sup> For information on the Catholic Committee and Catholic Association see: Maureen Mac Geehin, 'The Activities and Personnel of the General Committee of the Catholics of Ireland, 1767-84' (M.A. Thesis, UCD, Dec, 1952); Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine 1798-1848*, 42-53.

The Catholic middle class longed for the respectability and social standing of their Protestant neighbours. Middle-class Catholics sought respect and acceptance from Protestants and the State, however, they did not want acceptance for themselves alone but also for their religion. Eager to disassociate from the image of a backwards, superstitious religion the middle-class laity supported the Church in the programme of reform. Similar to their Protestant counterparts, the Catholic middle class was concerned with the ‘material, ‘moral’, and spiritual welfare of the poor’.<sup>88</sup> They became involved in a whole range of charitable and religious endeavours. Members of the Catholic middle class, both male and female, became benefactors to orphanages, shelters, and schools, taught catechesis, organised religious devotions, were members of temperance societies, financed church buildings, and joined confraternities and sodalities. Writing about the involvement of women in philanthropy, Maria Luddy states: ‘the overwhelming importance of religion in the lives of nineteenth-century Irish women cannot be overemphasised’.<sup>89</sup> The same applies to nineteenth-century Irish men. The involvement of the laity in charitable and religious activity was in response to their Christian duty. The improved wealth and social position of middle-class Catholics heightened their sense of duty towards their fellow Catholics, who were less fortunate. Charity also afforded the middle class with an opportunity to influence the behaviour and manners of the Catholic laity, imposing ‘middle class morality’ and ‘Victorian respectability’.<sup>90</sup> The involvement of members of the middle class in areas of reform was an added resource for the Dublin Diocese, and the success of certain initiatives, such as catechesis and church building, can be attributed to their commitment.

The wave of church building in nineteenth-century Dublin can be seen as a result of a more prosperous and assertive Catholic middle class, who largely funded the construction. Reconstruction was also an essential component in the programme for reform and indicates the Church’s improved social standing. In 1749 Dublin was reported to have 19 chapels in the city. By 1849 this had risen

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<sup>88</sup> Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 4.

<sup>89</sup> Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge, 1995), 2.

<sup>90</sup> Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy*, 2; Caoimhín Ó Danachair, ‘The death of a tradition’, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 63, No. 251 (Autumn, 1974) 219-230, 223

to 28; 9 parish churches and 19 others associated with religious orders.<sup>91</sup> These new edifices had an ‘architectural pretention’ lacked by their eighteenth century predecessors.<sup>92</sup> Eighteenth-century chapels were outwardly inconspicuous buildings, located in side streets and back lanes and lacking distinguishing features usually associated with a religious building, such as a cross, bell tower, or steeple.<sup>93</sup> These chapels had ‘neither street frontage nor adjacent graveyard and their sites were usually small. They were approached by narrow lanes for they were usually at the rear of houses occupying sites of former stables and warehouses’.<sup>94</sup> Towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was, what David Dickson describes as, a ‘minor flurry’ of church building.<sup>95</sup> In 1782 a new chapel was built on Meath St for the parish of St. Catherine to replace the old building, which had become dilapidated. The building, described as being ‘very spacious’, was octagonal in shape and constructed of brick, with columns inside to support the structure.<sup>96</sup> In keeping with the times, the chapel was located behind a row of houses. In 1785 a new chapel was erected in Arran Quay for the parish of St. Paul, likewise it was built off the road, at the back of the houses.<sup>97</sup> Following the 1793 Catholic Relief Act work began on the construction of a Discalced Carmelite chapel on Clarendon St, dedicated to St. Teresa. Although the facade was simple (plaster and brick), the location was significant as was the size. At the time of its completion, 1810, it was the largest Catholic church in the city.<sup>98</sup> As the design and location of chapels became more conspicuous they came to be described as churches rather than chapels, to correspond to the improved position of the Church.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Brendan Grimes, ‘The Architecture of Dublin’s neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples 1803-62’, (Ph.D. Thesis, National College of Art and Design, Dublin, 2005). 25.

<sup>92</sup> Grimes, ‘The architecture of Dublin’s neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples’, 23.

<sup>93</sup> James Kelly, ‘The Impact of the Penal Laws’, in James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (eds.), *History of the Catholic diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000), 144-74,160.

<sup>94</sup> Nuala Burke, ‘A Hidden Church? The Structure of Catholic Dublin in the mid-eighteenth century’, *Archivium Hibernicum* Vol. 32 (1974), 81-92, 85.

<sup>95</sup> David Dickson, *Dublin: the Making of a Capital City* (London, 2014), 295.

<sup>96</sup> George Newenham Wright, *An Historical Guide to the City of Dublin, Illustrated by Engravings, and a Plan of the City* (Dublin, 1825, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), 90.

<sup>97</sup> Wright, *An Historical Guide to the City of Dublin*, 87.

<sup>98</sup> Wright, *An Historical Guide to the City of Dublin*, 93;

<sup>99</sup> Grimes, ‘The Architecture of Dublin’s neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples’, 9-11.

As the first authorised church building, following the Catholic Relief Act, the construction of St. Teresa's chapel marked a new era of Catholic building.<sup>100</sup> Encouraged by concessions, nineteenth-century churches were large and ornate, and built on prominent sites, often facing onto a busy street. One of the most ambitious projects was the construction of the Catholic Metropolitan Chapel dedicated to the '*Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*', commonly known as the Pro-Cathedral or St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral. Initially Archbishop Troy wanted to replace the chapel on Liffey St., which acted as his mensal parish, with a larger chapel. After 1793 the construction of a large church to meet the needs of the Catholics in Dublin city became a possibility.<sup>101</sup> In 1803 a site for the new church was purchased on Marlborough St. a short distance from Sackville St., Dublin's main thoroughfare. The Pro-Cathedral was built between 1814 and 1841, costing a total of £45,000, which was raised from public donations. Initially funds were raised from the laity in Dublin, with Troy personally going door-to-door collecting; however, in 1821 the building committee decided that the new church would be a national chapel rather than a parish chapel, thus allowing the committee to solicit donations from further afield.<sup>102</sup> On November 14 1825, the feast day of the patron of the Dublin Archdiocese, St. Laurence O'Toole, Dr. Daniel Murray dedicated the new church, in an elaborate ceremony attended by a large number of the Catholic hierarchy.<sup>103</sup> Thereafter the Pro-Cathedral was opened for general use, although the interior was not completed until 1841.<sup>104</sup>

By 1858 new churches had been built in all nine parishes in Dublin city. In 1811 foundation stones were laid for the churches of St. Michan and St. Michael and John. In 1814 St. Michan's church on North Ann St. was completed.<sup>105</sup> The following year, 1815, the new church dedicated to St. Michael and John was opened on Essex Quay. Originally the parish of St. Michael had a

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<sup>100</sup> Peter Costello, *Dublin Churches* (Dublin, 1989), 38; Grimes, 'The Architecture of Dublin's neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples', 29.

<sup>101</sup> After being transferred to Dublin in 1786, Archbishop Troy petitioned Rome for the use of St. Mary's parish on Liffey St. as his mensal parish, up until this point, the Archbishop of Dublin had used the chapel on Francis St, as it was in closer proximity to Christ Church Cathedral.

<sup>102</sup> Dermot McCarthy, *St Mary's Pro Cathedral Dublin* (Dublin, 1988) 5.

<sup>103</sup> Mc Carthy, *St Mary's Pro Cathedral Dublin*, 6.

<sup>104</sup> Grimes, 'The Architecture of Dublin's neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples', 4.

<sup>105</sup> Costello, *Dublin Churches*, 82. In 1891 St. Michan's was enlarged and the main entrance was moved to Halston St.

small chapel located on Rosemary Lane. However, in 1810 Fr. Michael Blake was appointed vicar general of the Dublin Diocese and parish priest of St. Michael's parish. Blake, ever willing to assert the Catholic cause, purchased the site of the former Smock-Alley Theatre, then a busy market area, and set about plans to construct a new church.<sup>106</sup> When the church, dedicated to Ss. Michael and John, was opened in 1815 it was the first of the new churches to have an external bell and face onto the street.<sup>107</sup> The construction of a new church for the parish of St. Nicholas of Myra on Francis St. was begun in 1829, at the instigation of the parish priest, Fr. Michael Flanagan. Initially, Fr. Flanagan wanted only to extend and renovate the existing chapel however, he decided instead to build a new church and the original chapel was razed to the ground. The church was consecrated and in use from 1832 and was dedicated in 1842, although still unfinished.<sup>108</sup> The parish of St. Andrew, originally located on Townsend St., purchased a site in Westland Row and work on the new church was begun in May 1832. Fr. Michael Blake, who by this stage had left Ss. Michael and John to become the parish priest of St. Andrew's, laid the foundation stone.<sup>109</sup> On 17 March 1835 the foundation stone for the parish of St. Paul was laid at Arran Quay and the church opened for worship in 1837.<sup>110</sup> In 1823 construction began for a new chapel of ease for the parish of St. Paul. Located outside the city, in Phibsborough, this new church was dedicated to St. Peter.<sup>111</sup> The church of St. Catherine on Meath St., built in 1782, was renovated, enlarged and added to until 1858 when a new church was built.<sup>112</sup> Thus by 1835 the parish of St. James and St. Audeon were the only city parishes that had not begun restoration. In 1836, William Battersby, while writing in the *Catholic Directory*, lamented the poor condition of St. James' chapel:

It is to be regretted, that in such a respectable and extensive parish as this, the old chapel, so unfitted for divine worship particularly in the

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<sup>106</sup> Matthew Russell, 'Michael Blake Bishop of Dromore II', *Irish Monthly*, Vol. IX, No. 100 (Oct, 1881), 561-568, 565.

<sup>107</sup> James Quinn, 'Michael Blake', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, 586-7; Nicholas Donnelly, *A Short History of Dublin Parishes*, part VIII, 197.

<sup>108</sup> Grimes, 'The Architecture of Dublin's neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples', 31, 111-114; Costello, *Dublin Churches*, 44.

<sup>109</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836* (Dublin, 1836), 78.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> In 1838 the church of St. Peter was given to the Vincentian fathers for their care.

<sup>112</sup> Costello, *Dublin Churches*, 42.

metropolis of Ireland, has not been superseded by a church adapted to the wants of the increasing congregation and more in keeping with the piety of the faithful.<sup>113</sup>

In 1837 Battersby again criticised St. James' parish, describing it as: 'a disgrace to the people and the age'.<sup>114</sup> The parish of St. Audoen on Bridge St. was similarly: 'in bad repair and too small for the congregation'.<sup>115</sup> A new church for the parish of St. Audoen was begun in 1841 and opened in High St. in 1847, while work on St. James' church was finally begun in 1844.<sup>116</sup> Construction was likewise underway in a number of parishes outside the city. From 1820 to 1860 35 new churches were built in the Dublin Diocese.<sup>117</sup> By the 1860s all of the parishes in the diocese, even the most remote parishes in Wicklow and Kildare, had either extended an existing chapel or built a new church.

Church building was not restricted to the Dublin diocese, nor was it restricted to churches. Convents, schools, hospitals, colleges and seminaries were also built.<sup>118</sup> Between 1800 and 1868 approximately £5,000,000 was spent on Catholic buildings in Ireland, indicating the close relationship between physical and spiritual renewal at this time.<sup>119</sup> However, Dublin spent more than any other diocese. From the beginning of the century until 1864 Dublin spent £1,170,100 on religious construction, 53% of which was spent on building parish churches and chapels of ease in the diocese.<sup>120</sup>

The experience of Catholics in rural and urban parishes differed greatly during the nineteenth century, as did their experience of reform. City parishes had the advantage of a parish priest and curate and benefited from the establishment of religious orders. Whereas rural parishes often lacked a curate. Religious orders played an important role in developing educational and charitable services in the parishes where they were established. While some orders established houses outside Dublin city, such as the convents located in Harold's Cross, Ranelagh, and Kingstown, remote parishes, such as those in

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<sup>113</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 79.

<sup>114</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837* (Dublin, 1837), 150.

<sup>115</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 79.

<sup>116</sup> Grimes, 'The Architecture of Dublin's neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples', 4.

<sup>117</sup> See List of New Churches, Appendix B.

<sup>118</sup> Grimes, 'The Architecture of Dublin's neo-classical Roman Catholic Temples', 32.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

Kildare and Wicklow did not benefit from such establishments. Construction of churches was a slow process in rural areas largely because it was easier to finance building in large urban centres. As already mentioned, by 1858 all nine city chapels had been replaced by churches. However, for rural parishes the same could not be said until the late 1870s.<sup>121</sup> A similar pattern emerges for catechesis, confraternities and religious practice. Innovations were first seen in the city parishes before being adopted by the rest of the diocese. An example of this is the development of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, a lay group that taught the catechism to children through a system of weekly classes. In Dublin city the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine could be found in the parish of Francis St. and the parish of St. Michan as early as 1798.<sup>122</sup> In 1810 this group was operating in at least 8 of the 9 city parishes.<sup>123</sup> The evidence for rural parishes indicates that catechesis was not widespread until the mid-1830s at which time the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was only active in 25 of 39 rural parishes.<sup>124</sup> Despite the lack of resources, a revival of Catholic religious practice was evident in even the most remote rural parishes by the 1830s, visible by organised catechesis, improved access to reading material, and the development of devotional confraternities.

#### The Protestant Evangelical movement in the early nineteenth century

The Catholic Church was not alone in being renewed and revived in this period. The principal Protestant denominations likewise felt the force of revival, and their revival had the effect of galvanising the Catholic Church further. Triggered by the secularisation of the French revolution and the enlightenment, a new wave of religious enthusiasm swept through Europe. The reform of the Irish Church was part of this movement of revival. According to Connolly: ‘In Ireland, as elsewhere, the new spirit of religious conviction and commitment was seen in each of the major denominations’.<sup>125</sup> Britain, during the first half of the nineteenth century, was marked by: ‘a remarkable rise in evangelical piety,

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<sup>121</sup> Appendix B contains a list of churches built in rural parishes from 1800 to 1880, including the construction of chapels of ease.

<sup>122</sup> *General Confraternity Book of Francis Street Chapel; Register of the Christian Doctrine Confraternity, St. Michan's 1859-1868.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese, DDA/Murray/1834.*

<sup>125</sup> Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 7.

fuelled by a growing sense that the Protestant religion and constitutional government had saved Britain from the social and political catastrophe that had overtaken France'.<sup>126</sup> This evangelicalism emphasized salvation through faith in Christ and encouraged a personal conversion based on the knowledge of Christ's sacrifice, which could be gained by reading the Gospels. It also encouraged members to perform charitable and missionary work. Evangelical piety found expression through voluntary societies, which sought to reform the morals of the lower classes, promote the reading of Scriptures, provide religious education, and perform various charitable works. These missionary endeavours were not confined to home; evangelical societies launched missions to places such as India and parts of Africa. For these foreign missions, Bibles were translated into the vernacular, which, according to Irene Whelan, 'more than any other factor accounted for the global spread of the Protestant missionary movements in the nineteenth century'.<sup>127</sup> This evangelicalism quickly spread to Ireland. In the wake of the 1798 rebellions and the Act of Union, evangelical societies which were influenced by, and in some cases an extension of, British movements, were established in Ireland.

During the eighteenth century the Penal Laws had been enforced to safeguard the position of the Established Church; however, during this period there had never been a sustained campaign to convert the Irish to Protestantism. The situation changed at the end of the eighteenth century, and this can be attributed to the influence of the evangelical movement on Irish Protestantism. The movement began in Ireland with the development of Methodism. According to Brian Mc Namee, Methodism, which originated in the mid-eighteenth century as a religious society within the Anglican Church, 'revitalized the whole spirit of Irish Protestantism'.<sup>128</sup> Moved by a desire to spread the word of God, Methodist preachers travelled throughout Ireland teaching the tenets of their faith. In 1799 the Methodist church undertook an Irish-speaking mission. According to Irene Whelan, this was the first time its mission was aimed directly at Irish

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<sup>126</sup> Irene Whelan, 'The Bible Gentry: Evangelical Religion, Aristocracy, and the New Moral Order in the early Nineteenth Century' in Crawford Gribben and Andrew Holmes (eds.) *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism and Irish Society, 1790-2005* (Hampshire, 2006), 52-82, 55.

<sup>127</sup> Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland*, 93.

<sup>128</sup> Brian McNamee, 'The "Second Reformation" in Ireland', *Irish Theological Quarterly*, No.33 (1966), 39-64, 42.

Catholics.<sup>129</sup> Its endeavours did not result in significant conversions to Methodism; nevertheless, it did begin a movement of missionary activity in Ireland. This was evidenced by a rise in educational and moral societies formed on a national scale to endorse scriptural reading and religious education. These societies, which focused on education, promoted the acquisition of literacy as a means to encourage the reading of the Bible. The Protestant Reformation, which up to this point had largely been neglected in Ireland, was once again on the agenda and there was an expectation that the work carried out would lead to a change in the religious allegiance of the Irish. As a result ‘the first third of the nineteenth century saw an unprecedented attempt to convert Irish Catholics ... by the voluntary religious zeal of a host of evangelical societies’.<sup>130</sup>

The Bible played a pivotal role in the work of the evangelical societies. Moved by a missionary impulse, societies printed and sold, or distributed, the Bible or tracts of Scripture in the hope that an encounter with the word of God would lead the Catholic Irish to a personal encounter with Christ, which would ultimately result in a conversion.<sup>131</sup> As well as printing biblical texts, evangelical societies also produced a plethora of religious tracts. Some societies, such as the Association for Discountenancing Vice and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion, aimed to supplant cheap popular literature already available in Ireland, which it believed was morally compromising, with more wholesome texts. Other societies, such as the London Hibernian Society, became involved in the movement for education, establishing schools to teach basic literacy.

The Association for Discountenancing Vice and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion (ADV) was formed in Dublin in 1792. The ADV was established by three private individuals from the Church of Ireland who felt that the ‘rapid progress which infidelity and immorality are making throughout the Kingdom calls loudly on every individual, both of the Clergy and of the Laity ... to exert all his powers to stem the baneful Torrent’.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland*, 86.

<sup>130</sup> David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland: from the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of the Empire* (Cambridge, 1996), 102.

<sup>131</sup> John Wolffe, ‘Contentious Christians: Protestant – Catholic Conflict Since the Reformation’, in John Wolffe (ed.) *Religion in History: Conflict, Conversion and Coexistence* (Manchester, 2004), 97 – 128, 114.

<sup>132</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, HC 1825 (400), xii, 31

Initially the society relied solely on subscriptions and was thus restricted to producing reading material; but from 1800 it was in receipt of a parliamentary grant, which enabled it to have a more active role in religious education. Although originally begun by members of the laity, the society became the principal evangelical agent of the Established Church. It was endorsed and supported by its prelates, managed by its clergymen, and organised according to the doctrines and principles of the Church of Ireland. To further education in Ireland, the ADV gave grants (under certain conditions) to build and support schools. To receive such a grant, a school had to be under the control of the clergyman and the teachers were required to be members of the Established Church. In addition, the schools were to use the Catechism and the Scriptures for instruction. The schools were open to all, regardless of religion. Although Catholic students were not expected to learn the catechism, they were required to read the authorised version of the Bible.

The London Hibernian Society for Establishing Schools and Circulating the Holy Scriptures in Ireland (LHS) which was formed by the Congregationalists, was established in London in 1806. It aimed to foster religious knowledge by ‘the dispersion of the holy Scriptures and religious tracts, by the formation and support of schools, and by every other lawful and prudent measure calculated to promote pure religion, morality, and loyalty’.<sup>133</sup> Through religious and scriptural instruction it hoped to: ‘implant in the minds of the rising generation principles of pure morality and scriptural piety’.<sup>134</sup> The LHS ran Day Schools, Sunday Schools, and Evening Schools for adults. These schools were open to all denominations and offered reading, writing and arithmetic. All reading lessons were to be taken from the Scriptures, and even the lessons contained in the spelling books were extracts from the Bible: ‘It being the grand object of the Society to impart Scriptural instruction to those under their care, the only books provided by the Society, and used in its schools, shall be the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, without note or comment’.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 65.

<sup>134</sup> ‘Appendix to the Christian Observer, volume the fifteenth, for 1816’ in *The Christian Observer Conducted by Members of the Established Church for the Year 1816. Being the fifteenth volume*, 878.

<sup>135</sup> London Hibernian Society, *A Brief View of the London Hibernian Society for Establishing Schools and Circulating the Holy Scriptures in Ireland* (London: 1837), 7.

One Society that stood out from the others was the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland. Begun in Dublin in 1811, it was commonly referred to as the Kildare Place Society (KPS) due to its location in the Dublin street of the same name. The KPS was a non-denominational society that strove to provide education without interfering with the religious affiliation of the pupil. At its formation, the society resolved that it should be ‘divested of all sectarian distinctions in Christianity’. So, while it encouraged reading the authorised Bible, it was read without doctrinal explanation and their books and school lessons were all ‘carefully compiled to avoid controversy’.<sup>136</sup> The schools established by the KPS were very successful and by 1820 it had 381 schools with 26,474 pupils in attendance.<sup>137</sup> The Kildare Place Society differed from other educational societies because of its position of non-interference in religious matters. As a result, there was no opposition to their schools and Catholic children attended them in the same numbers as Protestants.

While parish priests and individual members of the hierarchy had long been wary of the activities of evangelicals, the Catholic Church did not openly oppose these societies initially. Although some of the clergy criticised the use of the scriptures, Catholic children attended the schools run by evangelicals. However, in the 1820s, as tension between the evangelicals and the Church mounted, the position altered. In 1819, Cardinal Fontana, the Prefect of Propaganda wrote to the Catholic Bishops of Ireland condemning the Bible Societies, a condemnation that was repeated in August 1820.<sup>138</sup> Prominent members of the clergy had also become alienated from the work of evangelicals. In 1820 Rev. John Mac Hale, later Archbishop of Tuam, wrote a series of letters under the name of ‘Hierophilos’, advising against the ‘insidious schemes’ of the KPS. Dr. Doyle, bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, published a series of twelve letters in 1824 signed ‘J.K.L’ on the condition of Ireland. In the sixth and seventh letter he addressed the issue of education, and Bible Societies, and expressed his concerns about the reading of Scripture in schools:

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<sup>136</sup> Sean Griffin, ‘The Catholic Book Society and its Role in the Emerging System of National Education 1824-1834’, *Irish Educational Studies*, Vol. II. Issue I (1992), 82-98, 83.

<sup>137</sup> Donald Akenson, *The Irish Educational Experiment the National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970), 87.

<sup>138</sup> LHS, *The Twelfth Annual Report of the Hibernian Society in London for establishing Schools and Circulating Holy Scriptures in Ireland* (London, 1818), 91.

These societies are embarked in propagating an intolerable error, by seeking to introduce the indiscriminate perusal of the Sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, and substituting chaos of undisciplined opinion for the wisdom, and order, and power of the church of God.<sup>139</sup>

Dr. Doyle also claimed that the sole purpose of evangelical societies was to convert, or proselytise, Irish Catholics. ‘The tendency of all these societies is one and the same – the subversion, by indirect means, of the ancient faith and the establishment on its ruin of a wild and ungovernable fanaticism’.<sup>140</sup> According to the *First Report of the Commissioners on Education*, in 1825, Doyle was not alone in this view:

We found that an opinion prevailed generally amongst all orders of the Roman Catholic clergy, that a combined and systematic attempt was making on the part of several societies to effect the conversion of the Roman Catholics to the Protestant faith. ... We found that they made little or no distinction between these several societies, although some of them in their character and their intentions widely differ from others.<sup>141</sup>

As a result of this mistrust, the Catholic Church exerted pressure on parents to withdraw children from these schools, including non-denominational institutions such as the schools run by the KPS.

In the early 1820s, the Church began to withdraw its support for the KPS. Although it began as a non-denominational society, according to Donald Akenson, by the 1820s it ‘gradually became just another Protestant agency’.<sup>142</sup> In 1819, Daniel O’Connell, who was on the Board of Managers for the KPS, criticized its use of the Bible and sought the formation of a committee to examine the rules of the Society to determine whether it was in conflict with the societies position of non-interference.<sup>143</sup> From 1820 onwards, the KPS donated a proportion of their income to assist other societies in their endeavours to educate the Irish. Among the societies receiving assistance from the KPS were the ADV and LHS; two societies that the Catholic clergy adamantly maintained were proselytising. In 1824, Dr. Murray wrote to Doyle seeking advice in relation to

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<sup>139</sup> William J. Battersby, *The Life of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Doyle: Compiled from Authentic Documents* (Dublin, 1856), 142.

<sup>140</sup> Battersby, *The Life of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Doyle*, 139.

<sup>141</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 90.

<sup>142</sup> Akenson, *The Irish Educational Experiment*, 90.

<sup>143</sup> Akenson, *The Irish Educational Experiment*, 89.

the system of education in use by the KPS. Doyle, although he supported inter-denominational education, responded emphatically against the work of this Society, or any other that used Scripture, with or without explanation:

I deem the reading of the Sacred Scriptures by the weak and ignorant, such as children are, whether with or without comments an abuse always to be deprecated; but such reading of them in this country, at this time and in present circumstances, I consider an abuse filled with danger – not only an evil, but an evil of great magnitude; and the Apostle says they are guilty of death, not only they who do evil but they also who consent to the doing of it.<sup>144</sup>

Doyle warned against assisting or approving of the work of the society, maintaining that for any Catholic to do so would be unlawful.<sup>145</sup>

While it may have been supposed that literacy and scriptural knowledge would result in a change of religious allegiance, the evidence for such conversions is sparse. The Commissioners of Education, who investigated the matter, reported that in their opinion no conversion of children had taken place, and any that had occurred was due to the conversion of at least one of their parents.<sup>146</sup> However, in spite of this evidence, the Catholic clergy insisted that their objection to the system of education provided by these schools was still valid, as the intention remained the same. They argued that proselytism was the object and tendency of these schools ‘and that such might be the effect of their system if it were allowed to prevail’.<sup>147</sup> This fear of ‘leakage’ was very real to the Catholic hierarchy who continued to view proselytism as a threat.<sup>148</sup>

The struggle between the Catholics and Protestants came to a head in 1822 when the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, William Magee, called the Catholic Church a ‘church without a religion’ and urged the Church of Ireland to claim its place as the national Church.<sup>149</sup> Seen by the Catholic Church as an attack, it resulted in a rise of controversial publications and public debates. In the

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<sup>144</sup> William J. Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin* Vol.I (Dublin, 1861), 352.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland, 1825*, 90.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>148</sup> Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland Before the Famine 1798-1848*, 58.

<sup>149</sup> Irene Whelan, ‘The Sermon and Political Controversy in Ireland, 1800-1850’ in Keith A. Francis and William Gibson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689-1901* (Oxford, 2012), Chapter 10.

midst of this tension, John Henry North (c. 1789-1831), MP for Drogheda, proclaimed, during a parliamentary debate in 1824, that prior to the formation of the KPS the whole of Ireland was in: 'a state of thick and palpable darkness'.<sup>150</sup> North, who was a member of the Society, claimed that the Protestant clergy were not in a position to influence the Catholic population and the Catholic clergy never attempted to instruct them; instead education was left in the hands of hedge schoolmasters. He stated that the hedge school system was not only inadequate but also dangerous:

The schools were along the side of hedges ... In them licentiousness and robbery were openly taught, and the horn-book of instruction was the manual of vice. The "History of Moll Flanders" was a common school-book. ... The effect of that system on the mass of the population was dreadful. It was rearing up a lawless, tumultuous, undisciplined array, which threatened the peace, the property, the lives of the community, and which, from the abysses of misery, sent up a voice of defiance against a dismayed gentry, and an almost appalled government.<sup>151</sup>

Hedge schools were temporary schools formed at the instigation of parents to provide elementary education for children.<sup>152</sup> Hedge schools were not controlled by the state or sanctioned by the Church. They were independent of supervision and as such anyone could operate a school regardless of their abilities. According to Adams 'anyone from a man with the highest attainments to the lowest could open a school and hope to attract pupils'.<sup>153</sup> Children learned to read using spelling books and primers and 'just about anything they could lay their hands upon'.<sup>154</sup> Very often these supplementary texts were chapbooks purchased cheaply from pedlars and included tales of highwaymen and romances. Although hedge schools were not affiliated with it, the Catholic Church did try to monitor and influence them. According to P. J. Corish: 'the private schoolmaster may not have needed his [the parish priests] permission to open, but his disapproval might

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<sup>150</sup> HC, *Parliamentary Debate*, 29 March 1824, Second Series, Vol. 10, Col. 1477-1484.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> For detailed account of hedge schools in Ireland see: Patrick J. Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland* (Cork, 1968); Antonia McManus, *The Irish hedge school and its books, 1695-1831* (Dublin, 2002).

<sup>153</sup> J.R.R Adams, 'Swine-Tax and Eat-him-all-Magee: The Hedge Schools and Popular Education in Ireland', in J.S. Donnelly and K.A Miller (eds.), *Irish Popular Culture, 1650-1850* (Dublin, 1998), 97-117, 96.

<sup>154</sup> Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 51.

well have closed him down'.<sup>155</sup> Appointment of masters was often depended on the approval of the parish priest and by the end of the eighteenth century some schools were operating in church buildings. The masters also cooperated with the clergy by teaching the Catholic faith in the school and providing additional religious instruction outside of the school, particularly at Catholic Sunday Schools.

The speech made by North came at a time when the new Catholic teaching orders were beginning to flourish. North's comments were perceived as an 'offensive aspersion on the Catholic priesthood' and as disparaging towards the Church's commitment to advancing education.<sup>156</sup> The Catholic Association held an extraordinary meeting on 6 April 1824 to discuss the best response to North's accusations. The Association decided that the clergy of Dublin and the other dioceses should furnish reports detailing the number of schools and students in each parish, as a means of 'effectually demonstrating how unfounded were the assertions of Mr. North'.<sup>157</sup> Dr. Doyle wrote a letter claiming the 'vast majority' of his diocese under 40 years of age can read and are 'well instructed in their moral and religious duties'.<sup>158</sup> The claim that Catholic children read 'immoral and seditious books' until the KPS replaced them with religious tracts, was described by Doyle as: 'a gross and unfounded calumny'.<sup>159</sup> He further stated the Catholic clergy and not the KPS were responsible for the removal of 'seditious' texts. Doyle's claims were perhaps as unfounded as those made by North, but they illustrate the tensions between the denominations, particularly in the area of education. Three weeks prior to North's speech, Henry Grattan presented a petition from the Catholic Bishops of Ireland stating their grievances with the current state of education, desire for a Catholic school system, and suggested establishment of a committee to investigate education in Ireland.<sup>160</sup> The Church was determined to play a role in the emerging system of national

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<sup>155</sup> Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 164.

<sup>156</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr Doyle*, 312.

<sup>157</sup> The Catholic Association, *Proceedings of the Catholic Association in Dublin, From May 13, 1823, to February 11, 1825* (London, 1825), 258.

<sup>158</sup> The Catholic Association, *Proceedings of the Catholic Association in Dublin*, 267.

<sup>159</sup> The Catholic Association, *Proceedings of the Catholic Association in Dublin*, 269.

<sup>160</sup> Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 93-4; HC, *Parliamentary Debate*, 9 March 1824, Second Series, Vol. 10, Col. 837-47.

education. It was therefore vital for the Church to present itself as a reforming Church, committed to advancing knowledge and education.

In the 1824 petition the bishops insisted the education of the Catholic poor should, ideally, be the priority of the Catholic Church rather than a proselytizing society.<sup>161</sup> However ideal, such a system of education could not be financially supported by the Catholic community. Thus, when the national system of non-denominational education was introduced in 1831 it was welcomed by the Catholic hierarchy as the best possible alternative.<sup>162</sup> The National Board of Education was established on 9 September 1831. Originally the Board had 7 commissioners: 3 Established Church, 2 Catholic, 1 Presbyterian, and 1 Unitarian. The Catholic representatives were A. R. Blake (a layman who acted on the Poor Law Commission and the Education Commission) and Archbishop Daniel Murray.<sup>163</sup> The role of the Board was to oversee the management of National Schools and ensure they fulfilled the requirements of the new system, namely that schools be open to children of all denominations and that religious instruction be carried out separately and at fixed times. The Board also supervised the curriculum taught in schools by composing and approving schoolbooks. Schools could apply to the board for financial support. Successful schools were supplied with financial aid and the approved textbooks.

From the outset the national education system received support from the Catholic Hierarchy. The first misgivings about the new system came in 1838 from the Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. John MacHale. MacHale, who wanted the Board of Education to support Catholic denominational schools, criticized the use of English in schools, the ratio of Catholics to Protestants serving as commissioners, and the use of scriptures in some of the approved textbooks. MacHale's stance brought him into open conflict with Murray. After three years of disagreement and controversy the matter was settled by Rome recommending

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<sup>161</sup> HC, *Parliamentary Debate*, 9 March 1824.

<sup>162</sup> Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*, 59; Thomas McGrath, 'Archbishop Slattery and the Episcopal Controversy on Irish National Education, 1838-1841', *Archivium Hibernicum* Vol. 39 (1984), 13-31, 15-16.

<sup>163</sup> John Coolahan, 'The Daring first Decade of the Board of National Education, 1831-1841', *The Irish Journal of Education / Iris Eireannach an Oideachais*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Summer, 1983), 35-54, 39.

each bishop should decide for his own diocese.<sup>164</sup> The national system resulted in a decline in the educational societies as those with proselytizing aims had their financial assistance withdrawn. In addition, a large number of the schools endowed by the Board were essentially Catholic, a situation that was unavoidable due to the demographics of nineteenth-century Ireland, circumstances that greatly assisted the development of Catholic education.<sup>165</sup>

As the nineteenth century progressed Catholic reform became more and more concerned with religious education. This can be seen in the establishment of Sunday Schools and catechism classes, and in the Church's involvement in the printing industry. Both printing and catechesis fitted with the programme of Tridentine reform as they disseminated Catholic teaching among the laity. However, the Church's emphasis on religious instruction must also be viewed as a response to the activity of Protestant Evangelicals. While Evangelicals focused on reading the Bible the Catholic Church concentrated on teaching the catechism. Similar to the Evangelical groups, the Church concentrated on providing religious education for children. By the late 1820s the Church was also printing and selling religious texts as a means of disseminating Catholic ideology and supplying reading material for the laity. Furthermore, the Church produced a number of catechetical and apologetical books as an attempted to protect the laity from proselytism.

### Conclusion

The Catholic revival in the Dublin diocese aimed to implement the standards put forth at the Council of Trent. Tridentine reform established parish boundaries and emphasised the hierarchical structure of the Church. Bishops were to be responsible for the spiritual and moral welfare of their diocese, as parish priests were for their parish. Through leadership, clerical discipline and parish visitations, bishops were to ensure reform was being properly conveyed to the laity. The challenge posed by Protestant Evangelicals in the early nineteenth century forced the Church to redouble its effort to implement reform. The fear of

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<sup>164</sup> For an in-depth study of this conflict see: Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*, 59-64; McGrath, 'Archbishop Slattery and the Episcopal Controversy on Irish National Education, 1838-1841', 16-26.

<sup>165</sup> McGrath, 'Archbishop Slattery and the Episcopal Controversy on Irish National Education, 1838-1841', 28; Ó Ciosáin, *Print and popular culture in Ireland, 1750-1850*, 43.

proselytizing and 'leakage' intensified the Church's campaign of pastoral reform and its involvement in print.

The restoration of the Church was visible in the Dublin Diocese through the construction of churches, development of religious orders, and the growth in lay confraternities. Reform in the Dublin Diocese was greatly assisted by a history of reform-minded bishops and the development of the Catholic middle class. The Catholic middle class sought to improve the standing of their religion and thus supported the Church in its efforts to reform the religious practices of the laity. The education of the laity was central to the reform effort of Troy and Murray. Both were strong supporters of catechesis and encouraged the development of Sunday Schools in the parishes. The success of catechesis in the Diocese increased the demand for religious print and by the 1830s the Dublin laity had access to a wide variety of religious materials issuing from the Catholic press.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **Catechesis and Religious Instruction in the Dublin Archdiocese**

The pastoral reform begun in the late eighteenth century resulted in a considerable revival in Dublin by the mid nineteenth century, evidenced in the development of the catechetical programme. By the 1830s Catechism classes were organised on a weekly basis in most parishes in the Dublin Diocese. An extensive system of catechesis was essential for the reforming Church as it provided an opportunity to educate the laity in doctrine and practice and at the same time safeguard against criticisms of Evangelical Protestants. Catechisms provided the essential teachings of the Church in an easy format but also emphasised the deep-rooted divisions between Catholics and Protestants. Contentious issues such as devotion to the saints, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, and Indulgences were defended through the pages of the catechism. The catechisms used were either written during the Counter Reformation (such as the catechisms composed by Peter Canisius or Robert Bellarmine) or catechisms based on these earlier works. These sixteenth-century catechisms were written in a hostile environment with an emphasis on defending the teachings, practices and devotions of the Church from the criticisms of Protestant Reformers. In nineteenth-century Ireland where these same teachings and practices were being publicly denounced, this time by Protestant Evangelicals whose activities were known as the ‘second reformation’, the works of Canisius and Bellarmine would have seemed very relevant and appropriate to the time. With a shortage of priests, the catechetical programme desired by the hierarchy would have been impossible without the assistance of the laity, who were involved in teaching and promoting the catechism, either as individuals or as part of a confraternity.

As instruction was the starting point for a religious renewal of the laity, this chapter aims to examine the extent and nature of religious instruction in the Dublin Archdiocese. By providing instruction in the doctrines and duties of the Catholic Church it was hoped that the laity would gain a deeper understanding of their faith and come to practice their religion more diligently. The importance of facilitating religious education was affirmed in numerous diocesan regulations

beginning in 1614 at Provincial Synods held in both Dublin and Armagh. By the end of the eighteenth century, despite regulations, the need for systematic catechesis was still not adequately catered for, and some bishops refused to administer the sacrament of confirmation because children lacked even a basic knowledge of Church teachings. In fact, despite some progress in the eighteenth century, a widespread system of catechesis was not realized until the nineteenth century when lay confraternities began to assist the clergy in fulfilling this pastoral duty.

This chapter will focus almost exclusively on catechetical instruction provided to children on Sundays in the parish chapel. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Irish diocesan synods urged parish clergy to hand on the faith to the laity by preaching and teaching. Instruction consisted of teaching Catholic doctrine either through a sermon delivered from the pulpit or separate education in the form of Sunday catechism classes. The Sunday school programme was aimed at educating the youth of the diocese, while for adults the Sunday sermon remained the principal source of instruction, although there is some evidence that provisions were also made for adult catechesis. In the Dublin diocese the catechetical program was greatly advanced by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), a society of lay catechists. The CCD was first introduced in Dublin by Archbishop Troy; however it was during the episcopacy of Dr. Murray that the society really gained ground. By the 1840s branches of the confraternity were not only in the majority of city parishes but also attached to a large number of rural parishes. An examination of the work of the CCD reveals the structure, content and extent of catechism classes in the archdiocese. Furthermore, it provides a window into a section of the laity who not only subscribed to Church reform, but also actively assisted the Church in bringing this reform to the rest of the laity through religious instruction.

Finally, this chapter will approach catechetical instruction as an arm of the reforming Church. Through the Sunday School Catholic children were instructed in the tenets of their faith, and the obligations that that faith required. Specifically designed to transmit religious instruction, the catechism is an essential instrument for disseminating Christian doctrine. Designed as a manual for teaching, the format in which catechisms are written offers a systematic approach to instruction. The catechism is generally, although not always,

presented in a question and answer format, which can be recited as a conversation between two people. This format lends itself to oral examinations by means of questions and answers. In addition, the catechism introduced children to Catholic apologetics as it provided students with clear answers to the most common objections to Catholic teaching. Furthermore, the catechism encouraged loyalty to the Church and her doctrines, participation in the sacraments, and proper devotion to Mary and the saints.

### A history of religious instruction in Ireland: Catechisms and homilies

The need to clarify Catholic doctrine through a system of regular religious instruction was recognised by the Council of Trent. Following the Council, catechetical programs were implemented in parishes all over Catholic Europe. The need to teach and educate the laity became a priority for the Counter-reformation Church. The importance of catechesis was stated in Irish synods and diocesan regulations from the seventeenth century on. As early as June 1614, the Dublin Synod agreed to legislate 'in so far as is possible' the decrees of Trent and ordered the clergy to teach the laity the tenets of the faith.<sup>1</sup> At a Synod held in Armagh in the same year, the parish clergy were similarly urged to instruct their flock.<sup>2</sup>

Until the mid-eighteenth century there was no differentiation between the catechism and preaching, both formed the basis for religious instruction.<sup>3</sup> In Irish synod regulations the hierarchy directed the clergy to deliver some form of religious instruction for their flock, either a sermon, separate instruction, or both. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the term catechesis could refer to various types of instruction given by the priest. It could denote lessons passed on to the laity by way of a sermon at Mass on Sundays and holy days, teaching children the basic elements of their faith before or after Mass, or the private

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland c.445-1962: A Juridico-Historical Study of Irish Synodal Activity from the Early Days of Christianity in Ireland up to the Second Vatican Council with Special Reference to Catechesis* (Rome, 1987), 28.

<sup>2</sup> Laurence Renehan, *Collections on Irish Church History, from the MSS of the late V. Rev. Laurence F Renehan*, Vol. I (Dublin, 1861), 433.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Green, 'The Necessary Knowledge of the Principles of Religion': Catechisms and Catechizing in Ireland, c.1560-1800', in Ford, Maguire, Milne (eds.) *As By Law Established: The Church of Ireland since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995), 71; David Ryan, 'That Most Serious Duty': *Catholic Preaching in Ireland, 1760-1840* (University College, Galway: M.A. Thesis, March 1998), 12.

instruction of parishioners in their own homes.<sup>4</sup> The Dublin Synod of 1614 called on the priests of the diocese to administer to the spiritual needs of their flock by providing religious education whenever the opportunity presented itself:

They are, in particular, exhorted to instruct the faithful in the catechism; and even when casually stopping for a day in the house of any of their parishioners, never to fail to teach to one or other of its inmates in the presence of the rest, the creed or the Lord's Prayer, or some point of Christian doctrine.<sup>5</sup>

While in 1688 the Dublin bishops again refer to the need for instruction, they only refer to the homiletical form, urging the clergy to: 'explain some point of the Christian doctrine or address a short exhortation on each Sunday to the people, immediately after the Gospel'.<sup>6</sup> According to David Ryan, the homily on Sunday usually consisted of 'an exposition or moral application of the day's Gospel or Epistle, or as the preacher deemed necessary, a discourse on immediate 'abuses' or 'vices' that were being engaged in by the laity'.<sup>7</sup> In addition, catechisms were often used to provide the basis for sermons.<sup>8</sup> The 1614 Synod of Armagh and 1632 Synod of Tuam recommended that the clergy acquire a catechism, for this purpose, as well as for their own personal edification.<sup>9</sup> The Armagh Synod recommended the use of sixteenth-century Dutch Jesuit Peter Canisius for the use of priests 'whence they may learn how to teach the people the principal mysteries of faith'.<sup>10</sup> Peter Canisius (1521-1597) was the first Catholic to provide an alternative to the Protestant catechisms produced during the Reformation. He produced three catechisms to combat, and correspond to, the work being carried out by reformers. In his work Canisius presented a statement of the Catholic faith and laid particular emphasis on the doctrines rejected by the reformers.

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<sup>4</sup> Green, 'The Necessary Knowledge of the Principles of Religion', 71.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Moran, *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin, since the Reformation*, Vol. I (Dublin, 1864), 267.

<sup>6</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 49.

<sup>7</sup> Ryan, 'That Most Serious Duty', 12.

<sup>8</sup> Green, 'The Necessary Knowledge of the Principles of Religion', 71; Ryan, 'That Most Serious Duty', 12; Thomas Wall, 'The Catechism in Irish: Bonaventure O'Hussey, O.F.M.', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, Vol. 59 (January, 1942) 36-48, 37.

<sup>9</sup> 1614 Synod of Armagh, 1632 Synod of Tuam, 1658/60 Synod of Tuam.

<sup>10</sup> Renehan, *Collections on Irish Church History*, 430.

It is evident from synod regulations that catechesis was considered to be one of the most important tasks of the diocesan clergy. Throughout the eighteenth century, catechesis and the need to educate the laity were constantly being affirmed by the hierarchy. For instance, in 1721, the clergy in Limerick were told to educate their congregation in ‘the rudiments of the faith’.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, in the diocese of Kilmore, in 1750, the clergy were directed to give instruction in accordance with the Roman Catechism each Sunday,<sup>12</sup> while the Killala Statutes of 1771 stated that the clergy were to give an explanation of the text of the Gospel on Sundays and holydays and to teach the catechism to the children in front of the congregation so that the adults could also learn the basic Christian doctrines.<sup>13</sup> Three things are evident from the continued mention of catechesis in Irish Synods from the eighteenth century. Firstly, religious instruction was considered to be an important issue by the hierarchy. Secondly, catechetical instruction was not implemented at a parish level. Thirdly, the laity lacked a proper understanding of Church teaching. Dioceses continually reiterated the need to provide instruction, and, by the end of the eighteenth century, statutes were still urging the clergy to fulfil this pastoral duty. This can be seen in the Diocese of Meath in 1780 when Bishop Plunkett carried out visitations and found a number of parishes were not providing adequate instruction for the laity. In his visitation reports, Plunkett made it clear that the catechism was a necessary tool for instructing the young and should be taught on Sundays and holy days. In addition, he stressed the need to educate adults, for this he urged his clergy to use every opportunity to deliver a homily, as it was often the only opportunity to teach the whole congregation. For instance, after visiting the parish of Kilskeer on 29 June 1780 he:

Ordered, in the strictest manner, that on every Sunday of the year and on the principal festivals, the gospel or epistle of the day be read and expounded to the faithful, or some familiar exhortation be addressed to them. This capital branch of pastoral duty must ever be considered as

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<sup>11</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 50.

<sup>12</sup> John Hagan, ‘Relationes Status’, *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 5 (1916), 74-156, 133.

<sup>13</sup> Hagan, ‘Relationes Status’, 154.

indispensable; nothing else can conciliate the respect, the submission, and love of the flock, which are always forfeited by the silence of the pastor.<sup>14</sup>

While in Kilskeer he found the children of the parish poorly educated in their religion: ‘the children in general ignorant of the essential parts of the Christian Doctrine, and not understanding what they say ... Catechism necessary to be taught every Sunday and holiday and to be explained in a familiar way and therefore strictly ordered [*sic*]’.<sup>15</sup> In another parish Plunkett found ‘the children not sufficiently instructed in the catechism; only one of those examined knew it tolerably.’<sup>16</sup> He reminded the parish clergy: ‘It is absolutely necessary to teach the element of our holy religion every Sunday and holiday, either before Mass or after at regular determined hours [*sic*]’.<sup>17</sup> In some parishes Plunkett refused to administer confirmation as, on examination, those presented did not have sufficient knowledge of basic doctrine.

Members of the laity preparing to receive a sacrament were expected to have at least a basic understanding of Church doctrine. The clergy were required to explain the nature and significance of the sacraments so that, upon understanding, the laity could then receive them. Synod legislation emphasised this aspect of religious instruction, and commanded the clergy to withhold the sacraments until the laity were fully prepared. In 1614, the Armagh Synod urged the clergy to educate their parishioners before administering the sacrament of penance. Moreover, it presented the clergy with a catalogue of prayers and doctrines, which the laity should be instructed in:

No one can be absolved without knowing the chief mysteries, the unity of nature and trinity of persons in God; the incarnation, death and resurrection of our Lord; the last judgement and life eternal; and that there is no salvation outside the true church. It is necessary to know the Apostles creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the commandments of God and the church, the sacraments and the duties of our state in life. Woe to the parish priest and superiors who neglect those committed to their care.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Anthony Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern*, Vol. III , 1862 (Dublin, 1992), 27.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern*, 28.

<sup>18</sup> Renehan, *Collections on Irish Church history*, 431.

Prayers such as the Our Father and Apostles Creed contain the fundamental truths of the Catholic faith and were often used by the Church to transmit basic doctrines to the laity. The Synod of Cashel, 1685, had similar instructions for the clergy. It stipulated that before receiving absolution the laity was to be informed of Church doctrine:

Priests should admit no one to Sacramental absolution unless first they shall have learned the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles Creed, the precepts of the Decalogue and of the Church, the number of the sacraments and the seven capital sins.<sup>19</sup>

The Diocesan Synod of Limerick, held in 1721, stated that those wishing to receive the sacrament of penance had to be versed in the precepts of the Decalogue, the Our Father, Hail Mary, the Creed and the number of Sacraments.<sup>20</sup> In the decrees of Cloyne and Ross, 1755, the clergy were urged to ensure the penitent was sufficiently informed before administering absolution and emphasised the duty of the clergy to instruct the faithful on the sacrament of penance: 'They shall teach the laity how to examine their consciences and how to confess'.<sup>21</sup> Other sacraments, such as baptism and marriage were also mentioned in Synod regulations. In 1770, the priests in the diocese of Elphin were instructed not to join couples in marriage or allow sponsors for baptism unless they knew the basic articles of their faith.<sup>22</sup>

The Catholic hierarchy emphasised the need for catechism lessons and religious instruction as a preparation for the sacrament of confirmation. In a pastoral letter, written around 1799, Francis Moylan, Bishop of Cork, directed his clergy to provide religious education for the youth of the parish so that they could receive confirmation:

We particularly recommend to you an unwearied attention to the Catechetical Instructions of the Children of your Parishes, as one of the most essential and useful functions of the Pastoral Charge; and we trust that on the Visitation which we propose ... we shall have the Comfort of finding them well grounded in the principles of our holy Religion and

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<sup>19</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 46.

<sup>20</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 50.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Hagan, 'Relationes Status', 146.

duly prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation which we shall then administer.<sup>23</sup>

If it were found that students were not adequately prepared for the sacrament, the bishop would not administer it until the next visitation, which could be the following year, or even later. In 1780 Archbishop James Butler II of Cashel wrote to Bishop Plunkett of Meath, offering him counsel for conducting visitations:

I announced to them [parish priests] that I'd confirm no children under seven, and none past seven who were not well instructed on the principal mysteries, the commandments, the seven sacraments, particularly confirmation and the dispositions for a good confession and who did not know the acts of contrition, faith, hope, and charity.<sup>24</sup>

Plunkett applied Butler's advice to his own diocese, refusing to confirm children who were not adequately instructed. During diocesan visitations in 1780, Plunkett visited 15 parishes and confirmations were carried out in 13. However, in the parishes of Kilskeer and Castlepollard confirmations were not administered as Plunkett found 'none fit for confirmation'.<sup>25</sup> In the parish of Oldcastle three were confirmed. Yet, he found 'the children not sufficiently instructed in the catechism ... it was not edifying to see so very few prepared for the sacrament of confirmation'.<sup>26</sup> Despite this, improvements in catechesis were being made. In the parish of Castletown-Delvin 83 were confirmed while in the parish of Fore Plunkett was 'greatly edified' by the 62 children 'he found prepared for confirmation by their knowledge of the catechism'.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, when Plunkett carried out visitations in 1791 he inspected 66 parishes and celebrated confirmation in all but three.<sup>28</sup> Along with baptism and first communion, confirmation is classed as a sacrament of Christian initiation. For the laity, confirmation marks the commencement of life in the Church as an adult. It is obligatory that the laity be confirmed. By refusing to administer

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<sup>23</sup> Evelyn Bolster, *A History of the Diocese of Cork from the Reformation to the Penal Era* (Cork, 1982), 167.

<sup>24</sup> Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, 24.

<sup>25</sup> Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, 27.

<sup>26</sup> Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, 28.

<sup>27</sup> Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, 33.

<sup>28</sup> Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, 249-254.

confirmation until the candidate was familiar with the catechism, bishops such as Plunkett and Butler compelled the parish priest to provide religious instruction.

By the end of the eighteenth century many dioceses were promoting lay participation in catechesis. Throughout the eighteenth century lay teachers taught the catechism in hedge schools and assisted with Sunday catechesis. However, the introduction of confraternities at the close of the century formalised the role of the laity in teaching the catechism. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, sometimes called the Society of Christian Doctrine, was the most active association of catechists. Introduced first in Cashel in 1778, it spread throughout Ireland and by the early nineteenth century was being promoted in the dioceses of Dublin, Kildare and Leighlin, Meath, and Cork. In 1789 the prelates of Munster, assembled in Limerick and resolved, 'that in every parish where it can be affected a confraternity of the Christian Doctrine should be established'.<sup>29</sup> Dr Plunkett of Meath, who had been critical of lay involvement in teaching catechism, which he believed was primarily the duty of the priest, nonetheless established branches in his diocese. Revisiting the parishes of the diocese of Meath in 1796, Plunkett called for the establishment of the Confraternity, as a remedy 'for the ignorance and drunkenness of the lower orders' and 'for the degeneracy of the affluent'.<sup>30</sup> In 1803 Bishop Moylan of Cork-Ross claimed: 'in every rural parish young assistants are appointed who, under the supervision of the parish priest, teach catechism in both Irish and English; and I have ordered the establishment of a confraternity of Christian Doctrine which has spread to many districts'.<sup>31</sup> The introduction of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine to Ireland greatly assisted the hierarchy in delivering catechesis to the laity.

By the nineteenth century, the catechism was being taught in most parishes, even those in remote areas. In the *First report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 1825, the commissioners noted that religious instruction was carried out extensively in Ireland with classes of religious doctrine available in almost every parish in the country:

... there are, we believe, but few Chapels in Ireland in which religious instruction is not imparted on Sundays to the Roman Catholic Children.

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<sup>29</sup> Bolster, *A History of the Diocese of Cork from the Reformation to the Penal Era*, 143.

<sup>30</sup> Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, 276.

<sup>31</sup> Bolster, *A History of the Diocese of Cork, from the Reformation to the Penal Era*, 172.

The instruction is exclusively catechetical. The attendance is usually extremely numerous ... In the city of Limerick, it occurred to one of the commissioners to witness on one Sunday upwards of 4,000 Children collected in Four Chapels for this Purpose, and in several parishes similar instruction is given on Saturdays as well as on Sundays.<sup>32</sup>

In 1825, answering questions from the commissioners, Bishop Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin confirmed that a Sunday-School system was in operation in his diocese. Doyle explained that in Kildare and Leighlin children attended catechetics after Sunday Mass, while before Mass 'there are books of religious instruction read for all the adults'.<sup>33</sup> Even more surprising, Dr. Kelly of Tuam informed the commission that in his diocese, despite low levels of literacy, the catechetical program was enormously successful.<sup>34</sup> He claimed even the illiterate were provided for with classes of separate instruction.<sup>35</sup>

At Westport chapel, on each Sunday, there are 800 children instructed for at least an hour or an hour and a half. They are divided into different classes; those who cannot read are instructed apart by themselves; those who can read, have certain lessons in the catechism marked out to them, which they are to learn in the course of the week; and on Sunday they are examined in their respective classes, in the parts of the catechism that are marked out for them.<sup>36</sup>

The commissioners themselves witnessed Sunday Schools in Limerick and elsewhere, indicating the practice was indeed widespread. However, the extent of catechesis in rural areas may have been exaggerated in an attempt to give a favourable account to the committee. Dr Kelly informed the commissioners that Sunday Schools were 'prevalent' throughout his diocese. However, he stated that while towns such as Westport and Castlebar could have upwards of 40 lay teachers, rural parishes had only two or three and still had to rely on the schoolmaster to teach the class.<sup>37</sup> Kelly also told the commissioners that the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was known in Connaught, though he did not state to what extent or if it was active in remote areas. Judging from the fact that

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<sup>32</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 88.

<sup>33</sup> *Appendix to Report from Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 1825, 792.

<sup>34</sup> Mayo had an illiteracy rate of 80%, Ryan, 'That Most Serious Duty', 13.

<sup>35</sup> *Appendix to Report from Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 1825, 792.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

the hedge schoolmasters were still used in rural parishes, it is unlikely the Confraternity was very extensive. The diocese of Killaloe had a catechetical system but classes were not held every Sunday as they were in the Dublin Diocese. In 1824 the parish of Kilrush had catechism in the chapel ‘on certain days’ and the parish of Ballywilliam on ‘appointed Sundays’.<sup>38</sup> As in other dioceses the priest was assisted by a number of pious lay people, however the Confraternity does not appear to have been established in Killaloe.<sup>39</sup> For many rural areas a fixed system of catechesis only came with the formation of national schools in the 1830s.

While the Catholic hierarchy promoted the catechism over other forms of instruction, it could not, according to David Ryan, have been effective in areas with low levels of literacy.<sup>40</sup> However, the catechism was designed to cater for the illiterate. The question and answer form, in which it is written, is intended to be read and recited out loud and is therefore ideal for a society which was still largely oral. Furthermore, catechism classes were concerned with promoting religion rather than teaching literacy. While a level of literacy would have been required for the more advanced catechism classes, basic catechesis could be taught through repetition, recital, and recall. Dr. Kelly distinguished between those who could and could not read, telling the commissioners that they receive separate instruction.<sup>41</sup> One can assume that in areas of low literacy, such as Connaught and parts of Munster, the majority of children would have been exposed to the catechism through oral recital. In a forward to the catechism *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* by Rev. Henry Tuberville, Dr. Doyle instructs teachers of Christian doctrine to clearly repeat each section until it is properly understood.

Whilst you propose the several questions in a clear and distinct tone of voice, do not fail, and even by repeating them if necessary, to require that the answers, when returned be equally slow, and distinct, and clear.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe 1800-1850* (Dublin, 1992), 348.

<sup>39</sup> The confraternity is never mentioned in Ignatius Murphy’s extensive study of Killaloe. In the chapter ‘A people at prayer’, Murphy describes catechesis in the diocese from 1800 to 1850. Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, 348-51.

<sup>40</sup> Ryan, ‘*That Most Serious Duty*’, 13-14.

<sup>41</sup> *Appendix to Report from Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 1825, 792.

<sup>42</sup> Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine, with Proofs of Scripture on Points Controverted. By way of Question and Answer. Now revised by the Right Rev James Doyle, D.D.*

Clearly Dr. Doyle assumes that the catechism will be taught orally. When carrying out diocesan visitations Plunkett was concerned that this method of rote learning would not make a lasting impression on students. While administering Confirmation at the parish of Fore, Plunkett found that some of the children ‘seemed to answer like parrots, and could not answer when questioned out of their ordinary course’.<sup>43</sup> He concluded that children should be ‘cross-questioned’ to ensure they ‘answer from knowledge, and not from rote’.<sup>44</sup> In areas with low literacy rates and limited access to books memorization and oral recitation were essential for transmitting the basics of the catechism. Rote learning was a necessary starting point for catechesis, and indeed for acquiring literacy. Although the Sunday Schools were not teaching literacy, reading was a natural consequence of catechesis. As the system of Sunday Schools became more developed, children were expected to be able to read the catechism by their second or third year of study.

#### Catechesis in the Dublin Diocese

The need for religious instruction was evident in the Dublin Diocese. As with the other dioceses, the Archdiocese of Dublin struggled in the eighteenth century to implement synod regulations. The 1614 Synod, held in Kilkenny, marks the beginning of Tridentine reform in the Diocese. The Synod decreed that the clergy were to ‘instruct the faithful in the catechism’.<sup>45</sup> Implementing such regulations proved to be a difficult task, and subsequent regulations were issued urging the clergy to fulfil this directive. For instance, the Dublin Diocesan Synod held in June 1686 urged the clergy to: ‘instruct the little children thereof in Christian Doctrine’, and in 1751 Dr. Linegar, following instructions received from Rome, ordered that the catechism be taught ‘diligently and correctly’ to the children of the parish.<sup>46</sup> In a pastoral address, dated November 1787, Archbishop John Thomas Troy echoed previous prelates when he reminded the clergy: ‘frequently to catechise the children of their parish’.<sup>47</sup> In the same address he

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*and prescribed by him to be used in the United Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin* (Dublin; 1828),

v.

<sup>43</sup> Cogan, *The Diocese of Meath*, 33.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Moran, *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin*, 267.

<sup>46</sup> John D’Alton, *Memoirs of the Archbishops of Dublin* (Dublin: 1838), 450-468.

<sup>47</sup> D’Alton, *Memoirs of the Archbishops of Dublin*, 484.

also reminded them to read aloud to the congregation on Sundays and feast days.<sup>48</sup> In an episcopal report to Rome in 1802 Troy, who carried out regular visitations, was satisfied with the progress of reform in his diocese. In relation to religious education, he declared that the clergy in Dublin taught ‘the rudiments of faith’ and to his knowledge delivered a homily on Sundays and holy days.<sup>49</sup> Archbishop Daniel Murray (1823-1852) worked alongside Troy as a coadjutor from 1809 and likewise, maintained discipline by frequent visitations of his diocese.

This is reflected in the parish returns, or the visitation sheets, issued during Murray’s episcopacy. Before visiting a rural parish, a form was issued to be completed by the parish priest and returned prior to the date of the visitation. Often referred to as visitation sheets, these forms were large sheets with five columns; each column had a heading or question printed at the top and a space below for the priest to answer in detail. The answers supplied by the priest gave information about the practice and advancement of religion in the parish. Visitation sheets were used in other diocese too, such as the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, and Cashel. In the Dublin Diocese, visitation sheets were issued from 1830 on with the following headings:

1. Title of Parish or parishes united; with those of the chapel, and of the SS to whom dedicated: Also the titles on which the Chapels are held, and if by lease, the names of the Lessor and Lessee; the terms of years and rent, and with whom the lease is deposited. If a Glebe or Parochial House, the same particulars to be stated with regard to it.
2. N<sup>o</sup>. of Chalices, Ciborium, of other Plate – of Suits of Vestments, including Albs, Copes, Sets of Altar Linen – of Missals, and of Volumes in the Parochial Library.
3. N<sup>o</sup>. of Confraternities of the C. Doctrine, and of the B. Sacrament – no. of monthly communicants, of Adult in the Parish, and of those who do not approach the Sacraments at Easter time; all as nearly as they can be ascertained

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<sup>48</sup> D’Alton, *Memoirs of the Archbishops of Dublin*, 483.

<sup>49</sup> Keogh, “‘The Pattern of the Flock’: John Thomas Troy, 1786-1823’, 222.

4. N<sup>o</sup>. of Schools in the parish, with the names of the Masters and Mistresses, and the average number of Scholars who attend each, distinguishing Free-schools, and specifying how the latter are supported.
5. N<sup>o</sup>. of Public Masses on each Sunday, and if a Special compensation be made for any, and for how many – the hour at which catechism is taught in the Chapels, and by whom, and if Vespers be celebrated, in what chapels, and at what house.<sup>50</sup>

The information provided to the diocese came from the clergy, who could have had a motive to exaggerate the extent of religious practice in their parish. However, the clergy appear to be honest in their representations, admitting to poor numbers receiving monthly communion, lack of confraternities, absence of a parish library, or lack of vespers. Besides, the reports were submitted prior to the visitation, so Murray would have had the opportunity to check the accuracy of the data provided.

Along with the completed visitation sheet, priests were to return a list of the most common sins and the most obstinate sinners in their parish (most likely so the bishop could direct his preaching towards these sins). The forms were not always completed correctly; most are missing some of the requested information. However, they still provide useful data about the condition of rural parishes and indicate areas of reform considered important to the hierarchy. The five headings identify the areas of religious reform desired by Murray i.e. they emphasise the parish church and church services (heading/column 1, 2, 5), the role of the church in education (4), access to books and religious instruction (2, 5), fulfilment of Pascal duty (3), and the formation of religious and charitable outlets for the laity (4, 5).

Although Dr. Murray conducted annual visitations, he was not able to visit each parish on a yearly basis. In general rural parishes received an episcopal visit every other year, but for some parishes it could be every 2 or 3 years. Thus the parish returns were an invaluable resource for Murray. The details provided by the clergy would have enabled him to gauge the progress of reform in the diocese from one visitation to the next. Being armed with this information prior

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<sup>50</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray Papers/1830-1851.

to each visit would also have made it easier for Murray to discipline the parishes in his Diocese.

Visitation sheets contain evidence relating to catechetical instruction at a parish level. From the answers supplied, one can tell if a parish provided catechesis on Sundays, for how long, and who was involved in the teaching. Of the 15 parish sheets remaining for the Dublin Diocese dated 1830, 14 parishes provided a catechism class every Sunday. Members of the laity, either pious individuals or select members of a confraternity, assisted in 12 parishes (See *Fig. 1*).

*Fig. 1*

Parishes providing regular catechesis in the Dublin Archdiocese in 1830

<b><u>Parishes in the Dublin Archdiocese teaching catechism in the Chapel, 1830.</u></b>				
<b><u>Based on 14 out of 15 parish returns for that year</u></b>				
<b>Name of the Parish</b>	<b>County:</b>	<b>N° of chapels:</b>	<b>Duration of catechism class:</b>	<b>Are the teachers members of a confraternity?</b>
<b>Athy</b>	Kildare	2	1-1.5 hours	Yes
<b>Ballymore Eustace</b>	Kildare	2	Not specified	No
<b>Blackditches</b>	Wicklow	2	1 hour	No
<b>Castledermot</b>	Kildare	2	Not specified	No
<b>Crookstown</b>	Kildare	2	2 hours	Yes
<b>Dunlavin</b>	Wicklow	3	Not specified	Yes
<b>Irishtown</b>	Dublin	2	Not specified	No
<b>Kilcullen</b>	Kildare	2	Not specified	Yes
<b>Lucan</b>	Dublin	3	1-2 hours	Yes
<b>Maynooth</b>	Kildare	3	1 hour	No
<b>Portabello</b>	Dublin	3	Not specified	Yes
<b>Rathcoole</b>	Dublin	2	Not specified	No
<b>Rathdrum</b>	Wicklow	4	2 hours	Yes
<b>Roundwood</b>	Wicklow	2	2 hours	Yes

The parish of Rathfarnham, which was composed of 3 chapels at Bornabreena, Crumlin, and Rathfarnham, was the only parish visited in 1830 that did not report a catechism class. Rathfarnham did have a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine established in the parish; however, no information is provided about whether or not the Confraternity delivered regular religious instruction. It may have been that the society was only newly formed. Murray visited Rathfarnham again in 1833, by this time the catechism was being taught in the chapel every Sunday by the members of the Confraternity. From 1831 onwards all of the parishes visited by Dr. Murray recorded catechism classes being held on a weekly basis.<sup>51</sup>

Catechism classes became the accepted method of transmitting religious instruction in the diocese. Classes were held in the chapel once a week, on a Sunday, either before or after Mass. The duration of the class varied, from a half hour class in some parishes to up to two hours in others. In some of the larger country parishes instruction in the catechism was held more than once, or in more than one location to facilitate children who lived on the outskirts of the parish. In the parish of Athy, Co. Kildare, an hour of catechesis was provided in both chapels and in ‘every school house throughout the parish – for the convenience of the children too far away from the chapel’.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Dunlavin, a large rural parish in Co. Wicklow, had an extensive system with classes held in the chapel and at 19 other locations on Sundays and ‘occasionally on weekdays’ too.<sup>53</sup> The parish of Wicklow, which was a union of three townlands, taught the catechism in local houses each Sunday. The houses were appointed in advance, and may have been the house of the teacher. In this way, children did not have to travel to the chapel to receive instruction.<sup>54</sup> As well as being used on Sundays, the catechism continued to be used for instruction in schools. According to the parish priest of Blackditches, 213 children were instructed in 7 schools in the parish where the catechism was ‘constantly taught’.<sup>55</sup> Diocesan statutes for Dublin, following the 1831 Synod, recommended that the parish clergy visit schools to ensure the catechism was actually being taught. Priests record positive numbers attending the classes and seem satisfied with the quality of teachers.

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<sup>51</sup> In 1831, 14 of 14 Parish *Visitation Sheets* recorded catechism classes, 1833 11/11, 1834 21/21 etc.

<sup>52</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray/1830.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray/1834.

<sup>55</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray/1830.

The only exception is the parish of Sandyford. Although Sandyford had a weekly Sunday School the parish priest reported that children did not diligently attend as parents were ‘extremely negligent in sending their children to Mass and catechism’.<sup>56</sup>

Occasionally the class was conducted by the parish priest, but most commonly it was taught by a member of the laity; either confraternity members or individuals selected by the parish clergy and considered to be ‘pious’ and upstanding members of the community. In the Dublin diocese, two confraternities are mentioned in connection with these Sunday schools, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, whose sole purpose was spreading religious knowledge and the Purgatorian society, who incorporated religious knowledge as one part of its aims.<sup>57</sup>

In 1831, four diocesan synods were held in the Leinster province, in Dublin, Kildare and Leighlin, Ferns, and Ossory. All four synods promulgated similar diocesan statutes.<sup>58</sup> Priests were exhorted to explain the Gospel or some point of Christian doctrine on Sundays and to ensure that the children and the unlearned were assembled in the chapel to learn the catechism. The synod noted that bishops, according to the Council of Trent, must compel the clergy to instruct the young and unlearned, if necessary under threat of ecclesiastical punishment. Bishops were to use parish visitations as an opportunity to inspect the level of catechesis and religious knowledge. The clergy were to encourage the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and it was expected that within a year of promulgating this decree the Confraternity would be established in every parish.<sup>59</sup>

### The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

The improvement in religious instruction can be attributed in part to the vigilance of the bishops and also to the emergence of lay societies, known as confraternities or sodalities, which oversaw the organisation of catechism classes. The most influential society providing religious instruction was the

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<sup>56</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray/1837.

<sup>57</sup> The Purgatorian Society will be discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>58</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 62.

<sup>59</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 62-63.

Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. In the nineteenth century this confraternity became the principal vehicle for educating the laity.

European in origin, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) was formed in sixteenth-century Milan, Italy. The CCD was established by Castellino da Castello, a Milanese priest in 1536. In that year, Castello, accompanied by laymen, opened schools of Christian doctrine designed to teach religious education to the youth of Milan on Sundays and holydays. To entice children to attend the instruction Castello sent his lay associates into the streets with apples, offering them to anyone who would come to the church and listen to the lesson. More apples were promised for those who attended the following week.<sup>60</sup> The lure of the apples worked, and in 1539 Castello formed a lay confraternity, the *Compagnia dei Servi di Puttini in Carità* (Company of the Servants of Children in Charity), to organise the numerous religious classes being held in the city. Furthermore, the confraternity selected two members to travel to neighbouring towns and form similar schools and confraternities of Christian doctrine, who would in turn send two members to the next town.<sup>61</sup> In this way the society spread, being most successful in towns and cities. By the end of the sixteenth century, branches of the society could be found not only throughout Italy but also in parts of Germany and France.

The society was championed by the Archbishop of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo, the spiritual writer and Bishop of Geneva, St. Francis de Sales, and the Jesuit theologian, St. Robert Bellarmine. In 1562, the society received official sanction from Pope Pius IV. In 1571, Pope St. Pius V, in his Brief *Ex Debito Pastoralis Officii*, acknowledged the work already accomplished by the society and recommended that bishops should establish branches in every parish within their diocese.<sup>62</sup> In 1607, in a papal brief titled, *Ex Credito Nobis*, Pope Paul V united the society under an Arch-confraternity with its headquarters in St. Peter's in Rome.<sup>63</sup> The society continued to spread across Europe establishing schools to

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<sup>60</sup> Paul Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: literacy and learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore, 1991), 335.

<sup>61</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 336.

<sup>62</sup> Martin Brennan, *The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Ireland: A.D. 1775-1835* (Dublin, 1935), 5.

<sup>63</sup> Lance Lazae, 'Devotion, Belief, and Memory in Early Modern Italian Confraternities', *Confraternitas*, Vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), 16.

catechize both children and adults and soon became the main force satisfying the need for religious education.

The CCD was encouraged by the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland and by the late eighteenth century many prelates had established branches in their diocese. As early as 1778, in the Diocese of Cashel, Archbishop James Butler II formed a CCD to instruct the laity, especially the youth, in Catholic doctrine.<sup>64</sup> By 1788, the CCD was likewise in operation in the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, and Dublin where catechism lessons were organised by members of the society.<sup>65</sup> In a pamphlet produced by Patrick Wogan in 1789, to promote the work of the CCD in Ireland, it was claimed that the Irish hierarchy were united in their desire to spread this particular confraternity: ‘our spiritual superiors have agreed to establish throughout the several parishes of this kingdom, a society composed of pious laypersons, who shall undertake, according to their respective opportunities, to instruct their ignorant brethren in the principles of religion, and the Christian Doctrine’.<sup>66</sup> In 1788 a petition was sent to the Holy See to grant an indulgence to the CCD operating in Ireland. Although it was sent by the archbishop of Dublin, John Thomas Troy, it was sent on behalf of ‘The Prelates of the Kingdom of Ireland’, indicating a united front on promoting the confraternity.

Archbishop Troy hoped that an indulgence attached to the society would serve as an incentive for the laity to become active in the work of the CCD. An indulgence is the remission of temporal punishment for sins committed. Indulgences can be partial or plenary and can be gained for oneself or those already dead.<sup>67</sup> Indulgences can be obtained through prayers, good works, pilgrimage or other sanctioned means. Alternatively, indulgences can be granted by the Pontiff. The following indulgences were sought:

The Prelates of the kingdom of Ireland, zealous for the salvation of souls, have designed to institute in the respective parishes a society, consisting

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<sup>64</sup> Rev. Patrick Wallace, ‘Irish Catechesis – the Heritage from James Butler II Archbishop of Cashel 1779-1791’ (Ph.D. Thesis, The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 1975), 62.

<sup>65</sup> Brennan, *The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*, 12-14.

<sup>66</sup> Sodality or Society of Christian Doctrine, *Sodality or Society of the Christian Doctrine or, the Nature and Design of that Pious and Useful Institution, Briefly Explained: with the Rules and Conditions to be Observed by each Member, in order to Promote Christian Instruction and Obtain the Indulgences Granted by Pope Pius VI* (Dublin, 1789), 6.

<sup>67</sup> Indulgences cannot be gained for other living people.

of the well-disposed among the laity, for the purpose of instructing their ignorant brethren in the principles of religion, and the Christian doctrine: and in order that the members of said society be encouraged by a participation of holy indulgences to prosecute with fervour the said charitable work. Therefore, JOHN THOMAS, A.D. in the name of the other Pastors of the aforesaid kingdom, most humbly entreats your Holiness to grant forever, in favour of this kingdom of Ireland, and the above-mentioned laudable Institution, the following Indulgences, And, &c.

I. A Plenary Indulgence for every member at the time of his entering the society; he observing the usual conditions.

II. A Plenary Indulgence for every member at the hour of his death

III. A Plenary Indulgence for every member one day in every month

IV. A Indulgence of seven years, as often and every time he shall perform the aforesaid charitable work.<sup>68</sup>

On 10 August 1788 Pope Pius VI granted the CCD in Ireland the requested indulgences. Moreover, the indulgence could only be gained by members when they first ‘confess their sins sacramentally with due contrition, and receive the most Holy Communion’.<sup>69</sup> The partial indulgence of seven years was restricted to those who were contrite of heart and diligently fulfilled their duty of teaching the Christian doctrine.<sup>70</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the CCD was widespread in assisting the Church with the evangelisation of the laity. According to the Commissioners of Education (1825) branches of the CCD were ‘well established in many of the Towns and most populous Parishes of the South and West of Ireland, and appear to be daily extending themselves to other Parts of the country’.<sup>71</sup> When the commissioners of education interviewed Bishop Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin in 1825, he claimed that catechism classes, which were commonplace in his

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<sup>68</sup> CCD, *Sodality or Society of the Christian Doctrine or, the Nature and Design of that Pious and Useful Institution*, 7-8.

<sup>69</sup> CCD, *Sodality or Society of the Christian Doctrine or, the Nature and Design of that Pious and Useful Institution*, 8.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *First Report from Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 88.

diocese, were exclusively controlled by the CCD.<sup>72</sup> In the same year Doyle also gave a detailed account of catechises in his diocese to the *Select Committee on the State of Ireland*. In this interview, Doyle stated that he had been active in promoting confraternities within the diocese. When asked by the committee about the extent of confraternities in Kildare and Leighlin, Doyle responded:

When I came into that diocese, I found a few such societies existing in it, but from the advantages which I perceived to result from them, I myself recommended at the several visitations I held in the chapels, in the strongest and most earnest manner, that such confraternities should be formed; and I do not know that there is at present any one chapel in the diocese to which there is not a confraternity of the Christian doctrine, as we call it, attached.<sup>73</sup>

The Parochial School Returns for the Diocese confirm Doyle's claim. The Parochial School Returns contain information relating to the education available in the Sunday Schools attached to parish churches. In 1825, Bishop Kelly of Tuam also informed the commissioners of education that the CCD was active in Connaught. Classes were held in the chapel after Mass on Sundays and Holydays. Children were instructed in the rudiments of their faith by appointed lay persons, often connected to the CCD, who 'receive no other reward than the hope of that inheritance which is promised to those who instruct others unto justice'.<sup>74</sup> By the 1830s the CCD was reported to be operating in the diocese of Dublin, Kildare and Leighlin, Cashel, Tuam, Rahphoe, Down and Connor, Ardagh, Dromore, Meath, Limerick, Waterford and Lismore, Kilmore, Armagh, Derry, and Ferns.<sup>75</sup>

#### The operation of the CCD in the Dublin Diocese

The CCD was introduced to the Dublin Diocese during the episcopacy of Archbishop Troy to provide a more comprehensive system of catechesis. Troy encouraged membership of the society by gaining the indulgences for the society

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<sup>72</sup> *Appendix to Report from Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 1825, 792.

<sup>73</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on the State of Ireland, Ordered to be Printed 30 June 1825 with the Four Reports of Minutes of Evidence*, HC 1825 (129), viii, 197-198.

<sup>74</sup> Parish of Clane, Rathcoffey and Staplestown, in Martin Brenan, *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin*, 219.

<sup>75</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836, 1838*; Irish Confraternities and Parish Website and Database <http://www.irishconfraternities.ie>.

in 1788. In the nineteenth century members of the CCD became the primary conductors of catechetical instruction in the diocese. In 1825 Archbishop Murray declared that the CCD and other confraternities were encouraged and sanctioned by him and by the Catholic hierarchy in general. Murray stated that members of these societies were active in assisting the clergy:

There are in general separate societies in each parish where they can be established. The bishop recommends that the people form themselves into societies of this kind for the communication of religious instruction.<sup>76</sup>

The Dublin Visitation Sheets from the 1830s reveal that, where it was established, the CCD was involved in, and in many parishes solely responsible for, the management and teaching of catechism classes. In Dublin, in 1830, 10 rural parishes had the CCD established and in 8 of those parishes members of the CCD were responsible for weekly catechism classes (See *Fig. 1*).<sup>77</sup> The diocesan Statutes for Leinster, following the 1831 Synod, urged ‘all those with the care of souls’ to establish Confraternities in their parish for the benefit of educating youths and promoting discipline.<sup>78</sup> The Leinster Statutes ordered the clergy to ‘foster the Sodality of Christian Doctrine’ and hoped it would be formed in every parish.<sup>79</sup> In 1833 and 1834 Murray visited 32 parishes, finding that a systematic network of catechetical instruction was established in all, but the CCD was only active in 25 of the parishes. Of the seven parishes remaining, the Purgatorian Society and other confraternities organised the teaching of catechism in five of the parishes, while in Clontarf and Arklow individuals supervised by the clergy conducted the Sunday class.<sup>80</sup> Murray visited Clontarf again in 1839 and found that the CCD had still not been established. Interestingly, the popularity of some of the other confraternities is cited as a defence for the absence of the CCD in the remaining parishes. According to the parish priest of Garristown, in north county Dublin, the Purgatorian Society, Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin, and

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<sup>76</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*.

<sup>77</sup> The parishes of Athy, Crookstown, Dunlavin, Kilcullen, Lucan, Portabello, Rathdrum, and Roundwood have Sunday Schools run by members of CCD. Rathfarnham and Irishtown have CCD established but as yet members do not conduct the Sunday school. See: *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray Papers/1830.

<sup>78</sup> *The Diocesan Statutes of the Roman Catholic Bishops of the Province of Leinster* (Dublin, 1831), 145.

<sup>79</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 64.

<sup>80</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray Papers/1833 & 1834.

In 1839 in the parish of Rush the CCD and the Purgatorian Society combined to teach Christian Doctrine. *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray Papers/1839.

Confraternity of the Sacred Heart were formed in the parish and ‘members of these societies in a great degree devoted their time to the instruction of the children – in the same way as the society of the Christian doctrine would and in consequence thereof we have not established the society of the Christian doctrine’.<sup>81</sup>

The CCD was a lay society established to support the clergy in their efforts to provide catechesis. It was composed of members of the laity, both men and women of a religious character who gathered on Sundays to arrange the children of the parish into classes where they were instructed in the rudiments of the Catholic faith. The CCD was divided into two separate branches, one for men and the other for women. While having the same goals and rules, and belonging to the same arch-confraternity, the male and female branches operated as separate societies.<sup>82</sup> By 1847 Dublin could boast 1,267 CCD teachers educating 10,082 children.<sup>83</sup> Confraternities were arranged by parish and each parish confraternity had its own distinctive regulations specific to the needs of the parish. In addition, the CCD had universal objectives that were applied to each branch in Ireland. It had four primary rules, as laid out in 1789:

- I. That, for admittance into the said Society, application be made to the respective Pastors, and those Clergymen commissioned by them in the Parish, or other Chapels.
- II. That no person be admitted a member who shall not appear sufficiently instructed; nor entitled to the Indulgence, who shall not edify his neighbour by orderly conduct, and frequent the Sacraments.
- III. That zeal be regulated by prudence, and that the instructions be confined to the prayers and catechisms approved by the superiors, and communicated only to such persons as are disposed to receive them.
- IV. That, however reading in approved books of piety for, and otherwise assisting the sick and unlearned in their spiritual

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<sup>81</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray DDA/Murray Papers/1834 .

<sup>82</sup> In 1837 the Parish of Saggart in South Dublin had 58 men and 47 women in its branches of the CCD. A full list of teachers names are given with the parish return. *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray Papers/1837.

<sup>83</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1847*, 287.

concerns, be considered as a work that entitles the members to the benefits of this institution.<sup>84</sup>

In July 1831 a more detailed list of rules for a Society of the Christian Doctrine was contained in the Dublin Diocesan Statutes. It was recommended that these rules be adopted for ‘the formation, improvement, and preservation of this Society, and that its labours may be efficient’.<sup>85</sup> This updated rule was promulgated as the principal standards of the society. The list, which contained 11 rules, was reproduced in *Rules for the direction of Christian Doctrine ... in country parishes*, printed in 1832, *The Catholic Penny Magazine* in 1834 and several editions of Battersby’s *Catholic Directory*.<sup>86</sup> According to these regulations, the primary object of the society was ‘to promote, amongst all classes of the faithful, the knowledge of the Christian doctrine’.<sup>87</sup> The first five rules related to the election of a committee, payment of subscriptions and enrolment in the society. The society was to be governed by a clergyman as guardian, then a lay president, vice-president and treasurer who were annually elected. New members were to be chosen by ballot. There were rules dealing with the organisation of classes, examination of students, and the conduct of members. Members of the society were to give edification to all and assist one another. They were not to give bad example or frequent public houses. In the tenth rule, members were reminded of the words from St. Paul’s letter to Titus: ‘let the members recollect, that they are bound in all things, ‘to walk soberly, justly and honestly’... that the name of God may be glorified in them’.<sup>88</sup> The final rule communicated the conditions for gaining the plenary and partial indulgences attached to the society.

The membership of the CCD was drawn from all ranks of the laity, once they were literate (‘sufficiently instructed’) and received the approval of the parish priest. Although essentially a lay society, it was under the supervision of the priest, who acted as guardian of the society. This is evident in the above rules

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<sup>84</sup> CCD, *Sodality or Society of the Christian Doctrine or, the Nature and Design of that Pious and Useful Institution*, 9.

<sup>85</sup> *The Diocesan Statutes ... of the Province of Leinster*, Appendix II.

<sup>86</sup> Anon., *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies in Country Parishes. Drawn up...with the Approbation of Superiors* (Dublin, 1832); *The Catholic Penny Magazine*, Vol. 1. No. 9, April/12/1834; Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*.

<sup>87</sup> *The Diocesan Statutes ... of the Province of Leinster*, Appendix II.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

from 1789 where membership was gained via an application made to the local clergy. The rules promulgated in 1831 kept the society firmly under the direction of the parish clergy. According to its first rule, the CCD was to be ‘in all things, under the special care and superintendence of the parochial clergy’.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, no person could be proposed as a member without a ‘written certificate from some one of the parochial clergy’, according to the third rule.<sup>90</sup> Another responsibility of the priest was to determine which members would assist in teaching the Christian doctrine.

Membership of the society alone was not sufficient qualification to act as a catechist. Only the most outstanding members of the community were selected for this role. Teachers were chosen from among the better educated of the congregation, as they had to be able to read and understand the catechism, and keep written records of the class. In the visitation sheets for the Dublin diocese, teachers were regularly described as being pious persons appointed by the priest. For instance, in 1830, the parish priest of Castledermot noted ‘the teachers are exemplary persons approved of by the clergymen’.<sup>91</sup> In addition, the clergy inspected classes, tested students and monitored teachers to ensure the laity was being properly instructed. Lessons, prayers and literature used by the CCD were restricted to those that were first approved of by the Church hierarchy. By entrusting the teaching of the catechism to the CCD, the Church was able to provide enough classes to meet the needs of the faithful and at the same time maintain control over this instruction.

#### The organisation of Sunday Schools by the CCD

The rules of the CCD regulated the society and created a standard for organising classes. In 1832, with the approbation of superiors, *Rules for the direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies, in country parishes* was published in Dublin. The book was written after ‘the many entreaties and pressing petitions of the members of the Christian Doctrine ... which are established in some country parishes ... for their guidance and spiritual

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray Papers/1830.

direction'.<sup>92</sup> In great detail, the author of this work outlined how Christian doctrine should be taught by members of the CCD, provided information about the running of the society, and advised members about living out their Christian duty. This work, coupled with the rules of the society and descriptions found in *Catholic Directories*, provides a general picture of the organisation of catechism classes by the CCD.

Catechism classes were held throughout the diocese on Sundays and holy days. Classes took place before or after Mass. In many parishes more than one class was held during the day and classes could be held in more than one venue. Classes were most often held in the church building itself, with boys assigned to the aisles and girls taught in the gallery, or a separate part of the church.<sup>93</sup> In rural parishes, classes were often held in district schools, so that children who lived a distance from the church could still benefit from catechesis. Children were separated with a male teacher assigned to teach the boys while a female teacher worked with the girls. According to the 1831 *Rules of the Society of Christian Doctrine* teachers were, as far as possible, to be appointed to teach in their own neighbourhood, where they would be familiar with the children in their charge. Teachers were to instruct and to 'watch over the conduct' of their pupils.<sup>94</sup> As well as being segregated, children were divided into four or five different classes, depending on their competence. According to the seventh rule of the CCD, pupils were to be publicly examined once a year. Those who successfully passed the exam were then to receive a premium, which would be distributed in the local church by the priest.<sup>95</sup> Only students who were found to be sufficiently instructed could progress to the next class.<sup>96</sup>

The first class was the most basic and was reserved for younger children. In this class children learned to recite 'the Blessing, Lord's prayer, Hail Mary, Creed, Confiteor, Glory be, Act of Contrition and prayers before and after meals'.<sup>97</sup> These prayers introduced children in their Christian faith. Prayers were often used to transmit basic doctrines to the laity. The Creed, for example,

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<sup>92</sup> Anon., *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, iii.

<sup>93</sup> Cunningham, 'The Catholic Directory for 1821. (By Rev. H. Young)', 356; Anon, *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 11.

<sup>94</sup> *The Diocesan Statutes...of the Province of Leinster*, Appendix II.

<sup>95</sup> The Premium was a printed piece of paper or card with a quote, usually from the Bible.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Anon, *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 20.

contains the fundamental tenants of Christian belief such as the Trinity and Resurrection. Therefore, by learning these prayers, the children were also learning the central teachings of their faith, which were later reinforced through the catechism.

In the second class, children were introduced to the ‘small catechism’. This was a basic text designed for those being exposed to the catechism for the first time. It was recommended that the Catechism composed by Archbishop Butler of Cashel, which was available in three sizes, be used in Sunday schools.<sup>98</sup> The first catechism, or smallest sized, of Butler’s works was used for the second class.

In the third class, children continued to advance by studying Butler’s texts from the middle to the larger size. In the next class, pupils were introduced to the *Historical Catechism* by, French Cistercian Abbot, historian, and catechist, Claude Fleury, first published in 1679. The *Historical Catechism* was more advanced and contained a short summary in addition to the standard questions and answers. Fleury’s work, which drew heavily on scripture, contained a summary of Christian doctrine, sacred scripture, and principles of religion.<sup>99</sup>

The fifth and final class studied *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* by Rev. Henry Tuberville (c.1607-1677/8), an English priest and controversialist.<sup>100</sup> Commonly known as the *Douay Catechism*, due to its place of origin, this work was written in 1649 and based on the Catechism of the Council of Trent. This system of dividing children into different classes was not based on age, but on the ability of the student to progress, which was determined by examination, and students could only advance to the next class if their knowledge improved.

Every Sunday the children of the parish were assembled in the chapel immediately after Mass or in the hour before Mass was due to begin. When all were present a bell was rung to signal the start of the lesson. On hearing the bell, all knelt and prayed to the Holy Ghost. Following this the children were divided by gender and class and instruction in the catechism began. After a full hour of catechesis the children would again be led in prayer. Next, the teachers were to

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Claude Fleury, *Historical Catechism Containing a Summary of Sacred history and Christian Doctrine* (Dublin, 1834).

<sup>100</sup> Anon, *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 20. Sometimes spelled Turberville. Will keep as Tuberville throughout.

collect the catechisms and award the premiums. Then a lesson was read from *Think Well O'nt* by Challoner, or another pious work. This was followed by the closing prayer. The roll call was then taken, and after answering to their name the children were permitted to leave.<sup>101</sup>

To encourage full participation, premiums were awarded to the most worthy students. Premium tickets were given to the best male and female students. These tickets had a short piece of scripture or a pious quote printed on them. The student who received it brought it home with them. For the next week they memorised the quote and at the following lesson recited the piece in front of the class. The teachers recorded the number of premiums received by each student and prizes were awarded quarterly. For receiving 3 tickets one could receive a religious picture, for 6 tickets a pious book, for 9 tickets a small brass crucifix or rosary beads, and for 12 tickets a prayer book or work of instruction. In the rules of the CCD, penknives and inkhorns were suggested as additional prizes for deserving students.<sup>102</sup>

#### The CCD at work in Dublin city: The confraternity at Francis St. and Halston St.

The practical running of the CCD can be seen in confraternity books, which recorded the activities of individual societies. These books documented the names of members and teachers, the organisation of classes, types of books used, and rules followed by the branch. The confraternity books recorded information specific to each branch of the society and are thus useful for determining the operation of the confraternity at a local level.

A CCD was established at Francis St. Chapel, in Dublin city, in 1798. This confraternity combined Christian Doctrine with a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. It was quite common for the CCD to combine with other confraternities, as members would often be involved in more than one society. Indeed it was recommended that new members be drawn from those active in

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*; Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine and Blessed Sacrament, *General Confraternity Book of Francis St. Chapel*, DDA/Confraternity Books.

St. Francis St. Confraternity book outlines a similar structure for teaching a class.

<sup>102</sup> Anon, *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 30. The CCD at St. Michan's church had receipts for prayer cards, hymn cards and premiums, purchased from the Catholic stationer James Duffy. Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and Christian Doctrine, *Register of the Christian Doctrine Confraternity, St Michan's 1859 - 1868*, CFA, HA/SOD/VOL/1.

other confraternities. Catechesis remained the primary mission of the confraternity, while members enriched their spiritual life through devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The Confraternity Book from Francis St. Chapel survives and documents the activities of this particular society.<sup>103</sup>

In 1810, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Blessed Sacrament at Francis St. united with seven other Dublin chapels, in the same vicinity, to form a single confraternity.<sup>104</sup> Seven of the chapels were city parishes, located on the south side of the city. The eight different chapels agreed to uphold the same rules.<sup>105</sup> The primary motivation for forming a united-confraternity was to standardize the teaching provided within the locality and to ‘prevent any further innovations’ by wayward teachers.<sup>106</sup> The decision to unite in this way was arrived at on 17 June 1810 after a meeting of teachers of the Christian doctrine who found that some parishes were neglecting catechesis and others were not following the rules laid down for the society by Dr. Troy. To ensure the rules were followed and to prevent deviation they resolved to annually appoint three teachers to inspect the chapels. These three teachers would be directed by ‘Revd. Gentlemen or Gentlemen’ appointed by Dr. Troy for this purpose, ‘never doing anything from themselves but always by the said Gentlemen’s advice’.<sup>107</sup> The neglect of catechesis and the proposed solution was communicated to Dr. Troy by a letter, and the eight chapels were united into one body.

The united confraternity adopted eleven rules. According to the rules each parochial society was to continue to have a president and secretary responsible for monitoring teachers and recording subscribers. Teachers were to give advance notice if they could not teach; failure to give adequate notice resulted in a fine of 6d. The next rule related to membership fee, and noted that only those: ‘whose morals shall be found unsullied in both public and private life’ would be admitted as teachers. The teachers were to teach their class for at least one hour. Teachers were to be directed and advised by the President. As the

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<sup>103</sup> *General Confraternity Book of Francis St. Chapel.*

This confraternity combined the teaching of doctrine with the promotion of Eucharistic adoration, especially benediction.

<sup>104</sup> The eight united chapels were: St. Nicholas on Francis Street, St. Catherine on Meath Street, St. James, St. Paul’s on Arran Quay, St. Audeon’s parish on Bridge Street, St. Michael’s on Rosemary Lane, St. Andrew, and the parish of Harold’s Cross.

<sup>105</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>106</sup> *General Confraternity Book of Francis St. Chapel.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

society promoted devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, teachers were to take part in ‘Processions of the most Adorable Sacrament’ on Confraternity Day, Corpus Christi, Christmas and Easter. The seventh rule lists prayers to be recited daily by each member. The President, secretary and council were to be elected annually. All potential members were to be made known to the president, secretary and the society at large so that they could then decide if that individual should become a member. All members, teaching and subscribing members, were entitled to the benefit of seven masses for the repose of their soul. The final rule related to the catechism class.<sup>108</sup>

Similar to the general rules for conducting classes, already outlined, the final rule reiterated that teachers were to begin religious instruction by invoking the Holy Spirit ‘saying a prayer for that purpose such as Come O Holy Ghost replenish the hearts of the faithful’ followed by an act of contrition. They were then to begin teaching the catechism, which was to last at least one hour. The teacher was to conclude the lesson by reciting an act of Faith, Hope and Charity. When the children were dismissed the teachers were to kneel down and pray the office of the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>109</sup> The only mention of the type of catechism used is a receipt from 1823 for 303 catechisms purchased by the society. These were 100 Small Size, 100 Second Size, and 100 General catechisms and 3 Douay catechisms.<sup>110</sup> The variety of catechisms corresponds to the differing level of students. After uniting in 1810 the Confraternity at Francis St. Chapel, combined with the other chapels, had 162 teachers. For detail of teachers in each parish, see *Fig. 2.1*. There is no record of a separate branch for women. The records of the society only list six women as subscribers of the society, and three of these were teaching members. The CCD records for the society continue until 1845, at which point the society had 103 subscribing members (illustrated in *Fig. 2.2*).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> See Appendix D

<sup>111</sup> No distinction was made between subscribing and teaching members and no indication of which of the 8 parishes members were associated with.

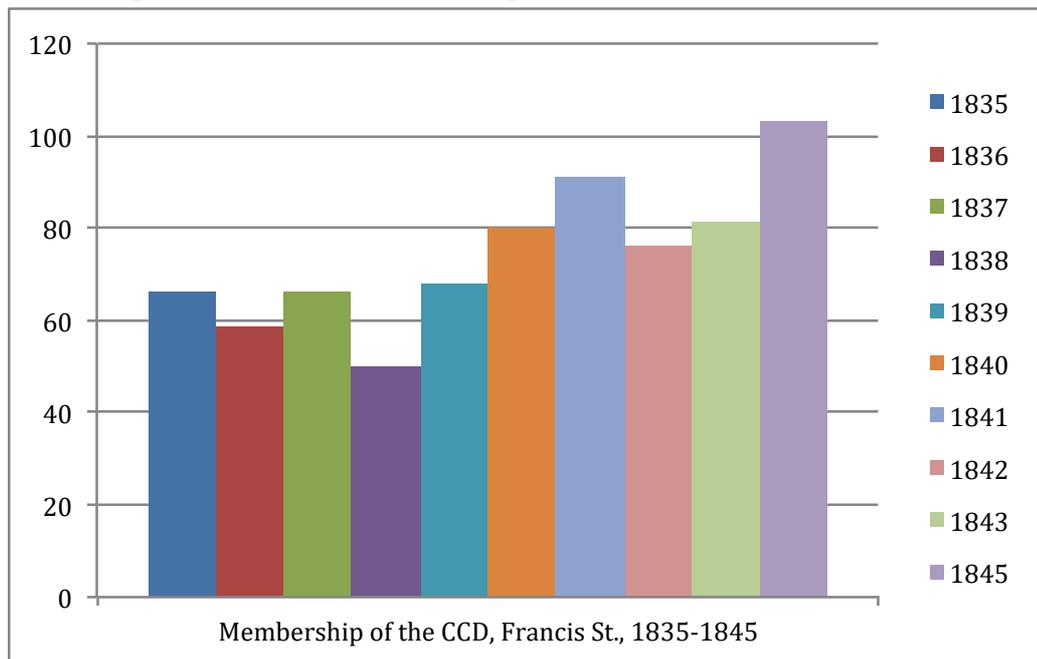
Fig. 2.1

Table of teaching members of the united CCD, Francis St. 1810.<sup>112</sup>

<b>Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine and Blessed Sacrament Francis St. Chapel, General Confraternity Book. 1810</b>	
<b>Parish</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
St. Nicholas, Francis St.	38
St. Catherine's Meath St.	36
St. James Parish	29
St. Paul's Arran Quay	16
St. Audeon's Bridge St.	14
St. Michael's Rosemary lane	14
St. Andrew's Parish	9
Harold's Cross	6
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>162 Teachers</b>

Fig. 2.2

Membership of the CCD at Francis St. Chapel, 1835-1845.



<sup>112</sup> *General Confraternity Book of Francis St. Chapel.*

A similar Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and Christian Doctrine was active at St Michan's Church on Halston Street from 1798.<sup>113</sup> Although its early records appear to be misplaced, a Confraternity Book from 1859-1866 survives, containing information about class attendance, teachers, and information relating to activities in the parish.<sup>114</sup> Although classes were held on Sunday exceptions were made on Sundays where special devotions or meetings were held, so that the teachers could attend these instead. For instance, from September 1859 to August 1860 classes were cancelled on six occasions: Christmas Day, a charity sermon, 40 Hours adoration, Easter Sunday, devotions of the Most Holy Sacrament, and a parochial meeting. New officers were elected annually following the feast of St. Michan (25<sup>th</sup> August).<sup>115</sup>

This Confraternity had a large number of teachers; in 1859 there were 32 teachers, teaching 31 classes. Although the address of each teacher is given, there are no details about the location where the classes were held. Class sizes differed each week, anywhere from 1 – 42 students, with an average of 8 students in each class (See *Fig. 3*). There were seven different levels of catechesis offered: Prayers, First Size, Second Size, Third Size, Abridged, Historical, and Acts.<sup>116</sup> It is interesting to note that a lay member was chosen each year to be the examiner, a role normally held by a priest. There is no mention of female teachers, however women generally formed a separate branch and would have kept records independent of the male branch.

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<sup>113</sup> Myles V Ronan, *An Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Father Henry Young* (Dublin, 1944), 124; Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 169.

<sup>114</sup> *Register of the Christian Doctrine Confraternity, St Michan's 1859 – 1868*.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> From September 1861, the Abridged Catechism class was no longer offered.

Fig. 3

Table of Teachers and attendance at the CCD, Halston St <sup>117</sup>

<b>Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and Christian Doctrine, St. Michan's Parish, Halston Street 1859-63</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Average Weekly Attendance</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Total Attendance</b>
<b>Sept 1859 – Aug 1860</b>	42	32	256		10,782
<b>Aug 1860 – Aug 1861</b>	45	31	226		10,193
<b>Sept 1861 – June 1862</b>	38	27	218		8,292
<b>June 1862 – May 1863</b>	44	28	204		9,003

The Confraternity book for St. Michan's parish records the names and addresses of the teaching members of the society. These teachers would have had to be literate and have the ability to conduct the class and keep records. Although the occupation of these teachers is not listed in the confraternity book, 7 can be found in *Thom's Almanac and Official Directory* and appear to be members of the Dublin commercial class.<sup>118</sup> Bernard Nangle, of North Anne St. and later Lower Dominic St., worked at the Halston St. Market selling eggs and butter. From 1859 on Nangle taught Butler's larger Catechism, and in 1861 was listed as the examiner. John Durham of Manor St. worked as a provisions dealer and taught the 'second size' catechism (Durham had the highest attendance in 1859 with 938 students). Martin Dunn and William Mullin were both iron brokers. Dunn taught the 'second size' catechism and Mullin taught the Abridged. Edmund Mc Kenna of North King St. was one of seven teachers in charge of the prayer class. Mc Kenna worked as a cork cutter. Both Fintan Courtney and Peter Ganley taught Butler's 'third size' catechism. Courtney was a corn, hay and potato factor, while Ganley worked as a clothier.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>117</sup> *Register of the Christian Doctrine Confraternity, St Michan's 1859 – 1868.*

<sup>118</sup> Alexander Thom, *Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory of the United Kingdom for the year 1862* (Dublin, 1862).

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

### Catechetical works available in Ireland

The Council of Trent sought to answer the criticisms of Protestantism and at the same time define the doctrines of the Church. Educating both clergy and the laity was a priority for the Council. The need to provide a clear statement on Catholic teaching led to the production of a uniform catechism. The *Catechismus Romanus* was published in 1566. Although printed in both Latin and the vernacular it was a large, unwieldy text, inaccessible to the general public. In fact, the new catechism was a manual of doctrine intended to be used by the clergy, rather than the laity, as a handbook of the faith and a guide for instructing their flock. When plans were laid for the *Catechismus Romanus* in 1546 a second catechism, designed to transmit Counter-Reformation theology to the laity, especially children and the uneducated, was also envisaged. The Council never produced such a catechism, but works already being produced in this field were praised by the Council.<sup>120</sup> These catechisms were small, compact works, written in unambiguous language and aimed directly at those unlearned in the Catholic faith. The format and style of these small catechisms was simple, yet the content maintained the spirit of the Council of Trent. That is to say, the doctrines promulgated in the *Catechismus Romanus* are also to be found in these works. The most significant of these smaller catechisms were those of the Jesuits Robert Bellarmine and Peter Canisius. The catechisms of these authors ran into numerous editions and were used as blueprints for subsequent catechisms, evidence of the importance of these works.<sup>121</sup> Advances in printing and the spread of literacy provided new opportunities for disseminating these religious texts among the laity. Simple catechisms and small works of instruction, aimed at those not yet instructed in their faith, were made available at very low cost. As in post-Reformation Europe, these simple catechisms were indispensable for religious education in Ireland.

Catechisms were produced in Ireland throughout the penal era. In the eighteenth century, catechetical works from the continent and England were continually reprinted by Irish stationers. These works were used and adapted during the nineteenth century and provided the foundation of religious knowledge in Ireland. According to Michael Tynan, in *Catholic Instruction in*

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<sup>120</sup> Wall, 'The Catechism in Irish', 37.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

Ireland, the Irish Catholic book trade in the eighteenth century was ‘largely fed by catechism copy’.<sup>122</sup> In 1738, the Dublin printer Ignatius Kelly, of Mary St, produced an English and Irish version of *Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* by English priest Henry Tuberville.<sup>123</sup> Tuberville’s *Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* was first produced in Douai, France, in 1648 and is generally referred to as the Douay Catechism.<sup>124</sup> The Douay Catechism was a large detailed text. In 1672 it was anonymously shortened to *An Abstract of the Douay Catechism*. The version produced by Ignatius Kelly was a shortened version of the original Douay.<sup>125</sup> Kelly also produced a copy of the *Catechism of Trent* as well as the catechetical works of John Gother and Richard Challoner. Gother wrote several works of instruction, such as *Instruction for Youth* and *Instruction for Confession, Communion, and Confirmation*, which catechised in the familiar question and answer form. In addition, Kelly reprinted various works of Richard Challoner, including his *Grounds of Catholic Doctrine* and *The Catholic Christian Instructed*, which were both works of religious instruction.<sup>126</sup> In 1770, the printer Richard Cross made the catechetical writings of John Hornihold available and by 1780 the works of another catechist George Hay were issued from the press of Patrick Wogan. In 1794, Wogan collaborated with fellow Catholic stationer Richard Cross to produce *The Poor Man’s Catechism: or the Christian Doctrine explained with short Admonitions* by the Benedictine John Mannock. It was the first time the text was printed in Ireland. *The Poor Man’s Catechism* first published in 1752, was based on the *Douay* but was a catechism of ‘spiritual formation’, which included instruction and exhortations along with the characteristic duologue.<sup>127</sup> The catechisms of Gother, Challoner, Tuberville, Mannock, and Hay were reprinted regularly and translated into Irish; nevertheless, they were large catechisms and thus readership was restricted to the better educated of the laity.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Michael Tynan, *Catholic Instruction in Ireland, 1720-1950* (Dublin; 1985), 14.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Spelling varies between Douai, Douay, and Doway. I will refer to it as the *Douay Catechism*.

<sup>125</sup> Tynan, *Catholic Instruction in Ireland, 1720-1950*, 14.

<sup>126</sup> Advertisement of books sold by Ignatius Kelly in Luis de Granada, *The Sinner’s Guide: Containing a Full and Ample Exhortation ... by the Reverend Father Lewis of Granada* (Dublin, 1740).

<sup>127</sup> Michael Tynan, ‘The End of an Era’, *The Furrow*, Vol.25, No. 12 (December, 1974), 660-71, 667.

<sup>128</sup> Information relating to Catholic printers can be found in Chapter 3.

While the majority of catechetical works were imported, texts from Irish authors were also available in the eighteenth century. The Augustinian friar William Gahan was a spiritual writer producing works of instruction and sermons, he worked as a translator as well, and wrote works of a catechetical nature. Gahan's *An exposition of the Small Catechism* was printed by Thomas Mc Donnell in 1797.<sup>129</sup> *Youth Instructed in the grounds of Christian religion* was published in 1798, again by Thomas Mc Donnell. *Youth Instructed* was written by Gahan as: 'an antidote against the contagious doctrines of atheists, materialists, fatalists, deists, modern Arians, Socinians, &c'.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, catechisms were produced by Irish priests and bishops for the use of their parish or diocese. In 1718, for instance, Cornelius Nary, parish priest of St. Michan in Dublin, produced a catechism for his parish. Archbishop Michael O'Reilly (1690 - 1758) of Armagh, William Devereux (1696 - 1771) from the diocese of Ferns, and James Butler (1774 - 1791) Archbishop of Cashel all composed catechisms. Although the works of O'Reilly, Devereux and Butler were originally intended for instruction within their own diocese they became the principal catechisms used in Ireland. For instance, O'Reilly's catechism was used in the Diocese of Tuam, while Butler's work became a standard text for many dioceses including Dublin and Kildare and Leighlin. The works of Butler, O'Reilly and Devereux were often revised and abridged into shorter works.<sup>131</sup> These smaller editions became standard catechetical texts and were regularly reprinted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And, according to Michael Tynan, it was not the large but the 'small abridgements that made the soul of our Tridentine peoples'.<sup>132</sup>

The catechism composed by James Butler became the standard text for teaching children in the Dublin diocese. In c.1775 Archbishop Butler produced two catechisms, a *Larger Catechism* and an *Abridgement Catechism*, the abridged was a simplified version of the *Larger Catechism*. Butler's catechisms were designed 'as an instrument of instruction within a system of community

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<sup>129</sup> William Gahan, *A Short and Plain Exposition of the Small Catechism for the use of Grown-up Children and other Illiterate Persons of the Roman Catholic Communion, who may not have the time to peruse, nor means to purchase larger books of instruction.* (Dublin, 1797).

<sup>130</sup> William Gahan, *Youth Instructed in the Grounds of Christian Doctrine* (Dublin, 1798).

<sup>131</sup> See book lists from Catholic Book Society 1838-1840, these works were still available in 1840s in various editions and sizes.

<sup>132</sup> Tynan, *Catholic Instruction in Ireland, 1720-1950*, 14.

catechesis' and thus suited to the teaching of parish catechesis.<sup>133</sup> In 1802 the Archbishops of Ireland (Dr. O'Reilly of Armagh, Dr. Troy of Dublin, Dr. Kelly of Tuam, and Dr. Bray of Cashel) approved of a revised and edited version of Butler's catechism. It was recommended that this revised catechism be adopted as the universal catechism for religious instruction in Ireland.<sup>134</sup> Many editions of Butler's catechism carry the imprint 'approved and recommended by the four R.C. Archbishops of Ireland, as a general catechism for the Kingdom'.<sup>135</sup> This catechism was often referred to as the *Catechism of the Four Archbishops*, or more commonly the *General Catechism*.<sup>136</sup> In 1882 the *General Catechism* was re-edited and published under the title of *The Maynooth Catechism*.<sup>137</sup> Butler's catechism was the catechism recommended for use by the CCD for instruction at Sunday schools. At some stage Butler's catechism was reworked into three sizes, with students gradually ascending from the small to the large version.<sup>138</sup>

As well as Butler's catechism, the CCD utilised the works of Claude Fleury and Henry Tuberville. While any approved catechetical text could be used for transmitting doctrine, only Butler, Fleury and Tuberville were recommended in the rules of the society. Fleury and Tuberville were only used in the higher classes, as they were considered to be 'the high watermark of catechetical instruction'.<sup>139</sup> However, Butler's work made the most significant contribution to religious education. It was used in three of the five Christian doctrine classes.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, it was the first catechism that children were introduced to and formed the basis of their religious knowledge. The Dublin preacher Fr. Henry Young, in a letter about the use of catechisms, stated that the *General Catechism*, in all three sizes, was 'in constant use, especially on Sundays'.<sup>141</sup> Young, who spent time travelling to different parishes to give missions, was familiar with the

<sup>133</sup> Wallace, 'Irish Catechesis – the Heritage from James Butler II Archbishop of Cashel 1779-1791', 2.

<sup>134</sup> Tynan, *Catholic Instruction in Ireland, 1720-1950*, 16.

<sup>135</sup> James Butler, *The Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism Revised, Enlarged Approved and Recommended by the Four R.C. Archbishops of Ireland, as a General Catechism for the Kingdom*, (Dublin, 1811); Same title, published by the Catholic Book Society (Dublin, 1834); Same title, same publisher (Dublin, 1838); Same title, published by John Coyne (Dublin, 1841); Same title, published by James Duffy (Dublin, 1868).

<sup>136</sup> Tynan, *Catholic Instruction in Ireland, 1750-1950*, 16.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Anon, *Rules for the direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian societies*, 20.

<sup>139</sup> Ronan, *An Apostle of Catholic Dublin*, 50.

<sup>140</sup> There were five standard classes listed in the rules of CCD. St Michan's parish had seven classes in 1859 and six in 1860s.

<sup>141</sup> Letter from Henry Young, DDA/Hamilton Papers/35/3/37.

operation of catechism classes in the diocese. He wrote that in the parish of Ballymore Eustace, in Co. Kildare, people had to be employed to strengthen the bindings of the catechism, as they were weakened from continuous use.<sup>142</sup> Young describes Fleury's *Historical Catechism* and Tuberville's *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* as 'excellent' texts for the more advanced.<sup>143</sup> Students at CCD classes could only study Fleury and Tuberville if they had first completed Butler's three catechisms.<sup>144</sup>

### The Catechisms as an instrument of instruction

The catechism presented its reader with the doctrines, beliefs, and practices of the Catholic Church as laid down by the Council of Trent. Study of the catechism encouraged loyalty to the Church and her teachings and outlined the religious obligations of the laity. In this way it reinforced Catholic identity and assisted the Church in spreading reform. Through catechetical instruction the Church was able to clarify doctrine and provide the laity with a clear response to offer those who ridiculed Catholic practice. The catechism justified areas of Catholic teaching, which were constantly being challenged by Protestants, such as Purgatory and the Sacraments, and practices that were often labelled as superstitious or blasphemous, such as devotion to the saints. Therefore the catechism had a dual purpose, to instruct and to defend.

The catechism offered the laity a clear definition of the doctrines that caused derision, such as indulgences, devotion to the saints and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the doctrine of Purgatory. Lesson XXVII in Butler's catechism was titled: 'On Confession, and on Indulgences'.<sup>145</sup> This lesson confirmed the Church's authority to grant indulgences, outlined the necessary conditions for obtaining an indulgence, and defined what an indulgence is, and also what it is not. For example, an indulgence 'remits the temporary punishments with which God often visits our sins', but it is not 'a pardon for sins to come, or a licence to

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<sup>142</sup> In the letter he complains to Dr. Hamilton that the binding is not strong enough, and as the catechisms are used regularly the binding often breaks and needs to be repaired.

<sup>143</sup> Letter from Henry Young, DDA/Hamilton Papers/35/3/37.

<sup>144</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 20.

<sup>145</sup> James Butler, *The Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism, Revised, Enlarged, Approved, and Recommended by the Four R.C. Arch-Bishops of Ireland As a General Catechism for the Kingdom. Twenty-sixth Edition, Carefully Corrected and Improved with Amendment* (Dublin, 1836), 63-66.

commit sin'.<sup>146</sup> The doctrine of indulgences, the buying and selling of which had been among the most scandalous abuses of the pre-Reformation Church, was easily manipulated and thus open to misuse. Another area of the Catholic faith open to misinterpretation was the position given to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. The catechism composed and answered questions to guide the laity through Church teaching: 'Are we forbidden to honour the saints? ... Is it lawful to recommend ourselves to the saints, and to ask their prayers? ... Is it proper to shew any mark of respect to the crucifix, and the pictures of Christ and his saints? ... Is it lawful to honour the Virgin Mary? ... What honour do we give our Blessed Lady? [*sic*]',<sup>147</sup> Tuberville's *Abridgement of the Christian Doctrine*, which was revised by Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, contained similar questions: 'Is it lawful to honour the angels and saints? ... Is it lawful to honour the relics of saints? ... How prove you that dead and inanimate things (for example, medals, crosses, churches, bread, water, and the like,) are capable of sanctity and honour?'<sup>148</sup> The veneration of the saints and the power attributed to relics and images was a matter of grave concern for Church authorities. It had been the desire of the Tridentine Church to reform this aspect of lay devotion, which often verged on superstition. Butler's catechism explained to the laity what was and was not proper devotion, according to the teachings of the Church:

Q. Why do Catholics honour the relics of the saints?

A. Because their bodies had been the temples of the Holy Ghost; and at the last day will be honoured and glorified for ever in heaven.

Q. May we then pray to the crucifix, or to the images or relics of the saints?

A. By no means; for they have neither life nor sense, nor power to hear or help us.

Q. Why then do we pray before the crucifix, and before the images and relics of the saints?

A. Because they enliven our devotion, by exciting pious affections and desires, and by reminding us of Christ and his saints; they also encourage us to imitate their virtues and good works.

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<sup>146</sup> Butler, *The Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism... Twenty sixth Edition*, 65.

<sup>147</sup> Butler, *The Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism... Twenty sixth Edition*, 40, 54, 55.

<sup>148</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 52-53.

Q. Is it not forbidden by the first commandment to make images?

A. No; if we do not make them for gods, to adore and serve them as the idolaters do.<sup>149</sup>

In addition, a lesson is given over to the doctrine of Purgatory consisting of seven questions outlining Church doctrine and the Scriptural basis for belief in Purgatory and Catholic practice of praying for the dead. The laity's understanding of indulgences, Purgatory, and the veneration of the saints was not always in line with the teaching of the Catholic Church. By explaining the correct role of these principles in the tradition of the Church, the Catechism assisted in the process of reforming and standardising lay belief.

Learning the Catechism reinforced Catholic identity as acceptance of Church teaching, such as those on the saints, the Virgin Mary, and Purgatory, firmly separated Catholics from other denominations. The *Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* by Tuberville was written not only to instruct Catholics in their faith but also to provide them with the means to defend that faith. Henry Tuberville describes his work as an: 'abridgement of Christian Doctrine; defended and cleared by proofes of Scripture, in points controverted between Catholiques and Sectaries [*sic*]'.<sup>150</sup> This is evident in the tone of the lessons, which were presented in the form of an argument, with students taught how to expound and defend each point: 'How prove you that? ... How declare you that? ... What other proof have you?'<sup>151</sup> In a lesson on the first commandment Tuberville's catechism asks:

Q. How do you prove it a great sin to go to church with heretics?

A. Because by so doing we outwardly deny our faith, and profess their false faith, at least in our country, where going to church is, by the laws of the land, made a distinctive sign betwixt them and us.<sup>152</sup>

In this way the Catholic sacrament of the Eucharist is confirmed as a unique characteristic of Catholicism, and a distinct divider between Catholics and non-

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<sup>149</sup> Butler, *The Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism... Twenty sixth Edition*, 40-41.

<sup>150</sup> Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine, with Proofs of Scripture for Points Controverted. Catechistically Explained, by way of Question and Answer* (Basileæ, 1680), 1.

<sup>151</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 13, 29, 35, 49, 56, 102, 103, etc. 'How prove you that?' is asked at least 35 times, 'What other proof have you?' is asked at least 15 times, 'How declare you that?' just used 2 times, other similar questions are asked throughout.

<sup>152</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 48.

Catholics. Furthermore, catechisms fostered loyalty to the Church by confirming her authority in areas of religion and morality, with this authority superseding other denominations. Butler's catechism asks students: 'Q. Where are true Christians to be found? A. Only in the true church'.<sup>153</sup> This is followed by a two-page lesson justifying the Catholic Church's claim to be the one true church:

Q. How do you call the True Church?

A. The Holy Catholic Church ...

Q. Is there any other true Church besides the holy Catholic Church?

A. No ...<sup>154</sup>

Fleury's *Historical Catechism* warns its readers that 'heretics and schismatics' and any others who separate themselves from the Church do not form another church but are rather 'as an arm or some other limb separated from the head'.<sup>155</sup> Fleury establishes the Church's authority in matters of faith and doctrine by describing those 'who teach a doctrine different from that of the church' as 'heretics'.<sup>156</sup> Tuberville uses similar language stating that those who 'accuse the Church of errors in faith and of idolatry' are 'Heretics or Infidels'.<sup>157</sup> Written for Catholics in seventeenth-century England, Tuberville's catechism is by far the most sectarian in tone and content. For a nineteenth century audience references to heretics, infidels, and apostates would have seemed to describe Evangelicals active in Ireland at that time. It is interesting to note that in Doyle's revised edition of Tuberville a number of derogatory references to Protestants were removed, making the Irish edition less controversial than the original.<sup>158</sup> For instance, in a passage relating to indulgences, the phrase 'as Protestants do falsely and slanderously teach' is replaced with 'as some do falsely and slanderously teach' in another passage the word Protestant is replaced with 'separated brethren'.<sup>159</sup> Another whole passage beginning with the question: 'How do you prove all obstinate Novellists to be Heretics?' and going on to discuss divisions within Protestant denominations: 'And is not this the reason

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<sup>153</sup> Butler, *The Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism... Twenty sixth Edition*, 29.

<sup>154</sup> Butler, *The Most Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism... Twenty sixth Edition*, 29-31.

<sup>155</sup> Fleury, *Historical Catechism*, 51.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 25.

<sup>158</sup> Doyle's edition was to be used in the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, it was also produced to be used by the CCD.

<sup>159</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* (Basileæ, 1680), 216, 43; Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 100, 22.

also why Protestants and all other Sectaries are so divided, damning one another for mis-believers? [*sic*]' is completely omitted from Dr. Doyle's edition.<sup>160</sup> Referring to these edits, Doyle explained: 'Many words, and even arguments, which ... were well adapted to the then prevailing taste and usage, have become less intelligible and less acceptable than they originally were'.<sup>161</sup> When it came to the fundamentals of the Catholic faith (Eucharist, Confession, infallibility of Church authority<sup>162</sup>), catechisms were extremely polemical, distinguishing Catholic teaching from other denominations in a defensive way. However, the edits made by Doyle to both the language and content used by Tuberville indicate that there were attempts by Church authorities to avoid unnecessary controversy between Catholics and Protestants.

By studying the catechism the laity was instructed in their duty towards the Church and her teachings from an early age. Dr. Doyle described the imparting of religious knowledge to the young as planting a 'mustard seed', a well-known biblical motif, which would be the means through which 'knowledge and practice of our divine religion will be planted'.<sup>163</sup> Through religious instruction children were encouraged to obey the Church's authority. In Claude Fleury's *Historical Catechism* the reader is reminded: 'The church is our mother; for this reason we are obliged to obey her, and to observe the commandments which she has laid upon us'.<sup>164</sup> All the catechisms state the precepts and the commands of the Church and reminded the reader of their responsibility to obey these commands and participate in the practices of the faith.

As well as clarifying doctrine, the Catechism inculcated religious practice, devotions, and participation in the sacraments. According to Catholic teaching, the seven sacraments were instituted by Christ, are conduits of grace, and are necessary for salvation. Thus it is not surprising that the sacraments are given prominence in Catholic catechisms. Instruction in the sacraments was necessary to ensure the laity understood what they were receiving. The sacraments could be refused if candidates were not properly instructed, confirming the importance of religious instruction for the receipt of the

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<sup>160</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* (Basileæ, 1680), 43-45.

<sup>161</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, iii.

<sup>162</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 22.

<sup>163</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, v.

<sup>164</sup> Fleury, *Historical Catechism*, 63.

sacraments. Furthermore, an understanding of the importance of the sacraments for salvation could encourage the laity to approach the sacraments, particularly communion and confession, more frequently. This was essential in Ireland where sacramental participation was sporadic. Butler's catechism invites Catholics to 'go often to communion ... as nothing can conduce more to a holy life'.<sup>165</sup> Butler informed his reader on the conditions necessary for receiving communion, in addition his work provided direction on what to do before and after communion. The communicant should approach with devotion and reverence and 'appear very modest and humble, and clean in dress'.<sup>166</sup> After receiving, the communicant should 'spend some time in meditation and prayer; and particularly in acts of thanksgiving'.<sup>167</sup> Tuberville's *Abridgement of Christian Doctrine* contained the order of the Mass in English. Fleury's *Historical Catechism* warned that the souls of those who do not receive would remain 'weak and languishing'.<sup>168</sup> In addition, the catechism acquainted the laity with their obligation to receive communion and confess at least once a year, and attend Mass on Sundays and holydays.

Catechetical instruction guided the laity towards personal sanctification by encouraging prayer, pious works, and devotions. Butler's *General Catechism* instructed its readers to spend Sunday praying and carrying out religious duties:

Q. Which are the chief duties of religion in which we should spend the Sunday?

A. Hearing Mass devoutly, attending vespers, or evening prayers, reading moral and pious books, and going to communion ... a part of the day should also be given to prayer, and other good works.<sup>169</sup>

Similarly, Tuberville directed the laity to spend Sunday in 'prayer and divine service' by 'hearing mass, confessing our sins, going to communion, hearing sermons, and reading good books'.<sup>170</sup> Tuberville's catechism also contained a discourse on the Liturgy of the Hours, the Our Father, Hail Mary and Angelus.<sup>171</sup> Readers were encouraged to 'daily spend some time in prayer' and churches

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<sup>165</sup> Butler, *James Butler's Catechism*, 61.

<sup>166</sup> Butler, *James Butler's Catechism*, 62.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> Fleury, *Historical Catechism*, 71.

<sup>169</sup> Butler, *James Butler's Catechism*, 42-43.

<sup>170</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 57.

<sup>171</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 36-41.

were recommended as the most appropriate places to pray.<sup>172</sup> The first section of Butler's catechism was dedicated to prayer and included the text of the Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, the Confiteor, acts of faith, hope and charity, prayers for before and after meals, and prayers for before and after Mass. It also contained instructions for the *little office of the Blessed Sacrament*, a devotion often associated with branches of the CCD. This was traditionally recited on Thursdays and was made up of seven parts that were prayed throughout the day from matins to compline. *The Christian's daily exercise* was also to be found in Butler's work. The daily exercise contained morning and night prayers, which are described as a 'necessary duty'.<sup>173</sup> For 'spiritual improvement' it recommends that every Christian should meditate on Christ's passion, hear Mass, and read books of 'true Christian piety and sound morality'.<sup>174</sup> A daily examination of conscience was also advised, as was communal prayer, especially in a family setting.<sup>175</sup>

### Conclusion

By the nineteenth century the plan for a parish based system of religious instruction of Catholic youths was being realised in the Dublin diocese. As early as 1810 seven of the nine city parishes had catechesis every week and by 1834 32 of the 39 rural parishes were also offering weekly catechesis. The system of catechesis in the Dublin diocese was greatly assisted by the formation of the CCD and other lay societies interested in religious education. The CCD supplied the Church with the manpower necessary to provide catechesis in every parish of the diocese. Although composed of lay members, the CCD was under the supervision of the Church and members could only join at the recommendation of the parish priest. Despite this, it would seem from *Confraternity Books* that the clergy played little to no role in the actual organisation and running of the society. At a time when the Catholic Church had an inadequate number of clergy, the service provided by the CCD was invaluable to the reforming Church. Classes were organised for children every Sunday, and in the main were operated by the CCD. These classes focussed on instructing children in the hope that it

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<sup>172</sup> Tuberville, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine... revised by James Doyle*, 35.

<sup>173</sup> Butler, *James Butler's Catechism*, 16.

<sup>174</sup> Butler, *James Butler's Catechism*, 15.

<sup>175</sup> Butler, *James Butler's Catechism*, 17.

would result in a new generation of Catholics, educated in Church teaching and active in practicing their faith.

The catechism was the primary text used to transmit religious instruction, with catechisms by Butler, Tuberville and Fleury being recommended for use in Ireland. Through the catechism, children were given the instruction necessary to receive the sacraments of the Church. As children progressed from basic to more detailed catechisms, they were gradually introduced to the essential doctrines of the Church. At a time when Protestant evangelicals were actively circulating anti-Catholic tracts it was important for the Church to ground the laity in the precepts of their faith. The catechism explored Protestant objections to areas of Catholic faith and doctrine, introducing children to these arguments from an early age. Through catechesis children were given the necessary formation to defend and justify the teachings of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, regular religious instruction enabled the Church to gradually transmit post-reformation theology. Through catechesis children were exposed to the doctrines confirmed and promulgated at the Council of Trent, such as the role of the sacraments, transubstantiation, indulgences, and purgatory. Catechisms encouraged loyalty to the Church and acceptance of Church teachings, often at the expense of other denominations. Children were informed of their duty towards to the Church and their obligation to participate in its rituals and liturgies. Finally, through catechesis children were introduced to the reform efforts of the Irish Church. Catechisms emphasised prayer and orthodox devotions, discouraged any form of devotion that could lead to superstition, endorsed participation at Mass and regular communion, and encouraged the development of an internal spiritual life of prayer and pious reading.

### **Chapter Three: Refuting Error and Diffusing Knowledge: Catholic Printing in Nineteenth- Century Dublin**

The desire to increase religious knowledge among the laity led to the Catholic Church becoming more actively involved in the print industry. Since the Reformation the potential of books as a tool for both instruction and devotion was recognised by all the churches. Indeed, the reading, often repeated reading, of religious texts was promoted as a devotional activity by both the Protestant and Catholic Church. Books were an ideal medium to transmit religious instruction and strengthen the religious convictions of the laity, leading to more diligent religious practice in everyday life. As literacy levels increased in Ireland, the Church came to see religious instruction as essential to fortify the faith of the laity against assault by evangelical Protestants. While the benefit of reading was evident to the Church, it was difficult to compel the laity to read moral and religious works. To encourage reading as a common practice it was necessary to produce a variety of suitable titles at a low cost, and to circulate these religious works to as wide an audience as possible. To achieve this desired objective the Catholic hierarchy formed a society to print and sell cheap religious works.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Church supported the Catholic print industry by approving and recommending religious texts. In addition, priests and religious provided printers with a steady clientele by subscribing to and commissioning Catholic works. However, books were a luxury item, which the majority of the laity could not afford. Some books were available to the poor but these were not considered to be suitable reading matter for the Catholic laity. Cheap popular literature, commonly known as chapbooks, was widely circulated. These cheap works included ballads, almanacs, folktales, romances, tales of highwaymen and other stories and were thus judged unseemly reading material. Moral and religious texts produced by Protestant tract societies were sold at a cheap rate or distributed free, but these works were treated with suspicion by the Church and again considered unsuitable for the laity.

In 1827 the Catholic Church established a religious book society with the grandiose title: The Catholic Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge throughout Ireland. This society was formed with the intention of supplying the

laity with affordable books that were both appropriate and instructive. It printed texts deemed ‘useful’ for the laity including works on prayer, devotions, doctrine, apologetics and the liturgy. The society aimed to produce books that would instruct and challenge those with advanced literacy, and smaller works that would be comprehensible to even the simplest mind. It received funding from donors, which allowed it to sell texts at an affordable rate. This enabled the Church to provide a wider variety of Catholic texts and to increase access to such works by significantly reducing the purchasing cost. Furthermore, the society assisted the Church in evangelisation by placing the means of religious instruction in the hands of the laity.

Knowledge, education and literacy were in vogue in the nineteenth-century. Victorian England was obsessed with the acquisition of knowledge, evidenced in the growth in encyclopaedias, periodicals, manuals of instruction, and societies and institutes dedicated to promoting knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Knowledge and literacy were held up as a solution for social instability. There was a growing interest in the education of the working class, particularly providing knowledge deemed ‘useful’. A Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was formed in England in 1825 by Henry Brougham to distribute instructive texts to the reading public. Brougham’s society had two primary objectives, first to ‘give the people books which might convey knowledge to uneducated persons, or persons imperfectly educated’ and second to ‘reduce the price of scientific and other useful works to the community generally’.<sup>2</sup> One cannot help but notice the similarities in the title of Brougham’s society and the one founded by the Church in Ireland. While Brougham’s society produced scientific and technological texts, the only ‘useful’ texts supplied by the Irish society were those of a religious nature. This is unsurprising, as Protestant Evangelicals also believed knowledge of God was of the utmost benefit to man.

This chapter documents the increased availability of Catholic print from the development of a Catholic print industry in the eighteenth century to the founding of societies whose sole intention was promoting Catholic reading.

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Rauch, *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians, Morality and the March of Intellect*, (North Carolina, 2001), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Rosemary Ashton, ‘Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (act. 1826–1846)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed. (Oxford, 2004) [www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/59807, Accessed 30/8/2013].

Research into the development of the Catholic print industry has been conducted, most notably, by Hugh Fenning and Cormac Begadon. Both authors begin their studies in the eighteenth century and continue into the early nineteenth century. Fenning has greatly contributed to the history of the Irish Church by describing what reading material was available to literate Catholics from 1701 to 1819.<sup>3</sup> His research is bibliographical and intended for future students, therefore he lists only texts that survive and can be located. Begadon's analysis of Fenning's work is also interesting as he categorises the types of literature available but again, it is limited as it only relies on surviving sources.<sup>4</sup> This chapter will use not only surviving texts but also bookseller's lists and advertising catalogues to create a more detailed analysis of the literature available to the laity in the early nineteenth century. The Catholic Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge throughout Ireland will be examined, and, as this society was created, organized and funded by the Church, it will form the primary focus of the chapter. A second society, the Catholic Society for Ireland formed in 1835 to distribute free books among the poor, will similarly be discussed. This second book society was a lay initiative but received sanction and support from the Church. The involvement of the Church in the print industry must be considered in the context of the Protestant evangelical movement active at the time. Both of these Catholic societies had many of the same features as the Protestant book societies: the desire to circulate religious books, a belief in the necessity of religious knowledge and an interest in religious education. The Church's venture into publishing must be viewed as an aspect of general Church reform. The books produced and circulated, by both of the book societies, reflected the aspirations of the Church to provide the laity with the means to instruct themselves in the tenets of the Catholic faith.

### A brief history of Catholic printing

In the early eighteenth century the Irish book trade was centred in Dublin. The main hub of the industry was located south of the river Liffey, from the Christchurch area to Trinity College. By the nineteenth century printing shops could be found on the north of the Liffey in areas such as Abbey St. and Capel

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<sup>3</sup> Fenning, 'Dublin Imprints of a Catholic Interest 1701 ... 1819'.

<sup>4</sup> Begadon, 'Laity and Clergy in the Catholic Renewal of Dublin, 1750-1830', 143-147.

St.<sup>5</sup> Catholic stationers operated from the area around Merchants Quay, concentrated in High St. /Bridge St. At this time it was customary for shops and business to hang signs over their premises, usually to indicate the nature of their trade. Members of the Dublin book trade hung portraits of famous authors such as Homer, Shakespeare, and Swift, or other signs signifying their work.<sup>6</sup> Catholic stationers worked under ‘signs of the Bible’,<sup>7</sup> ‘the Angel and Bible’<sup>8</sup> and ‘Stationer’s Arms’.<sup>9</sup> Towards the end of the century, and into the nineteenth century, many Catholic stationers moved premises, in correspondence to changes within the city and the improvement of their business. Signs fell into disuse and stationers were content to identify their shop with street numbers instead.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in 1808 Patrick Wogan moved from ‘The sign of Dr. Hay’ on Bridge St. to 15 Ormond Quay.

Throughout the eighteenth century Irish printers undercut the London market unhindered by copyright law. The print industry primarily catered for the English speaking community, with very few Irish language texts produced. Irish publishers concentrated on producing reprints rather than commissioning new works. Copyright legislation was introduced in Britain in 1709 and then again in 1739. This provided exclusive rights to the original publisher of a work and prohibited others from reproducing books that were already published and printed in Great Britain. However, this legislation failed to mention Ireland and, despite the pleas of British publishers, copyright was not extended to include Irish editions until 1801, in accordance with the Act of Union. This enabled Irish printers to republish any work first published in Britain, without paying royalties to the original publisher or to the author of the text. Throughout the eighteenth century works published in London were quickly reprinted in Dublin. These reprints were produced as cheaply as possible and could therefore be sold at a lower price than the original. Furthermore, the Irish printers sold their editions

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<sup>5</sup> Máire Kennedy, ‘Politicks, Coffee and News’: The Dublin Book Trade in the Eighteenth Century’, *Dublin Historical Record*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Spring, 2005), 76-85, 78.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Wall, *The Sign of Doctor Hay’s Head: Being some Account of the Hazards and Fortunes of Catholic Printers and Publishers in Dublin from the later Penal Times to the Present Day* (Dublin, 1958), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Bowes, Bridge St.

<sup>8</sup> Pat Lord, Cook St.

<sup>9</sup> Ignatius Kelly, Mary’s St.

<sup>10</sup> Wall, *The Sign of Doctor Hay’s Head*, 61.

not only in Ireland, but also in Britain and eventually America.<sup>11</sup> Although considered piracy by the original printers, the reprint-trade was ‘enormously profitable’ to the Irish book trade, which became a thriving industry during the eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

Catholic stationers applied themselves to producing and selling schoolbooks, devotional books, and chapbooks. Chapbooks formed a small but significant part of the reprint industry. Similar to general reprinting, stationers would select a suitable text and simply reproduce it. Catholics and Quakers dominated this sector of the book trade producing what Pollard describes as ‘popular reading-matter for the plain people of Ireland’.<sup>13</sup> Catholic printers specialised in the ‘country trade’, a rural market catering for the Catholic population. The ‘country trade’ provided Catholic stationers with an alternative to the religious market, as they could supply their fellow Catholics with cheap reading matter, stories, songs and small religious works, such as prayer books. Chapbooks were circulated by chapmen, journeymen, pedlars and hawkers, who travelled up and down the country selling their wares. In the early eighteenth century Catholic printers were primarily focused on supplying the chapbook industry. According to Philips the dominance of Catholic stationers in this industry ‘was the only monopoly which the Roman Catholic brethren of the book trade enjoyed’ during the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The proliferation of Catholics in this area of the printing industry was a consequence of their marginalisation within the guild system, which regulated the industry.<sup>15</sup>

Each trade was represented by a separate guild, specific to that craft. For example, the Guild of the Holy Trinity was the guild for merchants, while the Guild of St. Loy represented smiths.<sup>16</sup> The guild to which printers belonged was the Guild of St. Luke the Evangelist; it incorporated cutlers, painter-stainers and stationers. Similar to the other guilds, the Guild of St. Luke reserved full

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<sup>11</sup> Richard, C. Cole, *Irish Booksellers and English Writers, 1740-1800* (London, 1986), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Kennedy, ‘Politicks, Coffee and News’: The Dublin Book Trade in the Eighteenth Century’, 76.

<sup>13</sup> M. Pollard, *Dublin’s Trade in Books, 1550-1800, Lyell Lectures, 1986-1987* (Oxford, 1989), 190.

<sup>14</sup> James W. Philips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin, 1670-1800: A Bibliographical Enquiry* (Dublin, 1998) 73.

<sup>15</sup> Philips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin, 1670-1800; Ó Ciosáin, Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750 – 1850*.

<sup>16</sup> John J. Webb, *The Guilds of Dublin* (Port Washington, 1970), 63.

membership to those of the Established Church; however, it was the first guild to introduce quarterage, as early as 1670.<sup>17</sup> According to its by-laws, a Catholic was entitled to become a quarter-brother if he swore to ‘pay his said Quarterage and to obey, observe, submit and stand to all singular laws, rules, orders and constitutions of the said guild made and to be made for the rule and good government thereof’.<sup>18</sup> Quarter-brothers were not full members and as thus could not vote or hold an office in the guild.<sup>19</sup> In the Guild of St. Luke, Catholic quarter-brothers paid fines to the guild until the close of the eighteenth century when, following several petitions, they were finally admitted as full members. On 2 July 1793 the first Catholics were admitted following a request laid before the Guild by ten quarter-brothers: ‘praying to be admitted members’.<sup>20</sup> In accordance with the Catholic Relief Act which made Catholics eligible to be admitted into ‘lay bodies corporate’,<sup>21</sup> the request was accepted on the condition that they each pay a composition fine and admission fee to the amount of £ 3, 10s, 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d, which they accepted.<sup>22</sup> Seven stationers and three painters were admitted.<sup>23</sup>

During the eighteenth century the production and sale of certain Catholic works could result in prosecution. There were also restrictions against importing Catholic works into Ireland. According to Thomas Wall this was a daunting time for Catholic stationers who worked ‘under many restrictions’ and had to ‘exercise great caution’ when printing books of a religious nature.<sup>24</sup> For the most part Catholic printers were able to publish religious books unhindered but occasionally printers were prosecuted, especially for texts containing political content. The Catholic stationer James Malone noted as being ‘the principal promoter and trader in popish books’ was arrested on several occasions for

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<sup>17</sup> From as early as 1690, guilds extracted quarterage fees from non-freemen who wished to participate in trade but were unable to become full members, as was the case for Catholics and non-conformists. Quarterage was a tax levied every quarter of the year, which entitled non-freemen to become quarter-brothers of the guild.

<sup>18</sup> Guild of St. Luke Records, Vol. I. Bye-laws adopted 1670-1723.

<sup>19</sup> M Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade 1550-1800: Based on the Records of the Guild of St. Luke the Evangelist, Dublin* (London, 2000) xxv.

<sup>20</sup> Guild of St. Luke Records, Vol. VI. Journal of proceedings with index and lists of members, 1785-1813, 76.

<sup>21</sup> Guild of St. Luke Records, Vol. VI. Journal of proceedings with index and lists of members 80.

<sup>22</sup> Guild of St. Luke Records, Quarterage Accounts, 1787-1841.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas McDonell, Patrick Byrne, Richard Cross, Patrick Wogan, Peter Hoey, Hugh Fitzpatrick, and Jeremiah Sullivan.

<sup>24</sup> Wall, *The Sign of Doctor Hay's Head*, 41.

printing works deemed to be seditious.<sup>25</sup> In 1698 Malone produced and printed a New Testament. However, the edition was considered to be erroneous by the Guild and the offending books were confiscated. In 1703 Malone printed 500 copies of the *Memoirs of King James II*. Malone was arrested and the remaining books (only c.40 copies, of the 500 originally printed, were not sold) were publicly burned.<sup>26</sup> He was indicted again in 1704 for a subversive pamphlet. In November 1708 James Malone and Luke Dowling, another prominent Catholic bookseller, were arrested, along with four others, ‘on suspicion of printing and vending Popish Prayer-Books’.<sup>27</sup> The work in question was *A Manual of Devout Prayers*. Malone and Dowling were imprisoned and ordered to pay 300 marks each and to remain incarcerated until their debt was fulfilled.<sup>28</sup> The booksellers appealed to the Commission of Reducement declaring they had no ‘seditious or evil intent’ in supplying the book and that it had been easily available in Ireland for at least 20 years.<sup>29</sup> Following their appeal they were released from prison and the fine was reduced to 5 marks each, on the condition that they renounce James III by taking the Oath of Abjuration. The Justices who tried Malone and Dowling believed that the book was produced with the ‘intent to be dispersed in order to influence and encourage the Papists in this kingdom to rise and make disturbances here in favour of the Pretender’.<sup>30</sup> When Malone and Dowling were arrested and fined for *A Manual of Devout Prayer*, the main concern of the authority seems to have been the inclusion of prayers for the deceased James II and for the pretender James III. Similarly, the objections to *Memoirs of King James II* were based on its being a Jacobite text. Although the production of religious works could be subject to control, there was a large degree of tolerance. Hugh Fenning states that ‘the law against printing or selling Catholic books was

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<sup>25</sup> John Thomas Gilbert, Rosa M. Gilbert, and John Francis Weldrick (eds), *Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin: in the Possession of the Municipal Corporation of that City*, Volume vi (Dublin, 1889), 137-8.

<sup>26</sup> Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade*, 395-6.

<sup>27</sup> James Kelly, ‘Regulating Print: The State and the Control of Print in Eighteenth-Century Ireland’, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, Vol. 23 (2008), pp. 142-174, 148; Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade*, 396.

<sup>28</sup> 1 mark was equal to 100 pence.

<sup>29</sup> John T. Gilbert, *A History of the City of Dublin*, Vol.1 (Dublin, 1854), 179.

<sup>30</sup> Gilbert, *A History of the City of Dublin*, 180.

very seldom invoked after 1712'.<sup>31</sup> Generally printers were prosecuted for producing political or seditious texts; those who avoided works that were sympathetic to the Jacobite cause were free to produce religious books.

Despite the penal laws Catholic devotional literature was available in Dublin from the beginning of the eighteenth century in the form of small works of piety, such as books of prayer and instructions. When Malone sold his stock in 1719 it included books of prayer, piety and devotion.<sup>32</sup> Thomas Brown, working under the sign of the 'Three Candlesticks' on High St. from 1734-1761, traded in works of 'Catholic piety, histories and school books for the country trade'.<sup>33</sup> Among the numerous works of Catholic piety produced by Brown, were the following titles: 'Instructions for Confession, Communion and Confirmation; Office of the Blessed Virgin; Entertainments for Lent; Following of Christ; Key to Paradise; Differences betwixt the temporal and external Testaments, [and] Psalters'.<sup>34</sup> In 1740 John Fleming, of the Angel and Bible, on High St., announced, in the *Dublin Newsletter*, his intention to supply the country trade with: 'all Kinds of Histories and Books of Devotion'.<sup>35</sup> In 1740 Ignatius Kelly, at the Stationers Arms in Mary's Lane, had a catalogue of 65 Catholic titles. Kelly also produced altar charts, Mass books, Breviaries and Diurnals of various orders.<sup>36</sup> Assisted by the return of orders and improvement in lay literacy, the market for religious works steadily increased during the eighteenth century.

Patrons for religious books were drawn from the clergy, members of the Church, and the Catholic middle class. The Church supported the Catholic print industry by purchasing, commissioning and subscribing to works. Religious texts were often directly commissioned by religious orders. Thomas Wall writes: 'chapels provided a regular clientele for the printers, each of whom tried to associate himself as closely as possible with one particular chapel, printing its

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<sup>31</sup> Hugh Fenning, 'The Catholic Press in Munster in the Eighteenth Century', in Gerard Long (ed.), *Books Beyond the Pale: Aspects of the Provincial Book Trade in Ireland before 1860. Proceedings of the Rare Books Group Seminar 1994* (Dublin, 1996), 19-31, 19.

<sup>32</sup> *Dublin's Impartial News* No. 209, 17 Aug 1719 cited in Philips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin, 1670-1800*, 73.

<sup>33</sup> Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade*, 59.

<sup>34</sup> Wall, *The Sign of Doctor Hay's Head*, 46.

<sup>35</sup> *Reilly's Dublin Newsletter*, IV, No. 393, 7-11 October 1740 cited in Philips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin, 1670-1800*, 74.

<sup>36</sup> 'Books Printed and Sold by Ignatius Kelly at the Stationers Arms in Mary's Lane', in Luis de Granada, *Sinners Guide: Containing a Full and Ample Exhortation to the Pursuit of Virtue. Written Instructions and Directions, how to Become Virtuous, Written Originally in Spanish* (Dublin, 1740), Appendix.

favourite prayers or devotions or discipline'.<sup>37</sup> This association between printers and priests' accounts for the location of printing houses, which were often established in the vicinity of chapels; hence Wall refers to them as 'chapel printers'.<sup>38</sup> One of these 'chapel printers' was Ignatius Kelly. Kelly worked as a stationer from 1738 to 1753 and was the principal printer to Mary's Lane chapel. Priests returning from the continent assisted printers in selecting, adapting and translating appropriate works. Without this assistance religious texts from the continent could not have been translated in Dublin and booksellers would have instead reprinted texts from England, as indicated by Myles Ronan.<sup>39</sup> For a number of religious works the translator remained anonymous, often indicated only by their initials or as 'translated by a parish priest'. In his research into religious print in Dublin, Hugh Fenning has identified a number of Catholic priests who cooperated with printers as editors or translators. Among those listed by Fenning are: Peter Manby a Jesuit priest based in Dublin, Christopher Plunkett the parish priest of Athboy in Co. Meath, James McKenna an Augustinian who wrote under the alias 'J. White McK', and John Murphy a priest from the Dublin Diocese.<sup>40</sup> Towards the end of the eighteenth century Fr. Bernard McMahan, SJ, came to prominence as an editor and translator. Originally from Armagh, McMahan attended seminary in Antwerp before returning to Ireland and joining the Dublin Diocese. In 1777 he edited *Missale Romanum* with the approbation of Archbishop Carpenter. He edited Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, sold in 12 Volumes between 1779 and 1781. In 1793 he translated Gobinet's *Instruction of Youth* from the French, in 1793. In 1794 revised *The Poor Man's Catechism* by John Mannock. In 1804 he revised and corrected *Introduction to the Devout Life* by Francis de Sales.<sup>41</sup> The Catholic hierarchy, such as Carpenter and Troy, assisted the production of religious works by commissioning and authorising texts. In 1776 Carpenter authorised the

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<sup>37</sup> Wall, *The Sign of Dr Hay's Head*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Ronan, *An Apostle of Catholic Dublin*, 50.

<sup>40</sup> Fenning, 'Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1701-1739', *Collectanea Hibernica*, 106-54; Fenning 'Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1740-1759', 65-116.

<sup>41</sup> Séamus Ó Casaide, 'Bernard MacMahon: Priest and Scientist', *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (1940), 267-79, 257-79; Fenning, 'Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest 1790- 1795', 85, 115, 118, 121, 123.

publication of *Ordo Administrandi Sacramenta* for the use of the clergy, in 1776 he also commissioned a Missal, and in 1783 commissioned a New Testament.<sup>42</sup>

When it came to producing religious works for the laity, English devotional texts and religious works from the continent were regularly reprinted. Catholic booksellers used classical religious texts, such as the work of St. Francis de Sales, Thomas à Kempis and St. Augustine, whose content was reliable and guaranteed to be popular among an educated Catholic laity. The devotional and controversial writings of English Catholic authors were regularly issued from the Catholic presses. John Gother, a seventeenth-century secular English priest and a prolific writer, wrote *A Papist Misrepresented and Represented*, a work defending the practices and devotions of Catholics against claims of superstition, which was frequently reprinted.<sup>43</sup> Other works by Gother, available in Ireland, were his writings on prayer and directions for Christian living, such as: *Instructions for the Afflicted and Sick*, *Instructions for Confession and Communion* and *Sincere Christian's Guide*.<sup>44</sup> The works of Robert Manning (1655- 1731), English priest and controversialist, were made available by the Dublin stationers.<sup>45</sup> *The Shortest Way to end Disputes about Religion*, in which Manning defended the position of the Catholic Church 'from the imputations of the many gross errors laid to her charge' by proving the infallibility of the Church of Rome, first published in Ireland by Pat Lord in 1754, at the 'Angel and Bible', Church St.<sup>46</sup> *The Shortest Way* along with Manning's *Moral entertainments on the most important practice truths of the Christian religion*, were regularly reprinted in Ireland and remained popular into the nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> The works of the Scottish Archbishop Dr. George Hay (1729-1811) became 'a staple of spiritual reading in Ireland'.<sup>48</sup> The Dublin stationer Patrick Wogan first introduced Hay's works to Ireland in 1779. In his work, Hay

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<sup>42</sup> Fenning, 'Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest 1770- 1782', 185, 187.

<sup>43</sup> Printed in Dublin by Philip Bowes in 1750.

<sup>44</sup> Gother's various *Instructions* remained in print in eighteenth and nineteenth century. Gother's *Instructions* are to be found on the book lists of the nineteenth-century Catholic Book Society.

<sup>45</sup> Pádraig O' Súilleabháin, 'The Library of a Parish Priest of the Penal Days', *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 6/7 (1963/1964), 234-244; 242.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Manning, *The Shortest Way to End Disputes about Religion: in Two Parts* (Boston, 1855), 4.

<sup>47</sup> *Moral Entertainments*, first published in Ireland by Ignatius Kelly in 1749, it, along with *Shortest Way* remained in print in the nineteenth century by the Catholic Book Society. Manning was also reprinted and sold by nineteenth-century printers such as James Coyne and James Duffy.

<sup>48</sup> Fenning, 'Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest: 1783-1789', 80.

expounded on Christian doctrine with titles such as *Sincere Christian instructed in the Faith of Christ* and *Devout Christian Instructed in the Law of Christ from the written word*. Wogan ‘made his own of the Scottish bishop’ by reprinting all of his works.<sup>49</sup> Wogan even named his shop after Dr. Hay, and hung a portrait of the bishop from his premises.<sup>50</sup>

Although on a smaller scale than British and continental texts, religious works by Irish authors were also printed in the eighteenth century. In 1705, a Dublin priest named Cornelius Nary published an edition of *Prayers and Meditations*. In 1716 the same Nary wrote a *Book of Godly Instruction* and followed this up in 1718 with a catechism to be used in his Parish, St. Michan’s in Dublin. Although the publishers are unknown, all of these works were printed in Dublin. In 1736 *Sixteen Irish Sermons in an easy and Familiar Stile* [sic.] by James Gallagher (c.1684-1751), Bishop of Raphoe, was published in Dublin. One of the few text printed in Irish in the eighteenth century, Gallagher’s *Sermons* was intended to be used by the clergy for instructing their congregation.<sup>51</sup> Gallagher’s work was extremely popular and was regularly reprinted with over twenty editions by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> Another popular Irish author was William Gahan (1732- 1804) a Dublin Augustinian and author of seven religious volumes. Among his works were *The Manual of Catholic Piety* written in 1788 and *Sermons and Moral Discourses* written in 1799. Both were regularly reprinted during the nineteenth century.

By the nineteenth century works of devotion, doctrine, apologetics and religious controversy were readily available in Ireland. The growth of the Catholic market can be seen in the increase of Catholic titles in printers’ catalogues. Furthermore, by the end of the century printers were publically identifying themselves as Catholic booksellers, with some concentrating principally on religious works. Richard Cross (c. 1730s-1809) began his career in 1750 as an apprentice to the Protestant printer David Gibson. In 1758 he was admitted as a quarter-brother to the Guild of St. Luke. He established himself at the sign of ‘The Globe’ on Bridge St., where he worked as a bookseller, printer

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<sup>49</sup> Wall, *The Sign of Dr. Hay’s Head*, 12.

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>51</sup> Hugh Fenning, ‘Prayer-books and Pamphlets: 1700-1829’, *Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1994), 93-99, 95.

<sup>52</sup> Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh, ‘James Gallagher’, *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009), 10.

and publisher. In 1770, in a catalogue of Catholic books sold at his shop, he announced himself as ‘a new beginner’ stating that it was his intention to ‘lay himself out principally in the Catholic business’.<sup>53</sup> He offered 51 religious titles as well as a ‘variety of Country Chapmen’s Books’, all on the most reasonable terms.<sup>54</sup> Patrick Wogan (c. 1740-1816) was a printer and bookseller at the sign of ‘Dr George Hay’. He began business in 1771 in Church St., but by 1773 he had established himself on Bridge St., Dublin, where he remained until 1808 when he moved to Ormond Quay.<sup>55</sup> Motivated by a sense of religious duty, Wogan set himself out as a Catholic printer. In a letter addressed to the bishops and clergy of Ireland he describes himself not only as a bookseller but also as a publisher of Catholic works and credits himself with having printed more ‘approved’ texts than anyone else in the trade: ‘I feel ... a laudable pride in stating, that – through your sanction and support, I have printed and sold a greater number of approved Catholic Books than any other individual in my line’.<sup>56</sup> By 1795 his catalogue included 67 religious titles.<sup>57</sup> While he made a success supplying the Catholic market, Wogan’s income was primarily derived from educational text-books and supplies for schools. A final example of a Catholic printer was Richard Grace. Grace (1774-1849) began his career as a tallow chandler, which he continued until 1817 when he began printing and selling books.<sup>58</sup> He worked out of 3 Mary St. until the 1830’s when he moved to 45 Capel St. He was joined in business by his sons and by 1827 employed two journeymen and three apprentices.<sup>59</sup> From 1838 on, Grace advertised a depository, the ‘Catholic, School and Miscellaneous Book Warehouse’ from his premises on Capel St. where he supplied religious books such as the well-known works of Gahan and St. Augustine, and the writings of the English Catholic bishop John Joseph Hornihold (1706-1778), Vicar Apostolic of the midland district of England and bishop to the Titular See

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<sup>53</sup> ‘A Catalogue of Catholic Books Printed for, and Sold by Richard Cross, Bookseller, at the Sign of the Globe in Bridge St., near the Brazen-Head-Inn, Dublin’, in John Joseph Hornihold, *The Decalogue Explained, Thirty Discourses on the Ten Commandments*, (Dublin, 1770).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade*, 632.

<sup>56</sup> Patrick Wogan, ‘Letter to the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland’, in James Gallagher, *Seventeen Irish Sermons* (Dublin, 1795).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Peter Wilson, ‘*Wilson’s Dublin Directory for the year 1815*’ (Dublin, 1815), 53.

<sup>59</sup> *The Freeman’s Journal*, 12/Nov/1827.

of Philomelium,<sup>60</sup> and St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), founder of the Redemptorist Congregation and author of numerous spiritual, moral, and theological works. In addition, he was advertised as ‘Printer, Bookseller, Publisher, Fancy Stationary and Account book Manufacturer’ at a second premise: 109 Summer Hill, in north Dublin.<sup>61</sup> From 1841 he advertised a second depository, the ‘Metropolitan Catholic School Book and Stationary Warehouse’, at Summer Hill.<sup>62</sup> In his imprints Grace described himself as a Catholic bookseller and printer and, in an imprint from 1842, as ‘Printer and Stationer to the confraternities of the United Kingdom’.<sup>63</sup> Richard Grace published general literature, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and English Classics, and works for schools and colleges. Following his death, his son continued to operate the printing business from Capel St. under the name Richard Grace & Son. In 1851 Richard Grace and Son published an impressive catalogue containing 450 Catholic works.<sup>64</sup>

By the 1850s there were a number of booksellers specialising in Catholic books. In 1851 ten Catholic stationers advertised in Battersby’s *Catholic Directory*.<sup>65</sup> Among them were Richard Grace (mentioned above) who boasted an extensive stock of Catholic texts, Thomas Richardson of Capel St. who advertised 46 Catholic titles, and James Duffy who listed 252 Catholic works in his catalogue.<sup>66</sup> The two largest catalogues in the 1851 *Catholic Directory* are those of James Duffy and Richard Grace. The catalogue of Grace is 28 pages long and is the first in the ‘Advertising Register’. It includes an elaborate introduction page, complete with an image of a Bible and Missal topped with a bishop’s mitre, assuring the buyer of the variety, accuracy and value of the works.<sup>67</sup> The last page includes the statement ‘Grace and Son’s catalogue of standard Roman Catholic works’ in-between two prints, the first of three cherubs

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<sup>60</sup> Hornihold is sometimes spelled Hornyold the first spelling will be used.

<sup>61</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843* (Dublin 1839-1843).

<sup>62</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1841* (Dublin, 1841).

<sup>63</sup> Augustine Kirwan & Thomas Hughes, *Doctor Kirwan's Irish Catechism* (Dublin, 1842)

<sup>64</sup> ‘Grace and Son’s Catalogue of Standard Roman Catholic Works’ in Battersby *The Catholic Directory ... 1851* (Dublin, 1851), Appendix.

<sup>65</sup> Battersby, ‘Advertising Register, 1851’, *The Catholic Directory ... 1851* (Dublin, 1851), 449-532.

<sup>66</sup> ‘James Duffy’s Catalogue of Standard Catholic Works, and Books Relating to Ireland’ in Battersby, ‘Advertising Register, 1851’, *The Catholic Directory ... 1851* (Dublin, 1851), 463-490.

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix F.

reading, the second a distinctly Irish image of a harp, wolfhound, and round tower. Duffy's catalogue of Catholic and Irish works, which is 35 pages long, is introduced with the papal insignia (Mitre and keys).<sup>68</sup> Both catalogues give descriptions of certain books; describing the content or praising the actual printing; using phrases such as, 'beautifully printed in large type' or 'embellished with 240 engravings'.<sup>69</sup> In their catalogues printers were eager to claim their editions to be doctrinally correct and free from error. In an advertisement for his business Battersby wrote that Catholics: 'should be most cautious to procure duly authorised works, particularly where the principles of their religion are concerned' and then went on to claim his books to be 'accurate editions'.<sup>70</sup> Richard Grace's catalogue claimed he produced the 'best and most accurate editions of Catholic Books'.<sup>71</sup> William Powell Junior, a stationer in Thomas St., claimed his pamphlets and books were produced 'in the most correct and elegant style'.<sup>72</sup>

Similar to the eighteenth-century 'chapel printers', nineteenth-century stationers were eager to state associations with religious organisations. Gerald Bellew advertised himself as the 'agent for the Christian Brother's Publications',<sup>73</sup> while imprints to works published by Richard Coyne declared him to be: 'printer and bookseller to the royal college of St. Patrick, Maynooth, and publisher to the Roman Catholic bishops of Ireland'.<sup>74</sup> It was also common for Catholic printers to seek the approval of the hierarchy for certain publications. The name of the bishop lent sanction to the text and indicated the contents were sound and suitable for the laity. In both catalogues and books, printers included a declaration that the work had been printed with the 'approbation of His Grace the most Rev Dr Murray' or another bishop.<sup>75</sup> James Duffy's 1851 catalogue contained a copy of an imprimatur from Archbishop Murray for a book of prayers; Richard Grace included a similar statement in his

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> 'James Duffy's Catalogue of Standard Catholic Works', 478; 'Grace and Son's Catalogue of Standard Roman Catholic Works' (1851).

<sup>70</sup> Battersby, 'Advertising Register, 1851', *The Catholic Directory ... 1851*, 450.

<sup>71</sup> 'Grace and Son's Catalogue of standard Roman Catholic works' (1851).

<sup>72</sup> Battersby, 'Advertising Register, 1851', 453.

<sup>73</sup> Battersby, 'Advertising Register, 1851', 451.

<sup>74</sup> James Doyle, *An Essay on the Catholic Claims, Addressed to the Right Honourable the Earl of Liverpool, K.G &c* (Dublin, 1826), title page; Robert Manning, *The Celebrated Answer to the Rev. C. Lesley's Case Stated &c* (Dublin, 1839), title page.

<sup>75</sup> Battersby, 'Advertising Register, 1851' 478; other examples can be found at 468, 467, 458.

1851 catalogue.<sup>76</sup> In this manner stationers and the Church cooperated with each other in the production of religious works.

When writing about the ‘chapel printers’ of the eighteenth century Thomas Wall portrays them as men of faith who ‘worked amicably together in the cause of truth’.<sup>77</sup> While the Catholic printers and booksellers of the nineteenth century may have been men of faith, they were also men of business and naturally there was a degree of competition among them. The ‘Advertising Register’ in the *Catholic Directory* for 1851 contains the catalogues and advertisements of a number of Catholic booksellers, all selling similar stock. In light of this, one can see another motive for stationers describing their particular editions as ‘the most accurate’ or as being authorised by a particular bishop. Recommending their products in such a way was advantageous for business. While advertising Butler’s *Lives of the Fathers*, Duffy includes a quote from the British Catholic journal *The Tablet* that declared his edition to be superior to the ones produced by Richard Coyne and other publishers: ‘By comparison with Coyne’s and the Derby editions, and with those of an older date, we may term this the Library edition of the most popular and indispensable of Catholic calendars’.<sup>78</sup> As stationers were competing for clientele most offered reductions in price for members of the clergy or those buying in bulk such as religious libraries or confraternities.

For some printers their involvement in the production of Catholic works was motivated by religious conviction. One printer driven by religious conviction was John Coyne (1780 - 1845). Coyne was the official printer and bookseller to the ‘General Society of the Christian Doctrine’.<sup>79</sup> Coyne printed the rules for other confraternities, such as the Purgatorian Society. He was connected with the Society of St. John the Baptist, the Orphan’s Friend Society, and was an active subscribing member of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, operating from Francis St. Chapel. Another such stationer was Richard Coyne (1786 - 1856), the official printer to the college of Maynooth. Thomas Wall describes Coyne as ‘a

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<sup>76</sup> ‘James Duffy’s Catalogue of Standard Catholic Works’, 462; ‘Grace and Son’s Catalogue of Standard Roman Catholic Works’ (1851).

<sup>77</sup> Wall, *The Sign of Dr Hay’s Head*, 5.

<sup>78</sup> ‘James Duffy’s Catalogue of Standard Catholic Works’, 464.

<sup>79</sup> James Lanigan, *Catechetical Conferences on the Holy Eucharist* (Dublin, 1831), title page.

driving force in the Catholic intellectual life of his time'.<sup>80</sup> He was publisher to the controversialist Fr. Tom Maguire and even assisted him in public debates and lectures.<sup>81</sup> He was friend and confidant to Dr. Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin and published his famous 'J.K.L' pamphlets.<sup>82</sup> James Duffy (1808/9 - 1871) concentrated on the religious market publishing cheap works and periodicals. As with other printers he considered his involvement in the print industry more as a vocation than a job, this is evidenced in the inscription on his grave, which reads: 'his devotional publications have instructed many unto salvation, and the historic works he published have exalted the character of his native land, and saved its saints and heroes from oblivion'.<sup>83</sup>

### Protestant Tract Societies and printing

The interest of the Catholic Church in the print industry was heightened and encouraged by the activities of the Protestant evangelical movement. Protestant tract, book and educational societies provided instruction and produced religious and moral text to supplant the popular chapbooks. As well as producing alternative tracts, evangelical societies disseminated religious and instructional literature and encouraged the reading of the Bible. Societies sold works at a cheap rate or distributed them for free among the Irish. Furthermore, Protestant evangelicals openly questioned, ridiculed, and disputed Catholic doctrine through books, lectures and debates. The Catholic Church naturally viewed these activities, particularly the distribution of religious texts, as an attempt to undermine Catholicism and secure converts. The use of the Bible in education was a further point of contention between the Catholic Church and evangelicals.<sup>84</sup>

One society whose indiscriminate distribution of religious works caused tension with the Catholic Church was the ADV (discussed in Chapter One). The objective of the ADV was to discourage 'irreligion and vice' and promote Christian knowledge.<sup>85</sup> To achieve this it encouraged catechetical instruction,

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<sup>80</sup> Wall, *The Sign of Dr. Hay's Head*, 64.

<sup>81</sup> Wall, *The Sign of Dr. Hay's Head*, 65-6.

<sup>82</sup> William J. Fitzpatrick, *History of the Dublin Catholic Cemeteries* (Dublin; 1906), 73.

<sup>83</sup> Fitzpatrick, *History of the Dublin Catholic Cemeteries*, 129.

<sup>84</sup> Discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>85</sup> Association for Discountenancing Vice, *Laws of the Association for Discountenancing Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of Religion and Virtue* (Dublin, 1796).

provided support for schools by supplying buildings and salaries for teachers, and distributed copies of the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer and various religious tracts.<sup>86</sup> The society produced copies of the Bible and sold them, at a reduced price to its members, who then distributed them to the poor. The tracts and Book of Common Prayer were sold at the cheapest rate or distributed gratuitously to those who would benefit from but could not afford them. In 1836, in an appeal for subscriptions, the society claimed that from its inception until 1835 it had been responsible for circulating 154,760 Bibles, 284,422 Testaments, 284,825 Prayer books and 1,416,616 tracts.<sup>87</sup> These tracts, which were aimed exclusively at the unlearned, provided the ADV with a ‘most useful means of diffusing Christian Knowledge’.<sup>88</sup> Tracts were divided into three categories; the first was concerned with defending Christianity, the second with explaining the rites of the Established Church, and the third were of a ‘more lively and interesting character, conveying instruction in amusing narratives’, such as the works of Mrs. Hannah More.<sup>89</sup> Although the ADV was established to cater for members of the Established Church, tracts and Bibles were distributed among the Catholic laity.

Another important organisation was the LHS whose purpose was promoting scriptural and religious instruction through schools and printing. Disseminating the Scriptures was the primary aim of the society, to assist their labours the LHS employed ‘scripture readers’ who travelled to areas of low literacy and read extracts from the Bible. Those appointed to this task were laymen with an understanding of the Irish language, so that they could communicate with all sectors of the population. ‘Scripture readers’ were usually selected from the local community, to ensure they would be well received.<sup>90</sup> According to the society this method was highly effective:

The benefit of their labours is incalculable. Many who shrunk from the Sacred Volume, as a proscribed book, dangerous for them to hear, have been convinced of its excellence, and led to desire copies for themselves

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<sup>86</sup> ‘An Appeal in behalf of The Association Incorporated for Discountenancing Vice, &c.’ in Richard Whately, *Charges and Other Tracts* (London, 1836), 229-238, 232.

<sup>87</sup> ‘An Appeal in behalf of The Association Incorporated for Discountenancing Vice, &c.’, 232-233.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*; Hannah More (1745-1833) English writer, who composed religious and moral tracts.

<sup>90</sup> Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland*, 104.

and for their children ... No plan as yet suggested, appears so eminently useful as this employment of Scripture Readers.<sup>91</sup>

Furthermore, the society distributed gratis copies of Bibles and Testaments to Catholics, and also to Protestants who could not afford the reduced rate offered by other Bible Societies. It claimed that 396,339 copies had been thus dispersed between 1806 and 1837.<sup>92</sup>

An Irish branch of the Religious Tract and Bible Society was formed in 1814. The society initially struggled to make an impact in Ireland until 1820, when a London Auxiliary Society was formed to raise funds.<sup>93</sup> Similar to its counterparts in England and Scotland, the society vowed to rid Ireland of immoral literature by providing alternative religious texts. According to the society, there was a shortage of religious books in Ireland and those that could be found were so expensive that the general public could not afford them. Besides, there was an abundance of cheaply priced 'books and pamphlets, rhymes and ballads' which the society felt to be 'seditious and licentious'.<sup>94</sup>

The Society hope by their efforts, to counteract the sale of evil tracts, and to supply their places with those of a wholesome and religious kind, which, by their cheapness, may drive the vendors of seditious and licentious ones out of the market.<sup>95</sup>

It was a commercial enterprise and supported itself through the sale of books and tracts. It supplied texts to other societies, libraries, and depositories.<sup>96</sup> The society claimed that from 1821 to 1824 it printed 1,421,202 books and tracts and sold them at a reduced rate.<sup>97</sup>

The Bible played an important role in the work of these evangelical societies. It was used in schools as a reader and students were also encouraged to take copies home with them. In LHS schools the Bible was the only textbook

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> LHS, *A Brief View of the London Hibernian Society for Establishing Schools and Circulating Holy Scriptures in Ireland* (London, 1837), 11.

<sup>93</sup> The American Tract Society, *Proceedings of the first ten years of the American Tract Society, Instituted at Boston, 1814. To which is Added a Brief View of the Tract societies Throughout* (Boston, 1824), 190.

<sup>94</sup> 'The Christian Observer, March 1820, Vol. 19, No. 3', in *The Christian Observer Conducted by Members of the Established Church for the Year 1820. Being the Nineteenth Volume*, 202.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Mary Feeney, 'Print for the People: the Growth in Popular Writing and Reading Facilities in Ireland' (M.Litt. Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1982), 105.

<sup>97</sup> American Tract Society, *Proceedings of first ten years of the American Tract Society*, 191.

used.<sup>98</sup> Societies also sold the Bible at a reduced rate or distributed it free among the poor. The Catholic clergy, who saw these actions as an attempt to undermine Catholicism, criticized the emphasis placed on scriptural instruction. According to Whelan, ‘the influence of the priests was singled out [by evangelicals] as the greatest obstacle in the path of evangelization’.<sup>99</sup> The clergy were accused of keeping their congregation ignorant and encouraging superstition by denying access to the scriptures. Some evangelicals argued that the clergy maintained their stronghold over the Irish by deliberately keeping them in darkness about their faith. In a circular issued in 1820, the LHS claimed: ‘the Catholic religion, by systematically and determinately withholding the Holy Scriptures from the people, prevents the diffusion of truth, and perpetuates mental degradation and depravity’.<sup>100</sup> Evangelicals attempted to remedy this situation by exposing the Irish people to the Scriptures and distributing religious tracts of an instructional nature. The Catholic Church viewed the indiscriminate distribution of the Bible with increasing alarm, and its use in schools was seen as a tool of conversion. As the century progressed, the Church became more and more hostile towards the work of these societies, accusing them of proselytizing and seeking to undermine the role of the Catholic Church in educating the laity.

The ADV publicly maintained that it was concerned with improving the religious knowledge of poor members of its own church rather than converting Catholics. Despite this claim, the society was perceived to be undermining Catholicism. Copies of the authorised Bible were circulated among the Catholic population and in some ADV schools Catholic children were instructed in the catechism. Although the society stated that it would avoid producing controversial texts, in 1825 the Commissioners of Education found several tracts and books ‘of a highly controversial nature’ among the lists of the ADV.<sup>101</sup>

Similarly the LHS, although it denied it, was certainly considered to be another proselytising society. According to the 1825 Report compiled by the commissioners of education, the Church believed ‘that the real object of the

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<sup>98</sup> LHS, *A Brief View of the London Hibernian Society*, 7.

<sup>99</sup> Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland*, 95.

<sup>100</sup> LHS, *The Twelfth Annual Report of the Hibernian Society in London for Establishing Schools and Circulating Holy Scriptures in Ireland*, 3.

<sup>101</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 35.

Society is to disturb and undermine their religion'.<sup>102</sup> The commissioners also examined a report sanctioned by the LHS in 1808. This report clearly illustrated the anti-Catholic sentiments of the LHS: 'The hope, therefore that the Irish will ever be a tranquil and loyal people, and still more that piety and virtue will flourish among them, must be built on the anticipated reduction of Popery ... The most legitimate Field of Labour for the Hibernian Society is, therefore, in the confessed region of Popery, where there are few or no Protestants to shew the deluded multitude a more excellent way'.<sup>103</sup> On the one hand, the LHS acknowledged its desire that instruction should lead to conversion; on the other hand it denied accusations of proselytising.<sup>104</sup>

In the midst of this tension the Catholic Church decided to become involved in the printing industry by publishing works which would not only be affordable and accessible to all sectors of society, but would provide the religious knowledge necessary to defend the laity against the threat of evangelisation. A society, similar to, if not modelled on, the Protestant tract societies, was formed to oversee the selection, publication and dissemination of these works. This society, The Catholic Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge throughout Ireland, was commonly referred to as the Catholic Book Society. Through the society the Church hoped to spread Catholic doctrine and at the same time curb the influence of Protestant evangelicalism.

#### History of the Catholic Book Society 1827-1845

The Church's venture into the publishing world was first suggested in July 1824 by Dr. William Yore. Yore, parish priest of St. Paul's Arran Quay, wrote to Dr Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, proposing that an institution be established to promote the Catholic religion through the medium of print. Dr. Doyle welcomed Yore's proposal and drafted a plan for the establishment of such an institution, which he included with his response. His plan, which he described as 'a crude outline', carefully mapped out the establishment, governing, and execution of Yore's proposal in minute detail. He proposed that the institution should be named the 'Irish Catholic Society for the Diffusion of

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<sup>102</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 69.

<sup>103</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, 66.

<sup>104</sup> Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland*, 235.

Religious Knowledge' and should be governed by a president, four vice presidents, a treasurer, a secretary and a committee of twenty-one members. Moreover he outlined the appointment of the governing body, namely by ballot, and the conditions for appointment: nominees had to reside no more than three miles from Dublin and not be in receipt of a salary from the society. The terms of membership were discussed, as was frequency of meetings, donations and subscriptions, the employment of printers, agents and clerks, and lastly the types of books to be printed or excluded by the society. Furthermore, he envisaged the formation of societies and lending libraries in cities and towns outside Dublin, which would cooperate with the main society through their respective Prelates. In his plan, Doyle maintained that the purpose of the society should be to promote the Catholic faith by circulating appropriate books designed to increase knowledge of religion.

As the chief object of the society is to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion, they will circulate only such works as may enable Catholics to give an account of 'the hope which is in them', to dispel the prejudices existing against the ancient faith, and to improve the minds and hearts of all who read them.<sup>105</sup>

In the letter that accompanied his plan, Doyle insisted that the initial reception of the society was essential, as its success would depend on the cooperation and support of the clergy and people. He suggested that Yore should enlist the help of 'several persons of zeal and influence', specifically mentioning Daniel O'Connell, whose support would increase the popularity of the project. Finally, Doyle suggested that a meeting should be held to discuss the plan, and once a plan was properly formulated it should be brought before the public for support.<sup>106</sup>

In the November following Doyle's correspondence with Yore, a meeting took place on lower Exchange St. where rules, regulations and an address were agreed upon for the new society. In attendance were six leading clergymen, Rev. John White of St. Michael and Johns, where the meeting was held, Patrick Dowling an Augustinian, George Canavan from St. James parish and later chaplain to the South Dublin Union, William Yore parish priest of St. Pauls and

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<sup>105</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr Doyle*, 359-60.

<sup>106</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr Doyle*, 358-360.

later Vicar-General, John Spratt a Carmelite and later a leader in Fr. Mathew's Temperance Crusade, and Rev. Deane. These clerics met with several Catholic laymen; among them was William Joseph Battersby, a Dublin publisher and author of many Catholic works.

Battersby had previously written several letters on the importance of forming a Catholic tract society, similar to those established by Protestant evangelicals, to publish Catholic works at as low a cost as possible for 'circulation in England and Ireland, in refutation of error – in defence of truth, and in support of true religion and piety'.<sup>107</sup> Battersby, frustrated at the increase in Protestant Bible, tract, and reformation societies, 'whose direct object was to misrepresent the doctrines and to revile the practices of the Catholic religion', believed that something should be done in 'the cause of truth and self-defence'.<sup>108</sup> Battersby was intimately acquainted with the publishing world (he was described by Rev William Yore as having 'a perfect knowledge of printing and book-binding'<sup>109</sup>) and was completely dedicated to the plan, so much so that historian Thomas Wall has described him as 'an enthusiastic lieutenant of Dr. Doyle'.<sup>110</sup> Battersby wholly supported the proposed new society and would eventually become its general agent. His experience and dedication proved to be crucial to the success of the society.

Despite the progress made in the meeting in November 1824, the commencement of the plan was delayed until 1827 when it was finally brought before the prelates of Ireland and a society was formed. This delay of almost three years was most likely due to the investigation into the Irish education system by the Royal Commission on Education, which occupied the attention of the Catholic hierarchy. On the ninth of February the Catholic bishops held their annual meeting in Dublin, in the presbytery of Marlborough St. Church; the proposal for the new society was put before them. The bishops approved of the plan and it was given their full support. On the ninth of March a committee was elected and the rules for the society were accepted. It was given the title 'The

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<sup>107</sup> William Battersby, *The Life of the Rt. Rev. Dr Doyle, Compiled from Authentic Documents* (Dublin, 1856), 246.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> William Yore, *The Dublin Review*, 1845, cited in Thomas Wall, 'Catholic Periodicals of the Past, part 2: The Catholic Book Society and the Irish Catholic Magazine' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, Series 5, Vol. 102 (Jan-Jun, 1964), 293.

<sup>110</sup> Wall, 'Catholic Periodicals of the Past, part 2', 289.

Catholic Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge throughout Ireland' but came to be known as the Catholic Book Society (CBS).

The society adopted five primary rules. These were concerned mainly with the funding of the society and the means of distributing books. The society was not to be a burden on the people, and so was to be funded by donations and subscriptions, gathered mainly from the clergy. The first rule established a fund to be used to commence the work of the society. This fund was initially to be formed from the donations collected at the first general meeting and the five pounds contributed by each of the twenty-six appointed guardians. Presumably, this fund would then be renewed through the subscriptions and donations collected throughout the year and money raised through the sale of books. The second rule decided that books and tracts would be sent out in the first week of every quarter of the year. The books were to be sent to each parish in the major cities or to the Rural Dean of each diocese and from there would be distributed throughout Ireland. The primary cost of these books was the responsibility of the guardians of the society. The amount of books sent to each parish or deanery, according to the third rule, was to be in proportion to their population. The fourth rule stated that the price of books and tracts circulated was to be in the 'ratio of five shillings to every thousand souls'.<sup>111</sup> The cost was to be transmitted to the society by the Bishop of each diocese as guardians of the society. By creating quality texts at low cost the CBS hoped to provide the laity with the means of educating themselves in Catholic doctrine. The last rule stated that payment was to be made within two months of receiving orders of books. These rules could only be altered by a general meeting, of which notice had to be given, via newspapers, at least one month in advance.<sup>112</sup>

In order to ensure that the society was adequately managed, guardians, a president, vice-presidents, a treasurer, secretary, and managing committee, similar to the administration originally proposed by Dr. Doyle, were appointed. The guardians were made up of the Catholic Bishops of Ireland. The Primate, Most Rev. Dr. Curtis, was elected as President, Dr Murray, the Archbishop of Dublin was to be the Vice-president and Treasurer, and Fr. Matthew Flanagan was appointed as secretary. There were four other Vice-Presidents: Dr. Doyle of

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<sup>111</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, Saturday 30/June/1827.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

Kildare and Leighlin, Dr. Laffan of Cashel, the Vicar General Dr. Coleman, and Dr. Crotty the president of Maynooth College. The managing committee consisted of twenty-one clergy all from the Dublin diocese, and finally, William Battersby was appointed as the general agent. One could become a general member of the society through a donation; ten pounds would ensure membership for life, five pounds membership for seven years, and one pound membership for a year. The president, vice-presidents and treasurer, who were annually elected, could only be selected from those whose donations were five pounds or higher.

With the committee established and rules and objectives adopted the work of the society got underway. Dr. Murray, Archbishop of Dublin and treasurer to the CBS issued a circular to the Bishops of Ireland announcing its commencement and seeking their subscriptions. Murray received many letters in response, approving of the society and promising to aid its advancement. In his letter to William Yore in 1824, Dr. Doyle had maintained that the success of the Catholic Book Society would be subject to the support of the Catholic Church and that much would depend on its initial reception.<sup>113</sup> From the letters received by Dr. Murray, it is evident that the prelates enthusiastically welcomed the society. For instance Dr. William Crolly, while Bishop of Down and Connor wrote the following:

I have long desired to see such a systematically plan of moral and religious instruction, carried into active and general operation, in this kingdom, your Grace may rest assured, that I shall give it my cordial sanction and support.<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, Bishop Marum, of the diocese of Ossory gave his: 'entire approval' to the plan and assured Murray that his 'best exertions shall be used in carrying it into execution'.<sup>115</sup> In other letters the authors not only approved of the plan but took the opportunity to voice their opinion on its necessity, which many believed to be vital to Ireland at that time. For example, Dr. McLaughlin of Derry describes the work of the society as 'so useful and so necessary'<sup>116</sup> and Dr. Ryan of Limerick, who did not have funds at his disposal to contribute to the society nevertheless believed in the urgency of its formation: 'I consider the objects of

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<sup>113</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr Doyle*, 359.

<sup>114</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. Crolly, Belfast, 26/Feb/1827 DDA/AB3/30/10, 71.

<sup>115</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. Marum, Kilkenny, 26/Feb/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 69.

<sup>116</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. McLaughlin, 23/Feb/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 64.

the society mentioned... under any circumstances, very deserving of public attention, but at the present moment a matter of perhaps imperative necessity.’<sup>117</sup> Battersby stated that the bishops ‘gave life and stability’ to the society by backing it.<sup>118</sup> It was essential to ensure their cooperation of the hierarchy as in most cases it would guarantee the cooperation of the priests in their diocese. The cooperation of the clergy was necessary for the circulation of books nationwide; this was especially the case in remote areas, where books were distributed through the parish chapel. The assistance of the prelates and clergy, both organisationally and financially was fundamental to the success of the venture.

Dr. Murray issued a circular announcing the formation of the society in February 1827, the society was officially announced to the public in the *Freeman’s Journal* on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June of the same year, and by November the first report of the society was released. This report, which was also printed in the *Freeman’s Journal*, provided a catalogue of books printed and available, and a detailed list of subscriptions already received. Although the society received support and encouragement from the hierarchy, financial assistance was more difficult to secure. Subscriptions were received from 31 prelates, 247 priests, 5 confraternities, 46 lay subscribers, plus there were collections from parishes and subscribers who were anonymous or whose names were not available at the time the list was published. By November a total of £998 1s. 10d. was received from subscriptions collected throughout the country, with the majority coming from the Dublin Archdiocese; this established the fund to commence the work of the society (See *Fig. 4*).<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. Ryan, Limerick, 22/Feb/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 61.

<sup>118</sup> Battersby, *The Life of the Rt. Rev. Dr Doyle*, 247.

<sup>119</sup> *The Freeman’s Journal*, Thursday 15/November/ 1827.

Fig. 4.1

Subscriptions received by the Catholic Book Society for year 1827

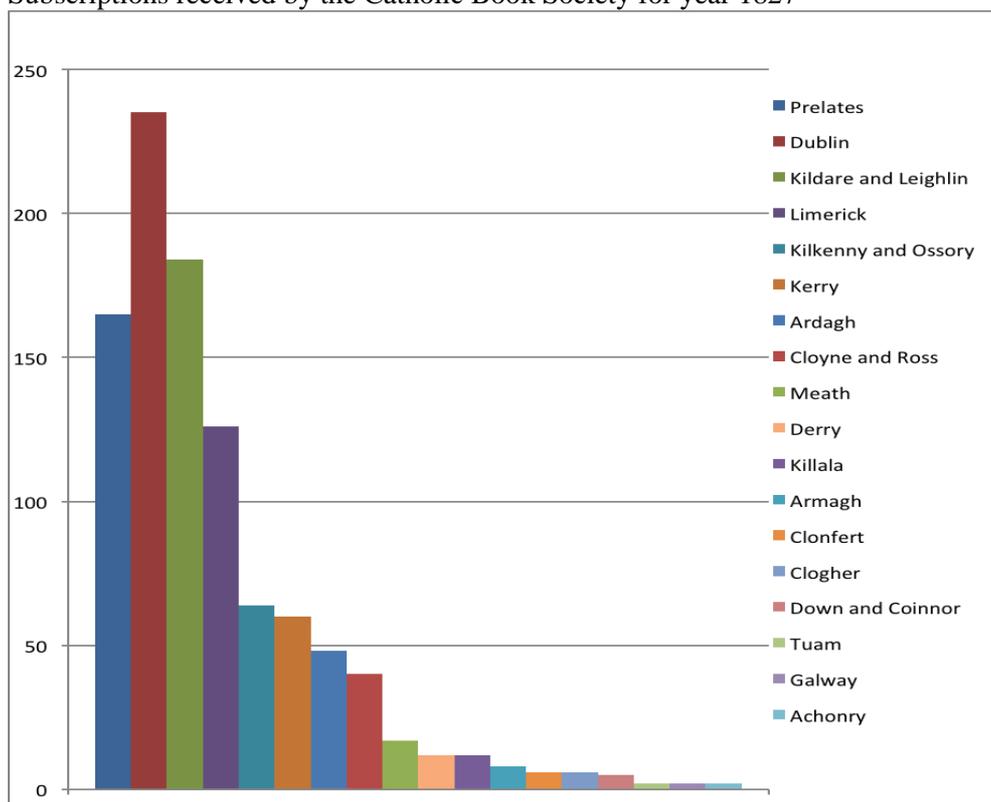


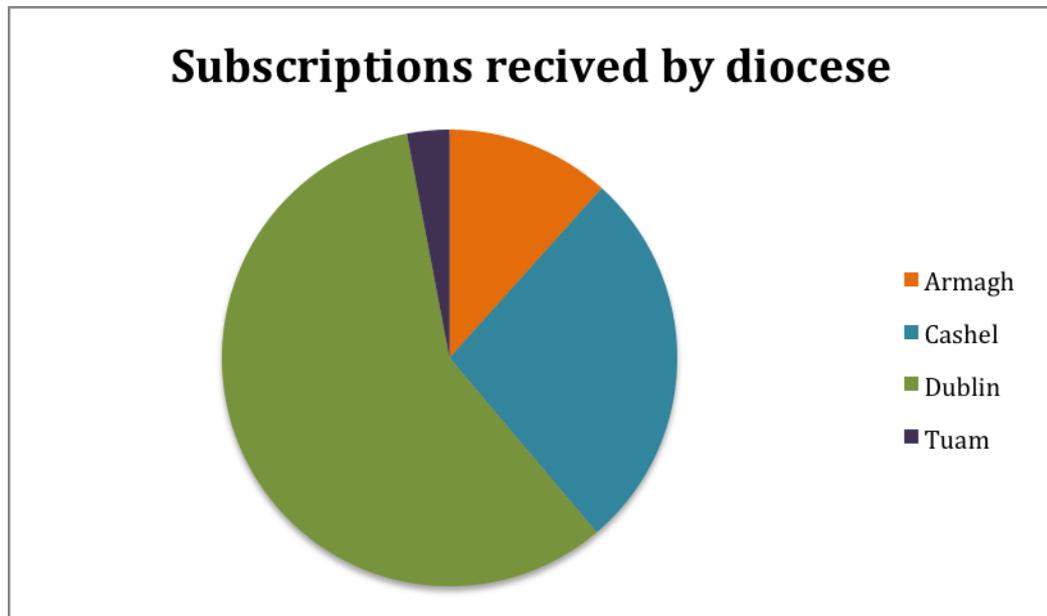
Fig. 4.2

Table of subscriptions received by the CBS, 1827.<sup>120</sup>

Source of money	Subscription, £ s. d.
Prelates	165 0 0
Dublin	235 16 10
Kildare and Leighlin	184 9 0
Limerick	126 0 0
Kilkenny and Ossary	64 0 0
Kerry	60 0 0
Ardagh	48 6 4
Cloyne and Ross	40 10 0
Meath	17 10 0
Derry	12 0 0
Killala	12 0 0
Armagh	8 5 6
Clonfert	6 18 8
Clogher	6 0 0
Down and Connor	5 5 6
Tuam	2 0 0
Galway	2 0 0
Achonry	2 0 0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£998 1 10</b>

<sup>120</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, Thursday 15/November/ 1827.

Fig. 4.3  
Subscriptions received by Archdiocese



In April, two months after Murray's request for funds, the society issued a new circular appealing for donations and subscriptions. This circular, composed by the secretary, Matthew Flanagan, presented the objectives and rules of the society. According to Flanagan the circumstances of the time, namely the increase in literacy through education and the dissemination of evangelical tracts, made these objectives indispensable.<sup>121</sup> The CBS intended to circulate 100,000 religious books in the first three months and to continue circulating until 'every poor Roman Catholic family in Ireland, will be furnished with a select library of religious and other useful books'.<sup>122</sup> By November 1827 the society had received almost a thousand pounds from subscriptions and donations collected in parishes throughout the country.<sup>123</sup> This sum, however, was not sufficient to meet the ambitious aims of the CBS. By November 1827 the society had fallen short of its goal having just printed 86,200 texts, and of these only 35,340 had been distributed.<sup>124</sup> Surprisingly, the statement of accounts for the society record a total of 150,696 books circulated from March 1827 to February 1828. The

<sup>121</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Fr. Matthew Flanagan, 18/April/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 27.

<sup>122</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, Thursday 15/November/ 1827.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

following year 247,613 books were printed and circulated.<sup>125</sup> Despite these impressive figures, the CBS failed to make a profit and continued to rely on contributions from the clergy and hierarchy.

The society struggled to support itself from the sale of books and had difficulty securing subscriptions. Without the necessary funds, the CBS was unable to have the impact it desired. In 1829, at the AGM in Dublin, the Catholic Bishops agreed that the Catholic Association should financially assist the committee of the CBS, to save it from its 'present embarrassment', namely its financial instability.<sup>126</sup> At the same meeting, after hearing the report of the society from Matthew Flanagan, it was agreed that the archbishops, bishops, presidents, vice-presidents and guardians of the society were to each pay £35 in return for books and tracts to this value which it would then circulate in their diocese or parish.<sup>127</sup> Doyle's assessment in 1824, that the success or failure of the CBS would be determined by the support of the clergy proved to be correct, without the financial backing of the hierarchy at this point the CBS would have disappeared. With this financial support the society was able to continue producing tracts, books and school supplies.

From November 1827 to June 1829 the society received a further £1592 11s. 2d. in subscriptions and donations. Subscriptions continued to be forwarded to the society but from 1830 onwards they were received on a much smaller scale.<sup>128</sup> Between 1833 and 1838 the society only received £7 2s. in subscriptions, by this stage the CBS was able to support itself through the sale of books instead of continually appealing for donations. From March 1827 to June 1829 the society received £3288 0s. 8d. from the sale of books averaging at £1,460 a year. From June 1829 to October 1837 the society received £17,704 2s. 1d. from the sale of books averaging at £2,100 a year, an increase of just over

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<sup>125</sup> Printed Report of the Catholic Book Society, 4/February/1830, DDA/AB3/31/2, 91.

<sup>126</sup> 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland Assembled in their Annual General Meeting in Dublin, Commencing on the 5 day of February 1829', *Minute Book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops February 1826 - November 1849*.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> 'Report on the State of the Society Adopted by a General Meeting of the Catholic Clergy of Dublin, 17 December 1838', cited in Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1840*, p 268-270.

£600 a year.<sup>129</sup> In 1838 the society stated that it was ‘in a more prosperous condition’ than it had been when it relied on subscriptions and donations.<sup>130</sup>

In its first year the society published 8 titles. By 1838 this had increased to 249 religious books and 18 schoolbooks.<sup>131</sup> In the first three years of its existence, the society printed and circulated 921,554 books (See *Fig.5*).<sup>132</sup> According to the CBS report in 1830, this was ‘nearly as much as the Kildare Place Society has circulated for the last seventeen years with its immense grants; but not one-tenth of the numbers the Catholic Book Society could circulate if it had adequate capital’.<sup>133</sup> A review of the society in 1838 revealed that it had printed or published 6 million texts.<sup>134</sup>

*Fig.5.1*

Table of books circulated by the Catholic Book Society in the first three years. Total printed: 921, 554 of which 680, 297 were circulated.<sup>135</sup>

Year	Amount Circulated		
1827	150,696		
1828	247,613		
1829	281,988	<b>Total circulated:</b>	<b>680, 297</b>

*Fig. 5.2*

Table of titles printed by the CBS, excluding schoolbooks.<sup>136</sup>

Year	Titles
1827	8
1828	12
1838	249
1839	278
1840	311

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> ‘Report on the State of the Society Adopted by a General Meeting of the Catholic Clergy of Dublin, 17 December 1838’, 268.

<sup>131</sup> Catholic Book Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge Throughout Ireland, *First Report of the Catholic Book Society, for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge Throughout Ireland: To Which is Added an Appendix Containing the Accounts, Ending the 31st of January, 1828* (Dublin, 1828); ‘Cheap Books, Sold by the Catholic Book Society’, Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1838* (Dublin, 1838), Appendix.

<sup>132</sup> Printed Report of the Catholic Book Society, 4/February/1830.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> ‘Report on the State of the Society Adopted by a General Meeting of the Catholic Clergy of Dublin, 17 December 1838’, 268-270.

<sup>135</sup> Printed Report of the Catholic Book Society, 4/February/1830.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

The society aimed to supply books, which would increase religious instruction and supply refutations to prevailing errors and heresies, to all classes of people at the lowest possible cost. It vowed to ‘promote the circulation of religious books to the most remote parish ... and the most obscure cabin in Ireland’.<sup>137</sup> In 1836, in a report of the society published in the Catholic Directory, it claimed to have published around five million books, it further believed the titles published by the society would not have been made available without the CBS.<sup>138</sup> Some of the books published by the CBS were original works, such as the school books and some of the devotional works. Battersby himself compiled many of these original works. According to the CBS report in 1839 the Society had been successful in circulating books not only in Ireland but further afield in England, Scotland, Wales and even America. The price of these books ranged from ‘a farthing to fifty shillings’, which in most cases was at least half of the price charged by other vendors.<sup>139</sup>

However, despite the low cost of these works, they were still not affordable to all sectors of the population. In February 1827, in response to Murray’s circular on the Catholic Book Society, the Rev. James Keating wrote to the Bishop of Dublin suggesting that instead a society should be established on a purely charitable basis. Although he writes that: ‘the objects proposed by the society are most laudable’, he did not believe that the goals of the society would result in the desired effect.<sup>140</sup> He also pointed out the financial struggles of the laity, particularly in rural parishes. He writes:

According to the Primary rules certain duties are imposed on the Guardian, duties which I would not like to submit to at any time, but particularly at present, when famine seems to approach us, and when the bulk of the people stands in much greater need of bread than of books, and it is my decided opinion that the desired objects will not be carried into effect unless the Tracts be distributed free of expense amongst the People of Ireland. An Orthodox Society founded and conducted on this

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<sup>137</sup> *The Freeman’s Journal*, Saturday 30/June/1827.

<sup>138</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 52.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. Keating, Enniscorthy, 28/Feb/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 73.

charitable principle could be easily established, and would, I am satisfied, merit and meet the support and sanction of every independent Catholic.<sup>141</sup>

With the financial struggles of the CBS it is difficult to see how the Church could have supported a society that did not make any profit. It was not until 1835 that the suggestion made by Keating was finally followed through when a lay society was established. Although a separate venture, this lay society worked alongside the CBS and distributed books gratis among the laity.

In 1845, the running of the Catholic Book Society was completely transferred to William Battersby. Battersby had been the general agent of the CBS since its conception in 1827 and was described by historian Sean Griffin as ‘the engine that moved’ it.<sup>142</sup> At a general meeting in 1845 the resolution to grant him complete control of the society was unanimously passed. The Church relinquished control of the CBS as the supply of cheap texts was no longer considered to be a pressing need. The Church had secured a role in the national system of primary education. The network of Sunday Schools guaranteed Catholic teaching would be disseminated to Catholic youth throughout the country. By 1845 religious books were more readily available at more competitive prices. Furthermore, the CBS was financially secure and no longer needed the direct intervention of the Church to continue.

Under Battersby the CBS continued to operate until the early 1850s. By the mid-1850s the society seemed to have run its course. In 1852 an advertisement appeared in the Catholic Directory for a ‘Catholic Book Depository’, operating out of Battersby’s headquarters at 10 Essex Bridge, however, the advertisement did not mention the CBS. The Catholic Book Depository is described in *Thom’s Irish Almanac* as a society for ‘the publishing of cheap books’.<sup>143</sup> The books available in Battersby’s Depository are described as: ‘Catholic Bibles, Prayer Books, School Books and every other description of Catholic Works’.<sup>144</sup> The Depository would appear to be a continuation of the CBS or at least be the remaining CBS stock.

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> Griffin, ‘The Catholic Book Society and its Role in the Emerging System of National Education’, 87.

<sup>143</sup> Thom, *Thom’s Irish Almanac and Official Directory with the Post-Office Dublin City and County Directory for the year 1852* (Dublin, 1852), 793.

<sup>144</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1852*, 376.

### Religious instruction: The principal objective of the CBS

The Catholic Book Society had three main goals, to increase religious consciousness throughout Ireland, to contradict errors being spread about the Catholic faith, and to supply books for schools. According to Matthew Flanagan, the secretary to the society, the CBS aimed to:

Procure and circulate books containing a clear exposition of the doctrine and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church, with satisfactory refutations of the prevailing errors of the present time; and in order to give additional facility to the education of the poor, books of elementary instruction are provided for the use of schools.<sup>145</sup>

Dr. Doyle, in June 1827, stated that the CBS had sprung from ‘the urgent necessities of the Irish people’.<sup>146</sup> Thus, its first objective was: ‘To furnish to the people of Ireland, in the most cheap and convenient manner, useful information on the truths and duties of the Christian religion’.<sup>147</sup>

The primary assumption of the Catholic Book Society was that there existed a pressing need for religious education. It is evident in the positive responses to Dr. Murray’s circular that the Irish prelates also held this view. Dr. Ffrench, Bishop of Galway, wrote: ‘the ‘plan’ appears to me (as it does to the prelates lately assembled in Dublin) to be of the most importance at the present moment to the faithful of this country’<sup>148</sup>, while Bishop Egan of Kerry believed that: ‘every bishop and priest in Ireland will rejoice at its formation’.<sup>149</sup> The poor state of religious knowledge and potential threat from evangelicalism led the hierarchy to believe the formation of a Catholic book society was imperative to Irish Catholicism.

The first objective of the society was to provide religious instruction for the laity. Therefore, it is not surprising that among the first books published by the CBS were Richard Challoner’s *Grounds of Catholic Doctrine* and the Catechism. The CBS was confident that the circulation of religious books would increase religious knowledge, which in turn would fortify Catholics in their faith.

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<sup>145</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Fr. Matthew Flanagan, 18/April/1827.

<sup>146</sup> Thomas McGrath, *The Pastoral and Education Letters of Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, 1786 -184* (Dublin, 2004), 241-4; Battersby, *The Life of the Rt. Rev. Dr Doyle*, 247-9, 247; *The Freeman’s Journal*, Saturday 30/June/1827.

<sup>147</sup> *The Freeman’s Journal*, Saturday 30/June/1827.

<sup>148</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. Ffrench, 27/Feb/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 72.

<sup>149</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from, Dr. Egan, 18/April/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 66.

To achieve this desired improvement it was essential that religious works should be universally distributed. Dr. Doyle wrote that the society planned to: ‘introduce into the bosom of every family – to place in the hands of all – to impart to the poor and to the rich this great blessing of religious instruction’.<sup>150</sup> To people ‘in easy circumstances’, who would purchase religious books if they were made available, the society wanted to supply titles that were not easily procured in Ireland.<sup>151</sup> At the same time it wanted to make sure these books were sold at a low-price for ‘the tradesman, the peasant, the poor labourer...who requires instruction and consolation’.<sup>152</sup> For this reason texts were produced at the lowest possible cost to ensure they could be sold at a reduced rate. In some instances books were with a 33% or 50% reduction from the original retail price.

#### The ‘defensive function’ of the CBS

The second objective of the society was: ‘To supply to all classes of persons satisfactory refutations of the prevailing errors and heresies of the present age’.<sup>153</sup> According to Doyle: ‘calumnies the most unfounded, misrepresentations the most gross and incredible, are everywhere circulated against Catholics, and against whatever they esteem most sacred and venerable’ and therefore it was the role of the society to provide a counter attack.<sup>154</sup> This duty, he believed, was more important than the general spread of religious knowledge in Ireland:

The Catholic Book Society also proposes to itself another duty – a duty still more sacred and important than those now noticed. Its principal object is, to co-operate with its own guardians, who are also the guardians of the faith in Ireland, in their efforts to preserve the true religion from the deadly effects of heresy and error.<sup>155</sup>

This role, described by Sean Griffin as the ‘defensive function of the Society’, was welcomed by the other Bishops of Ireland who recognised the necessity of

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<sup>150</sup> McGrath, *The Pastoral and Education Letters of Bishop James Doyle*, 241.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> McGrath, *The Pastoral and Education Letters of Bishop James Doyle*, 242.

<sup>153</sup> *The Freeman’s Journal*, Saturday 30/June/1827.

<sup>154</sup> McGrath, *The Pastoral and Education Letters of Bishop James Doyle*, 242.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

protecting and defending the Catholic faith.<sup>156</sup> Dr. Kelly, Bishop of Dromore, responding to the initial announcement circulated by Dr. Murray, wrote that the society was ‘of paramount importance in these perilous times.’<sup>157</sup> In a second letter to Dr. Murray, Dr. Kelly elaborated on this statement; he explained that Protestant reformers had recently established a society in Newry and had ‘made every effort to subvert the faith in this part of the country’. He thus welcomed the formation of the CBS, which he believed would be essential to combat the efforts of Protestant evangelicals, such as those operating in Newry. He wrote that there was: ‘no other plan better calculated to secure the faithful against the united efforts of our enemies’.<sup>158</sup> Dr. Kelly was joined in his view by Dr. Egan, Bishop of Kerry, who believed that the CBS was of paramount importance: ‘in order to combat the unceasing efforts of the enemies of the Catholic religion’.<sup>159</sup> While, the Rev. Thomas Coen, writing from Loughrea in Co. Galway, hoped:

The circulation of such books as your Grace may select will produce the most beneficial effect among the lower order of R.C. by informing them in the principles of our Holy Religion and thereby guarding them against the efforts of their enemies.<sup>160</sup>

A number of the correspondence refers to the necessity of the CBS at that particular time,<sup>161</sup> demonstrating the belief among the hierarchy that the Evangelical Movement was an active threat to Catholicism.

In the April circular, the society further claimed that the dissemination of Catholic works was essential in the ‘existing circumstances’ so that the ‘peasantry of Ireland, who by the general establishment of Parochial Schools, have with few exceptions been taught to read, may be supplied with the means of airing useful knowledge, and be fortified in their faith against the attacks made upon it by the industrious dissemination of anti-Catholic tracts’.<sup>162</sup> The CBS was

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<sup>156</sup> Griffin, ‘The Catholic Book Society and its Role in the Emerging System of National Education’, 86.

<sup>157</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. Kelly, Newry, 22/Feb/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 62.

<sup>158</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. Kelly, Newry, 15/March/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 78.

<sup>159</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Dr. Egan, Killarney, 24/February/1827.

<sup>160</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Rev. Thomas Coen, Loughrae, 2/March/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 74.

<sup>161</sup> Dr Ryan of Limerick ‘at the present moment a matter of perhaps imperative necessity’, Dr Ffrench of Galway ‘of the most importance at the present moment’, Dr Murray of Dublin ‘paramount importance in these perilous times’.

<sup>162</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Fr. Matthew Flanagan, 18/April/1827.

therefore seen as a vehicle to uphold the beliefs of the Church and to guard it from the attacks of its opponents.

### The CBS and education

The third objective of the CBS is laid out as follows: ‘To assist in supplying to schools throughout Ireland the most approved books of elementary instruction’.<sup>163</sup> The Catholic Church was dissatisfied with the current system of education and was becoming more vocal about this dissatisfaction. The Church wanted to secure a role in any future education system. Therefore it was important for the Church to be seen to be a leader in education, with a history of providing instruction for the laity. The CBS embarked on a mission to supply spelling and reading books, approved by the hierarchy, to aid the progress of education. Doyle, in his account of the society wrote: ‘the Catholic Society undertakes to become a patron of schools; it undertakes to select, to print, to publish, and circulate such books as contain the rudiments or first lessons of all useful knowledge’.<sup>164</sup> In 1827 the society printed a spelling book in four parts, produced spelling and reading tablets, and sold ruled paper, pencils, slates and other school provisions. Although the list of school books produced by the society was initially small, by 1838 it had expanded to include titles on arithmetic, geography, elocution, grammar, spelling, and reading. The third objective of the society was to provide books, approved by the Catholic Church, for schools throughout Ireland. In this endeavour it succeeded in supplying a large number of texts, as can be seen in the variety of titles available. Its books were used in schools throughout the country, and were probably used as frequently as those published by the Kildare Place Society.

When a national system of education was established in 1831 it was essential that appropriate books be issued for schools. The Board of Education planned to produce books for schools that would be approved of by all denominations. In the meantime however, the Board sanctioned the continued use of certain books until it could produce its own works. The books permitted were those issued by the Kildare Place Society and the Catholic Book Society,

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<sup>163</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, Saturday 30/June/1827.

<sup>164</sup> McGrath, *The Pastoral and Education Letters of Bishop James Doyle*, 242.

and from February 1832 these books were made available to schools.<sup>165</sup> The Board sanctioned two spelling books produced by the CBS for general use.<sup>166</sup> In this way the CBS books played a ‘small, but noteworthy’ role in the emerging system of national education.<sup>167</sup>

In 1833 the Board of Education published a list of all books and tracts used in schools in Ireland ‘with the sanction or approbation of the Board’.<sup>168</sup> The list contained the titles of 16 general school books that had been used in schools prior to the formation of the Board and, after examination by the commissioners, were permitted to remain in use. Of these 16 books, 8 also appear on the catalogue of school requisites supplied by the CBS. The Board compiled a list of 14 books used by Catholic children at times of separate religious instruction that had received the approbation not of the whole Board but of ‘those members of the Board who are of the same religious persuasion’.<sup>169</sup> Eleven of these books were supplied by the CBS. According to Rev. James Carlile (1784-1854), a Presbyterian minister and Resident Commissioner on the Board of Education, the CBS books were ‘to the credit of Roman Catholics’.<sup>170</sup> He said that the books produced by the society contained a large amount of religious instruction, most of which was ‘altogether unobjectionable’<sup>171</sup> to Protestants:

We found nothing whatever in those books which we examined, and which had been compiled solely for the use of Roman Catholic children, of an immoral tendency; but that, on the contrary, while we found very little that was peculiar to the Church of Rome, we found more of genuine religion in them than is usually to be found in school books.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> John Coolahan, ‘The Daring first Decade of the Board of National Education, 1831-1841’, *The Irish Journal of Education / Iris Eireannach an Oideachais*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Summer, 1983), 35-54, 40.

<sup>166</sup> James Carlile, *Defense of the National System of Education in Ireland: In Reply to the Letters of J.C. Colquhoun, ESQ., of Killermont, MP* (London, 1838), 44.

<sup>167</sup> Griffin, ‘The Catholic Book Society and its Role in the Emerging System of National Education’, 82.

<sup>168</sup> *Education, Ireland. Returns from the Board of Education in Dublin*, HC 1833 (725), xxxv, 2.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords, Appointed to Inquire into the Practical Workings of the System of National Education in Ireland; and to Report Thereon to the House; Together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, and Index*, HC 1854 (525), xv, 5.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> Carlile, *Defense of the National System of Education in Ireland*, 44.

Carlile was not only willing for the Board to sanction the use of these works, but made use of them himself, modelling the school books he created on those of the society:

I immediately availed myself of these books as an indication of the amount and nature of religious instruction which Roman Catholics wished to have intermixed with secular instruction; and in superintending the compiling of books for the Board, I kept these Roman Catholic books in view, introducing into the Board's books a large amount of religious instruction, but intermixed with a much larger amount of secular information than the Roman Catholic books contained.<sup>173</sup>

The influence of CBS books on those produced by Carlile is significant, since his texts were the official books supplied by the Board to schools throughout Ireland. In this way the influence of the society in education continued even after its demise.

#### Works produced by CBS

The CBS was part of the wider Catholic reform that was underway in Ireland in the nineteenth century. In 1835 the CBS was described by the *Dublin Evening Mail* as corresponding 'as nearly as possible' to the Association for Discountenancing Vice.<sup>174</sup> As the founding of the CBS was largely in response to the activities of Protestant tract societies, it is thus reasonable to assume that the CBS borrowed some objectives and structure from these Protestant organisations. The organisation of the CBS and ADV was very similar. Both were governed by a president, four vice presidents, a treasurer, a secretary and a committee of twenty-one members, both also had a system of membership based on donations and subscriptions. Furthermore, the CBS and ADV were both founded to supply members of their respective congregations with spiritual reading matter. Both produced and distributed instructive and catechetical texts, and encouraged religious education. However, the CBS, unlike the ADV and other Protestant societies, was only interested in supplying books for members of the Catholic Church, and had no interest in proselytising or seeking conversions.

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Dublin Evening Mail*, 26/October/1835.

The title of the society was the Catholic Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge Throughout Ireland. The ‘useful knowledge’ referred exclusively to religious knowledge, a cornerstone of Church reform. The CBS printed numerous instructional, catechetical and doctrinal works. As well as works of Catholic doctrine, the CBS printed the breviary, missal and daily office, and devotional works such as novenas, instruction for confraternities, and lives of saints. It produced educational works such as expositions of scripture, catechisms, and histories of the church.

The first two books printed and circulated by the CBS in 1827 were *The Grounds of Catholic Doctrine* and the *Catechism* of which the society distributed 10,200 and 25,140 copies respectively. *The Grounds of Catholic Doctrine: Contained in the Profession of Faith, Published by Pope Pius IV, by way of Question and Answer* by Richard Challoner (1691-1781), bishop of Debra and Vicar Apostolic for the London district, was first published in 1732. It was written to instruct the laity in the rule of faith. Composed in a similar style to the catechism, *Grounds* was designed to provide answers so that the reader could, in words taken from St. Peter, ‘give an answer to everyone that asks a reason for the hope that is in you’.<sup>175</sup> The CBS had four books in the process of being printed. Two of these were books of a controversial nature: *A Defence of Catholic Principles* by Demetrius Gallitzin (1770-1840) a Russian priest and prince, and Manning’s *The Shortest Way to End Disputes*. The devotional text *Exposition of the Lord’s Prayer* by French Priest Jean Grou (1731-1803) and Gallitzin’s work on the Sacred Scripture were also on the list, 6,000 copies of each title were due to be printed and distributed later in the year.<sup>176</sup> Two further texts were in the process of being printed, William Gahan’s *History of the Old and New Testament* and a spelling book, composed of four parts, the first school book attempted by the society.

In 1828 the society added 5 new titles to its catalogue of books. In 1827 the society announced it was printing a catechism, but did not specify which catechism. In 1828 the catechisms of Drs. Butler, Reilly and Plunkett were printed and sold. The CBS added Gahan’s *Manual of Catholic Piety*, which contained prayers of praise, thanksgiving and supplication, exercises of piety,

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<sup>175</sup> 1 Peter 3:15; Cover page *Grounds of Catholic Doctrine*.

<sup>176</sup> *The Freeman’s Journal*, Thursday 15/November/ 1827.

and instruction on devotions. *Instructions for Youth in Christian Piety* by French priest and theologian Charles Gobinet (1613-1690) that included extracts from the scriptures and instruction for prayer was also printed.

By 1838 the number of titles made available by the CBS had swelled to 249. By this stage the society was supplying the laity with doctrinal, devotional and liturgical works. It sold Catholic periodicals, such as the *British and Irish Monthly*, the *Orthodox Journal*, and the *Catholic Penny Magazine*. Besides catechisms, which obviously provided instruction on Catholic teaching, the society published works explaining indulgences, purgatory, the commandments, the Eucharist, and confession. The CBS also produced large works of Catholic doctrine such as *Exposition of Catholic Doctrine* by French bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704), *Catholic Christian Instructed in the Sacraments, Sacrifice, Ceremonies and Observances of the Church* by Richard Challoner, and *Exposition of Catholic Doctrine* by Gahan. Liturgical works included missals, breviaries, and instructions for receiving the sacraments. Devotional texts ranged from manuals of prayer to novenas and lives of the saints.

The most expensive work sold by the CBS was *Lives of Saints* by Dr. James Butler, which cost 30s. However, this edition of *Lives of Saints* compiled twelve volumes into two books. The *Missale Romanum* cost 20 shillings and the *Roman Breviary* cost 21, these were most likely aimed at the clergy. Catechisms were among the cheapest works sold. Butler's catechism only cost 1/2d. The catechism of Devereux, Doyle and Plunket cost 1 ½ d. Novenas cost between 2 and 3d. and lives of the saints between 4 and 6d.<sup>177</sup> The number of devotional titles printed far surpassed the other genres supplied by the CBS. These were small works of prayer and spirituality. They included novenas, litanies, offices, saint's lives, prayers for various occasions, and guides for devotions, such as the Stations of the Cross, the rosary, or the Sacred Heart. In this way the Catholic Church was able to supply the laity with a large variety of religious books, which were affordably priced.

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<sup>177</sup> See book lists from Catholic Book Society 1838, *Catholic Directory ... 1838*.

CBS titles and pricing and relationship with Catholic Booksellers

It is clear from the catalogue of the CBS that it offered an extensive range of Catholic works. At the time the CBS was in operation prominent Catholic stationers such as Richard Coyne, John Coyne, and Richard Grace were also selling religious works. The CBS believed it had produced and circulated books that would otherwise have not been obtainable in Ireland.<sup>178</sup> Surviving bookseller's lists for this period are scarce, however those that survive seem to indicate that the availability of religious texts increased in the decades after the arrival of the CBS (See *Fig. 6.1*).<sup>179</sup>

*Fig. 6.1*

Titles available from the CBS compared to other Catholic Stationers

DATE	STATIONER	TITLES
1740	Ignatius Kelly	65
1770	Richard Cross	51
1795	Pat Wogan	67
1827	CBS	8
1828	CBS	12
1831	Richard Coyne	29
1834	John Coyne	62
1838	Richard Grace	59
1838	CBS	249
1840	CBS	311
1851	James Duffy	252
1851	Richard Grace	450

<sup>178</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 52.

<sup>179</sup> Advertising Catalogues can be found at the back of books or in Advertising Registers. 'Books Printed and Sold by Ignatius Kelly at the Stationers Arms in Mary's Lane' in Luis de Granada, *Sinners Guide: Containing a Full and Ample Exhortation to the Pursuit of Virtue. Written Instructions and Directions, how to Become Virtuous, Written Originally in Spanish* (Dublin, 1740); 'A Catalogue of Catholic Books printed for, and sold by Richard Cross, Bookseller, at the Sign of the Globe in Bridge St., near the Brazen-Head-Inn, Dublin', in John Joseph Hornihold, *The Decalogue Explained, Thirty Discourses on the Ten Commandments*, (Dublin, 1770); Patrick Wogan, 'Letter to the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland', in James Gallagher, *Seventeen Irish Sermons* (Dublin, 1795); 'Works Published by Richard Coyne, Capel-Street', in Rev. James Doyle, *Letter to Thomas Spring Rice, Esq M.P &c. &c. on the Establishment of a Legal Provision for the Irish Poor and on the Nature of Church Property* (Dublin, 1831); 'Catalogue of New Publications, Printed and Sold by John Coyne, 24, Cooke-Street' in St. Alphonsus Ligouri, *A Short Treatise on Prayer; The Great Means of Obtaining from God Eternal Salvation and all the Graces of which we Stand in need, Translated from the Italian by a Catholic Clergyman* (Dublin, 1834); 'Catholic Books Printed and Sold by Richard Grace' in Bonaventure Giraudeau, *The Parables of Pere Bonaventure Giraudeau, S.J., a new Version, by T.R.* (Dublin, 1838); 'James Duffy's Catalogue of Standard Catholic Works' in Battersby, *Catholic Directory ... 1851*; 'Grace and Son's Catalogue of Standard Roman Catholic Works' in Battersby, *Catholic Directory...1851*.

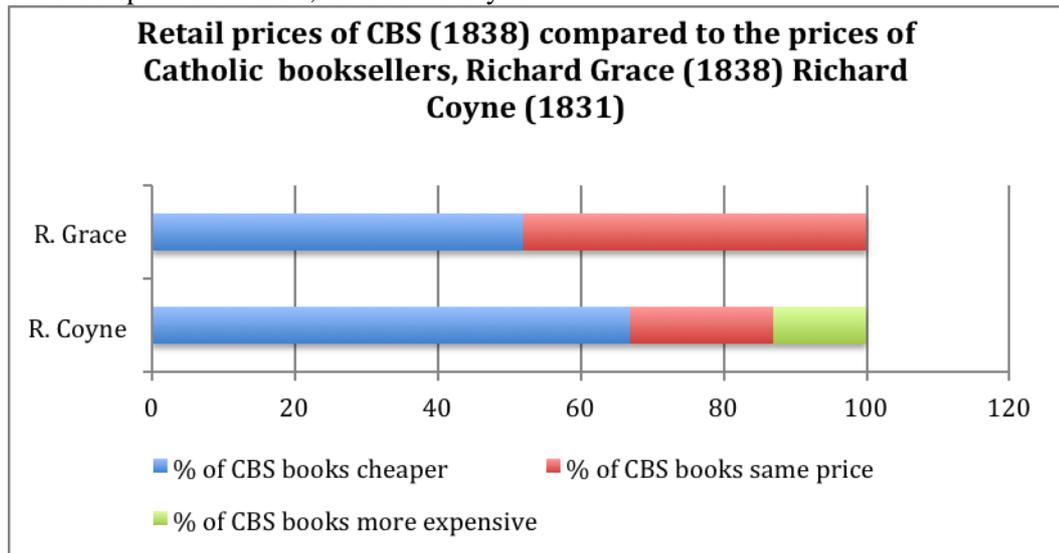
The CBS also claimed that its books were cheaper than books sold by regular booksellers, stating some of its works were reduced by a third or even a half of the usual price.<sup>180</sup> This claim related to books sold at ‘wholesale price’. The CBS had a two-tier price system. The first was for single copies and was the price offered to the public. This was described as ‘the lowest retail price’. The second was the wholesale price; this was cheaper per single copy but was offered for 12 copies of a text. The wholesale price was only offered to subscribers, donating parishes, confraternities, and, significantly, booksellers. Comparing the prices of booksellers’ lists from the 1830s to the catalogue of the CBS it is evident that the CBS wholesale price is always considerably cheaper. Richard Grace’s 1838 catalogue had 59 titles, 42 of these were in common with the CBS catalogue for the same year. The wholesale price is cheaper for all 42 titles. But the CBS retail price is only cheaper for 22 titles and for the remaining 20 the price is the same as that charged by Grace. Richard Coyne’s list for 1831 had 29 texts, 15 of these were also on the CBS list. As with Grace purchasing wholesales from the CBS was the cheapest option for all 15 titles. Comparing the retail prices the CBS is cheaper for 10 titles, 3 titles are the same price, and the remaining 2 titles are offered at a lower rate by Coyne (See *Fig. 6.2*). These are both works by Richard Challoner. The first, *Touchstone of the Reformed Gospel*, is a penny cheaper at 1d. The second, *Grounds of Christian Doctrine*, is also one penny cheaper at 2d.

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<sup>180</sup> McGrath, *The Pastoral and Education Letters of Bishop James Doyle*, 244; Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 52.

Fig. 6.2

Price comparison of CBS, Grace and Coyne



The 33% and 50% savings promised by the CBS were to be made by purchasing 12 copies of a text at wholesale price. However, on occasion these reductions were also replicated in the retail price. Of the 10 books that correspond to Richard Coyne’s catalogue (1831), four were a third cheaper and two were less than half of that charged by Coyne. Likewise, when compared to Grace’s prices, four titles are 50% cheaper, and 3 are at least 33% less.

Battersby, who was a member of the book-trade, was anxious not to detract from those already involved in Catholic printing. Those purchasing books at wholesale price were encouraged to supply copies to the poor at a lower price or even free. In addition, it urged its customers not to distribute them to any person who could afford to pay the retail price. The reason for this was so that ‘Booksellers may live by their trade’.<sup>181</sup> In 1836 he acknowledged the work of individual printers: ‘It should be understood that while both societies are for the most extensive circulation of good books, they are so far from claiming an monopoly injurious to others, that they avail themselves of the labours of all Catholic publishers who supply their books on reasonable terms’.<sup>182</sup> To keep up

<sup>181</sup> Catholic Book Society, *Cheap Books Sold by the Catholic Book Society... Under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishops* (Dublin, n.d).

Although no date is given it is most likely from 1840, the advertisement, which is a complete catalogue of the CBS, is the ‘Thirteenth Annual Impression’. Also, the books listed correspond to the 1840 catalogue found in the Catholic Directory.

<sup>182</sup> ‘Both societies’ refers to the CBS and a second society that Battersby was involved in, the *Free Book Society*. Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, Appendix, 53.

with growing demand, and to ensure the CBS had the widest variety of Catholic works to offer the public, the CBS sold books published by others. These books were priced the same as the lowest price offered by other Catholic booksellers. Although customers were assured this was indeed a low price, it was not ‘so low as if printed by the Society’ itself.<sup>183</sup> For example, in 1829 Hugh Clark of Belfast printed *An Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* and John Gother’s *A Papist Misrepresented* for the CBS. In 1831 another Belfast printer, Thomas Mairs, printed *The Office for the Dead* for the society. In 1839 James Duffy published Butler’s *Moveable Feasts* to be sold by the CBS. The fact that the CBS was buying works from Catholic stationers may account for the prices of CBS texts corresponding to the prices of independent booksellers. In 1838 the 20 titles whose retail prices were identical in both the CBS and Grace’s catalogue may have been titles published for the Society by others ‘the price of which are as low as they can be had for elsewhere’.<sup>184</sup>

Despite its relatively short life, the CBS did provide valuable contributions to the Catholic religion during its years of operation. It introduced a wide range of religious texts, many of these titles continued to be printed by publishers following the demise of the CBS. It also introduced cheaper versions of texts so that there were more options for the lower class to purchase. It also began a tradition of selling works in bulk to religious groups, such as confraternities, at a reduced rate. Thus, later catalogues such as those of Duffy and Grace in 1851 offer confraternities, parochial libraries, and those circulating texts free among the poor a ‘liberal allowance’ on books.<sup>185</sup>

### Lay involvement in Catholic print

When plans were laid for the formation of the CBS in 1824 the meeting was attended by leading clerics and prominent Dublin laymen. With the exception of William Battersby, the administration of the society was exclusively clerical. While general membership was open to the laity, the president, guardians, managing committee etc., was reserved for members of the clergy.

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<sup>183</sup> Catholic Book Society, *Cheap Books Sold by the Catholic Book Society... Under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishops*.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> ‘James Duffy’s Catalogue of Standard Catholic Works’, 461; ‘Grace and Son’s Catalogue of Standard Roman Catholic Works’.

However, members of the laity shared in the sentiments of the hierarchy that access to good books would benefit religion in Ireland.

In April 1827 a group of Dublin laymen wrote to Dr. Murray informing him that it was their intention to establish a religious book society in the city. The founders were connected with a Society of St. Paul and had received encouragement from a number of city chapels. The proposed society aimed to provide the poor of the city with much needed books to ‘promote Christian piety and virtue and at the same time to counteract the evil tendency of the numerous tracts now industriously circulated by certain classes of persons’.<sup>186</sup> The society wanted to disseminate instructional literature so that: ‘every Catholic may be able to give an account of his Faith and to strengthen that faith’. The group had already produced, ‘in a cheap and convenient manner’, the table of references from the Douay Testament along with the texts of scripture and notes on the scripture. The other works it proposed to publish were: Gobinet’s *Instruction for youth*, St. Francis Xavier’s *The Sufferings of Christ*, St. Bonaventure’s *Life of Christ*, Hay’s *Sincere Christian*, and *The Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection* by Fr. Alphonsus Rodriguez, S.J.<sup>187</sup>

The similarities between this society and the CBS are striking. The letter to Murray, which sought his approbation, is dated 10 April 1827, two months before the CBS was unveiled to the public. The plan for the CBS had been underway since February, and when Murray received this letter he was in the process of seeking financial support to launch the society to the public in June. In light of this it is unlikely that he encouraged the continuation of this society; there is no record of his response. Despite the lack of further sources, this lay society, whose objectives closely parallel the desires of the Church hierarchy, is significant.

The Society of St Paul developed in the hiatus between the formation and launch of the CBS. In this period the tensions between the Church and the Protestant Evangelical movement came to a head with heated public debates, clashes over education and increased distribution of Protestant tracts. The

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<sup>186</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Mr. Teegan, Ryan and Lawlor, Dublin, 10/April/1827, DDA/AB3/30/10, 80.

<sup>187</sup> The letter calls Dr. Hay’s work *True Christian*; I have changed it to *Sincere Christian*, as this is the correct title. Fr. Rodriguez (1526-1616) was a Spanish Jesuit. His *Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection* was first published in 1609.

Society of St Paul is obviously a direct response to the work of Protestant evangelicals ('certain classes of persons') who 'assailed [the Catholic faith] in every quarter'.<sup>188</sup> The society was a purely lay initiative and demonstrates the desire of certain members of the laity to become religiously engaged. These laymen were aware of the need for religious knowledge and intent on taking action to rectify this situation.

### The Free Book Society

A second lay initiative, and one that received the full support of the Catholic hierarchy, was 'The Catholic Society for Ireland, for the gratuitous distribution of religious books, and for promoting the Catholic religion, at home and abroad'. Created by William Battersby and James Frederick Lynam, the society planned to give religious works free of charge to the laity, hence gaining the title the Free Book Society (FBS). The FBS wanted to fulfil the objective proposed by the CBS in 1827 and supply religious works to every household in Ireland. The society, formed in response to the Church's desire to reform the laity and promote piety, was especially anxious to supply books to the poor. The FBS was not in competition with the CBS nor did it intend to replace the CBS. Instead, the FBS was formed to work in conjunction with the Catholic Book Society for the 'the most extensive circulation of good books'.<sup>189</sup> Although little is known of James Lynam, Battersby had been intimately connected with the CBS since its inception and had no intention of supplanting it. The FBS was established to be a 'valuable auxiliary' to the CBS.<sup>190</sup> The FBS acknowledged the work carried out by the CBS, and others, such as the Catholic printers, involved in producing religious texts. However, it stated that despite the reduced price of CBS texts, and the endeavours of the clergy, books were still too expensive for the poor. According to Battersby the FBS and CBS cooperated with each other to supply religious texts to the laity:

The last named society [Catholic Book Society] prints and prepares the books at the lowest possible price, the former [Catholic Society for

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<sup>188</sup> Letter to Dr. Murray from Mr. Teegan, Ryan and Lawlor, Dublin, 10/April/1827.

<sup>189</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 53.

<sup>190</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 52.

Ireland] comes in and supplies them gratis amongst such persons as could not otherwise procure them.<sup>191</sup>

The founders believed that ‘many thousands of Catholics are destitute of the means wherewith to purchase for themselves prayer books of moral and religious instruction’ and that, unaided by the laity, the Church was not in a position to provide the destitute with these works.<sup>192</sup> The FBS was thus to assist the Church in reforming the laity by distributing books gratis and helping parishes to form libraries.

In March 1835, James Lynam wrote to Archdeacon Hamilton, secretary to Dr. Murray, to announce the formation of a ‘most interesting society’.<sup>193</sup> Lynam invited Hamilton to become one of the Presidents of the new society, a role that had ‘neither duties nor responsibility’ but was rather an honorary title.<sup>194</sup> Having Hamilton’s name among the list of presidents would, Lynam wrote, ‘confer a great benefit on the society’.<sup>195</sup> Similar letters were sent to bishops, members of the clergy and prominent laymen seeking support for the proposed society. Among the positive and noteworthy responses received by the society were those from the Rev. Dr. Crolly, Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. Mac Hale, Archbishop of Tuam, and the president of Maynooth College, Dr. Montague. The FBS was described by Crolly as a ‘very useful and important ... society’, Mac Hale believed it would be ‘of great benefit to religion’ while Dr. Montague highly approved of the initiative and could think of ‘no expenditure more calculated to render important benefits to society than the diffusion of moral and religious books’.<sup>196</sup>

When the FBS was announced in 1835 it had an impressive list of 220 people who had joined and backed the new society. Among the list of supporters were Archbishop Crolly of Armagh, Archbishop Mac Hale of Tuam and 13 Irish bishops. The president, vice-president, dean, prefect and 6 professors from Maynooth approved of the society as did 2 deans, 3 vicar generals, 3 archdeacons, and 19 parish priests. Among the lay advocates were 31 justices of the peace, 18 members of parliament, 9 baronets, 1 King’s Counsel and other

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<sup>191</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 53.

<sup>192</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 58.

<sup>193</sup> Letter to Rev. Hamilton from J Lynam, 25/March/1835, DDA/Hamilton Papers/35/5, 131.

<sup>194</sup> Letter to Rev. Hamilton from J Lynam, 5/October/1835, DDA/Hamilton Papers/35/5, 170.

<sup>195</sup> Letter to Rev. Hamilton from J Lynam, 25/March/1835.

<sup>196</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 171-173.

‘gentlemen of rank and fortune’.<sup>197</sup> Most notable among the lay supporters were the poet Thomas Moore (1779-1852), the English historian Dr. Lingard (1771-1851) and James Hardiman (1782-1855), historian, librarian and member of the Royal Irish Academy.<sup>198</sup> As the society aimed to supply religious works: ‘at home and abroad’, it listed individuals from Great Britain among its sponsors. Bishop Caruthers and Bishop Kyle of Scotland and Bishop Baines of England were listed as vice-patrons of the FBS.<sup>199</sup> The society listed a further 32 British supporters.<sup>200</sup>

The Society was run by a committee of management, which was made up of 25 men, all from Dublin; 12 laymen, and 12 members of the clergy. The society had trustees, honorary secretaries and a treasurer. The FBS benefited from an elaborate system of sponsors, its 220 supporters were categorised into patrons, vice-patrons, governors for life, presidents, honorary presidents, and vice-presidents. Lynam and Battersby acted as honorary secretaries and were on the committee of management.

In 1824 Dr. Doyle had met six prominent Dublin clergymen to discuss the plan for the CBS. Of those six, four were also involved with the FBS. Fr. William Yore, who first proposed the CBS to Dr. Doyle, Fr. John Spratt, Fr. John White, and Fr. Patrick Dowling were all on the committee of management for the FBS. Dowling doubled as vice-president and Spratt was on the committee of management, a vice-president and a trustee.

The committee was based in Dublin, but the society proposed to establish auxiliary branches in towns and parishes throughout Ireland. It was hoped that the clergy would encourage the formation of branch societies at a parish level. The society wanted to form ‘Ladies Auxiliary Societies’ as women were: ‘foremost in every good work, and always zealous where the interests of charity and religion are concerned’.<sup>201</sup> In this way the society hoped for the most extensive circulation of religious works.

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<sup>197</sup> Letter to Rev. Hamilton from J Lynam, 5/October/1835.

<sup>198</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 53-7.

<sup>199</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 53.

<sup>200</sup> 29 English, 2 Welsh, and 1 Scottish.

<sup>201</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 62.

### Designs and objects of the FBS

The aims of the FBS were far more sweeping than those of the CBS. The Church, motivated by the emergence of Protestantism and the potential of national education, formed the CBS to improve religious knowledge. The hierarchy had a clear vision of what the society should achieve. On the other hand, the FBS tried to support a number of religious movements including: Church reform, parochial libraries, Catholic periodicals, and temperance societies. The Protestant Evangelical movement and education were not pressing issues for the FBS, perhaps because laymen rather than the hierarchy drove this society. Instead the FBS had a missionary outlook, supplying books and tracts outside of Ireland. In its outlook and mission it was more similar to an evangelical society than the CBS had been.

The FBS was formed to cooperate with God and the Church by working for the salvation of souls. The biblical words from the Old Testament Book of Daniel: ‘They who instruct others unto justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity’, and the New Testament, Book of James: ‘He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death’, were the guiding principles on which the society was founded.<sup>202</sup> The FBS proposed to lead others to salvation by distributing books designed to advance ‘true piety and religion’.<sup>203</sup> This participation in the ministry of the Church was described by the society as ‘one of the greatest of human works’.<sup>204</sup>

The FBS gave itself the role of supporting the Church in its effort to promote reading and encourage piety. Its first responsibility was to help the Catholic clergy in the ‘truly Christian and benevolent work of supplying their flocks with Prayer and other pious books’.<sup>205</sup> The society aimed to provide parishes in Ireland with necessary books in both English and Irish (this is interesting because the Catholic Book Society never mentioned producing texts in Irish). In addition, the FBS aimed to encourage the formation of parochial libraries and supply religious libraries with appropriate works. The 1831 statutes for the Dublin province (Dublin, Kildare and Leighlin, Ferns, and Ossory)

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<sup>202</sup> Dan 12:3; James 5:20.

<sup>203</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 58.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

directed parish priests to set up parish libraries and encourage pious reading.<sup>206</sup> During each parish visitation Dr. Murray required the clergy to report on the number of volumes held in the parish library.<sup>207</sup> The FBS intended to support Catholic periodicals by subscribing to them and distributing them along with books. A further objective of the FBS was to discourage drinking by circulating tracts against drunkenness, which the society described as the greatest source of 'misery, disease, crime, and demoralization'.<sup>208</sup> Although the Total Abstinence Society was not formed until 1838, temperance groups were established in Ireland before the Total Abstinence campaign, and the Abstinence Pledge became a national phenomenon. Individual clerics and some bishops were active in promoting temperance. In 1829 Dr. Doyle wrote against drunkenness, describing it as one of the most: 'debasing and hateful vices'.<sup>209</sup> In Dublin a number of temperance societies were founded by priests. Fr. Henry Young preached against intemperance and Fr. John Spratt (the same Spratt who was on the Committee of Management and a trustee of the FBS, and founding member of the CBS) led temperance societies in Dublin.<sup>210</sup>

The FBS considered its role to be imperative not just to the Church in Ireland but also to the mission of the Catholic Church in general. Thus it decided to supply moral and religious works to Great Britain, the British colonies, and the United States. It aimed to send free books anywhere 'where the want of such books had been severely felt, and had retarded, in a great degree, the advancement of true religious and piety'.<sup>211</sup> In this endeavour the society was especially concerned with providing for Irish emigrants. The society planned to supply works of prayer and piety to soldiers, sailors, convicts, emigrants and inmates. Bishops and priests operating in foreign countries were invited to apply to the society for the religious works. According to Battersby's *Directory*, books were sent to the following places:

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<sup>206</sup> Edward Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland, c.445-1962: A Juridico-Historical Study of Irish Synodal Activity from the Early Days of Christianity in Ireland Up to the Second Vatican Council with Special Reference to Catechesis* (Rome, 1987), 62.

<sup>207</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese 1830-1842*, DDA/Murray Papers.

<sup>208</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 58.

<sup>209</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr Doyle*, 181.

<sup>210</sup> John F Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade: Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and Irish America*. (Amherst, 2002), 55-6.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

England, Scotland, Wales, Newfoundland, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Ceylon, and other parts of India; the Cape of Good Hope, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land; the several diocese in the United States of America; Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward's Island, Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Demerara, and the other West India Islands; Gibraltar, Malta, The Ionian Islands, St. Helena, Mauritius, Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, &c., &c.<sup>212</sup>

By 1836 the society had received a number of requests for books, some of which were printed in Battersby's *Catholic Directory*. The requests included a plea from a Catholic priest in Brazil who was obliged to 'tear a Prayer Book into three parts' to supply the needs of his congregation, and a letter from the Rev. Dr. Polding, Vicar Apostolic of New Holland and Tasmania, and later the first Bishop of Sydney, who had 25,000 Catholics 'chiefly natives of Ireland, or of Irish descent' under his care, who were greatly in need of books.<sup>213</sup> The FBS did not restrict itself to supplying the missions and colonies with religious books, the society additionally aimed to establish a mission fund to support the clergy abroad. The fund was to defray some of the cost of priests travelling to work on the missions.

The society asked the public to support its efforts by providing financial assistance. It felt that £2000 a year would be adequate funds to enable the society to affect 'incalculable good'.<sup>214</sup> As well as the above objectives, the society adopted four 'fundamental rules'. As the income of the FBS relied on subscriptions and donations, the first two rules were to safeguard the society from financial difficulties, such as those experienced by the CBS, of which Battersby would have been acutely aware. The rules were as follows:

- 1 – No books shall be purchased by the Society but for ready money.
- 2 – No debt whatever shall be incurred.
- 3 – No books shall be circulated but such as shall be approved of by the committee of inspection.

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<sup>212</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 60.

<sup>213</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 59.

<sup>214</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 62.

4 – No gratuitous contribution of books shall be made, unless there be sufficient proof of inability to purchase on the part of the persons who require them.<sup>215</sup>

The primary goal was the benefit of the poor, thus the FBS urged all those interested in the welfare of the poor and of a charitable disposition to make a donation to the society. It maintained that, in an age when Protestant evangelicals were working to convert Catholics, it would be ‘a matter of deep regret’ if the FBS, the ‘only one of its kind’, should fail for lack of support.<sup>216</sup>

#### The operation of the FBS 1835-1845

Confident in the support it received from the hierarchy, clergy and laity, the FBS began operating on the 13 December 1835. It appealed to the public for financial support and by December 1836 it had secured a capital of £355 6s. 6d. to begin working with. The society welcomed requests for books from parishes and institutions in Ireland and overseas. Free books were granted depending on the needs of the parish and the circumstances of the society. In 1836 Fr. Ford, the parish priest of Inishmagrath Co. Leitrim, wrote to the FBS and asked for books to be sent to his parish. Fr. Ford hoped that his parishioners would read books, especially during the winter, and in this way avoid congregating and drinking (a value shared by the FBS).

When the long nights of winter are generally spent by them [the laity] in their neighbours’ houses drinking perhaps, and amusing themselves to the ruin of their temporal happiness and the loss of their souls, by employing themselves in reading, these evils will be obviated.<sup>217</sup>

A grant of 256 tracts was sent to Inishmagrath parish, to the value of £5 2s. 6d.

In its first year the society sent free books to four Dublin parishes: Arklow, Blessington, Howth and Tallaght. It also bestowed books on the Medicity Institution and Female Penitents Asylum in Dublin, as well as 171 books to individuals in the Dublin area (See *Fig. 7.3*).<sup>218</sup> In its first year a total of 8,631 books were distributed at a cost of £170 19s. 10d. to the society (See *Fig.*

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<sup>215</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 64.

<sup>216</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 62.

<sup>217</sup> Cited in Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 177.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

7.1 & 7.2).<sup>219</sup> For its second year, 1836-1837, the FBS had an income of £305 (See *Figs. 7.4-6*).<sup>220</sup> By the end of 1837, 10, 064 books had been circulated at a cost of £296 3s. 7d.<sup>221</sup> From December 1835 to December 1837 the income of the FBS amounted to £640.<sup>222</sup> The society continued to operate until 1845 but did not print an annual report after 1837.

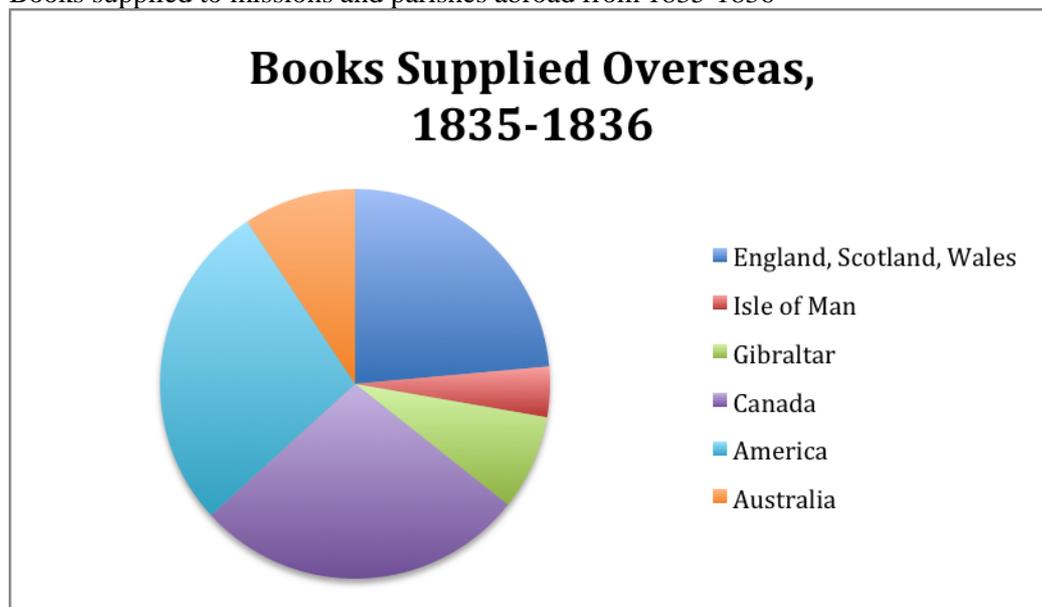
*Fig. 7.1*

Books granted by the FBS 13 December 1835 – 13 December 1836.<sup>223</sup>

Place	Tracts		
Dublin Diocese	1736		
The rest of Ireland	3980		
Overseas	2915	<b>Total circulated gratis:</b>	<b>8631</b>

*Fig. 7.2*

Books supplied to missions and parishes abroad from 1835-1836



<sup>219</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 177.

<sup>220</sup> In its 1836-1837 report, the FBS stated that 5,000 more books and tracts were in the process of being sent to parishes. As the society was close to fulfilling its yearly budget, the income for the year was £305. It is most likely that it was waiting for funds before sending these books.

<sup>221</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1838*, 459.

<sup>222</sup> Pettigrew and Oulton, *The Dublin Almanac, and the General Register of Ireland, for the Year of our Lord 1838, Being the First Year of the Reign of Her Present Majesty, Victoria &c, &c* (Dublin, 1838), 289.

<sup>223</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 177.

Fig. 7.3

Books granted to the Dublin Diocese 1835-1836.

Place	Tracts	Value	£.	s.	d.
Arklow, Co. Wicklow	386		5	15	4
Blessington, Co. Wicklow	314		6	2	0
Howth, Co. Dublin	619		10	16	11
Tallaght, Co. Dublin	80		2	9	3
Medicity Institution	112		2	16	9
Female Penitents, Domnick St.	34		1	0	0
Female Penitents, Drumcondra	20		1	0	0
Individuals in Dublin	171		3	2	0

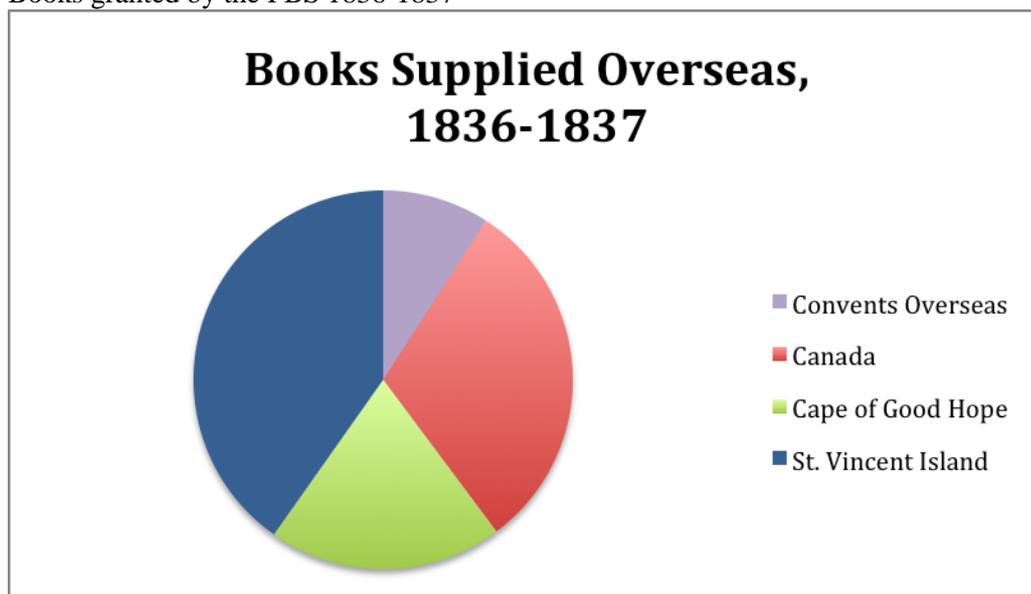
Fig. 7.4

Books granted by the FBS 1836-1837.<sup>224</sup>

Places	Tracts
Dublin Diocese	431
The rest of Ireland	7514
Overseas	2119
<b>Tracts:</b>	<b>10064</b>
<b>Value:</b>	<b>£296 3s. 7d.</b>

Fig. 7.5

Books granted by the FBS 1836-1837



<sup>224</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1838*, 459.

Fig. 7.6

Books granted to the Dublin Diocese 1836- 1837 <sup>225</sup>

Place	Tract	Value	£.	s.	d.
Bohernabreena, Co. Dublin	209		7	8	10
Goldenbridge, Dublin	25		1	8	0
Sandyford, Co. Dublin	197		7	11	9

As well as distributing books for free, the FBS also sold books at the lowest possible cost. In 1836 the society sent 230 books to Catholic soldiers garrisoned in Gibraltar at the request of their chaplain Fr. Meehan who wanted to establish a library. In August 1837, the society sent a second crate of 321 books, to the value of £8, 2s, 8d to the garrison.<sup>226</sup> From the correspondence between Fr. Meehan and the society it seems that money was sent to pay for the transport of these works. In October 1837 Fr. Meehan requested additional books. The sum of £6 was sent to the society collected from the soldiers in Meehan's care. He requested 20 double prayer books, psalters, and copies of Dr. Mac Hale's *Evidence of Christianity*, Dr. Doyle's *Letters on the State of Ireland*, Dr. Hay's *Sermons*, and books of instruction for establishing the confraternities of the Sacred Heart, Blessed Virgin, and the scapular, and any other useful works.<sup>227</sup> From its formation in 1835 to 1840 the FBS distributed 40,000 moral and religious books, most of these were free however, small charges may have applied.<sup>228</sup> While some of these were sent to missions, the majority were circulated around Ireland for the formation of parochial libraries.

The FBS came to an end in 1845 after just ten years of operation. It would seem that the society took on too great a task in its endeavour to answer to every need for Catholic texts. The aims of the FBS were so diverse that it is not completely surprising that the society disappeared after so short a period. 1845 was also the year the Church handed the CBS over to Battersby, perhaps running

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> Letter to Hamilton from Mr. Lyman, 9/August/1837, DDA/Hamilton Papers/35/7/134.

<sup>227</sup> Letter to Hamilton from Fr. Meehan, 1/February/1838, DDA/Hamilton Papers/36/1/22; Fr. Meehan asked the society to send anything except small tracts. Fr. Meehan explained: 'the men don't like to read these small affairs in the presence of dissenters who ridicule them unsparingly for those rags as they call them'.

<sup>228</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1840* (Dublin, 1840), 269.

two religious societies, virtually single-handedly, was too great a challenge for Battersby.

### The formation of the Religious Book Societies and Parochial Libraries

Religious Book Societies were formed in a number of parishes to disseminate Catholic works by establishing and maintaining parish libraries. In the original plan for the CBS, composed by Bishop Doyle, it was envisaged that libraries would be formed in towns and cities outside of Dublin to support the efforts of the CBS at a local level.<sup>229</sup> The FBS aimed to assist the dissemination of Catholic literature by promoting ‘the formation of Parochial Religious Libraries, one or more of which it would be desirable to see established in every Parish’ it also hoped parochial branches of the FBS would be formed throughout Ireland.<sup>230</sup> Although such institutions were slow to emerge, by the 1830s parishes in the Dublin diocese and the neighbouring diocese of Kildare and Leighlin had well stocked libraries.

The diocesan statutes for Leinster, issued in 1831, sanctioned and recommended the formation of parish libraries. It advised that a library be established in each parish to assist the uneducated in developing their faith by lending them approved religious books. It was anticipated that by ‘reading and meditating on them [books], in their respective houses, especially during winter, the faithful of Christ, may learn his duties towards God and neighbour’.<sup>231</sup> It was further hoped that by pursuing reading the laity would be ‘be able to render the nature of the hope, which, is in them, to all those who ask’.<sup>232</sup> The library was to be operated according to the ‘Rules of the Religious Book Society’, which were included in the appendix to the statutes.<sup>233</sup>

The Religious Book Society was a confraternity established by the Church hierarchy in 1831 to advance the reading of pious works and operate parish libraries. It was to be formed from members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, both of which were well established, and ‘every person of good character, who complies

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<sup>229</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr Doyle*, 139.

<sup>230</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 58.

<sup>231</sup> *The Diocesan Statutes of the Roman Catholic Bishops of the Province of Leinster*, 145.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> These rules were also printed in the *Catholic Penny Magazine* in 1834 and in Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1832*.

regularly with the duties of religion'.<sup>234</sup> The 'diffusion of religious instruction' was the sole purpose of the society.<sup>235</sup> The society was to lend books, appoint persons to read in the chapel and superintend the teaching of the catechism. The committee was to consist of a president, vice-president, secretary, librarian and treasurer, and a council of six members. The position of president was reserved for the parish priest, or curate, who was to govern the society. The duty of president was to oversee meetings of the council, examine the reports of the treasurer and secretary, and order books for the library. The society was placed under the patronage of St. Paul.<sup>236</sup>

Books for the library were to be approved of by the priest, as president. The librarian was in charge of purchasing the recommended works; lending them to the public and receiving them back. The library was 'a large case or box with a lock and key', kept in the church or sacristy.<sup>237</sup> To borrow a book, one had to become a member of the society (paying two pence a month) or be recommended by a member. Books were lent one at a time and could be taken out for a month. The secretary was to keep a record of each transaction, the name of the borrower, the title borrowed and the date returned. The capital to establish the library was to be raised from a collection taken in the chapel; subsequent books were purchased from the monthly fee paid by members. The rules of the Religious Book Society, twelve in total, were to be framed and hung in a 'conspicuous place' in the chapel.<sup>238</sup>

Libraries had been formed in the Dublin diocese prior to the 1831 statutes. According to the *Visitation Sheets* for 1830, 8 of the 15 parishes visited by Murray had formed lending libraries.<sup>239</sup> In the 8 libraries, the number of volumes ranged from 80 to 280.<sup>240</sup> Visitations provided an opportunity to encourage the formation of libraries and examine the progress, and content, of those already established. Parish priests were to record the number of volumes held in the library, and submit this to Murray prior to his arrival. During a

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<sup>234</sup> *The Diocesan Statutes of the Roman Catholic Bishops of the Province of Leinster* Appendix III.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, DDA/Murray Papers/1830.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

visitation Murray would no doubt have availed of the opportunity to encourage the formation of parish libraries. In June 1830, while giving evidence before the Select Committee on the State of the Poor in Ireland, Dr. Doyle, in the neighbouring diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, claimed that parochial libraries ‘consisting of a great number of volumes of religious works’ were attached to every chapel in his diocese.<sup>241</sup> The libraries were formed at his request, expressly stated during visitations:

On my first visitation, I explained to the people at considerable length, in every chapel, the great advantages of a library of this kind, how necessary it was to diffuse widely religious knowledge, and that the establishment of libraries was amongst the best means of doing so. I then desired, that upon the Sunday after my visitation, the priest would make a collection of money from the parishioners, and from the sums so collected purchase a stock of books, thus the libraries were originally formed; they have since received additions in consequence of monthly contributions.<sup>242</sup>

It is likely that libraries would have been established in the Kildare Diocese by 1830; however, they may not have been as widespread as Doyle reported. In 1824 a Mr John Dunn, giving evidence before a *Select Committee Appointed to inquire into the Disturbances in Ireland*, appears to confirm Doyle’s claim. He stated that Dr Doyle had been ‘most solicitous to have schools introduced, and libraries for the use of the people’.<sup>243</sup> In the libraries he had visited, Mr Dunn recalled seeing the works of Challoner, Dr. England, the *Life of Christ*, the *Death of Abel*, and works on the tenets of the Catholic religion and some books of Catholic devotion. The purpose of these books was ‘for the reading and instruction of the children, and the education of the more advanced people, that have not, in their early period, been educated’. Dunn, who was himself a Catholic, also stated that some of the books were read out in the chapel before Sunday Mass.<sup>244</sup> This was one of the duties of the Religious Book Society.

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<sup>241</sup> *Report of the Select Committee on the State of the Poor in Ireland; Being a Summary of the First, Second and Third Reports of Evidence taken before that Committee: Together with an Appendix of Accounts and Papers*, HC 1830 (667), vii, 428.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *State of Ireland. Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Disturbances in Ireland, in the Last Session of Parliament, 13 May – 18 June 1824*, HC 1825 (20), vii, 291.

<sup>244</sup> *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee ... Appointed to Inquire into the Disturbances in Ireland*, 291-2.

The Dublin *Visitation Sheets* only required the priest to record the number of volumes held in the library. Nevertheless, a few priests provided the title of the books as well. In 1830 the parochial library at Athy, Co. Kildare, possessed the following titles: Challoner's *Following of Christ* and *Grounds for Christian Doctrine*, Gahan's *Catholic Piety*, sermons by English priest James Archer, referred to as *Archer's Sermons*, *Commandments and Sacraments* by Hornihold, *Fifty Reasons* by the German Duke Anton Ulrich (1633-1714), *Office books*, and a book simply referred to as *Holy Week*.<sup>245</sup> In 1837 the description for Athy stated that the library contained: 'books for public instruction ... and several other small and useful books for the poor'.<sup>246</sup> The parish of Narraghmore in Kildare had the following: *Sermons* by Gahan, *Butler's lives of the Saints*, *Evangelical Life of Christ* by John Murphy, *Sinners Guide* by Luis de Granada, St. Francis de Sales' *Introduction to the devout life*, *Historical Catechism* by French priest and historian Claude Fleury (1640-1723), *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, *Think Well O'nt* and *The Douay Testament* both by Challoner, *Poor Man's Catechism* by the English Benedictine monk John Mannock (1681-1764), a work on the Mass by an author listed as Lochim, a title referred to as *Donell's Reflections*, and *Butler's Posthumous works* (possibly Samuel Butler).<sup>247</sup> In 1839 the parish of Blanchardstown in Co Dublin had 'more than 300 small volumes in the parochial library such as Manning's Shortest Way – Exposition of Bossuet – Grounds etc.'. <sup>248</sup> In 1840 the parish of Blessington, Co. Wicklow, described its library as 'a lending library of religious books sent hither by the Catholic Book Society, consisting of tracts, sermons, prayer books, catechisms'.<sup>249</sup> Of the 39 parishes located outside Dublin city, 30 had established religious libraries by 1842, with the number of volumes housed ranging from 50 to 200.<sup>250</sup>

### The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, 1899

By mid-century both the CBS and FBS had disappeared, except for the Catholic Depository which continued to be advertised at Battersby's Essex

<sup>245</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830.

<sup>246</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1837.

<sup>247</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830.

<sup>248</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1839.

<sup>249</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1840.

<sup>250</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/ 1830-1842.

Bridge address. The Church did not venture into publishing again until the end of the century when the hierarchy turned to books once again as a mean of promoting piety

In 1899 the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland was formed at a national congress of bishops held in Maynooth College. The Catholic Truth Society (CTS) was established in London in 1884 by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan to promote Catholic Doctrine.<sup>251</sup> The Irish society was formed following a rousing speech by the Rev. Dr. O' Riordan of Limerick where he complained of the Anglicisation and anti-Catholicism being fostered through the national education system and literature. He felt there was a need for an Irish version of the Catholic Truth Society, already established and operating in England and Scotland, to circulate cheap popular literature that would be 'at once Catholic and Irish'.<sup>252</sup> O'Riordan's paper was followed by Rev. Dr. Richard Sheehan, bishop of Waterford, who agreed with O'Riordan's sentiment and lamented the fact that 'bad reading' had been flooding the Irish market and that it was the Church's duty to supply the people with good reading material. Dr. Lynch of St. Wilfrid's in Manchester, who had been involved in the foundation of the society in England, concurred that Ireland needed her own CTS. He advised that all books should be one penny, so all could afford, but should be of good quality and illustrated. He also recommended that the society print religious books and avoid producing works of controversy. The Rev. Dr. Michael Hickey, Professor of Irish at Maynooth, agreed with Lynch saying that Ireland had no special need for controversial literature. He advised that any society formed should pay particular attention to native Irish speakers. It was agreed that a society should be formed and plans for it drawn up that very evening. The topic was closed by Dr. Kelly, Bishop of Ross, who stated that the dissemination of literature was essential so that the Irish people could 'give an account of the faith that was in them' as 'it was not enough that they should [only] have faith'.<sup>253</sup>

After its formation the first year was spent selecting titles and laying the foundations for the new society. 10 June 1890 the first set of titles was printed,

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<sup>251</sup> The Catholic Truth Society was originally formed in 1868; however in 1872 the progress of the society was halted following Vaughan's appointment as Bishop of Salford. In 1884, with the assistance of the layman James Britton, the CTS was re-established with Vaughan as its president.

<sup>252</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, June/23/1899.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

each priced at a penny. The first books printed by the new society included works by the bishops of Clonfert, Limerick, Derry, and Clogher. There were also works by the Irish poet Lady Gilbert, Rev. Sheehan the parish priest of Doneraile, Co. Cork, and the Jesuit John Conmee. Similar to the CBS, the CTS wished to provide the laity with the means of explaining the doctrines of their faith and to dispel misrepresentations propagated against the Catholic faith by other denominations.

The closing statement of Dr. Kelly, that it was ‘not enough’ for the laity simply to have faith, is reminiscent of the words spoken by Dr. Doyle in 1825 at the foundation of the CBS when he also quoted the epistle of St. Peter, that access to books would allow the laity to express the ‘hope that was in them’.<sup>254</sup> When the Catholic Church transferred the CBS to Battersby in 1845 it could have hardly anticipated the establishment of a similar society at the end of the century. The CTS was formed following the period of intense religious revival in Ireland, known as the ‘devotional revolution’ (c.1850-80). At this time Mass attendance, which is often used to indicate success of Church reform, was at its peak for the century. Yet, despite this liturgical adherence it was necessary for another book society, this time the CTS, to be established to instruct the laity in the doctrines of the Catholic faith. The Formation of the CTS demonstrates the importance of religious instruction to Church reform. The founders of the CTS, like those of the CBS and FBS, understood that true reform must be rooted in knowledge. While the CBS and FBS relied on reprints of Catholic classics to bulk-up their catalogue, the CTS created their own works. Determined to be Irish in origin the CTS did not rely on foreign works but commissioned pamphlets and tracts by Irish authors. In an effort to be perceived as a native endeavour, the CTS printed texts in Irish as well as English. This emphasis on creating Catholic works that were unique to Ireland rather than reprinting works of European origin marked the CTS from the previous endeavours of the CBS and FBS. With the improvement in material condition, rise of literacy, and language change the Irish laity were in a much better position to welcome a book society. Similarly, the Church now had the financial resources and influence to maintain such a society.

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<sup>254</sup> 1 Peter 3:15.

## Conclusion

The Church's foray into the publishing world proved to be a mixed success. In 1835 the CBS was described by William Battersby as: 'an institution, which, notwithstanding every difficulty thrown in the way, is likely to last longer and accomplish more for religion than any other ever founded in Ireland'.<sup>255</sup> Alas the CBS did not have the longevity predicted by Battersby disappearing sometime in the 1850s.

From the outset the CBS faced a number of challenges. After its initial formation, the launch of the society was delayed by three years, as the Church was preoccupied with education. Although it was met with widespread support from the hierarchy the initial sum raised was insufficient for the CBS to have its desired effect. The Society continued to struggle financially until the 1830s when it finally began to support itself through sales. Initially the CBS had hoped to establish local branches throughout Ireland, but this was not feasible and the Dublin committee remained the sole contact for the whole country. In 1845 the Church gave William Battersby full control of the CBS. Battersby had proven his commitment to providing religious literature and supporting the efforts of the Church by co-founding the FBS in 1835. The FBS was a lay-driven society, organised and managed by Battersby and Lynam, it encouraged the participation of the laity as well as the clergy. Through the FBS and CBS Battersby continued to offer cheap religious books until the 1850s.

The CBS was founded with three primary aims, to supply schoolbooks, to respond to the Evangelical Movement, and to bolster Church reform by improving religious knowledge. By 1845 the Church was a prominent figure in education and Protestant Evangelicals were no longer perceived as a pressing threat. The increase in libraries and reading rooms made religious books more accessible to the public and the development of lay religious societies concerned with promoting catechesis promised to improve knowledge of Catholic teaching.

The Church was interested in printing as a means of disseminating Church reform. Both the CBS and FBS printed religious works calculated to promote divine worship, frequent use of the sacraments, and approved devotions. At a time when the Church lacked both financial resources and personnel, books

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<sup>255</sup> Battersby, *The Life of the Rt. Rev. Dr Doyle*, 247.

were an ideal medium for transmitting religious knowledge and educating the laity in the Catholic faith. By offering such a range of cheap works, the CBS succeeded in reducing the price of Catholic texts, making books more accessible to the laity. It also improved the range of books available by catering to people of all circumstances, printing books for the poorly educated as well as supplying books to those with more advanced literacy.

## **Chapter Four:**

### **The Changing religious landscape: old traditions and the introduction of new practices**

Irish Catholic identity evolved over the course of the nineteenth century. Eighteenth century Catholics belonged to a 'hidden' Church, and received their spiritual sustenance from a combination of liturgical events and popular devotions. In the nineteenth century Irish Catholicism came to be characterised by church based devotions, private prayer and more active lay participation in the liturgical rites of the Church. The Catholic revival promoted the canonical ceremonies and prayer of the Church over popular Irish observances, such as patterns and stations. Similarly, sanitised devotions such as processions and novenas were endorsed as alternatives to traditional practices. Both liturgical and devotional reform must be considered to understand the development in lay practice.

Participation in the sacred liturgy of the Church was an important facet of the revival. The sacred liturgy, or liturgical prayer, is the prescribed public worship of the Catholic Church. Liturgical prayer includes the Mass, seven sacraments, and songs and prayers of the entire Church, otherwise known as the Divine Office. The importance of the sacred liturgy was emphasised at the Council of Trent, which provided in-depth teaching on the sacraments and confirmed the privileged place which the Mass and Eucharist held within the liturgy.<sup>1</sup> The Council put forward instructions to ensure that the Mass was celebrated with proper reverence and ceremony.<sup>2</sup> The Council wanted the laity to venerate the Eucharist and attend the Mass more regularly. Furthermore, Tridentine reform emphasised annual communion and confession, and receiving the sacraments in secular places was discouraged as the Council wished to restore religious practice to the parish church.

Despite the privileged position held by the liturgy, manifestations of faith were not restricted to Mass and the sacraments. Devotional prayer was recognised and endorsed by the Church as an important aspect in the spiritual life

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<sup>1</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Sess. XIII, C. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXII.

of the laity. Devotional prayer is private prayer, the prayer of the individual rather than the whole Church. It is made up of a spectrum of prayers and devotions, the most popular being the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, novenas, and devotions associated with the Virgin Mary and the saints. The Council directed the Church to ensure that devotions were not tainted by secular activities, and were free of what it viewed as idolatry and superstition.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, devotions were never to be used as a substitute for the liturgy but rather to complement it.

In pre-famine Ireland attendance at the Mass was low, in many cases limited to the minimum Pascal requirement. The celebration of Mass and confession was often held in private houses, a custom known as Stations. This became the preferred mode of attending Mass, especially in rural areas. Pilgrimage to a holy well, known as a pattern, was the most popular lay expressions of faith. Patterns, derived from the word patron indicating the saints to whom wells were dedicated, were vital to Irish Catholic identity and were attended more diligently than the Mass. Both Stations and patterns were accompanied by joviality and celebration, which regularly descended into unruly behaviour such as fighting and heavy drinking. The festivities, which invariably followed the religious ritual, soon became a source of embarrassment for the Church. According to Donal Kerr, Stations and patterns were ‘under attack, as a reforming church, in common with Tridentine Catholicism elsewhere, strove to exert discipline over popular forms of piety, fearful lest the superstitious and excessive festivity of many of those practices prevail over their religious aspects and lead, as they sometimes did, to abuses’.<sup>4</sup> This chapter will discuss the changes to lay religious practices by examining the reform of Stations and patterns.

Stations and patterns represent both the liturgical and devotional practices of the faithful. The Church hoped to transform lay worship by encouraging liturgical devotions such as the sacraments, the Divine Office, and benediction and veneration of the Eucharist as appropriate expressions of faith. Private devotions, which were considered to be in harmony with the teachings of the Church, were presented to the laity as more suitable forms of piety than the

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<sup>3</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Sess. XXV.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*, 48.

traditional pattern. In the course of the nineteenth century there was a rise in the use of set devotions in Ireland. This was not unique to Ireland but part of a wider Catholic phenomenon. Europe also witnessed an increase in devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, Blessed Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart in the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> These practices were accompanied by lay religious organisations and printed texts that endorsed liturgical and devotional orthodoxy. In Ireland numerous confraternities, sodalities and lay societies, were formed. This chapter will also examine the use of confraternities and religious texts, both of which were used to refocus religious expression.

### Stations and the celebration of the Mass

A Station is Mass and confession held in a private dwelling and was largely a rural phenomenon.<sup>6</sup> Generally, Stations occurred twice a year, to coincide with the celebration of Christmas and Easter, and were held for up to six weeks.<sup>7</sup> During this time, Stations were conducted in the homes of different parishioners each Sunday. It was customary for the priest to announce the upcoming Stations from the altar following Mass. Stations were held some distance from the chapel, in rural areas where parishioners found it difficult to travel to the parish church. On the appointed Sunday, the community was invited to gather at a chosen house where the priest heard confessions, celebrated Mass, and catechized the children.

Stations were normally, although not always, held in the home of the more affluent Catholic parishioners. Michael Carroll maintains the hosts were predominantly middle-class farmers.<sup>8</sup> The days preceding the event were spent preparing the house. According to William Carleton, in his tale *The Station*, the chosen parishioner spent the eve of the Station ‘scouring, washing, weeping,

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<sup>5</sup> Heimann, ‘Catholic Revivalism in Worship and Devotion’, 71-2.

<sup>6</sup> The word ‘Station’ has a variety of meanings when connected with Irish religious practice. It can refer to a place where mass is celebrated, a pilgrimage to a sacred place, or a set ritual at a sacred place, for instance the act of rounding at the Lough Derg pilgrimage is known as a station. For Mass and confession celebrated in the home of a parishioner, Station will be capitalised or referred to as Station Mass to differentiate from other forms of stations.

<sup>7</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of Right Rev. Dr. Doyle*, 98.

<sup>8</sup> Michael P. Carroll, *Irish Pilgrimage: Holy Wells and Popular Catholic Devotions* (Baltimore, 1999), 163.

pairing and repairing'.<sup>9</sup> The Station began early in the morning. Neighbours and parishioners assembled at the house where the priest heard confessions and gave absolution until the time came to celebrate the Mass. Provisions for Mass were basic; a table covered in a cloth was used for the altar. Large numbers attended Stations, gathering inside and outside the house. Those who had previously confessed received communion. When the Mass ended a breakfast was served. The breakfast was eaten by the priest, friends and neighbours of the host. According to William Fitzpatrick, the breakfast was attended by 'the better order of the communicants'.<sup>10</sup> The final duty of the priest was to spend some time instructing and catechising the laity, especially the children. The Station ended with a dinner, prepared by the host, for the priest and select guests. The rest of the evening was passed in 'mirth and jollity'.<sup>11</sup>

The Station was relied upon by both priests and people as a convenient means of fulfilling their religious obligations. The shortage of priests and chapels in the eighteenth century proved to be a considerable disadvantage for the Church. The inadequate number of priests during the nineteenth century led to a shortage of curates, especially in rural areas. Therefore many parishes had only one priest to meet the needs of an ever-increasing congregation.<sup>12</sup> The clergy were expected to provide spiritual care for their flock by facilitating Mass and confession, and providing education for the laity. With the lack of a curate it was increasingly difficult for the clergy to fulfil this pastoral duty. Stations provided an opportunity for the priest to meet a large group of parishioners together and provide pastoral care. Moreover, the shortage of churches made private homes an ideal location for the priest to celebrate the Mass. The inadequacy of church buildings in the eighteenth century further contributed to the reliance on Stations. A number of churches and chapels, which had been improperly maintained, were dilapidated and unsuitable for celebrating the Eucharist.

Mass-houses were often too small to accommodate the whole parish or inconveniently located.<sup>13</sup> Although country parishes had fewer households to

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<sup>9</sup> William Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish peasantry, with an Autobiographical Introduction, Explanatory Notes and Numerous Illustrations*, Vol. I (Dublin, 1843), 155.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle*, 98.

<sup>11</sup> Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, 157.

<sup>12</sup> 1800 ratio 1:2676; Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in pre-Famine Ireland, 1750-1850*, 193.

<sup>13</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 94-96.

administer to, compared to their city counterparts, parishioners were spread over a much wider geographical area, making pastoral work extremely difficult. According to Fitzpatrick, Stations were held ‘some distance from the chapel’ for the benefit of ‘small farmers and labourers necessarily much occupied’ so that they could ‘avail themselves of the sacraments’ without having to travel to the chapel.<sup>14</sup> As Emmet Larkin succinctly states in his work on the pastoral role of the clergy: ‘it was these conditions that produced the necessary rationalisation for a more efficient and effective use of the clergy’s time and energy in meeting the pastoral needs of an ever burgeoning Catholic population in the homes of their more substantial parishioners’.<sup>15</sup> Thus, it is unsurprising that Stations were primarily a rural phenomenon.

The Station Mass provided another very practical function; it was an opportunity for the priest to collect his dues and any outstanding fees. Unlike ministers of the Established Church, who received financial assistance from the state, the Catholic clergy were reliant on the laity for the bulk of their income. Although their primary means of living came from parishioners, the clergy often supplemented their income by maintaining an agricultural holding of some kind, such as a small plot or garden.<sup>16</sup> Dues were generally collected twice a year, at Easter and Christmas.<sup>17</sup> These half-yearly payments were collected at the Station Mass. The importance of Stations for collecting these dues should not be underestimated, as dues were the most regular source of income for the Catholic clergy. Dues were paid to the priest by the head of each family. The amount collected was not regulated and varied depending on the circumstances of the family and the custom of the diocese. In 1809 a priest from the diocese of Cork wrote that in the parishes he had served as a priest the sum collected was ‘generally a shilling at Easter, and a shilling at Christmas; some gave half a crown, some a crown, and some few a guinea a year’.<sup>18</sup> The payment, he wrote, was given to the priest ‘in consideration of his trouble in catechising, instructing,

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<sup>14</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle*, 97.

<sup>15</sup> Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church*, 194.

<sup>16</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 49.

<sup>17</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 244.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Letter from a Roman Catholic Clergyman of the Diocese of Cork, 1809’, in Thomas Newenham, *A View of the Natural, Political and Commercial Circumstances of Ireland* (London, 1809), Appendix, 39-42, 40.

and hearing the confessions of his [the parishioner's] family'.<sup>19</sup> Additional income was received from fees charged for baptisms, marriages, extreme unction, funerals and other functions. As well as the fee charged by the priest, there was an additional collection taken up during a wedding. The amount charged varied from one diocese to another, standardisation of fees did not occur until the nineteenth century. Gifts were likewise received as payment:

In some parts of the country custom has established, that a certain quantity of hay and oats is sent by the more opulent parishioners to the clergyman; that his turf should be cut, his corn reaped, his meadow mowed, &c. gratis; and I have been credibly informed that in some parts of Ireland, bordering on the sea coast, a certain quantity of fish is given to the priest, in lieu of parochial dues.<sup>20</sup>

According to Connolly the 'hospitality of parishioners' further enhanced the income of the clergy.<sup>21</sup> For example, it was customary for the priest to join the dinner that followed weddings, Stations or other events. The parish priest of Kilmore in Co. Armagh celebrated sixty Stations a year, mostly in private houses.<sup>22</sup> Dr. Doyle acknowledged this advantage, priests in his diocese, especially those in 'large populous parishes', celebrated up to one hundred stations a year: 'from which, of course, results a very capital saving in the article of house-keeping'.<sup>23</sup>

Station dinners were lavish affairs that incurred a hefty cost on the host. They were put on for the benefit of the priest, who 'did ample justice to the meats and drinks provided'.<sup>24</sup> In many parishes there was a rivalry amongst Station hosts to provide the most lavish meal, which naturally added to the cost.<sup>25</sup> Although the clergy did not necessarily encourage such rivalries, the fact that they participated in the dinner led to severe criticism. By the 1780s the Rightboy movement in Munster was including fees, dues, and the expectation of hospitality by the Catholic clergy to their list of grievances.<sup>26</sup> As well as claiming

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Cited in: Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 50.

<sup>22</sup> Yates, *The Religious Condition of Ireland*, 155; Kerr, *Peel, Priest and Politics*, 48.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle*, 98.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; 'Letter from a Roman Catholic Clergyman of the Diocese of Cork', 40-41.

<sup>26</sup> For more information on the Rightboy Movement and its grievances see S J Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 244-252.

the clergy charged excessive fees; the Rightboys stated that the parish priest imposed himself on his parishioners, citing the Station dinner as an example. They advised the Catholic laity to resist the clergy and deny hospitality.<sup>27</sup> Archbishop Butler of Cashel held a meeting in Cork, on 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1786, and issued a pastoral addressed to the priests of his diocese warning them not to extract exorbitant fees. The pastoral forbid them from imposing on their parishioners at Stations.<sup>28</sup> In September 1786 Bishop Troy of Ossory issued similar regulations, as did MacKenna of Cloyne and Ross.<sup>29</sup> Apart from the cost, Station dinners were disapproved of by the hierarchy for the impropriety that arose from the priest socialising and drinking with his parishioners. According to Fitzpatrick, Dr. Doyle believed the mingling of priest and people ‘lowered the dignity and the solemnity of the Sacrament of Penance for the repentant sinners to associate convivially with the dispensers of the sacred mysteries of God’.<sup>30</sup>

While the expense and scandal of station dinners featured in Church regulations, the two major concerns were the conditions in which the sacraments were celebrated and the manner in which dues were collected. As already mentioned, Stations provided the clergy with an ideal opportunity to collect their dues. Traditionally, dues were received at Christmas and Easter, which coincided with the period for Stations. Nonetheless, the hierarchy was rightly apprehensive about the methods for collecting dues, as it was common for the priest to receive them during the course of confession. The danger was that priests could potentially withhold the sacrament of confession from a parishioner who could or would not pay. In addition, the collection of dues could easily be mistaken as a payment for absolution. The concerns of the hierarchy were justified. In 1825 the Rev. T.W. Dixon explained to the *Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the State of Ireland* the method for collecting fees and dues from the Catholic laity. Dixon, a former Catholic priest who had converted and become a minister of the Church of Ireland, was able to provide the commissioners with a first-hand account. He does not make it clear that the payment received was not for absolution but rather a payment of dues, separate to confession.

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<sup>27</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 230.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle*, 98.

How often is confession required by the Roman Catholic church? It is required twice a year, at Christmas and at Easter, and under the penalty of very severe punishment they must confess at least once a year

Are they accustomed to require confession oftener? They are recommended as often as possible, but they must conform to the practice once a year.

Is any payment made to the priest upon confession? Yes.

Is there any settled rate or does it vary? It is generally settled in most parishes, though in different parishes the rates may vary. In that in which I was, the rate was generally the same all over the diocese; at Christmas and at Easter they paid I recollect, 2s. 6d. at each time; and the younger members of the family paid something less than that.

If they confessed at other periods than the two you have named, did they pay the priest upon confession? I have not known it in my time; I have known no instances of that nature. The parish being very extensive, twice a year was as often as I could expect them; I do not recollect an instance of their confessing oftener than twice a year.<sup>31</sup>

A further issue was the manner in which the sacraments were celebrated during the Station. The homes of parishioners were not considered to be suitable venues for hearing confession, or celebrating the Eucharist. Firstly, the large crowds gathered at Stations must have made it extremely difficult to make a private confession. In addition, the provisions for celebrating the Mass were basic and it was not always celebrated with due ceremony. In February 1829 the committee of bishops, appointed to investigate problems relating to discipline within the Irish Church, presented a detailed account to the ecclesiastics assembled in Dublin for the Bishop's AGM. The committee reported a number of discrepancies in religious practice and highlighted areas in need of reform. It was found that the clergy frequently celebrated Mass with altar cloths and vestments 'not becoming the sacred ministry'.<sup>32</sup> At some Stations the priest distributed communion, which priests often carried constantly on their person for want of a

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<sup>31</sup> *Minutes of Evidence taken before Select Committee of the House of Lords, Appointed to inquire into the State of Ireland, more Particularly with Reference to the Circumstances, which may have led to Disturbances in that part of the United Kingdom. 24 March – 22 June 1825, HC (521), 507.*

<sup>32</sup> *Minute Book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops February 1826 - November 1849.*

tabernacle, without actually saying the Mass. In relation to confession, the committee reported that the laity primarily confessed in private houses rather than chapels, and generally this confession was during a Station. As well as lamenting the payment of dues in the confessional, the committee regretted to report that the clergy seldom wore a stole or any distinguishing vestments while administering the sacrament. Similar to Mass and confession, the sacrament of Baptism was also received in the home.<sup>33</sup> The Catholic hierarchy was determined to reform the abuses that occurred at stations. At the 1829 AGM the assembled bishops passed fourteen regulations, to be implemented in each diocese, to standardise religious practice in the Irish Church. Three of these regulations related directly to stations. It was resolved that Mass must be celebrated at every Station; on the evening of a Station the clergy were not to dine in the house where the Station was held; and the clergy were never to receive payment of dues in the confessional.<sup>34</sup>

The benefit of the Station Mass to the Irish Church outweighed the problems associated with it, for this reason the hierarchy was content for the practice to continue. The Council of Trent in a 'Decree concerning the things to be observed, and to be avoided, in the celebration of Mass', declared:

Nor shall they [bishops] suffer the holy sacrifice to be celebrated, either by any Seculars or Regulars whatsoever, in private houses; or, at all, out of the church, and those oratories which are dedicated solely to divine worship.<sup>35</sup>

Therefore, Mass, and the other sacraments, should only be celebrated in a church, as administering the sacraments in a public place would detract from the solemnity of the occasion. Although the Irish Church was in the process of implementing the standards laid down by Trent it recognised that Stations, especially in rural areas, were a great necessity.

### The Station in the Dublin Diocese

The Station Mass was an issue in the Dublin Dioceses as much as elsewhere in Ireland. As with other diocese, the Dublin Hierarchy understood the

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Session XXII.*

necessity of the practice. This is evident in the correspondence between Dr. Troy and the Congregation for Propagation of the Faith on the topic of Stations.<sup>36</sup> The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Troy, received a letter from Cardinal Fontana, Prefect of Propaganda, dated March 1819. Fontana informed Troy that it had come to his attention that Stations were still used in Ireland to administer the sacraments. Fontana maintained the practice of Stations, at which ‘the guests are often guilty of gluttony and drunkenness’, should be completely abolished.<sup>37</sup> In April 1820 Troy wrote to Fontana addressing the issue of Stations throughout Ireland. Administering the sacraments in private dwellings, according to Troy, was convenient not only for the priest but also the laity. Troy argued that Stations were indispensable in country parishes where ‘the people scattered in their varied small holdings, or Tenants far from the Parochial Chapel, are hardly able to go hear Mass on Sundays’.<sup>38</sup> He continued, ‘this custom is universal, and so ingrained for centuries in the minds of Catholics that it could not be removed without scandal and damage to the devotion for the Holy Sacraments’.<sup>39</sup> In 1821 the subject of Stations still had not been resolved and Troy received a further letter from Fontana, dated the 7<sup>th</sup> of April. Fontana informed Troy that Propaganda was writing to him and the other three archbishops regarding the abuses in the Irish Church, especially clandestine marriages and Stations. The four archbishops were to act ‘unitedly’ to eradicate the irregularities and abuses found in Ireland.<sup>40</sup> Instructions, outlining the Tridentine regulations, were to be published in all churches and priests were to explain the regulations to the laity.<sup>41</sup> Despite the desires of Rome, the Irish bishops were content to reform, rather than remove, Stations. The hierarchy committed to removing the abuses associated with Stations, and the practice of celebrating the mass in the homes of the laity continued to be an important feature of Irish Catholicism.

Stations developed in the eighteenth century to compensate for the lack of church buildings, thus, the rebuilding of Churches in the nineteenth century played an important role in returning the focus of religious activities to the parish church. In the eighteenth century, as many as 60% of chapels in penal Dublin

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<sup>36</sup> Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, henceforth referred to as Propaganda.

<sup>37</sup> *Troy Finding Aid*, ‘Roman Correspondence’, DDA/AB2/28/01, 207.

<sup>38</sup> Cited in Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church*, 203.

<sup>39</sup> Cited in Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church*, 204.

<sup>40</sup> *Troy Finding Aid*, ‘Roman Correspondence’, 28/1/229.

<sup>41</sup> *Troy Finding Aid*, ‘Roman Correspondence’, 28/1/228.

were in poor condition and many were considered to be unsafe.<sup>42</sup> The poor condition of chapels, coupled with overcrowding, resulted in a number of accidents occurring. In Skippers Lane, just off Cook St., a stable was converted into a mass-house.<sup>43</sup> In 1716 the loft of the stable collapsed killing four people.<sup>44</sup> The mass-house was moved to another stable in nearby Rosemary Lane. In 1738 members of the congregation at Hawkins St. were injured when a beam fell.<sup>45</sup> The most serious incident occurred in 1749 when a poorly maintained mass-house, situated in Pill Lane, caved in killing a priest and 9 parishioners.<sup>46</sup> Although most Dublin parishes could boast a mass-house in the eighteenth century, the condition of these greatly varied, as a number were established in converted stables and warehouses.<sup>47</sup> The chapel at Hawkin St. was a renovated stable. Rosemary Lane was another stable, until 1810 when the church of Ss. Michael and John was built on Essex Quay.<sup>48</sup> The mass-house connected to St. Paul's parish was a stable until 1835 when the church of St. Paul's was erected on Arran Quay.<sup>49</sup> Chapel accommodation in rural parishes was also inadequate. The period from 1820 to 1840 was the most concentrated era of church building in the century, as the Church began to renovate and replace disused and dilapidated churches.<sup>50</sup> In the Dublin Diocese rural parishes were often a union of two or more townlands, spanning a wide area. For instance, the parish of Ballymore Eustace in Co. Kildare, was comprised of Ballymore Eustace, Tipperkevin, and Hollywood. By 1830 it had a Catholic population of 6,394 but only two chapels (Ballymore and Hollywood).<sup>51</sup> Chapels were commonly located in the town and therefore not accessible to those in the most remote parts of the parish. The size of these country parishes is evident by the number of churches build in the nineteenth century. The parish of Rathfarnham, just south of the city,

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<sup>42</sup> Kelly, 'The Impact of the Penal Laws', 156.

<sup>43</sup> 'Report on the State of Popery in Ireland, 1731: Diocese of Dublin', *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 4 (1915), 131-177, 140.

<sup>44</sup> Nuala Burke, 'A Hidden Church?', 81; James Collins, *Life in Old Dublin, Historical Associations of Cook Street, Three Centuries of Dublin Printing, Reminiscence of a Great Tribune*, (Dublin, 1913), 143.

<sup>45</sup> Burke, 'A Hidden Church?', 81.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Burke, 'A Hidden Church?', 86.

<sup>48</sup> For more detailed information about renovation of chapels see Chapter One.

<sup>49</sup> Collins, *Life in Old Dublin*, 10.

<sup>50</sup> Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 118; Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 108.

<sup>51</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830.

had four churches, the primary church and three chapels of ease. In Co. Kildare, the union of Maynooth, Lexlip, Confey, and Taghadoe was served by three chapels.<sup>52</sup> The Parish of Rathdrum in Co. Wicklow had a parish church and two chapels of ease.<sup>53</sup> The increased availability of church buildings and chapels of eases led to the priests reverting to churches rather than private homes for the celebration of Mass.<sup>54</sup> However, it is likely that Stations, which served a social as well as religious function, continues to be used in rural areas. In 1829 the AGM of Catholic bishops was told that priests were celebrating two Masses on Sundays, a public Mass in the chapel and a second, private Mass, in the home of a parishioner.<sup>55</sup> In the visitation sheets for the Dublin diocese, priests often list the number of Sunday Masses. There is only one mention of Stations in the returns but this may be because the clergy were only asked for the number of 'public masses'.<sup>56</sup> In 1840 the parish priest of Newbridge reported an increase in parishioners approaching the sacraments during the months when no Stations were held in the parish, with up to 100 monthly communicants on such occasions.<sup>57</sup> This confirms the continued reliance on Stations in some rural areas, and the possibility that the laity preferred to receive the sacraments during the Station Mass. The hierarchy were successful in transferring the sacrament of Baptism from the home to the parish church. However, unlike the practice of patterns, Stations were never condemned outright or completely abolished.

#### Popular devotion: patterns and pilgrimage to holy wells

A pattern is a celebration that takes place on the feast-days of a saint. Patterns were held at holy wells associated with a local saint. A holy well is a spring of water believed to have the power to cure. The spring is considered holy because of its association with a saint who was believed to have consecrated the water. Very often walls were built around the water to protect it; in some cases large stone structures were built to completely cover the water. A stone that had a cross etched into it often marked the entrance. Altars were usually erected near

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<sup>52</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830.

<sup>53</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1840.

<sup>54</sup> For list of Church buildings see Appendix B.

<sup>55</sup> *Minute book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops February 1826 - November 1849*.

<sup>56</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830-51.

<sup>57</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1840; The parish of Newbridge in Co. Wicklow, he refers to them as 'Stations at the houses'.

the well, often accompanied by shrines.<sup>58</sup> There are believed to be at least 3,000 holy wells spread throughout Ireland.<sup>59</sup> Wells were generally named after a saint or holy person associated with the well. Wells were named after the Virgin Mary, national saints such as St. Patrick or Bridget, or important Catholic saints like St. Catherine or St. John. However, the majority of wells were named after local saints with an association to the area. Each well had its own separate pattern. Devotions at holy wells occurred throughout the year as locals would make individual pilgrimages to these holy places. There were many reasons why pilgrims visited holy wells including atonement for past sins, the hope of obtaining a cure, seeking a favour, or simply as an act of piety.

While devotions occurred throughout the year, patterns were generally held once, on the feast of the patron saint. Holy wells and patterns had long been a part of Catholic devotions in Ireland. During the eighteenth century they became a focal point for popular religious expression. Patterns provided the laity with an opportunity to outwardly display their faith and acknowledge their continued adherence to Catholicism. Patterns were attended by large numbers, as the Catholic community gathered to celebrate the feast of the saint. On the day of a pattern devotees gathered and performed the ceremonies specific to the well. The sequence of devotions differed from one station to another, as did the number of prayers and rounds; nevertheless there were a number of key rites, which were general to all patterns. The rites included performing rounds, or circuits, of the well; drinking water from the well; bathing in the well; leaving a votive offering such as a pebble or a rag; and rounding stones and trees in the vicinity of the well believed to be sacred by association.<sup>60</sup> On the day of a pattern Mass was celebrated in the local chapel or at the holy well itself. Patterns were supported and encouraged by the local clergy who, like their parishioners, believed the devotions at the wells were sacred. The clergy participated by celebrating Mass and hearing confession. Furthermore, the clergy prescribed 'rounds' of the well as a form of penance.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Thomas Crofton Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland; Illustrative of the Scenery, Architectural Remains, and the Manners and Superstitions of the Peasantry, with an Appendix Containing the Private Narrative of the Rebellion of 1798* (London, 1824), 282; Michael P Carroll, *Irish Pilgrimage: Holy Wells and Popular Catholic Devotion*, 22.

<sup>59</sup> Kelly, 'The Impact of the Penal Laws', 165.

<sup>60</sup> Patrick Logan, *The Holy Wells of Ireland* (Buckinghamshire, 1980), 21.

<sup>61</sup> William Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry, Vol. III* (Dublin, 1833), 266.

Patterns were public affairs and attracted large numbers. The crowds provided merchants with an opportunity to sell their wares. On the day of a pattern, tents were erected in the vicinity of the well to sell food and alcohol and provide entertainment for the pilgrims. The result, according to Connolly ‘was something resembling a fair or a carnival’.<sup>62</sup> Thomas Crofton Croker, who attended a pattern in 1813 and 1815, described the effect as: ‘resembling a gipsy encampment’.<sup>63</sup> After performing the religious rites, pilgrims made their way to the booths and tents where they partook of food and drink and then spent the remainder of the night singing, dancing and enjoying the entertainment. The contradiction between the solemnity of the devotions and the entertainment that followed was explained thus by William Carleton:

It is quite usual to see young men and women devoutly circumambulating the well or lake on their bare knees, with all the marks of penitence and contrition strongly impressed on their faces; whilst again, after an hour or two, the same individuals may be found in a tent dancing with ecstatic vehemence to the music of the bagpipes or fiddle.<sup>64</sup>

Fuelled by alcohol, riots and fights regularly broke out. Apart from spontaneous quarrels, patterns were selected as venues for fights. In 1834 Henry Inglis, a Scottish travel writer attended a pattern outside Galway where he witnessed a faction fight between two families, where ‘five or six were disabled: but there was no homicide’.<sup>65</sup> According to Croker ‘patrons were professedly selected for the purpose of contest, by hostile factions or clans that met, and, when the rites of devotions were ended, fought’.<sup>66</sup> The music, drinking and fighting was regularly described by travel writers and often drew criticism from outside observers.

Patterns were seen by outsiders to be superstitious, and the activities that followed were viewed as profane and incompatible with acts of faith. In the 1703 ‘Act to prevent the further growth of popery’, patterns, described by the act as ‘superstitious’ and ‘dangerous’ were outlawed, with fines imposed on those who did not comply with the order:

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<sup>62</sup> Connolly *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 139.

<sup>63</sup> Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 280.

<sup>64</sup> Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (1843), xxiv.

<sup>65</sup> Henry Inglis, *Ireland in 1834. A Journey Throughout Ireland, During the Spring, Summer, and Autumn of 1834* (London, 1834), 227.

<sup>66</sup> Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 283.

Whereas the superstitions of popery are greatly increased and upheld by the pretend sanctity of places ... and of wells to which pilgrimages are made by vast numbers at certain seasons ... all such meetings and assemblies shall be deemed and adjudged riots, and unlawful assemblies, and punishable as such ... And for the more effectual preventing and suppressing [of] all such superstitious, dangerous, and unlawful assemblies; be it further enacted, that all and every person and persons meeting or assembling at ... any such well or place contrary to this act ... shall forfeit ten shillings ... and if such offender or offenders shall neglect or refuse to pay the said sum ... all and every such offender ... [is] to be publickly whipped.<sup>67</sup>

The religious elements of the wells were discounted as being irrational and an excuse for disturbances. The Act noted that: ‘many thousands of papists’ gathered at holy wells. Section 27 of the Act singled out the tents as contributing to the problem associated with holy wells. The tents were to be abolished and: ‘all and every person and persons, who at such assemblies build booths, sell ale, victuals, or other commodities... shall forfeit and pay the sum of twenty shillings.’<sup>68</sup> However, the law was not enforced, and patterns continued to be popular throughout the eighteenth and the nineteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, observers of patterns stated that the secular activities greatly overshadowed the religious elements. After his tour in 1834, Henry Inglis believed the festivities and fighting had become the central attraction for attending patterns, rather than the religious devotions. He wrote:

A pattern was originally a religious ceremony, and was, and still is, always celebrated near to a holy well; but although some still frequent the patterns for devotional purposes, it is now resorted to chiefly as a place of recreation.<sup>69</sup>

Thomas Croker, who twice attended the pattern on Gougane Barra, wrote that the religious ceremonies ‘are destroyed by the disgraceful riot of the patron, a

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<sup>67</sup> ‘An Act to Prevent the Further Growth of Popery’, 2 Anne C.6 (1703), Section 26-27.

<sup>68</sup> ‘An Act to Prevent the Further Growth of Popery’ Section 27.

<sup>69</sup> Inglis, *Ireland in 1834*, 225.

meeting that seems established only to profane all that is impressive, simple, and pious'.<sup>70</sup>

The Church had long disapproved of the secular activities that followed patterns and was eager to remove them. These activities brought scandal to the Irish Church and tainted the prayers and rituals performed at the wells. In 1660 the Tuam Synod agreed that: 'dancing, flute-playing, singing in harmony, intermingling and other such abuses are all forbidden during the visitation of wells and other holy places especially during the period when indulgences can be earned'.<sup>71</sup> While in 1782, Dr. Troy, then bishop of Ossory, lamented that patterns ended in 'the greatest impurities' and declared that the sacraments should be denied to anyone who allowed their land to be used for selling alcohol or constructing tents.<sup>72</sup> Regardless of the intentions of the hierarchy, the laity, and even some of the clergy, continued to resort to patterns to display their religious commitment.

As well as the embarrassment caused by the association of the Catholic laity with drinking and fighting, the Church had a further reason for wishing, if not to abolish, at least to reform devotions at holy wells. The hierarchy was aware that certain elements of the devotions were not in accord with the standards set by the Catholic Church. At holy wells, penitents and pilgrims rounded the well a certain number of times, reciting a certain number of prayers. These rites were not proscribed by the clergy or Church but rather developed over time. The formula of prayers and circuits, which varied from well to well, were not necessary for faith, and the importance attributed to them by the laity needed to be addressed by the Church. The laity believed the water in certain wells was imbued with the power to heal. Chink Well in Portrane, for instance, was said to cure whooping cough while St. Colmcille's Well in Tallaght could heal any ailment associated with eyes, ears, or throat.<sup>73</sup> It was believed that wells had the ability to dry up, move or disappear if treated with irreverence. The power attributed to wells, and the water within them, was a concern raised as early as 1614 by the Synod of Drogheda. It concluded that the beliefs of the laity

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<sup>70</sup> Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 283.

<sup>71</sup> Carroll, *Irish Pilgrimage: Holy Wells*, 45.

<sup>72</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 147.

<sup>73</sup> Caoimhín Ó Danachair, 'The Holy Wells of County Dublin', *Reportorium Novum*, Vol. II, No. 1 (1958), 68-87, 86; Logan, *The Holy Wells of Ireland*, 58.

were closer to superstition than Catholicism. The synod was anxious that any hint of superstition be removed from devotions and encouraged the clergy to strictly monitor activity at wells. It also urged the clergy to be cautious about the curative power of the wells: 'If it be certain that these waters have naturally, or through the intercession of a particular saint, the power of healing, or any virtue, the people are not to be prevented from assembling there, provided the danger of abuse be removed'.<sup>74</sup> The association of devotions with superstitious practices was raised at the 1660 Synod of Tuam.<sup>75</sup> Again, in 1771 the bishop of Ferns believed that the laity used the pretence of piety to participate in the immoral festivities of the patterns, he ordered the priests of his diocese to: 'discourage as much as ye can patrons or pilgrimages, or meetings of pretended devotion, or rather of real dissipation and dissoluteness'.<sup>76</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century some bishops were calling for patterns to be completely abolished. In 1782 the Diocese of Cashel and Emly called for patterns to be 'abolished altogether because of the many abuses'.<sup>77</sup> The bishop of Cork, Dr Murphy, completely removed his support for the pattern at Gougane Barra in 1818.<sup>78</sup> In 1829 at the AGM of Catholic bishops, those assembled agreed that: 'Pilgrimages to wells be totally abolished'.<sup>79</sup> Priests were not to celebrate Mass before patterns, or attend them, as this gave sanction to the devotions.

In its attempt to abolish patterns, the Church faced resistance from the laity and some of the clergy. Even when patterns were condemned by the bishops and abandoned by the local clergy, the laity continued to hold devotions at wells. In 1818 Bishop Murphy of Cork forbade devotions on Gougane Barra. Still, when the Protestant Evangelical Caesar Otway visited the site, in the mid-1820s, he saw pilgrims doing their 'rounds'.<sup>80</sup> Devotions at holy wells continued despite the lack of clerical support because the devotions were not reliant on the clergy. The clergy had provided a liturgical element by celebrating Mass and hearing confession on pattern days, thus legitimising the devotion. In spite of this, the

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<sup>74</sup> Carroll, *Irish Pilgrimage: Holy Wells*, 44.

<sup>75</sup> Renehan, *Collections on Irish Church History*, 502.

<sup>76</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 141.

<sup>77</sup> Renehan, *Collections on Irish Church History*

<sup>78</sup> Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 283.

<sup>79</sup> *Minute Book of Meetings of the Irish Bishops February 1826 - November 1849*.

<sup>80</sup> Caesar Otway, *Sketches in Ireland: Descriptive of Interesting, and Hitherto Unnoticed Districts, in the North and South* (Dublin, 1828), 312.

rituals associated with holy wells were essentially private devotional practices, and while Mass and the presence of the priest had enhanced the celebrations at wells the devotions were not dependent on them. It was the kneeling, praying, rounding, washing and other rituals that were integral to the devotion. Thus in 1858 when the Protestant writer John B. Doyle visited the holy well at Strewell in Co. Down, he observed members of the laity ‘upon their bare knees’ despite the fact that the pattern had long been abandoned by the Church.<sup>81</sup>

### Patterns in the Dublin Diocese

Of the 3,000 Holy Wells found in Ireland, over 200 are located in the Dublin Diocese.<sup>82</sup> Similar to wells throughout Ireland, those in the Dublin area were dedicated to a Saint or holy figure, usually a patron with a local connection. For example, St. Cronan’s Well in the parish of Brackenstown, St. Maccullin’s Well in Lusk, St. Doolagh/Duileach’s Well in Ballgriffin, St. Begnet’s Well in Dalkey.<sup>83</sup> There were exceptions to this format such as, Sunday’s Well in Malahide, or Chink Well in Portrane, both without a patron.<sup>84</sup>

Although there was a concerted effort to abolish patterns in the Diocese, some of the more popular patron days continued to draw pilgrims. The pattern at St. John’s well in Kilmainham was held annually on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June on the feast of St. John the Baptist and it attracted large numbers. In 1710 a crowd of 10,000 gathered to celebrate the pattern and as the century progressed devotion to the well showed no signs of abating.<sup>85</sup> In 1786 Archbishop Carpenter (1770-1786) of Dublin tried to put a stop to this pattern but to no avail. Carpenter forbade the laity from attending the well, where: ‘under the pretext of devotion occasion many scandalous enormities not only disgraceful to religion but to civil society’.<sup>86</sup> His successor Dr. Troy similarly discouraged the pattern in Kilmainham. In a pastoral address, read to the congregation in Dublin city chapels in 1787, Troy stated that those who attend the annual St John’s day

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<sup>81</sup> John B. Doyle, *Tours in Ulster: A Hand-Book to the Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Ireland*. (Dublin, 1854), 87.

<sup>82</sup> Kelly, ‘The Impact of the Penal Laws’, 165.

<sup>83</sup> Ó Danachair, ‘The Holy Wells of County Dublin’, 69-70; Logan, *The Holy Wells of Ireland*, 88.

<sup>84</sup> Ó Danachair, ‘The Holy Wells of County Dublin’, 70.

<sup>85</sup> Kelly, ‘The Impact of the Penal Laws’, 151

<sup>86</sup> M. J. Curran, ‘Instructions, Admonitions, etc. of Archbishop Carpenter, 1770-1786’, *Reportorium Novum*, Vol. II, No. 1 (1958), 148-171, 171.

pattern did not receive any spiritual benefit but rather ‘scandalized their holy religion and disturbed public peace by their criminal excesses’.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, St. John’s well continued to be a popular site for pilgrims and the pattern continued into the 1830s.<sup>88</sup> In the parish of Balbriggan, situated in Fingal in north Co. Dublin, holy wells were similarly resorted to into the 1830s. There are six known holy wells in the vicinity of Balbriggan. In 1834 the parish priest, Fr. John Smyth, admitted in a parish return that his parishioners still diligently attended ‘patron days and festivals thro’ the year’.<sup>89</sup>

Religious practices such as Stations and patterns formed an important aspect of Catholic identity in pre-famine Ireland. They represent two sides of Catholic prayer: public and private, liturgical and devotional. By taking part in these ceremonies the laity believed they were fulfilling their religious duty and, unlike diocesan synods, did not consider these practices to be unorthodox or in conflict with their Christian faith. The rituals surrounding Stations and patterns were so uniquely Catholic that, according to Michael Carroll, they validated Catholic identity and were as important as attendance at Mass to the laity.<sup>90</sup> The synod of Tuam in 1660 issued the following warning to the clergy: ‘Take care too that people do not use the appearance of devotion during these visitations to avoid hearing Mass on Sundays and holy days’.<sup>91</sup> The ‘visitations’ referred to are patterns. When Troy condemned the pattern at Kilmainham, he invited the laity to repair to the city chapels and pray there rather than at the well.<sup>92</sup> The Church was thus aware of the significance the laity placed on these devotions, placing them on a par with the Mass. Indeed, the parish priest of Balbriggan, Fr. Smyth, viewed patterns as indicators of piety. Reporting to Dr. Murray on the number of communicants in his parish he commented that only a handful of parishioners neglected the sacraments, stating members of confraternities received once a month and ‘very many’ attended patterns and festivals.<sup>93</sup> Evidently, Fr. Smyth

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<sup>87</sup> Cited in D’Alton, *The History of the County of Dublin*, 632.

<sup>88</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 144; D’Alton, *The History of the County of Dublin*, 632.

<sup>89</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1834.

<sup>90</sup> Michael P Carroll, ‘Rethinking Popular Catholicism in Pre-Famine Ireland’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1995, Vol. 34), 354-365, 356.

<sup>91</sup> Carroll, *Irish Pilgrimage: Holy Wells*, 45.

<sup>92</sup> Keogh, ‘“The Pattern of the Flock”: John Thomas Troy, 1786-1823’, 229.

<sup>93</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1834.

was not concerned about patterns and viewed lay participation as a sign of devoutness rather than disobedience or superstition.

It was easier to reform Stations, as the clergy were responsible for the majority of abuses associated with the custom. The reform of Stations was essentially reforming clerical behaviour. Once the Station was celebrated with due reverence the Irish hierarchy was happy for the practice to continue. The reform of patterns was more difficult as it involved transforming the beliefs and values of the laity. It was the laity that attached importance to the holy wells, they believed in the curative power of the water and the sacredness of the well. It was also the laity that cultivated the prayers and rituals associated with wells. To reform popular piety the Church had to not only discourage traditional practices but to replace it with a new devotionalism. Kerr maintains that popular devotions were under attack and ‘in their place the Church promoted a piety that was instructional and individualist based largely on the printed prayer book and catechism’.<sup>94</sup> There were in fact two elements to reforming popular practice. The first, as Kerr points out, promoted individual private prayer and personal devotions. The second encouraged communal, public prayer and outward displays of devotion that were considered acceptable by the Church. These alternative forms of piety included public rosary, adoration of the Eucharist, and processions. This new piety was reflected in printed works approved of by the hierarchy. There was a proliferation of catechisms and doctrinal works, works of piety and devotion, and books intended to instruct the laity on the liturgical practices of the Church were also widely available. It was hoped that through the promotion of liturgical worship, instructional reading, and orthodox devotions, the traditional religious practices of the Irish laity would become a thing of the past.

### Reform of liturgical practices

The Council of Trent instructed bishops to: ‘admonish their people to repair frequently to their own parish church at least on the Lord’s Day and the greater festivals’.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the Mass was to be celebrated with ‘all religious service and veneration’ and the doctrine and ‘mysteries’ of the sacrament were to

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<sup>94</sup> Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*, 44.

<sup>95</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXII, 1<sup>st</sup> Decree.

be properly explained to the people.<sup>96</sup> While there are no figures to indicate Mass attendance during the eighteenth century, by the nineteenth century the Mass had lost its centrality in Irish Catholic worship. According to Sean Connolly ‘the religious practices of a large section of the population fell significantly short of the obligatory minimum prescribed by their church’.<sup>97</sup> The data collected by David Miller for his article *Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine* published in 1975, puts attendance at weekly Mass, in pre-famine Ireland, at between 20 and 40 per cent in rural Gaeltacht areas, between 30 and 60 per cent in English speaking rural areas and at its highest from 40 to 60 per cent in large towns, including Dublin.<sup>98</sup> Considering the Council of Trent expected the laity to, at the very least, attend the Mass on Sunday and principal feast days, the number fulfilling this duty in Ireland was considerably feeble.

Canon Law stipulates that Catholics must participate in religious services on Sundays and Holydays. This participation does not require Catholics to receive weekly communion. Practicing Catholics are only required to receive the Eucharist once a year, at Easter time. The Easter, or Pascal, Duty is the minimum requirement made of the laity for the reception of the Eucharist. Practicing Catholics are also expected to confess once a year and is generally associated with, although not confined to, the Easter Duty.<sup>99</sup> Overall, the Easter Duty was adhered to in the Dublin Diocese, even in remote parishes. In the visitation sheets parish priests were required to provide information about the number of adult, monthly communicants and those who did not fulfil their Easter duty in their parish. The sheets record that the majority of parishioners met the requirement of Easter Communion. Priests do not always give an exact figure; some simply state that ‘few’ did not fulfil their duty. Others fail to state the amount of communicants in the parish. However, where figures are given they are surprisingly high. From 1831 to 1840, 25 rural parishes completed the information correctly. In 20 of these parishes between 80 and 99 per cent of parishioners fulfilled their Easter Duty. The figures for the parishes of Sandymount

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 47.

<sup>98</sup> Miller, ‘Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine’, 84-88.

<sup>99</sup> The six precepts of The Catholic Church which lay out minimum requirement for active participation are: Participating at Mass on Sundays and Holy days; Confession once a year; Receive the Eucharist at Easter; Observe days of fast and abstinence; Provide for the Church; Observe church canon on Marriage.

and Baldoyle were 79 and 75 per cent respectively. The lowest figure is recorded for Rathmines, in 1833 only 25 per cent approached at Easter. Blessington in Co. Wicklow recorded 40 per cent in 1833, 96 per cent in 1834 and 66 per cent in 1837.<sup>100</sup> The varying figures for Blessington may be explained by the fact that Easter is a moveable feast, and seasonal work may have prevented parishioners from fulfilling their obligation on time. Indeed, the parish priests in Wicklow and Sandyford both reported that some parishioners fulfilled their duty after the Easter period had expired.<sup>101</sup>

The data on Mass attendance, while useful in determining developments in lay practice, should not be used to measure the faith or religious commitment of Irish Catholics. Receiving the Eucharist was a serious occasion for the laity, preceded by confession and fasting. Reluctance to receive more often could indicate deep respect, rather than impiety. The emphasis often placed on sin coupled with fear of damnation could easily have led to scruples among the Irish laity, making them reluctant to receive more than the minimum requirement. The Dublin clergy were not asked to record weekly Mass attendance. Instead, priests were to provide the Archdiocese with a record of monthly communicants. Compared with the information gathered by the Commissioners of Public Instruction in 1834 it is evident that attendance is not equivalent to Eucharistic reception. Though the clergy record a very limited participation in monthly communion, they offer no apology and some even consider the numbers receiving to be a significant achievement. In 1831, Saggart, which united four parishes, had only 200 monthly communicants from a population of 3,102 adults. Nevertheless, the parish priest believed there were ‘a very considerable number of devout persons’ in his parish that received the sacraments ‘more than twice a year’.<sup>102</sup> In Balbriggan the Commissioners of Public Instruction found 1,345 weekly attendees, however in the visitation sheet the priest only records 50 monthly communicants but adds that a great number attend four and five times a year.<sup>103</sup> In Wicklow, in 1837, the parish priest stated: ‘there is no Sunday but many go to communion in each chapel - in Wicklow chapel there may be an

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<sup>100</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1831-1840.

<sup>101</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1837.

<sup>102</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1831.

<sup>103</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland*, HC 1835 (47), xxxiv, 97b; *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1831.

average of fifty or sixty each Sunday'.<sup>104</sup> Those receiving communion more than once a year were considered to be devout members of the congregation as they fulfilled more than the basic religious duty.

Devotion to the Eucharist and regular communion was aided by the formation of sodalities and confraternities in the diocese. Members of confraternities were obliged to receive the sacraments on a monthly basis. A number of confraternities were established to promote reverence for the Eucharist or to advance another aspect of liturgical worship. The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, which was to be found in Ireland by the late eighteenth century, was established in a number of city parishes as early as 1810 and in country parishes by the 1830s.<sup>105</sup> Often associated with the CCD, its members recited the little Office of the Blessed Sacrament every day and on Confraternity Sunday attended the 'procession of the most adorable Sacrament'.<sup>106</sup> By 1840, six rural parishes reported Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>107</sup>

The Society for the Ladies of the Visitation, for the Care of the Altars, was established in the diocese of Dublin by the 1840s. It was a female society managed by a committee of six Catholic ladies with the parish priest as president. Men could subscribe to the society but could not become active members. As the title suggests, the Ladies of the Visitation cared for the vestments, linens, candles and other sacramentals used during the Mass. Interestingly, maintaining the altar was not the first but the second objective of the society. The first objective was to 'promote devotion to Jesus Christ in the adorable Sacrament'.<sup>108</sup> The members were to visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently and recite a prayer of praise.

The Society of the Evening Office was a group of young men who gathered together to recite the Office.<sup>109</sup> The Divine Office of the Church, or Liturgy of the Hours, is 'an extension of the Eucharistic celebration' and a public prayer of the Church.<sup>110</sup> The Liturgy of the Hours is prayed throughout the day

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<sup>104</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1837; The Commissioners of Public Instruction reported 1,000-1,200 parishioners attended Sunday Mass in Wicklow parish.

<sup>105</sup> *General Confraternity Book of Francis St. Chapel; Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*/Murray Papers, 1830-40.

<sup>106</sup> Appendix C.

<sup>107</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/ 1830-40.

<sup>108</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1847*, 285.

<sup>109</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 50.

<sup>110</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), 1178.

with the Evening Office, commonly referred to as Vespers, forming one part of the prayer. The society was first formed in Dublin in the 1790s.<sup>111</sup> This society was said to have been ‘silently and secretly’ reciting the prayers of the Church since the late eighteenth century.<sup>112</sup> There was an indulgence, granted by Pope Gregory XVI, attached to the society for members who received communion on the second Sunday of the month. The society was originally formed in the parish of Ss. Michael and John, but by 1847 branches were to be found at the parishes of St. James, St. Nicholas, St. Paul, St. Catherine, St. Mary, St. Michan and at the Franciscan church of Adam and Eve on Merchants Quay.<sup>113</sup>

Some of the rural parishes had organised regular Vespers, recited after Mass on Sunday, by the 1840s.<sup>114</sup> There were also public devotions that promoted liturgical worship such as Benediction, Eucharistic processions, and 40-hour devotions. Feast days, such as the feast of the patron of a parish, were marked with solemn High Mass followed by a Eucharistic procession, and benediction in the parish church. Indulgences also encouraged liturgical practice. There were 10 separate indulgences granted to those who practiced devotion to the Eucharist.<sup>115</sup>

With improved access to books, reading was used as a means of transmitting ideas and introducing the laity to liturgical prayers and encouraged sacramental participation. When the CBS was formed in 1827 it vowed to distribute religious books to even the most secluded parishes. Parochial libraries and religious book societies made it easier to access Catholic texts. The CBS believed that the circulation of good books was the best way to instruct the faithful and bring about a change in the religious habits of the laity.<sup>116</sup> In his address on the foundation of the CBS, featured in the *Freeman's Journal* in June 1827, Dr. Doyle outlined the purpose of religious instruction:

[It] is the most easy and most effectual means whereby men can be rendered wise and good; it makes them acquainted with the Almighty

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<sup>111</sup> Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 170.

<sup>112</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1847*, 278.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830-1851.

<sup>115</sup> Anon., *Indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs, to the Faithful, who Perform the Devotions and Pious works Prescribed ... to which is Added the Prayers at Mass* (Dublin, 1839), 69-81.

<sup>116</sup> Flanagan, ‘Catholic Society’, *The Freeman's Journal*, Saturday 30/June/1827.

God; it informs them of his power, his wisdom, his providence, goodness, and mercy; it instructs them in the duties which they owe to Him, and renders sweet and easy the performance of those duties; it teaches them that important knowledge of themselves, of their own good and bad qualities, without which they are incapable of escaping the dangers and temptations of this world; and by placing before them in a proper light, the obligations annexed to their respective situations in life, it also enables them to become good citizens, faithful friends, dutiful children, wise parents, and above all good Christians.<sup>117</sup>

It was hoped that families would pray, read and practice religious devotions together in the home. In the catalogue of books sold by Catholic stationer Richard Grace, Grace claimed: ‘one of the primary duties of a Christian mother is to watch the religious and moral progress of her offspring’.<sup>118</sup> Confraternities, such as the CCD, encouraged members to read pious works out loud in the family home.<sup>119</sup> In all this the Church was catering to the literate members of the laity. The overemphasis on books may be due to the Church imitating Protestant evangelicals who were also using print in this way, but was also a response to the shortage of priests. At a time when the Irish Church was struggling to provide pastoral care religious books were an ideal medium for the spread of Tridentine devotions and orthodox practices.

Works on the sacraments, with particular attention to confession and communion, were readily available. These books were mainly instructional, containing explanations for the ceremonies and details about the nature of the sacraments. *Instructions for Confession, Communion and Confirmation* by John Gother, contained prayers for before, during and after receiving the sacrament.<sup>120</sup> *An Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* by the Rev. E. Glover was described as essential for ‘the better instruction of the poor and young’ as it inspired a ‘greater veneration during the celebrations’.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Dr. Doyle, ‘Address on the Origin, Nature, and Advantages of the Catholic Society’, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1827 cited in Author of *The Priesthood Vindicated*, *The Life of the Rt. Rev. Dr Doyle*, 247

<sup>118</sup> Description for *Counsel of a Christian Mother to her Daughter*, in Richard Grace ‘Catalogue of an Extensive and Valuable Stock of Standard Roman Catholic Works Published and Sold by Richard Grace and Son’, in Battersby, *The Catholic Directory, 1851*, ‘Advertising Register’, 1-27, 7.

<sup>119</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 8.

<sup>120</sup> John Gother, *Instructions for Confession, Communion and Confirmation* (Liverpool, 1755).

<sup>121</sup> Grace, ‘Catalogue of ... Works Published and Sold by Richard Grace and Son’, 11.

Guides for following and understanding the sacraments were written by the likes of Richard Challoner, Dr. Hornihold, and Dr. Lanigan (Bishop of Ossory, 1789-1811). Also available were catechisms on confession, communion and confirmation, instructions for first communion, methods for serving at Mass, and explanations of the Catholic Missal.<sup>122</sup>

Books designed to encourage regular communion were also made available to the laity. These works often promoted devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as a means of developing greater liturgical practice. Titles that advanced devotion to the Blessed sacrament and participation in the Mass included: *The Pious Communicant, or Devotion to Jesus Christ, in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar* by French priest Dominick Morel, Boudon's *Love of Jesus, in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar*, St. Alphonsus Ligouri's *Visits to the most Holy Sacrament, Devout Communicant* by English Franciscan Pacificus Baker, and *Ardent Lover of Jesus; or the Soul Elevated to Jesus in the Adorable Sacrament*.<sup>123</sup> It was common for such works to contain a 'devout method for hearing Mass'.<sup>124</sup> The 'method' was a series of approved prayers and meditations to be read at each stage of the celebration. It was designed to heighten the reverence, attention and devoutness of the laity during the sacrifice of the Mass.

These books also contained prayers and acts to prepare the laity to receive the sacrament, and prayers of thanksgiving to follow the receipt of the Eucharist. Baker's *Devout Communicant* had the sub-title: *Pious Meditations and Aspirations: for three days before and three days after receiving the Holy Eucharist*. Ligouri's work contained acts, or commitments, of faith, confidence, love, humility, contrition and desire prayed prior to receiving.<sup>125</sup> Following communion, Ligouri recommended acts of faith, welcome, thanksgiving, oblation and petition. There were also instructions, prayers, and devotions for venerating the Blessed Sacrament. Through these books the laity was advised to receive communion as frequently as possible. *The Pious Communicant*, for

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<sup>122</sup> All the books cited are from: 'Cheap books sold by the Catholic Book Society...1839', *The Catholic Directory, 1839*, 'Advertising Registry', 1-12.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ardent Lover of Jesus*, Ligouri's *Visit to the most Holy Sacrament*, Boudon's *Love of Jesus, in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar* all these works contained a devout method.

<sup>125</sup> Alphonsus Ligouri's *Visit to the most Holy Sacrament ... to which is Added a Devout Method of Hearing the Mass* (Baltimore, 1848).

instance, was recommended as ideal for the clergy or ‘such of the laity as communicate often’.<sup>126</sup>

#### Devotional evolution: the introduction of new practices

The Church encouraged private devotional prayer, fostered through religious reading, and communal religious activities as alternatives to popular devotions. The Church sanctioned orthodox practices such as Stations of the Cross, public rosaries, Divine Office, and parish missions. Approved devotions to the Saints and Blessed Virgin Mary, such as processions and novenas, were also endorsed. These devotions were always held in a church building, thus reaffirming the role of the parish church in Catholic identity.

Marian devotion flourished in the nineteenth century Church. Following the visions of Catherine Labouré in Paris in 1830, the Association of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was introduced to Ireland. Originating in France, members of the Association wore Labouré’s Miraculous Medal and recited the prayer etched on it on a daily basis. By 1846 the Association was to be found at the city parishes of St. Andrew, St. Audeon, and Adam and Eve, and the parish of St. Mary and Peter in Rathmines.<sup>127</sup> The Sisters of Charity also promoted the Miraculous Medal. Other continental devotions such as those to Our Lady of Loreto, Our Lady’s Seven Dolours, and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel were also disseminated in Ireland. Each of these Marian devotions was associated with a religious order. The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary promulgated devotion to Our Lady of Loreto, the spread of devotion to Our Lady of Dolours can be attributed to the Franciscans, while Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is patroness of the Carmelite Order. By the 1830s up to 21 indulgences could be gained by the laity for practicing devotions associated with the Blessed Virgin.<sup>128</sup> Indulgences were granted for those who recited novenas, litanies, prayers to the Sacred Heart of Mary, the rosary and other such religious practices. The CBS catalogue for 1843 had ten books with the Blessed Virgin Mary in the title; they included a novena,

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<sup>126</sup> Grace, ‘Catalogue of ... works published and sold by Richard Grace and son’, 19.

<sup>127</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1846*, 278.

<sup>128</sup> Anon., *Indulgences Granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs, to the Faithful, who Perform the Devotions and Pious Works Prescribed* 99-135.

office, life, and litany.<sup>129</sup> By mid-century books containing the prayers of Loreto, Mt. Carmel, and the seven Dolours were available from Catholic stationers.<sup>130</sup>

Devotions connected with an aspect of the life of Christ, such as those to the Infant Jesus and the Sacred Heart, became popular in nineteenth century Dublin. Specific prayers and meditations were attached to these devotions.<sup>131</sup> For instance, there was a novena to the Infant Jesus and a novena to the Sacred Heart.<sup>132</sup> The Pious Sodality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was established in Dublin as early as 1748.<sup>133</sup> In 1801 a Confraternity of the Sacred Heart was formed in Rome and in the same year Pope Pius VII granted partial and plenary indulgences to the society.<sup>134</sup> In 1831 Pope Gregory XVI extended these indulgences to Ireland.<sup>135</sup> In addition, there were 8 additional indulgences granted to those who practiced devotions to the Sacred Heart.<sup>136</sup> In 1840 the Sodality was active in 14 of the 39 parishes located outside Dublin city. As of 1852 the Sodality could be found in ‘nearly every parish’ in the city, and devotions were held in the various churches on the first Friday of the month.<sup>137</sup> The popularity of the Sacred Heart is reflected in the CBS catalogue for 1843. It contained seven separate texts relating to the Sacred Heart. There was a *Sacred Heart Book*, two different novenas, *Acts of Adoration to the Sacred Heart*, *Mass and Devotions to the Sacred Heart*, *Rules for the Sodality of the Sacred Heart*, and a book of twelve certificates of the Sacred Heart (probably connected to the Sodality).<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory, 1842 and 1843*.

<sup>130</sup> Grace, ‘Catalogue of ... works published and sold by Richard Grace and son’, 17-18; Duffy, ‘Catalogue of extensive and valuable stock of standard Catholic works ... published and sold by James Duffy’, 478, 480, 482.

<sup>131</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>132</sup> ‘Catalogue of the Catholic Book Society for 1839’; ‘Catalogue of the Catholic Book Society for 1843’.

<sup>133</sup> Sodality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, *Book of Receipts, 1748-1801, Ss. Michael and John’s*, DDA/Confraternity Books.

<sup>134</sup> Jean Baptiste Bouvier, *A Dogmatical and Practical Treatise, on Indulgences... Abridged from a French work* (Dublin, 1839), 105.

<sup>135</sup> Bouvier, *A Dogmatical and Practical Treatise, on Indulgences*, 110; Anon., *Indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs, to the Faithful, who Perform the Devotions and Pious Works Prescribed*, 84.

<sup>136</sup> Anon., *Indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs, to the Faithful, who Perform the Devotions and Pious Works Prescribed*, 82-97.

<sup>137</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory, 1852* (Dublin, 1852), 300, 27.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Catalogue of the Catholic Book Society for 1843’ in *The Catholic Directory, 1843*; The Sodality of the Sacred Heart is discussed again in Chapter 5.

Religious orders were associated with specific devotions and often formed confraternities for the laity. The Franciscans at St. Adam and Eve, on Merchants Quay, and the Franciscans at Milltown promoted the cord of St. Francis of Assisi. Both communities established a Confraternity of the Cord of St. Francis to develop the devotion.<sup>139</sup> The Carmelite community in Clarendon St. established a Confraternity of the Scapular of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. Members participated in processions and benediction once a month. The Augustinians in John's St. formed a Confraternity of the Sacred Cincture of the Blessed Virgin Mary, while the Dominican's established on Dominick St. had a Confraternity of the Rosary of Jesus and a Confraternity of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>140</sup> The rosary was recited before or after Mass in a number of parishes, and societies dedicated to spreading this devotion were also formed, such as the Sodality of the Living Rosary and the Confraternity of the Rosary of the Sacred Name.<sup>141</sup>

New religious practices were often introduced through public novenas and parish missions, which increased in popularity in the latter half of the century. From 1842 on the parish missions, described by Larkin as a parish mission movement, were held in diocese throughout Ireland. A mission consisted of a number of priests dispatched to a parish to: 'preach and teach the people in order to enliven their religious convictions'.<sup>142</sup> These missions were often organised by religious orders and offered the laity an intense religious experience. Missions took place exclusively in church buildings; the clergy took advantage of the large crowds that gathered at these occasions to disseminate Catholic doctrine from the pulpit with particular emphasis on the sacraments, especially confession. Missions also encouraged devotions that were already established, such as those to the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart of Mary and formed Confraternities to continue in the parish after the mission concluded. According to Murphy, the CCD, the Living Rosary, Temperance Societies, St.

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<sup>139</sup> *Funiculus Triplex or, the Indulgence of the Cord of St Francis* by the Franciscan Francis Walsh was printed in Dublin by Patrick Wogan in 1797, Richard Grace in 1851, and C. M. Warren in 1869.

<sup>140</sup> Cunningham, 'The Catholic Directory for 1821. (By Rev. H. Young)', 358-9.

<sup>141</sup> Battersby, *Catholic Directory ... 1858*, 172.

<sup>142</sup> J. H. Murphy, 'The Role of Vincentian Parish Missions in the 'Irish Counter-Reformation' of the mid Nineteenth Century', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 94, 152-171, 154.

Vincent de Paul and Ladies Associations of Charity were the confraternities most commonly endorsed at parish missions.<sup>143</sup>

The progress of the Catholic revival is evident in parishes in the Dublin Diocese where confraternities, sodalities and regular devotions were organised by the mid-nineteenth century. In 1834 the parish of Garristown in north Co. Dublin could boast the Sodality of the Sacred Heart, a Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin, a Purgatorian Society and Vespers on Sundays.<sup>144</sup> Lusk, also in north Co. Dublin, had confraternities of the Living Rosary, Sacred Heart of Mary and Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1834 and in 1857 had regular devotions to the 'Sacred and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners'.<sup>145</sup> In Dublin city, the parish of St. Michan on Halston Street, had a confraternity of the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart as early as 1814 and devotions were held on the first Saturday of the month.<sup>146</sup> By 1847 it had established the Evening Office Society, and in the 1850s St Michan's held 40-hour adoration once a year, usually in March, as well as regular benediction.<sup>147</sup>

#### Pious reading and private devotions

Devotions such as novena, the rosary, veneration of the saints, and prayers to the Virgin Mary, were part of the Church's campaign to promote a new spirituality among the laity. Although confraternities and parishes celebrated these devotions publicly they were designed to also be prayed and recited by individuals in private. Thus the rosary was prayed aloud in churches after Mass but individuals could also recite it at home. Likewise, saints were commemorated in the parish with processions and benediction and the laity could also honour saints by privately reciting novenas, offices, and prayers.<sup>148</sup> The transformation of piety was greatly aided by printing. Through the CBS a plethora of devotional texts were made available to the laity. From simple prayer books to works of

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<sup>143</sup> Murphy, 'The Role of Vincentian Parish Missions in the 'Irish Counter-Reformation' of the mid Nineteenth Century', 158.

<sup>144</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1834.

<sup>145</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1834; Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1858*, 173.

<sup>146</sup> Ronan, *An Apostle of Dublin*, 127; Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 150.

<sup>147</sup> *Register of the Christian Doctrine Confraternity, St Michan's 1859 – 1868*.

<sup>148</sup> In the parish of St Michan, on Halston St, the feast of St. Michan (August) was marked by a solemn High Mass, followed by a procession and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

instruction the CBS had 260 titles available by 1838 with devotional works making up a large proportion of its catalogue.<sup>149</sup> The CBS sold instructions for novenas to the Infant Jesus, Sacred Heart, B.V. Mary, Miraculous Medal, St. Joseph, St. Francis Xavier, St. Teresa, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Patrick. The CBS also produced the Office of the Dead, and of the B. V. Mary, works explaining the Stations of the Cross, the Three Hours Agony, and the rosary, as well as instructions to be followed at Advent and Lent, and rules for confraternities and book societies.<sup>150</sup>

The laity was encouraged to foster inward devotion through a life of prayer and pious reading. Prayer books were designed to cultivate piety. Written as guides or manuals to prayer, they contained instructions on how to pray, provided suitable prayers for recital, and gave additional information on specific devotions. Designed to appeal to the lower class, they were small and compact, written in a simple language and sold at a cheap rate. As the century progressed, these small devotional works became increasingly popular and more readily available. Booklists advertising Catholic works document the availability of books of prayer and piety in the nineteenth century. Prayer books often promoted a particular devotion, with specific prayers and religious observances. Among the most common devotions were those associated with a saint, the Blessed Virgin Mary or Christ. In 1843 the CBS had compendiums of saints, 18 lives of saints and ten other lives of holy people, such as the *Life of Dr. Doyle*, the bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, or the *Life of Good Henry* (See Fig. 8).<sup>151</sup> As well as providing examples of living a moral life, very often the saint's lives contained instructions and devotions associated with that saint. For instance, the *Life of St. Teresa* contained the novena of St. Teresa, while the *Life of St. Patrick* had 'rules for a Christian life' added to it.<sup>152</sup>

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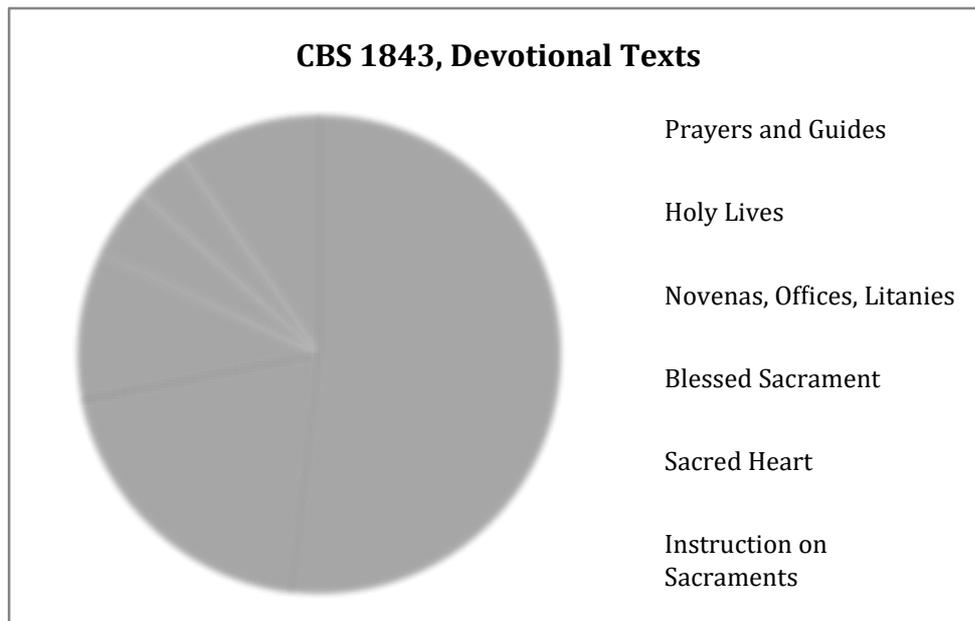
<sup>149</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory... 1838*.

<sup>150</sup> 'Cheap books sold by the Catholic Book Society ... 1839'.

<sup>151</sup> 'Cheap books sold by the Catholic Book Society ... 1843', in Battersby, *The Catholic Directory, 1843*.

<sup>152</sup> Grace, 'Catalogue of ... works published and sold by Richard Grace and son', 14-16.

Fig. 8  
Types of Devotional Texts printed by CBS, 1843



As demand for such texts increased a wider variety of titles was offered to the public. Nineteenth-century printers, such as John Coyne, Richard Grace and James Duffy, had extensive catalogues of religious works with a large proportion dedicated to books on prayer, piety and devotions. The printer Richard Grace had a separate section for prayer books in his 1851 catalogue, indicating the popularity of this form of reading material. There were 22 books classed in this way, with titles such as *Portable Prayers*, *Daily Companion*, and *Flowers of Piety*.<sup>153</sup> In addition to the titles classed as ‘prayer books’ his catalogue contained books of meditation, instructions for prayer, and manuals of prayer with meditations, reflections and spiritual exercises for every day of the year. James Duffy’s catalogue contained similar works of prayer and devotion. One book published from the French by Duffy was *The Spirit of Devotion, a Manual of Prayer*. This book was described as being the smallest work of prayer ever produced in Ireland. Despite its size it still contained: ‘Morning and Evening Prayers – the Mass – Devotions for Benediction – Prayers for Confession and Communion – Seven Penitential Psalms – the Litanies – serving

<sup>153</sup> Grace, ‘Catalogue of ... works published and sold by Richard Grace and Son’, 20.

at Mass, and other excellent Devotions'.<sup>154</sup> Likewise, *The Christian's Guide to Heaven; or a Complete Manual of Catholic Piety*, by Irish Augustinian William Gahan, contained prayers, instructions and a collection of 'approved devotions'.<sup>155</sup> Gahan's work included a calendar of the year with saint's days and feasts marked, morning and evening prayers, prayers in preparation for Mass, prayers during Mass, instructions for communion, devotions for every day of the week, and reflections for every day in the month.<sup>156</sup> Through these texts the laity was instructed in methods of prayer, preparation for receiving the sacraments, conduct at Mass and their Christian duty in general.

### Conclusion

Throughout the nineteenth century the Irish Church pressed for proper liturgical practice and orthodox devotions, which were centred on the parish church, the correct venue for worship. This can be seen in the attitude of the hierarchy to popular devotions, particularly Stations and patterns. The Church fostered devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as a means of improving liturgical practice, particularly reception of communion. Thus, Archbishop Troy was reluctant to discredit Stations; in 1820 he indicated to Propaganda that the complete removal of Stations would damage 'devotion to the Holy Sacrament'.<sup>157</sup> It was assumed that true devotion to the Eucharist would lead the laity to avail of every opportunity to receive. Troy believed that Stations, if practiced with due reverence, and giving no cause for scandal, could lead the laity to receive the sacraments. On the other hand, patterns and pilgrimages to Holy wells were completely discouraged by the Church. However, this did not prevent Catholics from congregating at holy wells and continuing to hold patterns. Although approved devotions, such as those associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, were adopted patterns persisted in some areas.

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<sup>154</sup> James Duffy, 'Catalogue of extensive and valuable stock of standard Catholic works and books relating to Ireland &c. &c. published and sold by James Duffy', in Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1851*, 461-495, 487.

<sup>155</sup> William Gahan, *The Christian's Guide to Heaven, or a Complete Manual of Catholic Piety, Containing ... Approved Devotions* (Dublin, 1833).

<sup>156</sup> Gahan, *The Christian's Guide to Heaven*.

<sup>157</sup> Cited in Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church*, 204.

The transformation of Irish religious practice was aided by the formation of Confraternities and dissemination of religious books. Confraternities allowed members of the laity to have a prominent role in the parish, and gave the clergy a core-group of ‘pious’ parishioners willing to engage in devotions that promoted improved liturgical worship. The Church recommended personal prayer and pious reading as means of instructing the laity to holiness. Through printed works the Church advanced the liturgy, approved and recommended private prayer and personal devotions. It was hoped that by perusing pious books the individual would practice religion more diligently and avoid practices that the Church regarded as unorthodox.

It is evident from the growth in Confraternities and development of devotions that the laity accepted Church reform. Middle-class Catholics, embarrassed by the superstitious and unruly elements of traditional practices, supported the Church in its effort to remove popular devotions, such as patterns.<sup>158</sup> Religious books and a variety of confraternities catered for the taste of the Catholic middle class. However, not all confraternities required literacy, and it is very possible that membership was drawn from all sectors of the laity. In addition, the rebuilding of parish churches, which was essential for the Catholic revival, gained universal support. As the Catholic laity funded the construction of new churches they would have naturally felt an affinity to the building and a desire to participate in the devotions and rituals organised in the parish church.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Ó Danachair, ‘Death of a Tradition’, 221-2.

<sup>159</sup> For information about the funding of Catholic Churches see Brendan Grimes, ‘The Architecture of Dublin’s Neo-Classical Roman Catholic Temples’, Chapter 8.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **Lay religious associations and Catholic Reform**

The development of a confident Catholic middle class was accompanied by a growth in lay religious associations and philanthropic societies.<sup>1</sup> Sodalities, societies, associations, and confraternities were identifiable in the Dublin diocese by the early nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Organised and governed by the laity, confraternities were formed in cooperation with the parish priest and with the approval of the Church. They provided conscientious members of the laity with an opportunity to fulfil their Christian duty by practicing corporal and spiritual works of mercy. In addition to charitable and pious works, some confraternities were concerned with spreading reform among the laity. Confraternities were assisted in their mission by the increased availability of printed works.

However, the presence of confraternities in the Dublin diocese does not necessarily demonstrate wide scale acceptance of reform. Membership of confraternities was drawn from active members of the laity who were receptive to Church reform, in other words the religious elite. Membership was not based on class, and confraternity fees often varied to account for the circumstances of members. However, illiterate members of the laity could be excluded from active participation, as such roles often required the ability to read. Active members were recruited from those who attended the sacraments on a regular basis, were known in the parish, and had a desire to participate more fully in the work of the Church. Confraternities demonstrate the ideal rather than the norm; members received the sacraments regularly, enriched their faith by participating in devotions, read religious books, and practiced works of charity.

This chapter will focus on the role of moral confraternities in the Dublin Diocese, with particular attention given to the Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist. Members of this Society performed corporal and spiritual works of mercy, thus members were not practicing charity for its own sake, but as an expression of faith. The Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist,

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<sup>1</sup> Colm Lennon, 'Confraternities in Ireland: a long view', in Colm Lennon (ed.) *Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland: Charity, Devotion and Sociability*, 15-34, 28-9; Luddy, "'Possessed of fine Properties'", 227.

<sup>2</sup> Confraternity will be used to encompass, sodalities, associations, and societies, unless referring to a specific organisation, such as the Sodality of the Sacred Heart.

established in Dublin 1817 by two Dublin clerics, truly embraced the reform efforts of the Church combining charitable, moral, instructional and devotional activities among its aims. The society had a desire not only to serve the poor but to also reform the religious and social behaviour of the Catholic laity.

This chapter will examine the role of the Purgatorian Society in the Church's effort to reform the traditional death rituals. For this, it is necessary to first examine the attitude of the Church towards wakes. Similar to Patterns, wakes were often criticised by both Church authorities and Protestant observers. The Church's efforts to exert control over wakes were largely unsuccessful as the wake, although it contained some religious elements, was not a religious event. Lay members of the Purgatorian Society regularly attended wakes on behalf of the priest of the parish, leading prayers and discouraging inappropriate conduct.

#### Confraternities, sodalities, and lay societies

Confraternities in nineteenth-century Ireland differed greatly from those associated with early-modern Europe. Confraternities, which can be dated to the early history of the Church when pious associations were first formed, thrived in the Middle Ages and remained an important feature of European Catholicism into the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> These confraternities were organised by laymen and operated independently of the parish system. Each confraternity had its own meeting house, and some even their own chapels.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, each confraternity had its own distinct religious observances, such as processions in honour of the patron saint and festivals.<sup>5</sup> Festivals and processions were accompanied by a social element, generally a feast, where: 'allegedly drunken and immoral behaviour' occurred.<sup>6</sup> Following the Council of Trent, the Church tried to regulate confraternities and bring them under the supervision of the parish priest and diocesan bishop.

In 1562 the Council of Trent stated that 'hospitals, colleges, and confraternities of laymen' fell under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary. As such, bishops were to visit these institutions, 'take cognizance of, and see to the

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<sup>3</sup> Donnelly and Maher (eds.) *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain*, vii.

<sup>4</sup> Black, 'Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform', 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*; Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 6-7.

<sup>6</sup> Black, 'Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform', 7.

performance ... of all things that have been instituted for God's worship, for the salvation of souls, or for the support of the poor'.<sup>7</sup> In addition, confraternities were obliged to present a yearly account to the Ordinary.<sup>8</sup> This was to ensure that the Church was the primary source of authority in all areas of religious practice. According to Gibson: 'all groups with a religious orientation but not directly subject to the clergy were viewed with extreme suspicion and often hostility' by the Tridentine Church.<sup>9</sup> The Church could see the potential benefit of confraternities, if properly regulated confraternities could act as a bridge between the clergy and the laity, and assist the Church in disseminating reform.<sup>10</sup> In 1604 Pope Clement VIII issued the Bull *Quaecumque*, which reaffirmed the authority of the Ordinary over all confraternities established in his diocese. The Bull stated that confraternities could only be formed with the permission of the Ordinary. The manner in which alms were disposed of was to be first approved of by the Bishop, and the rules and indulgences traditionally associated with confraternities were to be revised by the Bishop to ensure accuracy.<sup>11</sup>

While the Church wished to make confraternities part of the parish structure and envisaged cooperation between the parish and these associations, confraternities wished to remain independent of the Church. In Italy, lack of clerical control remained an issue for the eighteenth-century Church.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in eighteenth-century France any attempt to regulate confraternities was met with open hostility.<sup>13</sup> To counter the influence of traditional confraternities the Church established new parochial confraternities under the direct management of the clergy. These diocesan approved confraternities centred devotions in the parish church. In Italy, Holy Sacrament Confraternities, Rosary Societies, CCD, and Nome di Dio societies were instituted in parishes from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century.<sup>14</sup> These official organisations existed alongside the traditional confraternities but never became the agents of reform anticipated by the Church. In France Rosary confraternities, societies of the Scapular, the

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<sup>7</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXII, 2<sup>nd</sup> Decree, C. VIII.

<sup>8</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session XXII, 2<sup>nd</sup> Decree, C. IX.

<sup>9</sup> Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 25.

<sup>10</sup> Black, 'Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform', 1-9.

<sup>11</sup> Elder Mullan and Franz Beringer, *The Sodality of our Lady: Studied in the Documents*, (New York, 1912), 57.

<sup>12</sup> Black, 'Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform', 25-26.

<sup>13</sup> Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 26.

<sup>14</sup> Black, 'Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform', 9-10.

Blessed Sacrament, and the Sacred Heart replaced traditional confraternities. By the mid-nineteenth century ‘nearly every parish had at least one’ of these ‘clerically controlled confraternities’.<sup>15</sup> However, Gibson maintains that these societies, whose membership was mainly composed of women, were ‘not so much organisations of religious fervour as centres of female sociability’.<sup>16</sup> Atkin and Tallett state that ‘men shunned the confraternities as being clerically dominated and offering little in the way of their own spiritual needs’.<sup>17</sup>

The confraternities found in nineteenth-century Ireland, by contrast, were established within the parish structure, associated with the parish clergy, and sanctioned by the local bishop. While belonging to a religious association was likely to create communal ties, the confraternities founded in Dublin lacked the social element associated with their earlier European counterparts. Unlike countries such as France and Italy, Ireland did not possess a long tradition of independent confraternities, as a result, societies founded in Ireland did not have an obvious power struggle, with the confraternities being rather in partnership with Church authority acting as agents of Church reform. In addition, confraternities in the Dublin diocese could boast a strong male membership as well as female.

#### The management of Confraternities in Ireland

The assistance of confraternities was invaluable to reform, evident in the CCD whose members enabled the Church to provide an extensive system of religious instruction. Members of confraternities were essentially lay ministers who participated in a wide range of pastoral duties. They visited the sick, prepared the dying to receive the last sacraments, provided financial assistance to the poor, taught Christian Doctrine to children and adults, and facilitated religious devotions. It is not surprising, therefore, that confraternities were approved of and advocated by the clergy. In 1831, Fr. John Hyland, the parish priest of Dunlavin Co. Wicklow, observed that confraternities ‘promote the

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<sup>15</sup> Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 57-58.

<sup>16</sup> Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914*, 168.

<sup>17</sup> Atkin & Tallett, *Priests, Prelates & People*, 113.

interests of religion, a system of regularity, and a spirit of piety' within the parish.<sup>18</sup>

Confraternities were managed by a governing body. Each confraternity had a committee with a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. These positions were filled from the general members, either by ballot or appointment. The parish priest, or another member of the clergy, held a position on the governing body, commonly the presidency. The committee met at least on a monthly basis. All members were expected to frequent devotions and to approach the sacraments (confession and communion) once a month. There were three types of members: active, subscribing, and non-subscribing.

Active, or ordinary, members paid a subscription, regularly recited the devotions of the society, and carried out its work, which could include works of charity, or teaching catechism. Within the active members there was often a subgroup of Choir members who were the most elite of the confraternity. Choir members were active members who, in addition to the other duties, recited the Divine Office in the parish church on a weekly basis. The role of Choir member was restricted to literate men. This class of member was described as: 'men and grown boys of good morals, who can read'.<sup>19</sup>

Subscribing members, or honorary members, paid dues to the confraternity but had a passive role in the society. Subscribers prayed for the work being carried out by the active confraternity members and occasionally took part in devotions but did not devote themselves to the work of the society. Subscribing members were often those whose station in life prevented them from becoming active members. They included the elderly and married women.<sup>20</sup> The confraternity benefited from subscribing members as they contributed financially. In return they benefited from the confraternity by being regularly included in the prayers of the society and by being remembered in death through Masses and prayers.

Non-subscribers formed the third class of members. Although they fulfilled the active duties of the society they did not pay the subscription fee. This was to ensure that membership was not conditioned by financial position.

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<sup>18</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, v.

<sup>19</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian societies*, 8.

Thus, all classes of persons could participate in the work of the confraternity. Even within the category of subscribers, the amount contributed varied from member to member. For the CCD and Purgatorian Society it was recommended that those who were ‘able and willing’ should pay more than poorer members.<sup>21</sup> In the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) members contributed ‘according to each one’s means’, with non-active members encouraged to contribute more.<sup>22</sup> Although confraternities accepted non-subscribing members poor Catholics could still be excluded due to their lack of education. According to Patrick Corish, the very poor could not have had an active role in the work of some confraternities, such as the CCD, as ‘their activities presupposed literacy’.<sup>23</sup> Although membership lists were often contained in confraternity-books there is no indication of the occupation or social standing of members.<sup>24</sup>

#### Types of confraternities and associations in the Dublin Diocese

The confraternities operating in the Dublin Diocese can be roughly divided into four categories: religious, instructional, charitable, and moral. Religious confraternities were dedicated to advancing a particular devotional or liturgical practice, such as the rosary or devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, or Sacred Heart.<sup>25</sup> Instructional confraternities were occupied with inculcating religious knowledge and by default practice; these included the CCD and book societies. Philanthropic confraternities aimed at assisting the poor or socially outcast. These included orphan and widow societies and the St Vincent de Paul Society. Confraternities concerned with the morality of other Catholics included the Society of the Holy Name, which hoped to curb blasphemous language, the well-documented Temperance crusade, and the Purgatorian Society that aimed to abolish the irreligious activities that accompanied the traditional wake.

Members of religious confraternities were expected to participate in specific observances, such as reciting the Office or litanies, participating in

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<sup>21</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian societies*, 39.

<sup>22</sup> Society of St. Vincent de Paul, *Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Translated from the French* (Paris, 1909), 73 -74.

<sup>23</sup> Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 170.

<sup>24</sup> See description of CCD members from Halston Street in Chapter Two. Although the occupation of those teaching catechism is not listed in the Confraternity books for Halston Street, those charged with this task were from the commercial class.

<sup>25</sup> See Chapter Four for more detailed account of devotional and liturgical confraternities.

processions, benediction, or other religious exercises. An example of one such society was the Sodality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, formed in Dublin in the mid eighteenth century. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was popularised in seventeenth-century France, following a series of apparitions witnessed by the Visitation nun, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. Private veneration of the Sacred Heart dates to the medieval period but wide scale devotion was not organised until after Alacoque's visions.<sup>26</sup> The devotions propagated by Alacoque were approved of by the Church and extended throughout the world. The object of the Sodality was to promote love for Jesus by spreading devotion to his Sacred Heart. To become a member, one had to have their name signed in the Register of the Confraternity and sign a certificate, or act of dedication to the Sacred Heart.<sup>27</sup> An image of the Sacred Heart, based on a vision of Alacoque, was to be put on display in all churches where the Sodality was formed.<sup>28</sup> According to the rules, members were to frequently visit the image of the Sacred Heart and 'pray before the picture for some space of time'.<sup>29</sup> While visiting the image, members were to recite the prayers of the Sodality and any other devotions 'as may seem best calculated to inflame their hearts with love for their dearest Redeemer'.<sup>30</sup> The rules commanded members to pray for the dead and suggested that they receive communion monthly.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, it was recommended that members of the Sodality recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles Creed, and prayer to the Sacred Heart every day.<sup>32</sup> Members who faithfully practiced the devotions, regularly confessed, received communion on certain feast days, such as Christmas, the Annunciation and Easter, and prayed for the intention of the pontiff, were entitled to the plenary indulgences granted to the Sodality by Pope Pius VII in 1805.<sup>33</sup> Individual members practiced the prayers and devotions of the Sodality privately in the home. Prayers were recited on a daily basis, and in

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<sup>26</sup> David Morgan, *Sacred Heart of Jesus: The Visual Evolution of a Devotion* (Amsterdam, 2008), 5.

<sup>27</sup> A book of twelve certificates of the Sacred Heart was sold by the CBS. 'Catalogue of the Catholic Book Society for 1839- 43'. Information about the Sacred Heart Sodality can also be found in Chapter Four.

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix G.

<sup>29</sup> Anon., *Indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs, to the Faithful, who perform the Devotions and Pious works Prescribed*, 82.

<sup>30</sup> Bouvier, *A Dogmatical and Practical Treatise on Indulgences*, 108.

<sup>31</sup> Bouvier, *A Dogmatical and Practical Treatise on Indulgences*, 107-8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*; Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1851*, 341.

<sup>33</sup> Anon., *Indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs, to the Faithful, who perform the Devotions and Pious Works Prescribed*, 84.

this way members developed a personal prayer life. The society also performed public devotions, and members were invited to take part in these, however they were not obligatory.<sup>34</sup>

The CCD was the largest confraternity dedicated to religious instruction. Members of the CCD improved religious knowledge by providing instruction and access to books.<sup>35</sup> A number of other confraternities included religious education as a duty for members. In north county Dublin in the parish of Garristown, for instance, catechism was taught every Sunday by members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Sacred Heart, and the Purgatorian Society.<sup>36</sup> The members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament often assisted the CCD in organising Sunday schools. Members of the SVP catechised by distributing religious texts, while the Religious Book Society established and maintained libraries and assisted with Sunday catechesis.<sup>37</sup> The assistance of confraternities in providing religious education was vital and largely responsible for the spread of catechetical instruction in the nineteenth century.

Various charitable institutions operated in Dublin, such as orphan societies and asylums, and a number of confraternities included works of charity among their objectives. However, until the establishment of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 1845, there was no confraternity solely concerned with assisting the poor. The SVP was formed for ‘the promotion of piety and relief of the poor’.<sup>38</sup> Similar to other societies, the SVP was sanctioned and approved by the Church and local clergy but was organised, and in this case founded, by the laity. The Society was first formed in Paris, in 1833, when a group of laymen, led by M. Frederic Ozanam, banded themselves together in a Conference of Charity to serve the needs of the poor and practice works of mercy. According to Ní Chearbhaill, in her thesis on the Society in Dublin, the activities of the original conference were straightforward: ‘the members, called ‘brothers’ met to discuss their shared religious convictions and to put Christianity into practice by visiting

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<sup>34</sup> Bouvier, *A Dogmatical and Practical Treatise on Indulgences*, 117.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter Two for full details relating to the operation of the CCD in nineteenth-century Ireland.

<sup>36</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1834.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter Three for more detail on the Religious Book Society.

<sup>38</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1840*, 278.

a few poor families in the district every week.’<sup>39</sup> Each new branch of the SVP was referred to as a conference. The conference was associated with a parish; each parish having its own distinct conference and large parishes could have more than one conference.

Within the first ten years of its formation 130 conferences were established throughout France with 4,000 active members.<sup>40</sup> In 1836 the first conference was established in Italy, and by the 1840s conferences could be found in England, Scotland, Turkey, the United States, and Ireland. Emmanuel Bailley and François Lallier (both founding members of the SVP) devised the Rule for the government of the Society, which remained unchanged until the 1960s.<sup>41</sup> The *Manual of the Society* was first published in 1845 by the then president-general Jules Gossin. It was written to ‘preserve the unity of the expanding society’.<sup>42</sup> The *Manual* contained the Rule and provided guidelines and instructions for members and conferences of the SVP. A copy of the *Manual* was given to each new member on joining the Society.<sup>43</sup>

According to its Rule, the SVP had five primary objectives. Members were to support one another in the pursuit of Christian piety, to visit and provide for the poor, and to undertake any other charitable works. In addition, they were to provide ‘elementary and Christian instruction of poor children’ and ‘to distribute moral and religious books’ during home visits.<sup>44</sup> The distribution of books was described as a duty.<sup>45</sup> The SVP did not simply aim to assist the poor but ‘to make them better men and better Christians.’<sup>46</sup> Thus members were to ‘seek for every possible means of instructing the poor upon their duties, and of making them thoroughly comprehend them’.<sup>47</sup> The Society was formed for Catholics to assist the poor, which included the Catholic poor to whom they had a moral and fraternal obligation to assist.

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<sup>39</sup> Máire Brigid Ní Chearbhaill, ‘The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin, 1926-1975’ (Ph.D. Thesis. National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2008), 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ní Chearbhaill, ‘The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin’, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Ní Chearbhaill, ‘The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin’, v, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Ní Chearbhaill, ‘The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin’, 5.

<sup>43</sup> T.W.T Dillon, ‘The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Ireland 1845-1945’, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 34, No. 136 (December, 1945), 515-521, 520.

<sup>44</sup> *Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul*, 21.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul*, 34, 66.

<sup>47</sup> *Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul*, 67.

The SVP was formed in Dublin in December 1844. The first meeting, held on Ormond Quay in the parish of St. Michan, was attended by 17 laymen and 2 priests. Rev. Bartholomew Woodlock, the president of All Hallows attended the first meeting and is credited with bringing the Society to Ireland.<sup>48</sup> The other priest in attendance was Stephen Farrell, the parish priest of St. Nicholas' parish. The founding members were of the Catholic middle class, indeed the SVP came to be seen in Ireland as a society for the middle class. Of the 17 laymen, 5 were doctors, 8 were lawyers and the rest were 'established business and professional men'.<sup>49</sup> Redmund O'Carroll, a lawyer and friend of Archbishop Murray, was elected the first president of the Society. Woodlock became spiritual director to the Society, a role he maintained until 1885. The spiritual director, a role unique to Ireland, was an ex-officio member of the committee, thus creating a place for the clergy in the society.<sup>50</sup> At the end of 1847 there were 5 conferences in Dublin. The parent society connected with the parish of St. Michan and conferences in the parishes of St. Audeon, St. Andrew, St. Peter, and the Jesuit church of St. Francis Xavier.<sup>51</sup> By 1850 the number of conferences in Dublin had increased to 7 with 17 other branches operating across Ireland.<sup>52</sup>

Following its formation, the Society immediately began to carry out home visitations in Dublin. Home visitations were characteristic of moral societies of all denominations. The SVP regularly visited the same families, offering companionship as well as practical aid. By visiting people in their home, the SVP gained insight into the lives of the poor and the Society was able to adapt as the needs of the poor changed.<sup>53</sup> During these visits the SVP offered families temporal relief in the form of tickets that could be exchanged for food or fuel at certain shops.<sup>54</sup> According to the Rule, members were to offer spiritual assistance as well, consisting of 'religious advice and consolation', distribution

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<sup>48</sup> Ní Chearbhaill, 'The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin', 6.

<sup>49</sup> James Gerard Martin, 'The Society of St. Vincent de Paul as an emerging social phenomenon in mid-nineteenth century Ireland', (M.A. Thesis. National College of Industrial Relations, Dublin, 1993), 60-61; Ní Chearbhaill, 'The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin', 7.

<sup>50</sup> Dillon, 'The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Ireland 1845-1945', 519.

<sup>51</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1847*, 279.

<sup>52</sup> Ní Chearbhaill, 'The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin', 9.

<sup>53</sup> Dillon, 'The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Ireland 1845-1945', 516. Dillon described this quality of the SVP as the 'elasticity of approach to social problems'.

<sup>54</sup> Ní Chearbhaill, 'The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin', 8.

of religious texts and encouraging education.<sup>55</sup> However, James Martin maintains the SVP in Ireland was first and foremost concerned with fulfilling the physical needs of the poor with members content to leave spiritual formation to the clergy.<sup>56</sup> For the first decade of its formation the SVP in Ireland was occupied with providing Famine relief, and it was not until 1855 that the society took an active role in promoting religious instruction.<sup>57</sup>

During the nineteenth century the Church was concerned with improving the conduct and manners of its participants. Confraternities, such as the Temperance Society, Confraternity of the Holy Name and the Purgatorian Society, assisted the clergy in this effort. The Temperance Societies tried to end excessive drinking among the laity by encouraging abstinence, the Confraternity of the Holy Name aimed to curb swearing and blasphemy, while the Purgatorian Society strove to end immoral practices at wakes and they all expected their own members to set an example of acceptable behaviour. Members of the Holy Name were to avoid bad language, those involved in the various temperance societies were to abstain from alcohol, while members of the Purgatorian Confraternity were to practice sobriety, undertake works or charity and shun wakes. Poverty and immorality were viewed as synonymous; therefore most of the efforts of these groups were directed at the lower orders. Begadon sees the development of moral societies as reflecting the changing views of the Catholic community, who by the 1830s viewed the actions of the poor as a major concern.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the standard of morality suggested was based on middle-class values.<sup>59</sup> Membership of confraternities was approved by the clergy but theoretically was open to all. However, Colm Lennon states that when it came to moral societies such as the Confraternity of the Holy Name the Church ‘actively recruited well-educated Catholics from respectable backgrounds’.<sup>60</sup> The Dublin Jesuit Fr. Thomas Brennan described them in 1747 as ‘the better sort of lay-people’.<sup>61</sup> Members of the Confraternity of the Holy Name, which eventually came to be

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<sup>55</sup> Ní Chearbhaill, ‘The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Dublin’, 9.

<sup>56</sup> Martin, ‘The Society of St. Vincent de Paul’, 173.

<sup>57</sup> Martin, ‘The Society of St. Vincent de Paul’, 159.

<sup>58</sup> Begadon, ‘Confraternities and the renewal of Catholic Dublin c. 1750-1830’, 48.

<sup>59</sup> Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy*, 2; Ó Danachair, ‘The Death of a Tradition’, 223

<sup>60</sup> Colm Lennon, ‘Confraternities in Ireland: A Long View’, 29. The CCD was also careful in those selected to teach catechesis. Lennon mentions the CCD in this context.

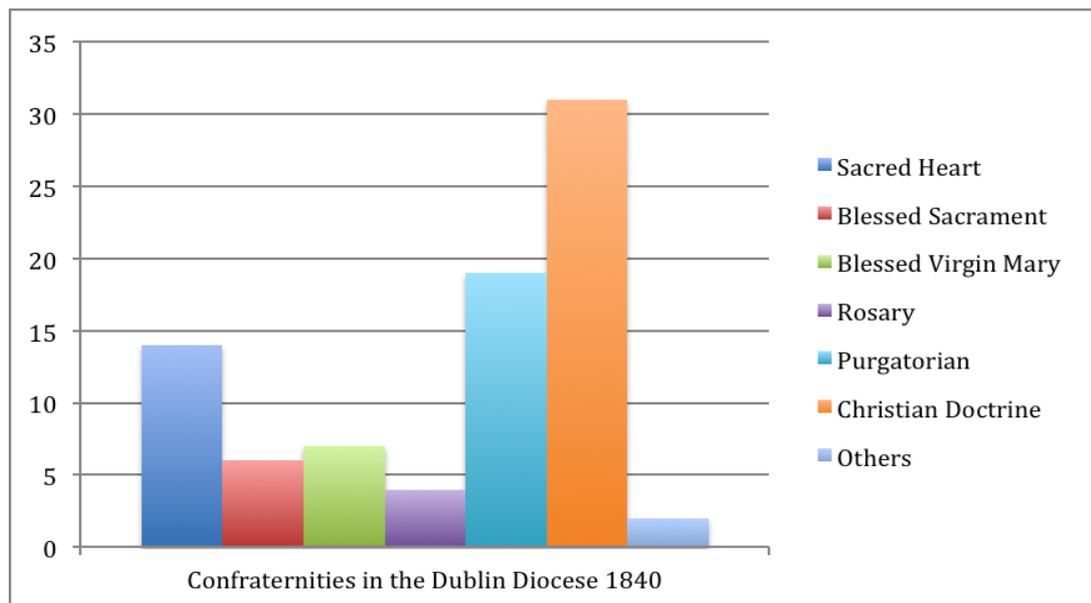
<sup>61</sup> Hugh Fenning, ‘Letters from a Jesuit in Dublin on the Confraternity of the Holy Name, 1747-1748’ in *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 29 (1970), 133-54, 143.

organised through the Dominicans, treated the name of God with reverence, avoided cursing and swearing, prayed for the conversion of ‘swearers’, and rebuked those who cursed.<sup>62</sup> Those respected in the community or those who had some sphere of influence were considered the best candidates to undertake such reform.

Although all confraternities strove to promote religion through piety and charity, each society had its own specific regulations, objectives, privileges, and spirituality. A number of confraternities were established in the Dublin diocese and even rural parishes had confraternities, with many parishes having more than one (*Fig. 9* and *Fig. 10*). Indeed, by 1840 only 5 Dublin parishes still lacked a confraternity or lay religious society.<sup>63</sup>

*Fig. 9*

Confraternities working in the 39 rural parishes of the Dublin Diocese, 1840<sup>64</sup>



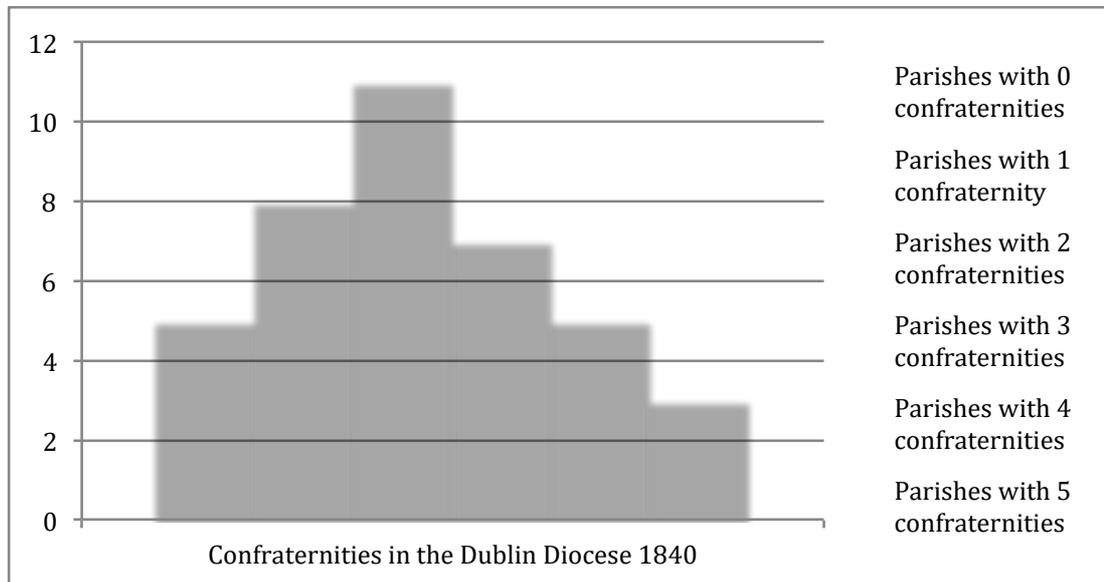
<sup>62</sup> Fenning, ‘Letters from a Jesuit in Dublin on the Confraternity of the Holy Name, 1747-1748’, 142-3. When the Confraternity of the Holy Name was introduced in Dublin in 1746 there erupted a dispute between the establishing members and the Irish Dominicans. The Dominicans had been entrusted by Gregory X with promoting the society in 1274, and felt they should control the operation of the society formed in Dublin in the eighteenth century, as it was based on the original confraternity. See Fenning, ‘Letters from a Jesuit in Dublin’, 143-6.

<sup>63</sup> Arklow, Blanchardstown, Clontarf, Donabate, and Maynooth were the only parishes still without a confraternity by 1840.

<sup>64</sup> The figures are based on parishes outside Dublin city. The category marked ‘others’ represents the confraternity of the Scapular and the Cord of St. Francis.

Fig. 10

Number of confraternities in each parish in the Dublin Archdiocese, based on the 39 parishes outside Dublin City



Confraternities provided parishes with a body of religiously engaged, respectable individuals willing to assist the clergy in a variety of religious and charitable activities. They ensured a ‘solid core of ardent Mass-goers’ some of whom could almost be considered as ‘lay religious’.<sup>65</sup> Confraternities were also an additional source of income for the clergy. They organised Masses for the intentions of members and subscribers as well as Masses for deceased members. The Purgatorian Society organised a monthly Mass, a quarterly High Mass, a Mass on the feast of All Souls, and regularly offered Mass for the dying in their care, and for the souls of the deceased that they had visited. Mass stipend was funded through the subscription paid by members.

Confraternities provided the laity with an outlet for their faith and a means of fulfilling their Christian duty. Members benefited from the prayers of the society and had the assurance that in death their soul would be continually prayed for and remembered by the confraternity. There were a number of indulgences attached to confraternities for those who faithfully completed the prescribed prayers and works. Membership of a confraternity was an opportunity to influence the lower class, under the guise of morality and reform.

<sup>65</sup> Gilley, ‘Roman Liturgy and Popular Piety: “The Devotional Revolution” in Irish Catholicism’, 232.

Furthermore, belonging to such a group created a sense of identity. Confraternities were exclusively Catholic and proudly promoted doctrines that were distinctly Catholic in origin, such as Purgatory, the Blessed Virgin, and the Real Presence.<sup>66</sup> The practices of indulgences, devotions, prayers and Masses further emphasised the denominationalism of confraternities. There was also a fraternal aspect as members associated with other Catholics who shared the same values and level of commitment.

### Confraternities, reading and libraries

Confraternities often acknowledged the need for reading for members and for those whom they sought to influence. The rules and devotions of confraternities were printed and members were urged to possess a copy for their own convenience. The Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist expected its members to read aloud while visiting the sick and attending at wakes. While the SVP began each meeting with a prayer followed by a spiritual reading, which members took in turn to read out loud, and required members to catechise the poor. Confraternities often advised members to pursue private reading, to strengthen their religious conviction. This was made possible through printed materials, such as those produced by the CBS, as we saw in Chapter 3. The *Rules for the direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies in country parishes*, recommended that married women recite daily prayers with their families in the morning and evening, and ‘attend to the reading of a chapter out of *Think well On’t*, Durrell’s reflections, or other pious books’.<sup>67</sup> The rules further suggested that each household possess at least a catechism, prayer books and a copy of Challoner’s *Think well On’t*.<sup>68</sup>

In rural areas, where access to books was limited, it was recommended that a religious sale library and a religious circulating library be organised by the local confraternity. Both libraries were to be stocked with books, pamphlets and periodicals of a religious nature, such as catechisms and prayer books, manuals of devotion, rules of confraternities and any other religious works. The sale library was to procure books and any items that would encourage devotionalism,

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<sup>66</sup> Confraternities that centered on these doctrines included: Purgatorian Society, Rosary Societies, and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.

<sup>67</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 8.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

such as rosary beads and religious prints, and sell them at a reduced rate, or supply items to a local shop, where they would be cheaply sold. Libraries were established to ‘promote religious instruction and encourage pious evening lectures in families’.<sup>69</sup> The lending library was to be operated from the society’s rooms or the chapel. To borrow a book, one had to subscribe to the library and pay a small fee.

The Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist and the CCD called for all branches to operate a religious library. The Purgatorian Society attached to Ss. Michael and John’s parish had a well-stocked library in Essex St. The library, which was open to the public, was established to be an instrument of religious instruction. According to Battersby, the Society aimed to ‘assist in promoting the diffusion of religious knowledge, through the medium of a well-regulated library’.<sup>70</sup> Initially, members and benefactors donated books for the new library. Subsequently books were purchased to extend the collection and by 1837 the library could boast ‘several hundred volumes’.<sup>71</sup> The library was exclusively stocked with religious and moral works lent to members and subscribers. For the year 1836-7 approximately 150 works were borrowed from the library.<sup>72</sup> The society operated a sale library too, where the *Office of the Church*, *Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary* and *Office of the Dead* were sold. A branch of the Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist attached to North King St. operated a library with over 1,000 books.<sup>73</sup> A similar branch of the society in St Peter’s Church in Phibsborough had a lending and sale library with religious, moral and historical works.<sup>74</sup>

Similarly, branches of the CCD established lending libraries for the use of members and the Sunday Schools. In 1823, the CCD and Blessed Sacrament operating at Francis St. purchased 613 books from the Dublin printer John Coyne. The majority of these works were catechetical including: 3 copies of the Douay Catechism, 250 Rules of Christian Doctrine Expounded and 300

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<sup>69</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 174.

<sup>70</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 185.

<sup>71</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 187; Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland: Comprising the Several Counties; Cities ... and Villages, with Historical and Statistical Descriptions ... and ... Seals of the Several Municipal Corporations* (London, 1837), 558.

<sup>72</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 187.

<sup>73</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 188.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

Catechisms. Other titles included the Old and New Testaments, Richard Challoner's *Think Well On't*, the Jesuit's *The Burning Lamp*, and *Virtuous Scholar* by French priest Abbé Proyart.<sup>75</sup> The catechetical works were most likely for the use of the Sunday school, while the remaining titles may have been added to the Confraternity's library. This library was intended for the use of members and was not open to the general public.

### Purgatorian Societies in Dublin

At what point praying for the dead, which was a common practice within the Catholic Church, was first taken up by societies is unclear. Societies whose members prayed exclusively for departed souls existed in Europe from at least the fourteenth century. Although the titles of these societies varied in each country, the rules and aims were the same and colloquially they were referred to as 'Purgatorian'.<sup>76</sup> The Purgatorian Society, or Society of the Divine Office of the Dead, was a confraternity formed to assist the 'suffering souls' in purgatory through prayer and offering Mass. Members visited the dying and offered them spiritual relief by praying with them and preparing them to receive the last rites. Following death, they continued to pray for the soul of the deceased until it was interred. All members paid the Society a penny a week. This money was used to purchase Masses for the faithful departed, especially 'the deceased parents, relations, and friends, of all the subscribers to this institution'.<sup>77</sup> The Purgatorian Society of the Divine Office of the Dead was instituted in Dublin parishes in the late eighteenth century. By 1778 a society was operating from St. Adam and Eve on Merchants Quay.<sup>78</sup> On 29 March 1806 a Purgatorian Society was instituted at the Evening Free School in Meath St.<sup>79</sup> On 1 July 1813 another branch of the Society was formed at St. James's Chapel and on 6 March 1815 the parish of St. Paul's Arran-Quay had similarly established a Purgatorian Society.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Appendix D.

<sup>76</sup> John F. Sullivan, *The Externals of the Catholic Church: her government, ceremonies, festivals, sacramental, and devotions* (New York, 1917), 351; the record of the earliest society is in Germany in 1835..

<sup>77</sup> 'Purgatorian Society ... held in St. James' Chapel', Cited in William McGavin, *The Protestant. Essays on the Points of Controversy between the Church of Rome and the Reformed*, Vol. I (Connecticut, 1833), 546-7.

<sup>78</sup> Begadon, 'Confraternities and the renewal of Catholic Dublin c. 1750-1830', 44.

<sup>79</sup> 'Purgatorian Society ... held at ... Meath St.', 348.

<sup>80</sup> McGavin, *The Protestant. Essays* 546-7; Gregory, *Remarks on Purgatorian Penny Societies*, 5.

Furthermore, it would seem, from the information collected in *Remarks on Purgatorian Penny Societies* by the Protestant Rev. William Gregory, that, although uncommon, such societies existed in Dublin as early as 1801.<sup>81</sup> In 1815, writing about the rules of the Society at St. Paul's, Gregory noted: 'the rules of this Society, here given, are not the only one established in the city, as they [Purgatorian societies] are now become general at the Chapels'.<sup>82</sup> In 1818 a similar society could be found in London, established by Catholics for the: 'relief of souls in Purgatory and Instruction of the Ignorant'.<sup>83</sup> In 1841 the Redemptorist Order revived the society in Italy. Called the 'Archconfraternity for relief of the poor souls in Purgatory' this Purgatorian Society became popular in Canada and America.<sup>84</sup>

The Society was governed by a council, made up of the parish priest and six lay members. The council met once a week and together recited the Office of the Dead.<sup>85</sup> The council was changed every 3 to 6 months, so that every member would at some stage be responsible for reciting the Office of the Dead.<sup>86</sup> Once a month a Mass was offered for the temporal welfare of subscribers and for the souls of deceased members. When a member died an Office was recited for their soul at the time of their death, at their month's mind, and at the anniversary of their death. On the feast of All Souls the deceased members of the Society, and their relatives and friends were to be prayed for at Mass, and the congregation were asked to remember them in prayer during the year. The rules were printed in pamphlet form and sold at the chapels for 3d. Each member was to purchase a copy of the Rules on entering the Society.

In 1817 a second society, the Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist, was founded at the newly built church of Ss. Michael and John,

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<sup>81</sup> Gregory, *Remarks on Purgatorian Penny Societies*, 16.

<sup>82</sup> Gregory, *Remarks on Purgatorian Penny Societies*, 15.

<sup>83</sup> *The London Quarterly Review*, Vol. XIX (London, 1818), 109.

<sup>84</sup> Sullivan, *The Externals of the Catholic Church*, 352; *The Manual of the Purgatorian Society: containing spiritual reading and prayers for every day of the month, also the ordinary prayers of a pious Catholic* (Boston, 1907).

<sup>85</sup> 'Purgatorian Society ... held in St. James' Chapel'; 'Purgatorian Society ... held in St. Paul's Chapel', Cited in William L. S. Gregory, *Remarks on Purgatorian Penny Societies Established for the Express Purpose of Affording Relief to the Suffering Souls in Purgatory! With a Correct Copy of the Rules ... instituted ... in St. Paul's Chapel* (Dublin, 1815), 5-10; 'Purgatorian Society ... held at ... Meath St.', Cited in *The Imperial Magazine; or, Compendium of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Knowledge*, Volume XI (London, 1829), 348-9.

<sup>86</sup> The Purgatorian Society attached to the chapel of St. Paul rotated the council every 3 months, while it was every 6 months at St. James' chapel and the chapel of St. Catherine on Meath St.

Essex Quay by the parish priest Fr. Michael Blake with the help of his curate Fr. Henry Young. The society was modelled on the original Purgatorian Society and retained many of its aims. However, the Society of St. John the Evangelist went further than its predecessor. For instance, they continued to visit the sick but offered material assistance as well as spiritual relief. The new society disseminated religious knowledge by providing catechetical instruction and maintaining a well-stocked library. Finally, in what was possibly its most interesting and innovative purpose, the society was to abolish abuses at wakes.<sup>87</sup> While the Society of the Divine Office of the Dead was a pious association whose members were united by prayer and compassion for the deceased, the Society of St. John the Evangelist was an active confraternity whose members were intent on moral and social reform.

The society founded in 1817 was a new departure from the original Purgatorian Society. The use of the name 'Purgatorian Society' by both groups has led to confusion in recent scholarship with the two societies being discussed as one unit.<sup>88</sup> While the 1778 society has European origins, the society formed in 1817 was distinctly Irish, formed by the Dublin clergy to deal with the problem of wakes. Furthermore, the original Purgatorian Society continued to operate outside of Ireland.<sup>89</sup> The society of St John the Evangelist proved to be a success in the Dublin Diocese and its aims and objectives were soon incorporated by other Purgatorian Societies. References to the Purgatorian Society in Ireland from the 1830s onwards include the developments added by the Society at Ss. Michael and John's. In 1832 the book *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies, in country Parishes* was published in Dublin, most likely written by Fr. Henry Young.<sup>90</sup> In this work the rules for the Purgatorian Society included the four objectives of the 1817 society. In addition, the author suggested that all purgatorian societies should adopt the rules of the

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<sup>87</sup> Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr. Henry Young*, 138-9.

<sup>88</sup> Begadon, 'Confraternities and the renewal of Catholic Dublin c. 1750-1830', 44-6; Begadon discusses the earlier society at Adam and Eve and the Society of St John the Evangelist in the same section and the sources for both groups are interchanged.

<sup>89</sup> Sullivan, *The Externals of the Catholic Church*, 352.

<sup>90</sup> The Author describes himself as having experience of country parishes through conducting 'country missions'. Young travelled to rural areas in the Dublin Diocese and conducted parish missions. He had experience formulating rules as he wrote the original rule for the Purgatorian Society in 1822 and the rules for the Evening Office in 1821, but modestly refrained from adding his name.

Society of St. John the Evangelist. As Young was one of the founding members of this society his recommendation is unsurprising.<sup>91</sup> The Purgatorian Society established in the diocese of Dromore in the mid-1830s had ‘removing abuses at wakes’ as one of its primary objectives. It also described itself as being ‘copied after the parent Society in Dublin’.<sup>92</sup> The ‘parent Society’ most likely refers to the Society of John the Evangelist as the society in Dromore was founded during the episcopacy of Michael Blake. In 1884 the Rev. Thomas McNamara published the work *Allocutions, or short Addresses on Liturgical Observances*, which contained an appendix on the Purgatorian Society. McNamara claimed: ‘The object of this [Purgatorian] Society is to prevent the abuses liable to arise at public wakes, and to have such wakes carried on in a Christian-like manner’.<sup>93</sup> From here on all reference to the Purgatorian Society will be to the Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist.

Although the founding of the Purgatorian Society originated with the clergy, it was established as a confraternity for the laity. The idea was that the laity could have more of an impact than the clergy alone; the Confraternity of the Holy Name shared this idea.<sup>94</sup> The Society began when Blake gathered a number of ‘edifying young men’ and sent them into the city to ‘read pious books, and recite the office for the dead’ at wakes.<sup>95</sup> At the first meeting, held in Temple Bar, a managing committee was appointed. Similar to other confraternities, the committee of the Purgatorian Society was formed from subscribing members of the laity. Likewise, the position of president was reserved for the parish priest, thus safeguarding the connection between the clergy and the Society and ensuring the priest could maintain control of activities in the parish. The committee was annually elected (on the first Sunday of January), and positions included a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, librarian and a general committee. The committee was to meet once a month, on the Sunday before the first Monday of the month. In addition, a sub-committee was formed to

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<sup>91</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 52.

<sup>92</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 45. Fr. Michael Blake became bishop of Dromore in 1833, and most likely introduced the society.

<sup>93</sup> Thomas McNamara, *Allocutions, or Short Addresses on Liturgical Observances and Ritual Functions* (Dublin, 1884), 289.

<sup>94</sup> Fenning, ‘Letters from a Jesuit in Dublin on the Confraternity of the Holy Name, 1747-1748’, 141-2.

<sup>95</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 93.

administer pecuniary relief. The sub-committee met on a weekly basis. Members paid a weekly subscription of a penny; more affluent members were encouraged to pay more. Public donations were also received by the Society. This money was used to stock the Society's library and fund its charitable endeavours. Initially the committee assembled in a premises on Derby Sq. but soon moved to Smock Alley, opposite the church of Ss. Michael and John.<sup>96</sup>

Fr. Michael Blake (1775-1860), had become parish priest of the chapel of St. Michael, Rosemary Lane, in 1810 after serving as curate to the parish from the time of his ordination in 1799. Following his appointment as parish priest, Blake initiated plans to replace the chapel of Rosemary Lane with a new parish church. In 1815 the church of Ss Michael and John, built on the ruins of Smock-Alley theatre, was opened. Blake, described by Cardinal Cullen as 'a man of exemplary conduct in his life and of extraordinary zeal', established a confraternity of the Christian Doctrine and Blessed Sacrament to serve the parish.<sup>97</sup> He helped to found the St. Joseph Asylum for single females and in his will Blake bequeathed a fourth of his property to the asylum.<sup>98</sup> He was a friend, advocate and advisor to Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy, blessing the founding stone of Mercy House, Baggot St. in 1824. In March 1833, Blake was appointed bishop of the diocese of Dromore.

Fr. Henry Young (1786-1869) was known for his piety and missionary zeal and devoted much of his ministry to encouraging religion among the lower classes. During his career, Young acted as curate to the parish of St. Michan, then St. Nicholas, Ss. Michael and John, St. Audeon, Howth, and St. Catherine, and acted as chaplain to St. Joseph's Asylum.<sup>99</sup> However, much of his time was spent travelling from parish to parish as a missionary preacher. In some rural areas he remained in the parish for a number of weeks, preaching, hearing confessions, catechising, promoting devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and generally working to improve religious practice.<sup>100</sup> Young wrote the rules for the Purgatorian Society and continued to

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<sup>96</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 185.

<sup>97</sup> James Quinn, 'Michael Blake', in James McGuire and James Quinn (ed.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009), 56.

<sup>98</sup> Matthew Russell, 'The Founder of St. Joseph's Asylum, Dublin', *The Irish Monthly*, Vol. 25, No. 292 (Oct., 1897), 543-547, 544.

<sup>99</sup> C. J. Woods, 'Young, Henry', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, 1104.

<sup>100</sup> Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr Henry Young*, 210-278.

have an interest in its progress, even after he left the parish of Ss. Michael and John.<sup>101</sup>

Blake and Young founded the Purgatorian Society to advance the moral and spiritual welfare of the laity. Both men were involved in temperance societies and worked to encourage teetotalism and abolish alcohol dependency; indeed Blake continued his association later becoming a firm supporter of Fr. Mathew's crusade.<sup>102</sup> Ronan argues that their commitment to teetotalism motivated them to found the Purgatorian Society: 'knowing city life so well, [they] apparently agreed, in 1817, that one of the remedies against intemperance was to abolish drinking at wakes'.<sup>103</sup> The connection between the Purgatorian Society and alcoholism has also been noted by John Quinn and Elizabeth Malcolm who both discuss the society in the context of the emerging Temperance Movement.<sup>104</sup> The relationship between the Society and temperance can be further seen in the rules for the new Society, whereby members were not permitted to enter public houses on Sunday, holy days or payday. Moreover, any member discovered drunk was to be fined. Fines were issued for the first two counts of drunkenness; a third offence would lead to expulsion from the Society.<sup>105</sup> According to Begadon, the need to regulate the behaviour of Purgatorians was essential to give the society the necessary credibility to carry out moral reform.<sup>106</sup> Quinn cautions against defining the society in terms of temperance arguing it was 'neither teetotal nor anti-spirit organization' rather, the Purgatorian society was part of a wider movement for moral reform.<sup>107</sup>

In 1820 Young, with the approval of the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Troy, petitioned the Holy See to grant the Society an indulgence in recognition of its pious works.<sup>108</sup> They prepared an account of the valuable work of the society and

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<sup>101</sup> Georgiana Fullerton, 'A Sketch of the Life of the Late Father Henry Young, of Dublin', *The Irish Monthly*, Vol. 2 (1874), 290-300, 290.

<sup>102</sup> Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 85.

<sup>103</sup> Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr Henry Young*, 143.

<sup>104</sup> Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 55-6; Elizabeth Malcolm, 'Ireland sober, Ireland free': *Drink and Temperance in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1986), 68-9.

<sup>105</sup> Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 55; Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr Henry Young*, 143.

<sup>106</sup> Begadon, 'Confraternities and the renewal of Catholic Dublin c. 1750-1830', 44

<sup>107</sup> Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 55.

<sup>108</sup> Appendix H.

sought the ‘sanction and privileges of the Holy See’<sup>109</sup> to encourage the laity to participate in the work of the confraternity:

To perpetuate these devout practices, and to increase the zeal and clarity of all the members of this congregation towards the dying and deceased faithful; we, prostrate at the foot of Your Holiness, do humbly petition you to grant us perpetual plenary indulgences ... we do also humbly petition the grant of a partial indulgence.<sup>110</sup>

On the 4 June 1820 Pope Pius VII granted perpetual plenary and partial indulgences for members of the Society.<sup>111</sup> On the 10 of February 1833, Pope Gregory XVI extended these indulgences to all other Purgatorian Societies, on the condition that they comply with the rules set down in the original indulgence.<sup>112</sup>

In the *Catholic Directory* for 1836 William Battersby wrote: ‘we know no Society more meritorious in its nature – more extensive in its objects, or more useful to Society at large, than St. John’s Society’.<sup>113</sup> New branches were soon formed in other Dublin parishes. In 1820 a branch was established at North King St., attached to the parish of St. Michan. Following the same rules as the parent Society, this branch had a general committee of 36 members and a sub-committee of 12. A branch was to be found in Phibsborough, at the newly built church of St. Peter. In 1819 a modified branch of the Purgatorian Society opened at St. Teresa’s chapel at Clarendon St., called the Society of St. Joseph. A further branch was attached to the parish of St. James.<sup>114</sup> By 1837 branches had been established in 16 of the 39 rural parishes in the Dublin Diocese including some parishes in Kildare and Wicklow.<sup>115</sup> In 6 parishes 2 branches of the Purgatorian Society were formed, one in each chapel.<sup>116</sup> In 2 parishes 3 branches were established.<sup>117</sup> The parish of Kingstown, near Dún Laoghaire, had a modified branch of the Society dedicated to St. Patrick, founded in 1820. Members of this

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<sup>109</sup> Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr. Henry Young*, 139.

<sup>110</sup> Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr. Henry Young*, 144.

<sup>111</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 94.

<sup>112</sup> Bouvier, *A Dogmatical and Practical Treatise on Indulgences*, 174.

<sup>113</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1836*, 93.

<sup>114</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 188.

<sup>115</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1834; The parishes were: Ballymore Eustace, Skerries, Kilcullen, Athy, Rathfarnham, Irishtown, Balrothery, Rathdrum, Naraghmore, Newbridge, Blessington, Rush, Kingstown, Saggart, Swords, and Kilquade.

<sup>116</sup> Newbridge, Naraghmore, Kilquade, Kingstown, Kilcullen, and Ballymore Eustace.

<sup>117</sup> Rathdrum and Rathfarnham.

Society gathered to recite the Office of the Dead three times a week and recited the rosary together once a week.<sup>118</sup> The parish of Ballymore Eustace, in Co. Kildare, had a confraternity of St. John the Evangelist attached to the chapels of Ballymore Eustace and Hollywood: ‘who teach the catechism, assist the dying and recite the office of the dead’.<sup>119</sup> In 1830 there were 120 men attached to these two branches.<sup>120</sup> In 1830 Fr. John Murtagh, the parish priest of Kilcullen in Co. Kildare, claimed the Society was responsible for ‘the suppression of the various scandals which heretofore prevailed at wakes’.<sup>121</sup> While in 1831 the parish priest of Skerries, Fr. Michael J. Murray, witnessed ‘the most beneficial results’ after establishing the Society three years previously.<sup>122</sup>

### Fulfilling the objectives of the Purgatorian Society

The Purgatorian Society described itself as a confraternity established ‘for promoting spiritual and corporal works of mercy’.<sup>123</sup> In Catholic teaching the works of mercy were integral to the salvation of souls. The corporal works were tasks prescribed by Christ, in the Gospel, for those who wished to enter heaven, and therefore an obligation not to be taken lightly.<sup>124</sup> It was not enough to simply relieve human misery; disciples also had a duty to tend to the soul, hence the spiritual works. The Church classes the following seven acts of charity as spiritual works of mercy: to admonish sinners, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive injuries, and pray for the living and the dead.<sup>125</sup> Through the work of the Society, members fulfilled at least four of the seven works. They regularly prayed for the dead, offered comfort, provided religious instruction and access to books, and worked to abolish sinful practices at wakes. The seven corporal works of mercy are: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit

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<sup>118</sup> Cunningham, ‘The Catholic Directory for 1821. (By Rev. H. Young)’, 357.

<sup>119</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1837. It is referred to directly as the Society of St. John the Evangelist.

<sup>120</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, v.

<sup>123</sup> Cunningham, ‘The Catholic Directory for 1821. (By Rev. H. Young)’, 359.

<sup>124</sup> The Scriptural basis for the corporal works of mercy comes from the parable of the goats and the sheep: *Matthew 23:31-46*.

<sup>125</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2447.

the sick, ransom the captive, bury the dead.<sup>126</sup> Members of the Society visited the sick and assisted at the burial of the dead. In addition, the Society donated money to the poor, therefore it could be said that the Society gave food, drink, shelter and clothes to those in need. By practicing works of mercy, Purgatorians understood that they were actively cooperating in the Divine plan for salvation.

The first objective of the Purgatorian Society was ‘to instruct the ignorant’. Apart from catechising, members were to take every advantage to transmit Catholic doctrine.<sup>127</sup> Rule XII of the Society directed:

Some of the Members who are most capable are to be appointed by the president to teach Catechism in the Chapel on Sundays. And all of them are recommended to instruct the ignorant poor in their own houses and immediate neighbourhood, if opportunity serves.<sup>128</sup>

The Purgatorian Society operated a Sunday-school in Exchange St. where members provided religious education to children. By 1850, this school had as many as 500 children attending on Sundays.<sup>129</sup> In the Dublin Diocese the Purgatorian Society, in parishes where it was established, assisted the CCD in teaching the Christian doctrine.<sup>130</sup> The *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies, in country Parishes*, insisted that while it was important to instruct the young it was not enough to confine religious education to children. Purgatorians should seek to educate the: ‘middle and inferior classes of the grown people, who are generally more ignorant, and want more instruction, than their own children’.<sup>131</sup> It was recommended that a catechetical class for adults be held once a week for at least half an hour. At the Sunday-school in Exchange St. catechesis classes were held for: ‘apprentices and persons confined to business, whose education has been neglected’.<sup>132</sup> As the congregation gathered in the chapel for Mass on Sunday, members, taking advantage of the audience, read out loud a passage from an instructive book ‘slowly and with clear voice’.<sup>133</sup> When visiting the sick or the wake house,

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Cunningham, ‘The Catholic Directory for 1821. (By Rev. H. Young)’, 359.

<sup>128</sup> Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr Henry Young*, 141.

<sup>129</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1850*, 273.

<sup>130</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1830-1851.

<sup>131</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 113.

<sup>132</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 187.

<sup>133</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 99.

Purgatorians again resorted to reading aloud. In addition, the Purgatorian Society operated a lending library. The decision to establish the library was reached at the first meeting, the same meeting where the committee was formed. The purpose of the library was to encourage members of the Society to pursue private reading and to make pious and instructive materials more available to the public.

A portion of the general committee was appointed to visit those close to death and prepare them to receive the last sacraments. Members visited the sick and fortified them with readings, prayers and reflections. Depending on the situation, members could also offer financial support.<sup>134</sup> Visits were to be of short duration so as not to over impose. Communication was restricted to discussions of a religious nature. During visits, members were to occasionally read, 'with slow and moderate voice', a passage from *Devotions for the Sick and Preparation for Death* from William Gahan's *Manual of Catholic Piety*.<sup>135</sup> Besides this, Purgatorians encouraged the relations and family to pray for the departing soul and, if they were present at the time of death, slowly read the *Testament of the Soul* by Charles Borromeo.<sup>136</sup> When the person died the Society had a Mass said for the repose of their soul and offered to assist the family at the wake. This ensured the wake was held according to the wishes of the Society. The Society established a sub-committee to 'afford prompt relief where they deem it necessary'.<sup>137</sup> Members recommended candidates to the sub-committee who they felt were deserving of financial support. Alternatively, the sick person, or their family, could apply directly to the Society. The Society gave pecuniary assistance depending on its circumstances at the time of the request.

Purgatorians were required to pray for souls in purgatory. Once a week, on a Monday, they gathered and recited the Office of the Dead. In 1822, a large Evening Office book was commissioned and printed for the Society at Ss. Michael and Johns, this was the only text sanctioned by the hierarchy for the use of the Society.<sup>138</sup> A monthly Mass was offered, on the first Monday of the month, for deceased members of the parish and the Society, and for all the faithful departed. In the evening following the Mass, members of the Society

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<sup>134</sup> Cunningham, 'The Catholic Directory for 1821. (By Rev. H. Young)', 359.

<sup>135</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 134-9.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 186.

<sup>138</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 52.

gathered again and prayed the Office of the Dead for the same intention. A High Mass and Solemn Office was celebrated every quarter ‘for the suffering souls in Purgatory and particularly for the deceased subscribers, and the parents, friends, and relations of the subscribers’.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, members of the general committee were dispatched to read the Office of the Dead at wakes.

Perhaps the most ambitious objective of the Purgatorian Society was its mandate to end abuses at wakes. The activities that took place at wakes had long been a concern for the Catholic Church. Boisterous festivities, excessive drinking, games and immoral practices, accompanied the prayers and mourning at a wake. Often encouraged, or initiated, by alcohol, the laity took part in: ‘sinful plays, unchaste songs and dangerous amusements’.<sup>140</sup> The Purgatorian Society intended to assist the Church in its desire to put an end to these abuses by providing prayers and religious readings at wakes. Members took it in turns to attend wakes and encourage prayers instead of the usual festivities. It was hoped that the presence of Purgatorians would increase the solemnity of the occasion and encourage more pious behaviour.

#### Wakes and the Catholic Church

The popularity of the wake, the gathering around a corpse prior to burial, among the laity caused the Church much consternation. Although wakes were associated with the religious rites of burial and contained some devotional elements, such as praying the rosary, they were not religious practices, and as such, were not subject to Church control. Furthermore, the wake took place in a private dwelling making it difficult for the Church to influence the practice. Diocesan synods and regulations called for an end to wakes and urged the laity not to participate in the unruly and immoral practices associated with the wake house. However, the efforts of the Church proved largely unsuccessful and wakes remained a popular feature of the burial custom in Dublin in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>139</sup> Rev Michael Blake, 1819, cited in Mc Gavin, *The Protestant: Essays*, 566.

<sup>140</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 140.

Wakes, according to Patricia Lysaght, are made up of two key components: lamenting and revelry.<sup>141</sup> Prior to burial, the body of the deceased was washed, prepared and laid out in the home, then the community would gather to ‘wake’ the dead. During the wake, the gathered community prayed and mourned for the deceased. The lament, or keen, for the dead was integral to the Irish wake. Keening, customarily performed by women, involved eulogising the dead by praising the deceased and mourning their passing in the form of impromptu poetry. ‘One of the relatives who possessed the gift would mournfully recite some verse in praise of the deceased, lamenting his death, and others would join in with sobs and additional words’.<sup>142</sup> The keen was performed at the wake, the funeral procession and during the internment. Mourning was accompanied or followed by celebration and festivities; hence the Irish wake is often referred to as the ‘merry wake’. In his study *Irish Wake Amusements*, Seán Ó Súilleabháin claimed that wakes ‘were far merrier than weddings’.<sup>143</sup> Singing, dancing, storytelling, games, plays, smoking tobacco, eating and drinking were all used to entertain mourners during night wakes. According to Hoppen these social elements were: ‘notable not only for their often alcoholic abandon but for curious ‘games’ of a remarkable, sexual, suggestive, and seemingly blasphemous kind’.<sup>144</sup> The ‘blasphemous’ games referred to by Hoppen were those that mimicked the sacraments of the Church such as ‘Hearing Confessions’ or the ‘The Marriage Act’ and ‘Marrying the Couples’ where participants held mock weddings. Those of a ‘suggestive’ nature included kissing games such as ‘Frimsey-Framsay’, and games that involved nudity such as ‘Drawing the Ship out of the Mud’.<sup>145</sup> A wide range of games were played, Ó Súilleabháin records 130 different types of entertainment associated with wakes.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Patricia Lysaght, ‘Caoineadh ós Cionn Coirp: The Lament for the dead in Ireland’ *Folklore*, Vol. 108 (1997), 65-82, 69.

<sup>142</sup> Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements* (Dublin, 1997), 131.

<sup>143</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*, 26.

<sup>144</sup> K. T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and Conformity* (London, 1999), 71.

<sup>145</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*, 94-6; John G. A. Prim, ‘Olden Popular Pastimes in Kilkenny’ *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society for the Year 1852* Vol. II, Part I (Dublin, 1853) 319-335, 334. When describing ‘Building the Ship’ Prim states the actions were ‘very obscene’ and claims he could not possibly describe them for the reader. He briefly describes some games including ‘Drawing the Ship out of the Mud’ to demonstrate ‘the obscene and demoralising tendency of the wake orgies’.

<sup>146</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*.

The Catholic Church condemned wakes as irreligious events, and often described the non-religious elements as abuses. Revelry and keening received particular condemnation for being unruly and contrary to Christian teaching. The games were similarly deemed to be inappropriate, unchristian, and immoral. From the seventeenth to the twentieth century Irish diocesan synods continually called for an end to the abuses that occurred at wakes. The Synod of Tuam, in 1660, denounced the feasting, drinking, keening, and merry-making and ordered Catholics to abstain from taking part in any of these activities. In 1748 the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin issued regulations to put an end to abuses at wakes, which were described as ‘heathen practices’.<sup>147</sup> The Kildare and Leighlin regulations ordered ‘no clergy whatsoever shall say Mass over the corpse of any defunct at whose wake such immodest songs, profane tricks or immoderate crowds are permitted’.<sup>148</sup> The regulations addressed the practice of keening as well; declaring it contrary to the doctrines of the Church and as such should be abandoned:

The heathenish customs of loud cries and howlings at wakes and burials are practiced amongst us, contrary to the express commandment of St. Paul in his *Epist. to the Thess.* forbidding such cries and immoderate grief for the dead, as if they were not to rise again ... all Parish Priests and religious laymen of this Diocese are hereby strictly charged and commanded, in virtue of holy obedience, to use all possible means to banish from Christian burials such anti-Christian practices.<sup>149</sup>

The eulogy that accompanied the keen was criticised for overemphasising the virtues of the deceased. Moreover, the regulations rebuked those who made a living from mourning and eulogising the dead. The 1834 regulations for the Diocese of Ardagh addressed the issue of wakes and suggested prayers and the reading of books as a remedy to abuses.<sup>150</sup>

The Dublin Diocesan Synod of 1686 called for priests to suppress the abuses at wakes.<sup>151</sup> In 1730 the regulations of 1686 were reissued for the Dublin

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<sup>147</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*, 139; Michael Comeford, *Collections Relating to the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Vol I* (Dublin, 1886), 81.

<sup>148</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*, 149; Comeford, *Collections Relating to the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin*, 81.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*, 153.

<sup>151</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 47.

diocese.<sup>152</sup> According to these regulations, the parish clergy were to impose penance on anyone who participated in the ‘lewd games’ and ‘obscene songs’ known to take place at wakes.<sup>153</sup> Connolly maintains the clerical condemnation of wakes, which continued in the nineteenth century, was motivated by the behaviour of the laity.<sup>154</sup> The diocesan statutes for the Province of Dublin, issued in 1831, had a whole chapter dedicated to ‘the burial of the dead’.<sup>155</sup> These statutes criticized drinking and games at wakes, and ordered that night-wakes be completely abolished, as this vigil over the dead was when the majority of abuses occurred.<sup>156</sup> Young, unmarried people were strictly forbidden from attending, unless they were a close relation of the deceased.<sup>157</sup> The synod desired that wakes, described as ‘disorderly’, be ‘gradually abolished and those who favour them rebuked’.<sup>158</sup> It further ordered that the funeral Mass, which had traditionally taken place in the home of the deceased, should always be held in the parish chapel and should take place as early as possible to avoid the need for a wake.<sup>159</sup> In 1875, at the Synod of Maynooth, the assembled bishops agreed to enact statutes to end wake abuses and replace them with orthodox devotions:

Parish Priests must put an end to unchristian wakes, where the corpse is present, and where games, dances, singing and drinking are carried on – these abuses are a shame and a disgrace to the house of the dead. Parish priests must similarly ensure that only members of the family of the deceased and near relatives spend the whole night at wakes.<sup>160</sup>

Similar to the Ardagh regulations, it recommended that keening and immoral entertainments, ‘which are unbecoming to the house of mourning’, should be replaced with prayers and spiritual reading.<sup>161</sup> Furthermore, the Maynooth Synod

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<sup>152</sup> Rogan, *Synods and Catechesis in Ireland*, 51.

<sup>153</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 161.

<sup>154</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 162.

<sup>155</sup> *Statuta diœcesana per provinciam Dubliniensem observanda* (Dublin, 1831), 179-184.

<sup>156</sup> *Statuta diœcesana per provinciam Dubliniensem observanda*, 183.

<sup>157</sup> *Statuta diœcesana per provinciam Dubliniensem observanda*, 184.

<sup>158</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 162.

<sup>159</sup> Ó Súilleabhain, *Irish Wake Amusements*, 152.

<sup>160</sup> Ó Súilleabhain, *Irish Wake Amusements*, 153; *Acta et decreta synodi plenariæ Episcoporum hiberniæ habitæ apud Maynutiam, an. 1875* (Dublin, 1877), 146.

<sup>161</sup> *Acta et decreta synodi plenariæ Episcoporum hiberniæ habitæ apud Maynutiam, an.1875*, 146; Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 213.

recommended the establishment of ‘societies for the dead’ (*societates pro defunctis*), to assist the clergy in dealing with unruly wakes.<sup>162</sup>

Wakes were local events but as important social and cultural gatherings were attended by a large percentage of the parish congregation. According to Corish, the traditions of the wake ‘were slowly eroded, but they died hard’.<sup>163</sup> In the nineteenth century the wake remained an important social event, even in urban areas such as Dublin. On his parish return for 1831 Fr. John Smyth of Balbriggan parish placed an ‘x’ on ‘Night Wakes’ and ‘violating the Lord’s day’ to indicate both were recurring abuses.<sup>164</sup> By 1837 the parish of Balbriggan had formed a Purgatorian Society and Fr Smyth reported that night wakes were ‘nearly abolished, but in some few instances still continues’.<sup>165</sup> In 1833 the parish priest in Blessington, reported that wakes were still practiced in the district.<sup>166</sup> In the same year Fr. Thomas Lawlor, the parish priest of Athy, wrote that the people continued to hold wakes despite being ‘publically and frequently admonished on the subject’.<sup>167</sup> In 1837 the parish of Kilbridge in Co. Wicklow reported that wakes continued to some extent.<sup>168</sup> Aware of the difficulty faced by the clergy, Blake and Young formed the Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist so that its members could attend wakes to put an end to the perceived abuses.

### The Purgatorian Society and reform of Wakes

The Purgatorian Society not only hoped to suppress abuses at wakes, but also to transform the very nature of the wake. While prayers, such as the *De Profundis* and the rosary, were traditionally recited at the wake house before the celebration commenced, the Society believed wake activities should be strictly limited to those of a religious nature. Therefore, all secular aspects were frowned upon and it was suggested that the games, plays and other amusements should be replaced with the recital of prayers and devotions and the reading of religious

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<sup>162</sup> *Acta et decreta synodi plenariae Episcoporum hiberniae habitae apud Maynutiam, an.1875*, 146-7.

<sup>163</sup> Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 181.

<sup>164</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1831.

<sup>165</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1837.

<sup>166</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1833.

<sup>167</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1833.

<sup>168</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1837.

books. According to the Society a model wake should consist of a small group, preferably the family of the deceased, gathered around the corpse reciting prayers.

When a person died in the parish the Society arranged for some of its reading members to visit the house of the dead and assist at the wake. Members were rotated to ensure all reading members participated in this service. Any member who did not comply with a request to attend a wake was fined and publicly reprimanded by the Society.<sup>169</sup> The family of the deceased could request purgatorians to attend and lead prayers by applying directly to the society. The local parish priest could also commission members to attend wakes and recite the Divine Office. Alternatively members were dispatched by the Society. Purgatorians attended wakes whether invited or not and once there attempted to redirect the proceedings; this must have drawn resentment from the family of the deceased and those attending the wake. The rules recommended that nine members attend each wake.<sup>170</sup> The sending of such a large number suggests the purgatorians were not always welcome. There was safety in numbers and the entrance of a group put the confraternity in a stronger position to take control of events.

The members assembled beforehand so as to enter the wake house together. On entering the house, Purgatorians went directly to where the body was laid out and standing around the deceased prayed for the repose of the soul.<sup>171</sup> Then they opened their prayer books and recited the Office of the Dead, out loud and in a clear voice, so that those assembled could hear.<sup>172</sup> According to the rule book of the Purgatorian Society:

Every member of this confraternity must be ready and willing to read the office of the Dead at wakes, in order if possible to abolish these

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<sup>169</sup> Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr. Henry Young*, 141.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> It was common practice for mourners to enter the house in groups and pairs, instead of individually. On entering the house it was customary to first approach the body and silently pray, as a mark of respect for the deceased. The honouring of these traditions by the Purgatorians could indicate some level of respect for wake traditions. However, it is most likely that these elements suited the aim of the Society to create an atmosphere of respect and reverence. Ridge, *Death Customs in Rural Ireland*, 60.

<sup>172</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 139-140.

unchristian and diabolical practices which are alas! But too common at wakes; and are disgraceful and insulting to our holy religion.<sup>173</sup>

Members were to ‘use their endeavours to remove the scandalous behaviour that is usually seen at wakes, to the insult and injury of God’.<sup>174</sup> This was to be accomplished by setting an example, scolding other mourners, and distracting attendees with pious readings and prayers. In, *Allocutions, or short Addresses on Liturgical Observances*, written in the late nineteenth century, McNamara detailed the steps taken by the Society to ensure wakes were held with fitting decorum:

When they hear of a death within their district, they are to ... suggest that the wake be private, without, at the same time, being over-urgent in pressing the matter.

They are then to offer themselves to assist at the wakes, and they will try to engage any good and charitable Christians, with whom they have influence in the district, to join them.

At the wake they will divide the time between prayer, spiritual reading, and conversation. The conversation should be subdued, as becomes such an occasion, to be in keeping with the tribute of respect due to the remains there before them, as also with the sympathy they should show to the family in their affliction.

If they observe any levity, they are to admonish the persons concerned with all mildness and gentleness, representing to them how unsuitable the occasion is for such conduct, both as regards the deceased and the family, as also in itself.

The prayers should be generally such, as that the people present may join in them, such as the Rosaries of the Sacred Name, and of the Blessed Virgin, and the reading should be, to a great extent, of a penitential character.<sup>175</sup>

The ‘spiritual reading’ was to remind those assembled of the dangers of sin and the brevity of life. McNamara recommended the writings of Luis de Granada, suggesting that *Memorial of a Christian Life* or *A Sinners Guide* would ‘furnish

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<sup>173</sup> Ronan, *Apostle of Catholic Dublin: Fr Henry Young*, 141.

<sup>174</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 140.

<sup>175</sup> McNamara, *Allocutions, or short Addresses on Liturgical Observances*, 289-290.

very suitable subjects'.<sup>176</sup> This was in accordance with the wishes of the Catholic hierarchy. In 1831, the statutes for the Province of Dublin, advocated prayers and spiritual readings as an alternative to the infamous games practiced at wakes, as did Armagh in 1834.<sup>177</sup> Similarly, the Synod held in Maynooth in 1875 stipulated that while the corpse is laid out, all that should be heard from the wake house should be prayers for the dead, the rosary, or readings taken from a devout book.<sup>178</sup>

Purgatorians presiding at wakes were forbidden from participating in any of the refreshments offered at the wake house. This was to set them apart from the other attendees. The serving of food and drink at wakes was frowned upon by the Church and one of the aims of the Society was to end drinking at wakes, as it believed alcohol was responsible for wake abuses. Indeed, the Purgatorian Society considered the games to be 'dangerous amusements' as they, coupled with the 'spirituous liquor' consumed, led to the laity falling into 'crimes of lust ... at the dead hour of the night'.<sup>179</sup> Concern regarding sexual activity at wakes was mainly directed at women and younger members of the laity, a sentiment that corresponds to the 1831 Dublin Diocesan statutes.<sup>180</sup> Purgatorians were to ensure that children were not present in the wake house to witness the wake games, and encouraged women not to attend. How they were to achieve this goal was not specified in the rules. Women played a significant role in the wake. It was women who prepared the body of the deceased: washing, clothing, and laying it out for viewing. Women were integral to the eulogising and keening. Therefore it was natural that women would remain for the duration of the wake. Female Purgatorians were not permitted to attend night wakes. This was most likely to set an example and to protect their reputation. However, female Purgatorians did play a role in transforming the wake. While they could not attend at night, women attended during the day, when there was generally women and family present, and encouraged the family to pray the rosary and litanies over the

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<sup>176</sup> McNamara, *Allocutions, or short Addresses on Liturgical Observances*, 289.

<sup>177</sup> *Statuta diœcesana per provinciam Dubliniensem observanda*, 183.

<sup>178</sup> *Acta et decreta synodi plenariæ Episcoporum hiberniæ habitæ apud Maynutiam, an.1875*, 146.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> The 1831 Statutes stated that the young and unmarried should avoid the wake house; *Statuta diœcesana per provinciam Dubliniensem observanda*, 179-184.

body.<sup>181</sup> Most likely, this opportunity was also used to persuade the family to hold a private wake.

As well as suggesting a private wake, the Society recommended that the corpse be brought to the church before the funeral, to avoid the need for a night wake. To persuade people to this end, the society proposed Masses and prayers for the deceased or the use of funeral regalia. The Purgatorian Society connected with St. Peter's church in Phibsborough aimed to 'abolish all kinds of vice at funerals'.<sup>182</sup> The Society purchased funeral regalia, for the use of the neighbourhood: 6 mourning cloaks and crepes, 18 scarfs, hatbands, and hoods and a shoulder hearse with pall. Families could apply to the Society for the use of these items during the funeral.<sup>183</sup> However, requests were only granted if certain conditions were met, mainly that the corpse be brought to the parish church before the funeral Mass and be interred immediately after the Mass, so as to remove the need to hold a wake. Thus, those who did not hold a wake were rewarded with the use of this finery.

In the 1950s, 60s and 70s, folklorist James Delaney, of the Irish Folklore Commission, collected and recorded aspects of Irish folk tradition. In the course of his work he interviewed people aged 65 years and older. These informants shared with him memories and experiences from their youth in Ireland and accounts they had heard from the generation before them.<sup>184</sup> John Purcell, interviewed in 1963, and William Talbot, interviewed in 1964, both attested to the presence of 'Purgatorians' in their town-land of Kilcormac, in north Offaly, in the diocese of Meath. Both men had memories of the Purgatorians arriving in large groups and reciting prayers. Talbot gave the following account of the Purgatorian Society:

I heard them at wakes and I seen them in the chapel with a corpse. They all got around the coffin and say an office. There were twelve or fourteen of them in it. They never took anything at a wake or corp' house ... as soon as the ceremony was over, they were all to leave the house.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> *Rules for the Direction of Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies*, 7.

<sup>182</sup> Battersby, *The Catholic Directory ... 1837*, 190.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> Anne Ridge, *Death Customs in Rural Ireland: Traditional Funeral Rites in the Irish Midlands* (Galway, 2009), 9.

<sup>185</sup> Ridge, *Death Customs in Rural Ireland*, 61.

Purcell described a group of ten to twelve men from the townland of Coolfin who regularly attend wakes in the parish: ‘There used to be people called Purgatorians at wakes long ago, in the Kilcormac district. And they used to recite psalms or some kind of office at the wakes.’<sup>186</sup> In Roscommon and Longford there was a group known locally as the ‘Carmelites’ who appear to have been identical to the Purgatorian Society and indeed may have been a branch of the Society. As demonstrated earlier, it was not unusual for branches of the Purgatorian Society to have different names, the original society was under the patronage of St. John the Evangelist, the branch founded in Clarendon Street was called the Society of St. Joseph and the branch in Dún Laoghaire was called the Society of St. Patrick. Despite the various names, all of the societies followed the same rule. It is likely that the ‘Carmelites’ in Roscommon and Longford were yet another branch of the Purgatorians. It is evident from Delaney’s account that this group had the same aims and methods as the Purgatorian Society. It was not uncommon for confraternities to combine; therefore it is also probable that members had an additional connection to a Carmelite confraternity, such as the Confraternity of the Scapular of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>187</sup> Delaney noted, ‘any reference I have ever heard to these ‘Carmelites’ – and they were very common in Longford – has almost without exception been derogatory’.<sup>188</sup> The ‘Carmelites’ were a lay group who visited the wake house and prayed and sang hymns. Although Delaney does not mention the Dublin Diocese, the accounts from the diocese of Meath provide verification of the operation of the Society at wakes and of the reception its efforts received. From these eyewitness accounts, it is evident that members of the Society did attend wakes, and did so in the manner outlined in the rules of the Society. From Delaney’s statement it is clear that the interruption caused by the Purgatorians, or Carmelites, although tolerated, was not welcomed at the wake.

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<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> It is interesting to note that the Carmelites in St. Teresa’s Church on Clarendon Street had established a Purgatorian Society as early as 1819. This church also promoted the Confraternity of the Scapular of the Blessed Virgin Mary by 1821 (see Chapter 4).

<sup>188</sup> Ridge, *Death Customs in Rural Ireland*, 62.

## Conclusion

The practice of holding a wake continued to be a cause of concern for the Church in the nineteenth century. Diocesan regulations ordered priests to reform or abolish the practice of wakes. In reality the clergy faced numerous obstacles implementing this reform. Whilst the province of reforming wakes fell primarily ‘on the shoulders of the parish priest’, the clergy in the Dublin diocese were greatly assisted in this area by the Purgatorian Society who cooperated with the Church in its effort to transform the manner in which wakes were held.<sup>189</sup> Parish priests applied directly to the Purgatorian Society for members to attend the wake house. It is true that Purgatorians were not always welcome as their insistence on prayers and hymns disrupted the rhythm of the wake. However, they did provide the clergy with much needed support, taking on the difficult task of attending wakes and monitoring activities.

Confraternities in nineteenth-century Dublin extended Catholic doctrine and religion and can thus be considered as lay apostolates. They were under the direction of a priest, approved of and recommended by bishop Troy and later Murray, and often granted indulgences by the Holy See. Confraternities allowed the laity to play a role in the on-going revival of the Church; members taught Catholic doctrine, organised devotions, participated in charitable endeavours and encouraged liturgical practice. They provided an outlet for the religious elite, members of the laity who already accepted Church teaching, to enrich their faith. Furthermore, through charitable and social work, confraternities had an impact on inactive members of the laity. Associations, such as the Purgatorian Society, provided charitable assistance to non-members, religious instruction to children and adults, and could potentially influence non-churchgoers through the work performed at wakes. Finally, confraternities, through good example and religious instruction, improved orthodoxy and encouraged the laity to practice their faith and perform their religious duties. In all this confraternities were assisted by the improved availability of Catholic print. Books were used to promote devotions among members and further afield. It was not uncommon for a confraternity to keep a library stocked with pious, devotional, and doctrinal works. Members were encouraged to borrow and read books from the library. There was an

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<sup>189</sup> Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*, 156.

expectation that confraternity members should be knowledgeable in the principles of their faith and therefore in a better position to disseminate reform among their peers.

## Conclusion

This study has sought to examine the influence of print and reading on the religious revival in the Dublin Diocese. The Church's pastoral programme resulted in a Catholic renewal in both urban and rural parishes, visible in the transformation of religious practice, the development of confraternities, and the growth in the system of Sunday Schools. The acquisition of religious knowledge was a central tenet of nineteenth-century reform. Knowledge was transmitted through the system of parish-based catechesis and Catholic books. This thesis has examined the extensive use of print by the Catholic Church. Religious books were used to explain Catholic teaching, to provide religious instruction, promote pious devotions, encourage liturgical practice and transmit reform. The desire of the Catholic Hierarchy to provide adequate religious books for the laity led to the formation of the Catholic Book Society in 1827. The Church's venture into printing was supported by literate Catholics who purchased the books produced by the CBS. By the mid-1830s the society, who up to this point had been financially supplemented by the Hierarchy, was supporting itself through the sale of books. By 1833 it no longer relied on advanced subscriptions. Furthermore, the catalogue of the society grew each year, indicating a growing demand for a wider variety of religious titles.

Readership of Catholic works is difficult to gauge. It is evident from the CBS that religious books were being purchased in the 1830s. Indeed, Battersby had enough confidence in Catholic readership to establish the Free Book Society in 1835. Battersby was a man motivated by faith, but he was also a businessman and wasn't prepared to suffer a loss should the society fail. This is clear in the first and second 'fundamental rules' of the FBS, which are concerned with how the society is financed. The demand for Catholic works is evident in the actions of private businessmen who, like Battersby, set themselves up exclusively in the Catholic trade. Booksellers began to specialise in the Catholic market during the eighteenth century, a trend that continued in the nineteenth century with printers such as Grace and Duffy.<sup>1</sup> Surviving catalogues of these printers are quite

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<sup>1</sup> Discussion on print in the eighteenth century can be found in Thomas Wall, *The sign of Dr Hay's head*, and in Hugh Fenning, 'Dublin Imprints of Catholic Interest'.

extensive by the 1840s and 1850s; for example Richard Grace sold 450 titles in 1851. Printers and booksellers were businessmen, the fact that they continued to make their living from Catholic works throughout the century demonstrates that the laity kept purchasing religious works after the demise of the CBS.

By 1831 the Dublin Diocese had a widespread system of catechism classes, supervised by the clergy but manned by members of the laity. This thesis argues that the success of the catechetical programme was dependent on the cooperation of laity, particularly members of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The CCD was the subject of Martin Brennan's 1834 book *The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Ireland, A.D. 1775-1835*. Since Brennan the CCD has been discussed by a number of historians such as Myles Ronan, Sean Connolly, and Cormac Begadon. However, the extent and influence of this society is often overlooked.<sup>2</sup> The CCD was the largest confraternity and branches could be found in even remote diocese such as Tuam. Its members were literate, highly organised, and entrusted with the important mission of religious instruction. In the Dublin Diocese the CCD operated in each parish in the city and by 1834 was organising catechism classes in 25 of the 39 country parishes. In the first half of the nineteenth century the Church simply did not have enough personnel to manage a system of Sunday Schools and without the assistance of this confraternity could not have provided such an extensive service.

The mobilization of the laity through a variety of confraternities, sodalities, and lay groups has also been considered in this study. The shortage of priests, a topic discussed by both Larkin and Connolly, had a negative impact on the level of pastoral care provided to the laity, particularly in rural parishes. Although the ratio of priest to people was more favourable in Dublin than other dioceses, such as those in Connaught for example, the growth in the population posed a pastoral challenge for the Dublin Diocese. Confraternities assisted the clergy in providing pastoral care in the parish by organising catechesis,

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<sup>2</sup> Brennan, *The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Ireland: A.D. 1775-1835*; Ronan, *An Apostle of Catholic Dublin*; Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*; Begadon, 'Confraternities and the renewal of Catholic Dublin c. 1750-1830', in Lennon (ed), *Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland: Charity, Devotion and Sociability*, 35-56. Connolly is sceptical of the success of the society and sees the shortage of priests as a hindrance to the catechetical programme; Connolly, *Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland*, 93-102. Begadon classes the society as a moralising confraternity rather than educational; Begadon, 'Confraternities and the renewal of Catholic Dublin c. 1750-1850', 47.

charitable endeavours and devotional activities. Confraternities provided the clergy with a network of active parishioners interested in their faith and aware of their religious duty. Confraternities had a dual function, first to convert their own members, and second the reform of the laity. Membership of confraternities provided certain members of the laity with a formal outlet for practicing piety and charitable works.

Membership of the confraternities was selective. Candidates were often accepted on the recommendation of the parish priest and were generally referred to in the records as 'pious' members of the parish. Confraternity members represent an elite group within the parish, composed of those who already fulfilled more than the minimum requirement. In theory the clergy had control of confraternities, as is clear from the rules and constitutions, where the parish priest is listed as the president with the final say on a number of decisions. This research has shown that in practice, the laity had a considerable amount of independence in the governance of confraternities. In the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine based in Francis Street,, priests are listed as subscribing members but are not listed as teachers. In the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Halston Street the examiner was one of the lay teachers rather than the parish priest. In addition, Halston Street rarely mentions the clergy, for instance there is no record of a priest as a teacher or subscriber. The only reference to the clergy is in relation to the Mass for the society. It is clear from the Dublin Diocese that the Church welcomed the participation of the laity through the structures of confraternities.

The devotional developments identified by Larkin as new, have since been shown to originate in an earlier period. Thomas McGrath, Desmond Keenan and Donal Kerr have clearly demonstrated that a devotional revival was underway in Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Larkin in his subsequent work acknowledged this, conceding that substantial religious development was underway in the English-speaking urban areas prior to Cardinal Cullen. However, he maintained that the reform could not have happened before the Famine, due to unfavourable circumstances, particularly the lack of clergy

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<sup>3</sup> McGrath, 'The Tridentine Evolution of Modern Irish Catholicism: a re-Examination of the 'Devotional Revolution' Thesis'; Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*; Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*.

and resources.<sup>4</sup> There was a considerable rise in the number of set devotions available in parishes, such as adoration, novenas, rosaries, and devotions to the Virgin Mary or Sacred Heart. These were accompanied by a growth in sodalities and confraternities whose members zealously promoted these devotions. . Devotional practices flourished in the Dublin Diocese in the first half of the nineteenth century By 1840 a devotional confraternity could be found in 31 out of the 39 rural parishes. The most popular of these confraternities were those associated with the Sacred Heart and Blessed Sacrament.

This thesis has traced a wide range of religious practice and expression, which indicate a major revival of religious life. The religious practices of the Irish laity have been examined in terms of liturgy and devotion, a distinction often ignored in discussions of nineteenth-century Catholicism.. Devotional practices are often regarded as being more accessible to the laity than the prescribed liturgical practices. However, devotions are designed to complement, rather than supersede, the Liturgy. This goes some way towards explaining the Church's attitude to traditional practices, such as Patterns, during this period, and the encouragement of devotions associated with the Blessed Sacrament. Eucharistic processions, adoration, benediction and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament greatly enhanced liturgical practice by fostering devotion towards the Eucharist. Devotional practices were crucial to developing the faith of the laity. Devotions foster piety, create a sense of religious identity and ultimately lead to improved liturgical practice. Aside from the spiritual benefit to the laity, devotions had the added advantage of not being dependent on a priest. Indeed most devotions were carried out individually and in private. Reform of religious practice was accompanied by appropriate religious print. Books were used to promote new devotional practices, such as novenas or devotion to saints, with printers producing a large quantity of prayer books. Liturgical works promoted sacramental practice and emphasised the importance of the Eucharist. The emphasis of liturgical reform was placed on reception of the Eucharist at Mass, however the expectation was for the minimum requirement rather than weekly attendance.

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<sup>4</sup> Larkin, *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism*, 7-8.

The significance of improved Mass attendance in the latter half of the nineteenth century, first identified by Larkin and Miller, remains a contentious issue and we have seen qualifications from other historians. What has emerged from this study, however, is that Mass attendance was less of a priority for the nineteenth-century Church than one might expect, as indicated in Chapter Four. The visitation sheets of the Dublin Diocese recorded the number of communicants and Easter duty rather than Sunday attendance. The fulfilment of the Easter Duty was generally adhered to in rural parishes of the Diocese. In 1832 Easter Duty was as high as 99% in Ballymore Eustace and Casteldermot, both in Co. Kildare, and Dunlavin in Co. Wicklow. Outside of Easter, as few as 50 weekly communicants was seen as positive, as was the case in Wicklow in 1837, and those who received twice a year were considered ‘devout persons’, as was the case in Saggart in 1831.<sup>5</sup> Although some priests recorded the number of parishioners receiving on a weekly basis the visitation sheets only sought information relating to monthly communicants, and did not ask for a record of attendance. It is evident that for the Dublin Diocese the emphasis of reform was on increasing communicants rather than attendees.

The connection between books and improved Mass attendance at the close of the nineteenth century is an area in need of further research. Such a study did not fit within the confines of this thesis, however, the Catholic Truth Society was briefly examined. The CTS was established in 1899, when printing as a medium for instructing the laity was much more feasible. By the arrival of the CTS, the Catholic laity were much more familiar with the concept of religious books than had been the case at the foundation of the CBS and FBS. The CTS was also catering to literate Catholics, of whom there was a far greater proportion in 1899 than 1827. These more favourable circumstances led to the CTS being the Irish Church’s most successful endeavour in printing. It is interesting to note that the CTS published works in the Irish language and commissioned native authors to write their texts, these innovations would have resonated with the national sentiment of the time. It is also significant that after the ‘devotional revolution’, and the episcopacy of Cardinal Cullen, there was a need to establish a society so similar to the CBS. Its formation demonstrates that

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<sup>5</sup> *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1837; *Visitation Sheets for Dublin Diocese*, Murray Papers/1831; See Chapter Four.

the need for religious knowledge remained an issue and also demonstrates the mutuality of knowledge and practice, a point that was regularly made by the CBS.

By the mid-nineteenth century religious reform was well established in the Dublin Diocese. The period from 1820 – 45 saw a wave of religious activity from printing to confraternities to church building. The CBS was founded in 1827 and by 1833 was supporting itself through the sale of books. The 1830s also saw the formation of a two book societies, the FBS and the Religious Book Society. In 1830 parochial libraries had been established in eight of the 39 rural parishes, by 1842 this number had risen to 30. A similar pattern emerges for confraternities and catechesis. By 1831 catechism classes were widespread in the Dublin Diocese, with even the most remote rural parishes organising a weekly class. In 1830 only 10 rural parishes had a CCD established but by 1834 it was active in 25 parishes. In 1840 devotional confraternities could be found in all but eight parishes. By 1840 there was a Purgatorian Society in 19 rural parishes as well as a number of city parishes. A programme of church building also occurred during this period. The reconstruction of churches was significant as churches provided a focal point for faith, encouraged liturgical practice, and helped to create a sense of identity for the laity. By 1845 the Dublin Diocese could boast a more catechised laity, a wide range of lay religious institutions, church buildings, and a substantial production of Catholic print. If Mass attendance achieved greater heights in the later nineteenth century, and was the most visible manifestation of Irish Catholicism, that should not blind us to the fact that a fully-functioning Church with substantial lay participation existed in the diocese of Dublin by 1845.

## Appendix A

### Parishes in the Dublin Diocese

#### Parishes in Dublin city:

St. Andrew	St. Mary
St. Audeon	St. Michael and John
St. Catherine	St. Michan
St. James	St. Nicholas
	St. Paul

#### Parishes in Co. Dublin:

Baldoyle, Howth and Kinsealy	Naul
Balrothery and Balbriggan	Palmerstown, Lucan and Clondalkin
Blanchardstown	Rathfarnham
Boosterstown, Blackrock and	Rathmines and Milltown
Dundrum	Rolestown
Clontarf, Coolock and Ballymun	Rush
Donabate	Saggart, Rathcoole and Newcastle
Finglas	Sandyford
Garristown	Skerries
Irishtown and Donnybrook	Swords
Kingstown, Dalkey and Cabenteely	
Lusk	

#### Parishes in Co. Wicklow:

Arklow	Kilbridge
Blackditches	Kilquade
Blessington	Newbridge
Bray	Rathdrum
Dunlavin	Wicklow
Glendalough	

#### Parishes in Co. Kildare:

Athy	Kilcullen
Ballymore Eustace	Maynooth and Lexslip
Castledermot	Naraghmore
Celbridge and Straffan	

## Appendix B

### Church Building in the Dublin Diocese, 1800-1880

<b>Date</b>	<b>Churches</b>	<b>County</b>
<b>1802</b>	Kilquade	Kildare
<b>1803</b>	*Arklow	Wicklow
	Blackditches	Wicklow
	Athy	Kildare
<b>1813</b>	Boosterstown	Dublin
	**Newcastle (Saggart)	Dublin
<b>1815</b>	Dunlavin	Wicklow
<b>1820s</b>	Finglas	Dublin
	Swords	Dublin
	Glencullen (Sandyford)	Dublin
	***Coolock (Clontarf)	Dublin
	Naul (2 Churches)	Dublin
	Ballymore Eustace	Kildare
<b>1830s</b>	Cabinteely (Kingstown)	Dublin
	Kingstown	Dublin
	Clontarf	Dublin
	Blanchardstown	Dublin
	Skerries	Dublin
	**Newcastle	Dublin
	***Coolock	Dublin
	Baldoyle	Dublin
	Kinsealy (Baldoyle)	Dublin
	Ballyboughal (Naul)	Dublin
	Castledermot	Kildare
	Lexslip (Maynooth)	Kildare
	<b>1840s</b>	Lucan (Palmerstown)
Lusk		Dublin
Dalkey (Kingstown)		Dublin
Blackrock (Boosterstown)		Dublin
Ballbriggan (Balrothery)		Dublin
Milltown (Rathmines)		Dublin
Saggart		Dublin
Maynooth		Kildare
<b>1850s</b>	Irishtown (2 Churches)	Dublin
	Rathmines	Dublin
	Rolestown	Dublin
	Blessington	Wicklow
	Bray	Wicklow
	Glendalough	Wicklow
	Cellebrige	Kildare

<b>1860s</b>	Donnybrook (Irishtown)	Dublin
	Clondalkin (Palmerstown)	Dublin
	*Arklow	Wicklow
	Newbridge	Wicklow
	Rathdrum	Wicklow
	Narraghmore	Kildare
<b>1870s</b>	Garristown	Dublin
	Rathfarnham	Dublin
	Kilbridge	Wicklow
	Kilcullen	Kildare

## Appendix C

### The rules, membership, and books of the CCD, Francis St. Chapel 1798-1845

*Rules for the united CCD*

#### **General Confraternity Book, Francis St. Chapel. 1810 The Rules of the Venerable Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine and Blessed Sacrament, Founded Dec 1798.**

Rule 1<sup>st</sup>: That there be always a president and secretary chosen by the presiding clergy and teachers; the duty of the president is to inspect the classes to take care that each class be diligently; attended. Silence always for this reason great care must be taken in selecting a Person for this office. The duty of the society is to have always a list of the teachers names and also to keep an account of the subscribers and subscriptions received –

---

Rule 2<sup>nd</sup>: That the teachers always attend, but in case they cannot, they should in proper time give notice to the President or secretary in order that some proper Person may be found, but in case the absent person neglect every part of this duty he shall be fined six pence which shall be applied to the use of the Confraternity or be dismissed –

---

Rule 3<sup>rd</sup>: That no person shall be admitted as teacher but one whose morals shall be found unsullied in both public and private life and then if able shall pay one British Shilling entrance, six pence half penny a month to be applied to the use of the Confraternity –

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Rule 4<sup>th</sup>: That teaching shall be continued at least one hour; and that each teacher shall dismiss his class in the most respectful quiet and orderly manner He can –

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Rule 5<sup>th</sup>: That the teachers be directed by the President in all things conclusive to the good of the Confraternity –

---

Rule 6<sup>th</sup>: That each Teacher attend the Procession of the Most Adorable Sacrament in surplice on the second Sunday of the month being Confraternity Sunday, also on the feast of Corpus Christie, Christmas Day, Easter Sunday etc, it is also expected that those who walk shall go to their duty that morning –

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Rule 7<sup>th</sup>: That each Teacher recite every day either the little office of the Bless'd Sacrament to be found in the Key of Paradise the Longe Lingua or six Paters and Aves and six Gloria Paters to the honour of our divine Lord: and to gain the Indulgence granted by the Church to the members of this Confraternity; for said recital –

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Rule 8<sup>th</sup>: That the President Secretary & Council hold their office one year and the elections always to take place on the first Sunday after the feast of Corpus Christi –

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Rule 9<sup>th</sup>: Shalt each member proposing another to the Confraternity must first make it known to the President or Secretary, that they may have time to call a meeting and report the said persons name, to the society at large –

Rule 10<sup>th</sup>: That each member as Teachers and subscribers shall be entitled to the benefit of seven masses to be said for his souls happy repose; and that all the members attend if possible at one or other of the said masses; and offer their prayers to Almighty God on his behalf – the benefit of the above to extend to any subscriber that pay their subscription regular –

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Rule 11<sup>th</sup>: That the President or Secretary before catechism invoke the Holy Spirit by saying a prayer for that purpose such as Come O Holy Ghost replenish the hearts of the faithful, likewise an act of Contrition and then begin – after catechism repeat the acts of Faith Hope and Charity, then dismiss the Children. All kneel down together and say the office of the Blessed Sacrament – <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *General Confraternity Book of Francis St. Chapel, DDA/Confraternity Books.*

## Appendix D

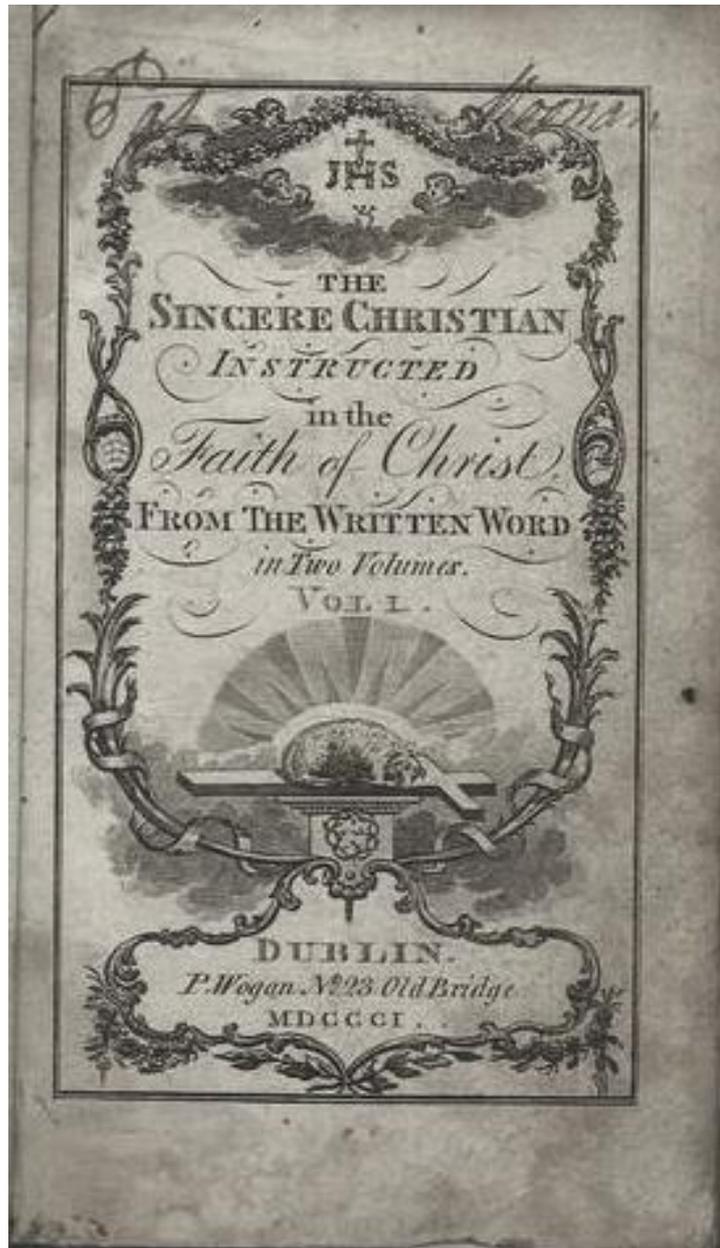
### Receipt of books for CCD, Francis St.

Receipt From John Coyne, R.C. Book Seller, Printer and Stationer, 24 Cook St. For Francis St. Chapel Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine, 8 <sup>th</sup> November 1823	
100 General Catechisms	£ 0 – 16 – 0
100 Second Size Catechisms	8 – 0
100 Small Do Do	4 – 0
3 Instructions for first Communion	3 – 9
3 Sure ways to find out the true religion	3 – 9
1 Virtuous Scholar	1 – 3
2 Lessons for Lent	2 – 6
2 Burning Lamp	1 – 8
1 Love of Jesus in the Sacrament	1 – 3
3 Think Well ont, Neat	1 – 10 ½
1 Gahans Old and New Testament	1 – 7 ½
1 Gahans New Testament	1 – 3
1 Gahans Old Do	1 – 3
3 Douay Catechism	0 – 9
12 Small Religious Books	5 – 0
2 doz Engravings Prince Horniholds Stations	5 – 0
1 doz Large Engravings	2 – 0
250 Rules of Christian Doctrine Expounded	1 – 0 – 0
25 Christian Doctrine Expounded	12 – 0
3 Single Poor Man's Manual	2 – 6
	£ 4 – 15 – 5 By Cash <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 'Receipt for books', in *General Confraternity Book of Francis St. Chapel*, DDA/Confraternity Books.

Appendix E

Title Page from 'Sincere Christian', printed by Patrick Wogan, 1801



Appendix F

Cover Pages from the Catalogues of Richard Grace and James Duffy

**CATALOGUE**  
OF AN  
EXTENSIVE AND VALUABLE STOCK  
OF STANDARD  
**ROMAN CATHOLIC WORKS**  
PUBLISHED AND SOLD  
**BY RICHARD GRACE & SON,**  
45, CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN.

---



A Liberal Allowance made on Books required for Confraternities, Parochial Libraries, or for gratuitous distribution amongst the Poor.

Orders for Exportation completed with promptitude and correctness.

The Public will find four things—rarely combined—to be obtained by forwarding Orders to this Establishment: 1st. The best and most accurate editions of Catholic Books; 2nd. The greatest possible variety of Catholic Works; 3rd. All at the Lowest Possible Prices; and 4th. The Works in the strongest and best bindings, at proportionate reductions, with that of the lowest or most inferior kind.

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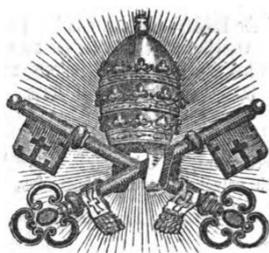
JANUARY, 1851.



GRACE AND SON'S CATALOGUE  
OF  
STANDARD ROMAN CATHOLIC WORKS.



CATALOGUE  
OF AN  
EXTENSIVE AND VALUABLE STOCK  
OF  
STANDARD CATHOLIC WORKS.  
AND  
BOOKS RELATING TO IRELAND,  
&c. &c.  
PUBLISHED AND SOLD  
BY JAMES DUFFY,  
7, WELLINGTON QUAY, DUBLIN.



*A liberal allowance made on Books required for Confraternities,  
Parochial Libraries, Poor Law Unions, or for gratuitous  
circulation amongst the Poor.*

JANUARY, 1851.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.



IMPRIMATUR

*D. Murray*

ARCHIEPISCOPUS DUBLINIENSIS.

Dublinii, Die 1 Jan. 1850.

THE BOOK OF CATHOLIC PRAYERS  
AND  
PIOUS EXERCISES,

For the use of the Faithful who desire to live piously and die  
happily. Compiled principally for the use of those  
who frequent the Churches, Colleges, and  
Schools of the Society of Jesus.

Embossed cover, gilt, 5s.  
Morocco extra, 7s. 6d.  
French velvet, gilt rims, clasp, &c., 21s.

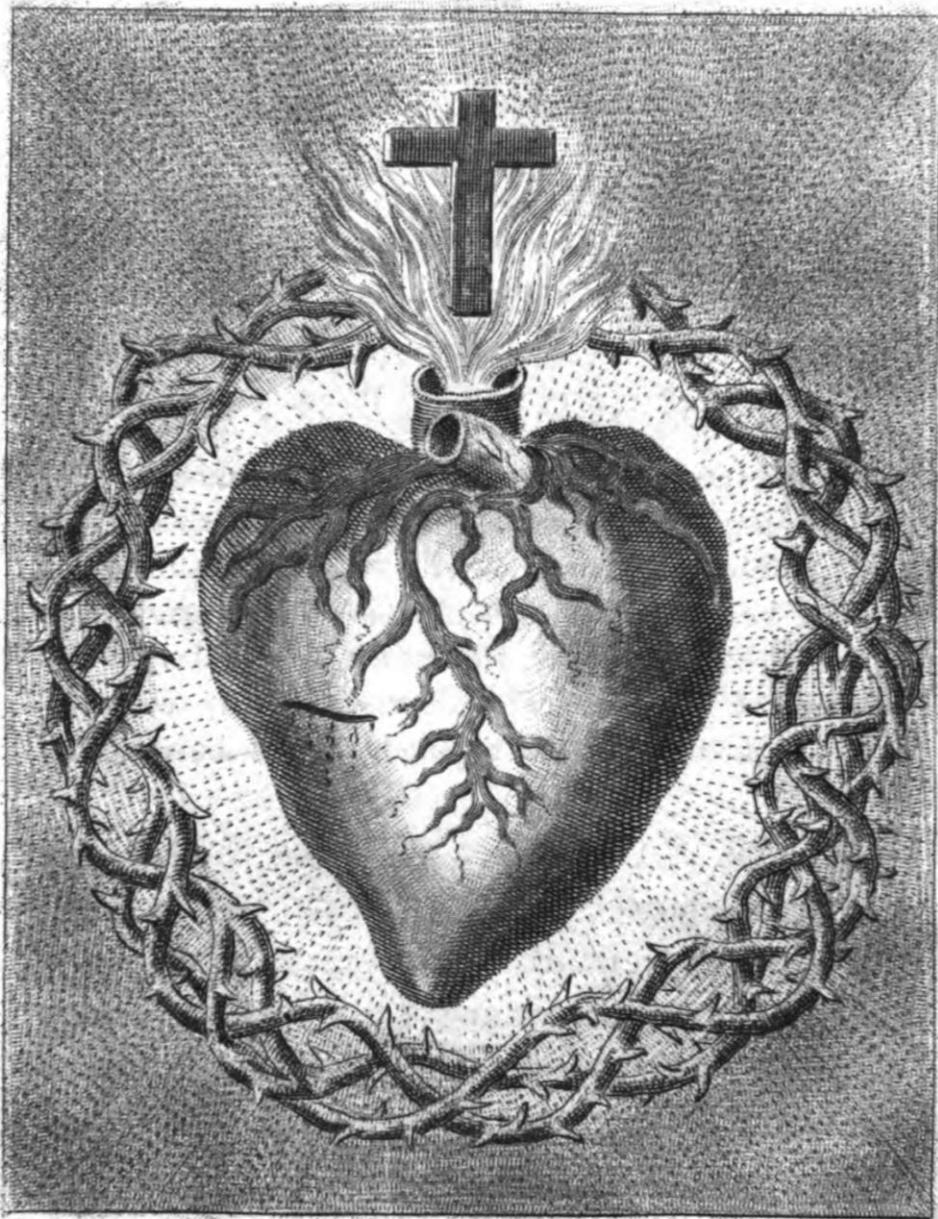
*\*\* Any Book or set of Books in the following Cata-  
logue, will be sent FREE THROUGH THE POST OFFICE to any  
post town in Great Britain or Ireland, on receipt of Six-  
pence in addition to the price of each volume, but it will be  
necessary IN ALL CASES to remit the amount with the order.*

J. M. O'TOOLE, Printer, 13, Hawkins'-street, Dublin.

Appendix G

The Sodality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Image of the Sacred Heart, based on visions of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.<sup>3</sup>



*O sweetest Heart of Jesus I implore  
That I may ever love thee more & more.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Bouvier, *A Dogmatical and Practical Treatise on Indulgence*, 232.

## Appendix H

### The Indulgence granted to the Purgatorian Society of St. John the Evangelist

Indulgence granted to the Confraternity of St. John the Evangelist by Pope Pius VII 4<sup>th</sup> June 1820:

Perpetual Plenary Indulgence:

- 1<sup>st</sup> On the day of enrolment into this Society
- 2<sup>nd</sup> On the first Monday of every month
- 3<sup>rd</sup> On the appointed days of the quarterly Office and mass, provided the members approach to the Holy Communion, and fulfil the other requisite conditions.

Partial Indulgence:

Seven years and seven quarantines each time they perform any of the offices and respective duties prescribed by rule. They are also granted the same privileges and indulgences granted to the Sodality of the Sacred Heart.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bouvier, *A Dogmatical and Practical Treatise on Indulgences*, 173-174.

Appendix I

Example of Confraternity Book, Register of the Christian Doctrine  
Confraternity, St Michan's 1859 - 1868

Names	Residence	1859												1860								
		4 Sep	11 "	18 "	25 "	2 October	9 "	16 "	23 "	30 "	6 November	13 "	20 "	27 "	4 December	11 "	18 "	25 "	1 January	8 "	15 "	
Mr. Wm. Mullin	2 Charles St.	"	"	"	"	6	4	7	6	7	4	5	5	7	7	6	5	6	"	5	"	5
Mr. Jas. Hartigan	7 Henry St.	"	"	"	"	5	5	6	6	7	3	5	5	7	7	7	5	6	"	4	"	6
Mr. John Connick	Cabra place	"	"	"	"	3	5	4	5	5	5	3	3	7	5	7	5	4	"	4	"	4
Mr. Joseph Trappe	18 Pill Lane	"	"	"	"	3	5	6	5	4	4	3	3	7	6	6	6	4	"	3	"	4
Mr. Peter Ganley	15b Capel St.	"	"	"	"	6	7	7	7	5	8	5	7	6	4	6	5	4	"	3	"	7
Mr. James Sheil	4 Archbold place	"	"	"	"	7	6	7	7	6	7	4	7	7	4	5	6	4	"	2	"	7
Mr. Thomas Trappe	18 Pill Lane	"	"	"	"	7	6	5	5	6	7	8	12	9	11	10	11	10	"	10	"	6
Mr. Nich. Muldrew	7 Fishamble St.	"	"	"	"	1	5	2	2	4	6	7	8	12	11	12	6	5	"	6	"	7
Mr. Jas. Houlihan	3 Little Mary St.	"	"	"	"	6	13	13	12	12	12	12	12	12	9	10	4	6	"	4	"	10
Mr. Martin Dunn	5 Charles St.	"	"	"	"	15	11	17	16	11	13	15	17	14	9	8	7	5	"	3	"	9
Mr. Mich. J. Grace	14 Petticoat Lane	"	"	"	"	"	"	11	13	15	12	17	16	17	13	14	11	9	"	4	"	4
Mr. Luke Flanagan	10 Boot Lane	"	"	"	"	24	18	15	22	23	20	25	19	24	21	20	23	24	"	20	"	12
Mr. Bernard Nangle	15 N <sup>th</sup> Anne St.	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	12
Mr. Richard Reeves	Wellington St.	"	"	"	"	13	12	13	14	10	7	10	10	8	8	10	9	10	"	3	"	7
Mr. Anthony Reeves	D <sup>o</sup>	"	"	"	"	9	5	8	8	7	4	4	5	4	4	8	4	3	"	3	"	5
Mr. John Durham	9b Manor St.	"	"	"	"	20	22	24	27	32	26	32	28	32	24	30	23	20	"	20	"	24
Mr. Patrick Sheil	7 Archbold place	"	"	"	"	21	14	16	20	15	12	13	12	13	13	13	12	10	"	10	"	10
Mr. Patrick Malpin	7 Yarn Hall St.	"	"	"	"	22	10	10	11	10	10	13	13	14	13	13	12	10	"	10	"	10
Christy Carroll	8b Capel St.	"	"	"	"	"	11	11	10	10	10	13	12	13	14	14	13	10	"	9	"	9
John Rogers	22 Fishers Lane	"	"	"	"	27	25	22	11	9	10	10	9	13	12	9	11	6	"	7	"	9
Edw. McKenna	63 N <sup>th</sup> King St.	"	"	"	"	28	25	22	8	9	10	10	9	13	11	9	11	6	"	7	"	9
Pat. Boland	9 Georges Hill	"	"	"	"	"	"	12	9	9	13	9	14	11	8	11	7	"	8	"	10	
Mich. Rourke	2 Simpsons Court	"	"	"	"	4	2	3	4	20	17	18	17	22	16	18	21	20	18	14	"	16
Henry Ryan	Heavens Lane Phibsboro'	"	"	"	"	"	20	17	18	18	22	15	18	21	20	18	14	"	13	"	16	
Thos. Develin	11 Malston St.	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Henry Hughes	8 Essex St. East	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Anton Courtinay	6 Malston St.	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Peter Broe	12 Bolton St.	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
John Waters	11 P <sup>l</sup> Dominick St.	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Miss M. Mahon	10 Linon Hall St.	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Miss M. Laughlin	10 Murray Lane	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
		"	"	"	"	265	243	266	261	252	234	271	252	289	259	265	236	197	"	171	"	218

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