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## REVISITING SACRED PROPAGANDA: THE HOLY BISHOP IN THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY JANSENIST QUARREL

Alison Forrestal

### Abstract

In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, prelates such as Borromeo of Milan and de Sales of Geneva, began to reinvigorate this hierarchical office, offering models of episcopal government, discipline and pastorate for other prelates to adopt throughout the Catholic 'Reformation' church. This article examines a central aspect of this formation: the ways in which the episcopal office could become a weapon in profound theological conflicts over grace, salvation, morality and ecclesiology. In midseventeenth-century France, the militant protagonists in the internationally notorious Jansenist conflict used controversial models and theories of episcopacy to defend their own views of morality and doctrine and to condemn their opponents as disobedient traitors of saintly and revered 'bishops', including ancients such as Augustine and the Apostles, and near contemporaries such as the famous Borromeo and de Sales. Their adaptation and manipulation of episcopacy highlights the profound dangers that the Catholic church encountered when its members sought to resurrect and energize the office of bishop within the powerful religious and political movement for Catholic reform.

The seventeenth-century Catholic church knew the value of sainthood. It produced its share of formally recognized saints; while just six canonizations took place in the sixteenth century, twenty-four individuals were canonized in the following. These were figures whose sanctity was defined in terms of 'heroic virtue' and tended to emerge from the ranks of religious, missionaries, pastors and mystics that the Catholic reform movement produced.<sup>1</sup> Figures

1. Peter Burke, 'How to be a Counter-Reformation Saint', in David Luebke (ed.), *The Counter-Reformation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1999), pp. 130-42.

such as Ignatius of Loyola and Teresa of Avila were officially placed on pedestals, inviting fame, admiration and even reverence for their devotion and loyalty to God and to his church.

An important reason for the marked growth in canonizations was the recognition that saints provided valuable sources of propaganda for the Catholic church in its conflict with protestantism. However, in offering privileged status to its heroes, the church risked the danger that they would be used not only to protect what it saw as entirely orthodox Catholic traditions, but also to defend more unseemly innovations in doctrine and devotion. This peril did not apply simply to newly consecrated saints; their venerable predecessors could also be drawn into battles over faith and discipline. This is especially evident in the hagiography of saintly bishops produced in France, one of the principal bastions of catholicism, during this era. The episcopal saints esteemed by the church were very well known in France and included traditional luminaries such as Peter, Paul and Augustine, as well as their episcopal descendants, notably Archbishop Charles Borromeo of Milan (1538–84) and Bishop François de Sales of Geneva (1567–1622), canonized in 1610 and 1665 respectively. Since the Council of Trent had placed bishops at the centre of its programme of reform, it became extremely important to French Catholic reformers to encourage its episcopate to emulate its holy predecessors, by governing through a Tridentine system of regular synods and visitations,<sup>2</sup> and by fulfilling its pastoral responsibilities of preaching and charitable care. As the movement for reform took shape in France in the early decades of the seventeenth century, reformers and hagiographers enthusiastically adopted Borromeo and de Sales, in particular, as contemporary paragons of episcopal brilliance.<sup>3</sup> Apart from editions of their own works, each was the subject of many French texts relating to the episcopal vocation. Between 1600 and 1670, Borromeo merited at least six hagiographic treatises, plus translations into French of several hagiographic biographies by non-French authors. At least seven hagiographic treatises of de Sales were also published. In contrast, just four works on ancient prelates and ten on contemporary French bishops are known to have been published between 1600 and 1670.<sup>4</sup>

2. H. J. Schroeder (ed.), *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Saint Louis/London: Herder, 1941), Sess. XXIV, chs. II and III, pp. 192-93.
3. Borromeo was canonized in 1610. Although de Sales was canonized in 1665, he was regarded as a saint in France from his death in 1622.
4. These totals exclude the short episcopal biographies in Antone Godeau, *Éloge des évêques, qui dans tous les siècles de l'église ont fleury en doctrine et en sainteté* (Paris, 1665). The early church bishops included in the totals were Savinian, the first bishop of Sens, Fulcran, bishop of Lodève, and Augustine of Hippo. Hagiographic works on contemporary French bishops

Yet, behind the superficially cohesive drive for episcopal renewal lay serious fissures that threatened the progress and energy of reform in France and throughout the Catholic church. As the French reform movement gathered pace, its clergy began to diverge in their opinions on issues of faith and discipline. When they did so, they were quick to invoke celebrated prelates to defend their views. In the most active decades of reform, these bishops became the objects of tugs of war between factions determined to defeat their opponents through campaigns that depended on sophisticated propaganda. The Jansenist quarrel (1640–68) was easily the most spectacular of these clashes, and demonstrates precisely how the images of the church's most revered bishops, and even the theology of episcopacy, could be subject to the vicissitudes of contemporary ecclesiastical politics. Of course, it is commonly known, thanks to the work of scholars such as Lubac and Sedgwick, that the Jansenists believed that they perpetuated Augustine's theology.<sup>5</sup> It is still almost universally unrecognised, however, that they and their rivals devoted considerable attention to saints Peter and Paul, both considered to be founding bishops of the church, as well as to Borromeo and de Sales. This is unfortunate for, as this article will demonstrate, each of these bishops was already famous in France before the outbreak of the Jansenist struggle, but their images were not absolutely defined. Rather, they still remained open to shifts of emphasis in virtue, theology and spirituality. As a result, the specific images presented in the publications issued during the course of the Jansenist conflict do not necessarily present accurate facts about the bishops' lives and personalities, but reveal a great deal about the aspirations, values and culture of those who constructed them. More broadly, in addition, this lively aspect of the Jansenist affair sheds light on the dilemmas involved in providing unified direction to an international movement for Catholic reform which desperately sought appropriate rules for spiritual piety, ecclesiastical observance and hierarchical government.

This article identifies two significant ways in which the images of episcopacy became entwined in the Jansenist quarrel: through the doctrines of salvation developed by the Jansenists, and through the attention that the conflict

were produced on Philippe Cospeau (one), Barthélemy Donadieu de Griet (one), JeanBaptiste Gault (one), François de La Rochefoucauld (one), Nicolas Pavillon (one), Alain de Solminihac (three), François de Sourdis (one) and Étienne Villazel (one).

5. This article does not, therefore, revisit this well-worn theme. See Henri de Lubac, *Augustinianism and Modern Theology* (trans. Lancelot Sheppard; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969), pp. 34-96, and Alexander Sedgwick, *Jansenism in Seventeenth-Century France: Voices From the Wilderness* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977), pp. 48-50.

brought to ecclesiology and, in particular, to the question of ecclesiastical authority. However, before analysing the different uses of saintly bishops in this struggle, it is essential to outline briefly the chronology that forms the basis of this article and to highlight particular circumstances in the French church that helped to complicate and shape the debate. The affair began in 1640 when Cornelius Jansen's (1585–1638) *Augustinus* was published, before long attracting accusations that it distorted Augustine's doctrines on grace, sin and salvation. Although the work found significant support in France, more than eighty French bishops forwarded five propositions from it to Rome for judgement in 1649. Innocent X duly condemned these in 1653 and 1655, a decision that Alexander VII confirmed three years later. However, when the Assembly of Clergy and the state attempted to force Jansen's supporters to subscribe to an anti-Jansenist Formulary almost all flatly refused to do so without distinguishing between *fait* and *droit*.<sup>6</sup> Among the most notorious recalcitrants were the nuns and *solitaires* residing at Port-Royal-de-Paris and Port-Royal-des-Champs, whose communities the archbishop of Paris eventually dispersed in 1664.<sup>7</sup> The quarrel, however, also received impetus when four bishops, Arnauld of Angers (1597–1692), Caulet of Pamiers (1610–80), Choart de Buzenval of Beauvais (1611–79) and Pavillon of Alet (1597–1677) joined the fray, withstanding immense pressure from the Crown and the papacy through the 1660s for their refusal to submit to the Formulary or to force their clergy to sign it.<sup>8</sup> In 1669, the *Paix de l'église* restored a temporary calm to the French church until the closing years of the century, with the recalcitrant bishops allowed to add *procès-verbaux* distinguishing between *fait* and *droit* to the Formulary.<sup>9</sup>

The most famous champion of the Jansenist cause during these years was Antoine Arnauld (1612–94). He was a protégé of Jean Duvergier de Hauranne (1581–1643), the *Abbé* de Saint-Cyran, who was a crucial figure in the development of French Jansenism, and a close associate of Jansen from the 1620s.

Because Saint-Cyran's penitential theology fitted comfortably with Jansen's

6. This would have allowed signatories to adhere to the papal condemnation of the five propositions (*droit*) but to deny that they were present in the *Augustinus* (*fait*): Louis Cognet, *Le Jansénisme* (Paris: Press universitaire de France, 1964), p. 64; Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, pp. 108–10.

7. Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, pp. 124, 130.

8. Alison Forrestal, *Fathers, Pastors, Kings: Visions of Episcopacy in Seventeenth-Century France* (PhD diss.; University of Manchester, 2000), pp. 109–74.

9. The conflict arose again in the final decades of Louis XIV's reign, resulting in the papal bull *Unigenitus* (1713): Pierre Blet, *Le Clergé de France, Louis XIV et le saint siège de 1695 à 1715* (Città del Vaticano: Archivio vaticano, 1989), pp. 429–80.

abstract soteriology he urged his brilliant young friend, Arnauld, to defend the tenets of the *Augustinus* when it began to attract negative publicity in France.<sup>10</sup> Arnauld duly produced *De la frequente communion*, a lengthy vindication of Jansenist doctrines on penitential discipline and a refutation of the ‘lax’ moral teaching usually associated with the Jesuits. Another controversialist, the nephew of Saint-Cyran, Martin de Barcos (1600–78), penned its preface. The book included a substantial section on the penitential practices of Charles Borromeo and François de Sales, the holiest bishops of the past two centuries, according to Arnauld.<sup>11</sup> Partially because of this, several anti-Jansenists quickly produced their own refutations and the affair spiralled into a full-scale war over the integrity of episcopal saints. Four archbishops, eleven bishops and one coadjutor bishop formally approved *Frequente communion* when it appeared in 1643, with all regarding its tenets as perfectly legitimate.<sup>12</sup> Even so, there were many that did not agree, and who felt that Arnauld had sullied the reputations of holy bishops in order to perpetuate heresies. They fought to return these to their rightful and eminent positions on the side of orthodoxy.<sup>13</sup> This situation was complicated further by two very thorny, and related, issues: the ongoing dispute over the rights of religious orders in dioceses, and the resurgence of ecclesiastical gallicanism within the episcopate. In the early decades of the seventeenth century, French bishops sought to draw the regulars under their jurisdiction, as they believed the decrees of Trent had recommended. Over the course of previous centuries, however, the regular orders had earned considerable autonomy and now proved extremely unwilling to abandon their freedom. The greatest disputes arose over their pastoral activities, for they argued that special papal privileges meant that bishops did not have authority over their preaching or administration of the sacraments. However, the bishops flatly rejected this claim, and when confronted by the regulars’ opposition to their policies, they simply tended to harden their own

10. Albert de Meyer, *Les premières controverses jansénistes en France (1640–1644)* (Leuven: Peters, 1919), p. 225.

11. Antoine Arnauld, *De la frequente communion. Ou les sentiments des peres, des Papes, et des Conciles, touchant l’usage des Sacrements de Penitence et d’Eucharistie, sont fidelement exposez: Pour servir d’adresse aux personnes qui pensent serieusement à se convertir à Dieu; & aux Pasteurs et Confesseurs zelez pour le bien des ames* (Paris, 1643), p. 587. A second Parisian edition was also published in 1643.

12. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, approbations (unpaginated).

13. Ultimately, Arnauld was expelled from the Sorbonne in 1656 for refusing to acquiesce to the Formulary and for his alarming skill in combatting the best anti-Jansenist propagandists with controversial, but sophisticated, arguments: Jacques M. Gres-Gayer, *Le Jansénisme en Sorbonne 1643–1656* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1996), pp. 133–276.

stance. They became more anxious as the independently minded Jesuits became increasingly associated with ‘lax’ moralism, a worry that the Jansenists were quite happy to foster. When they singled out Jesuit casuistry as an odious perpetuator of poor moral discipline within the church they were joined by almost all of the bishops of France.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in 1657, the episcopate published Borromeo’s rigorous *Instructiones aux confesseurs* in order to combat the casuistic excesses of the Jesuits’ teaching.<sup>15</sup> Like the Jansenists, they worried that laxist moral tenets and easy penitential absolution perniciously accommodated ‘bad habits’ and, as a result, jeopardised the salvation of the faithful.<sup>16</sup>

By 1625, the situation had become so tense that the episcopate had resorted to a strongly worded *Déclaration* that placed the regulars firmly under its control.<sup>17</sup> Rome, however, proved conspicuously reluctant to approve its terms, and the episcopate finally published the *Déclaration* independently in 1645.<sup>18</sup> Even so, the regulars continued to reject the bishops’ authority over them. An exasperated episcopate then produced a further set of twelve articles in 1657 to reiterate its stance and continued to pounce quickly whenever the regulars attempted to extricate themselves from episcopal supervision in dioceses. Significantly, however, the articles of 1657 were far more provocative than the *Déclaration* in their claims, for they explicitly stated that bishops held their jurisdiction directly (*de droit divin*) from God, rather than from the pope: ‘[The bishops] receive their jurisdiction immediately from [Christ] for the spiritual regime and government of their Churches, of which they are the leaders by divine law’.<sup>19</sup> This meant that the pope could not intervene in a

14. Forrestal, *Fathers*, pp. 129-34.

15. Many bishops also published editions for their dioceses, for example, Charles de Montchal’s, *Instructions de S. Charles Borromee, cardinal du titre de sainted praxed, archevesque de Milan, aux confesseurs de sa ville, et de son diocese* (Toulouse, 1648); Marcel Bernos, ‘Saint Charles Borromée et ses “Instructions aux confesseurs”: Une lecture rigoriste par le clergé français (xvie-xixe siècle)’, in *Pratiques de la Confession* (Paris: Les Editions de Cerf, 1983), pp. 185-200. 16. *Instructions de S. Charles Borromee, cardinal du titre de sainte praxed, archevesque de Milan* (Paris: 4th edn, 1665) (unpaginated).

17. By this time, unsavoury disputes between bishops and regulars over sacramental administration and preaching had broken out in Amiens, Chartres, Langres, Marseille, Orléans, Paris, Poitiers and Quimper. See Forrestal, *Fathers*, pp. 78-108.

18. Forrestal, *Fathers*, p. 110.

19. *Recueil des actes, titres et mémoires concernant les affaires du clergé de France, augmenté d’un grand nombre de pièces et d’observations sur la discipline présente de l’Église, divisé en douze tomes et mis en nouvel ordre suivant la délibération de l’Assemblée générale du clergé du 29 août 1705* (12 vols.; Paris, 1768–71), I, col. 687-88: ‘Ils reçoivent immédiatement de lui leur juridiction pour le régime et gouvernement spirituel de leurs Églises, dont ils sont les chefs de droit divin’. See Forrestal, *Fathers*, pp. 126-28.

diocese without the leave of its bishop, unless he had manifestly disobeyed established canons.

The articles' firm circumscription of papal power was a product of the increasingly troubled relationship between the French episcopate and Rome. The bishops' militant episcopal gallicanism meant that they strongly resented any attempt by the papacy to intervene in French ecclesiastical affairs without the permission of the episcopate. Because this position related directly to their dearly held 'gallican liberties', its defence was an issue of chronic significance for them. At a basic level, gallicanism is usually explained as either political or ecclesiastical: the term political gallicanism describes the alliance between church and state to limit papal authority, while ecclesiastical gallicanism is characterized by the belief that the French church should be independent of both king and pope.<sup>20</sup> A more particular application subdivides ecclesiastical gallicanism, however, according to the institutional structures of the French church, so that the specific term episcopal gallicanism, in part, represents the special privileges or liberties pertaining to the office of bishop. Equally, however, episcopal gallicanism was characterized by a tough defence of episcopal rights of jurisdiction, so that the bishops' rejection of illegitimate papal intervention within their dioceses should be at least partly understood as a manifestation of their gallicanism. The natural correspondence between these tender issues meant that the episcopate would pay close attention to the progress of Jansenism in France.

### **Reform, Grace and the Sacraments**

The Jansenists proved to be enthusiastic defenders of episcopal dignity and authority, and their publications often used the lives of holy bishops to illustrate the jurisdictional rights of contemporary bishops in France. Indeed, it was in their interests to do so: when the four Jansenist bishops became involved in the Formulary crisis, they worked hard to paint them as admirable personifications of episcopal leadership, wisdom and fearless integrity who were willing 'to suffer, to be persecuted for this cause'.<sup>21</sup> Augustine proved a

20. Victor Martin's *Le Gallicanisme et la réforme catholique* (Paris: A. Picard, 1919), and *Le Gallicanisme politique et le clergé de France* (Paris: A. Picard, 1929) are still the best introductions to this topic. See also his *Les Origines du gallicanisme* (2 vols.; Paris: Blond & Gay, 1939) for the background to seventeenth-century disputes.

21. Lucien Goldman (ed.), *Correspondance de Martin de Barcos abbé de Saint-Cyran avec les abbesses de Port-Royal et les principaux personnages du groupe Janséniste* (Paris, 1956), p. 215, Barcos to Gilbert de Choiseul, 1654: 'de souffrir, de d'estre persecutez pour cette mesme cause'.



useful model in this context, for his life became a vindication of the bishops' crusade. Martin de Barcos recognised this as early as 1643 when he wrote that those who opposed the penitential doctrines expressed in *Frequente communion* simultaneously opposed the 'sentiments and words' of Saint Augustine. He added that this resistance to the truth was not surprising, for Augustine had been subjected to similar obstinacy when he had undertaken his spirited defence of it.<sup>22</sup> It was not long before other Jansenists began to point to parallels in the struggles of Bishop Pavillon and his brethren. As the pressure upon them mounted in 1662, Antoine Arnauld published a powerful vindication of their refusal to obey the royal order to accept the Formulary 'pure and simple'.<sup>23</sup> Contrasting them to their feeble detractors within the episcopate, he argued that the latter unscrupulously used the Jansenist quarrel to curry favour with the Crown. However, he observed caustically, one should not expect any better from bishops who led profane and secular lives at court. On the other hand, the four Jansenist bishops, unaffected by ambition or intrigue, sought only to defend their dioceses, as true bishops should.<sup>24</sup> In this way, they followed the path of Augustine, who had not hesitated to act against the heretical Donatists 'for the extinction of this schism'. The quartet's zeal in defending the church's true doctrine was accompanied by 'wisdom, moderation and charity', for unlike their attackers at court, they never sought to oppress those who disagreed with them. Rather, like Augustine, they attempted to deal with the split in the episcopate through 'mild' negotiations that would produce an agreement with which every bishop was satisfied.<sup>25</sup>

Not everyone agreed with this interpretation of Augustine and his Jansenist descendants in the episcopate. Among the so-called court prelates condemned by Arnauld was Charles d'Abra de Raconis (1595–1646), the learned bishop of Lavaur, and one of the most active opponents of Jansenism.<sup>26</sup> Raconis published five lengthy treatises against the Jansenists, concentrating particularly on the writings of Arnauld and Barcos.<sup>27</sup> He was obviously stung by Barcos' claim

22. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated).

23. *Les Oeuvres de Messire Antoine Arnauld, docteur de la maison et société de Sorbonne* (43 vols.; Paris, 1775–83), XXI, p. 440.

24. *Les Oeuvres*, p. 444.

25. *Les Oeuvres*, pp. 453–48.

26. Joseph Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate 1589–1661* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 687–68.

27. Charles d'Abra de Raconis, *Examen et jugement du livre De la frequente communion, fait contre la frequente communion, et publié sous le nom du Sieur Arnauld, Docteur de Sorbonne* (Paris, 1644); *idem*, *La primauté et souveraineté singulière de Saint Pierre* (Paris, 1645); *idem*, *Breve anatomie du libelle anonyme intitulé Response au livre de Monsieur l'Eveque de la Vaur, etc.* (Paris,

that those bishops who opposed *Frequente communion* also opposed Augustine, and by the suggestion that their motives in doing so were less than pure. He was not, he retorted, a court bishop at all; in fact, he had resided in his diocese until driven to ‘employ my pen’ to defeat a heresy that threatened to deprive the faithful ‘of all the advantages of [the sacraments]’.<sup>28</sup> In doing so, he simply fulfilled his episcopal responsibilities: as a ‘doctor of truth’, he was obliged to defend the church against all ills; as an episcopal father, he had to protect his children.<sup>29</sup> The seductive and superficially orthodox Jansenist teachings contained ‘hidden venom’ that would destroy the church if unchecked.<sup>30</sup> Raconis consciously drew a comparison between his actions and those of Augustine, presenting himself, rather than the Jansenist bishops, as a true follower of the bishop of Hippo. He too acted to cure evils and to return the misguided to the church; he too sought only to protect the glory and honour of God’s church. His reasons for entering into combat were, therefore, entirely selfless and it was unfair to attribute motives of worldly pride, ambition or fickleness to his position.<sup>31</sup>

A decade later, Claude Morel applied the Augustinian legacy to the bishops who had recently ordered that all clergy subscribe to the anti-Jansenist Formulary (1657).<sup>32</sup> By paralleling the bishops’ struggle against the Jansenists with Augustine’s conflict against the heretical Pelagius, Morel was able to assert that the same episcopal ‘zeal’ and ‘knowledge’ that had inspired the bishop of Hippo animated them.<sup>33</sup> According to Morel, the bishops had behaved impeccably throughout the crisis: first, they requested that the pope judge the five propositions from the *Augustinus*, waited obediently until he did so, then confirmed his decision and acted to ensure that it was universally accepted. In doing so, they had resorted to strategies similar to those that Augustine had used against Pelagius: written disputations and condemnations that demon-

1645); *idem*, *Continuation des examens de la doctrine du feu abbé de S. Cyran, et de sa cabale: pour servir de response au livre de la tradition de l'Eglise, publie sous le nom du sieur Arnould, docteur de Sorbonne* (Paris, 1645); *idem*, *Declaration de Monsieur l'evesque de L'avaur, et touchant une lettre supposée par luy escrite a N. S. Pere le Pape: et présentée à Messieurs de l'Assemblée du clergé de France* (Paris, 1646).

28. Raconis, *Declaration*, pp. 6-8: ‘...priver de tous les avantages de graces qui se retirent de la participation [des sacrements]’.

29. Raconis, p. 5; *idem*, *Primauté*, p. 525.

30. Raconis, *Examen*, p. 15.

31. Raconis, *Primauté*, pp. 525-26.

32. *Recueil des actes*, I, col. 302.

33. Claude Morel, *La conduite de Saint Augustin contre les Pelagiens, suivie par les Evêques de France contre Jansenistes* (Paris, 1658), pp. 6-7.

strated the heretical nature of Jansenism. Yet, in ‘chasing the wolves from the sheep pen of Jesus Christ’, the bishops were not simply blind followers of Augustine, but ‘followed exactly the example, the order and the style of the whole Church’.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, it was unjust to criticize them for seeking royal support for their position, for Augustine had also done this. Both instances offered perfectly legitimate examples of the ‘necessary concert of the two Spiritual and Temporal powers’, which ‘can only be the result of God’s grace’.<sup>35</sup>

Of course, Augustine was not the only revered bishop who apparently needed to be rescued from the clutches of the Jansenists. Although his shadow overlay the Jansenists’ theology of grace, salvation and morality, the Jansenist writers also relied heavily on Borromeo and de Sales to defend their controversial teaching. This was based on a particular understanding of man’s relationship with God within the material world. For Jansenists like Antoine Arnauld, human nature was inherently corrupt; because of the fall, man was not able to choose between good and evil, but would invariably be drawn towards sin. Equally, the corruption of human nature meant that it was immensely difficult to bridge the gap between flawed man and the divine. It could only be achieved through the infusion of divine grace that was offered through Christ the redeemer. To access that grace, the individual had to cultivate an intense routine of solitary prayer and mortification, through which he would become open to the will of God. Because these introspective practices would encourage the sinner to examine his conscience, they would enable him to develop a truly contrite heart, stripped of worldly pride and ambition and marked with a humble piety.<sup>36</sup>

Progress in sanctity was extremely difficult, for it demanded wholehearted commitment to God. Saint-Cyran had emphasized this when he acted as spiritual director to the nuns of Port-Royal-de-Paris during the 1630s, and it informed the choices made by the Jansenist *solitaires* some years later.<sup>37</sup>

34. Morel, *Conduite*, pp. 6-8, 15-16, 25-28, at pp. 26 and 28: ‘Ils ont suivy exactement l’exemple, l’ordre et le style de toute l’Eglise...chassez comme des loups hors de la bergerie de Jésus Christ’. See also Louis Abelly, *De l’obeissance et soumission, qui est deüe a N. S. P. le Pape, en ce que regarde les choses de la Foy* (Paris, 1654), pp. 182-206, for a similar evaluation of the bishops’ behaviour.

35. Morel, *Conduite*, pp. 38-43, at p. 43: ‘Et ce concert si necessaire des deux puissances Spirituelle et Temporelle, ne peut estre que l’effet de la Grace de Dieu’.

36. Jean Orcibal, *La Spiritualité de Saint-Cyran avec ses écrits de piété inédits* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1962), pp. 233-41; Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, pp. 32-33.

37. Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, pp. 24-25.

Although Antoine Arnauld was only periodically a member of this ascetic group, he too shared their profound mistrust of the world and suggested that all Christians should strive to detach themselves from its values. Just as importantly, he developed Saint-Cyran's opinions on sacramental practice. One of the most controversial aspects of the *abbé's* direction of the nuns of Port-Royal had been his recommendation that they confess and receive communion infrequently, unless they had reached a state of near spiritual perfection.<sup>38</sup> The *abbé* had certainly not denied that the sacraments were essential to the Catholic faith, or that they were channels of grace in the Thomist sense. However, rather than steps that enabled one to advance in sanctity, they were confirmations of progress. This meant that the act of confession should be anticipated and accompanied by contrition; without it, the individual could not be absolved from his sins, for attrition was insufficient for absolution. Most fundamentally, love of God must precede confession and this could only be developed through an extended routine that involved scriptural study, contemplation and meditation, as well as mental and corporal mortification. Conversion, then, transformed love of self into love of God, and the sacrament of confession sealed that process.<sup>39</sup> This view of the sacrament represented a strict understanding of redemption, in which forgiveness was not possible for most, because they never proved truly contrite. Saint-Cyran was cautious in encouraging recourse towards the eucharistic sacrament for the same reason. The reception of the Eucharist should always be preceded by a worthy confession; only those who had managed to achieve this should approach the holiest sacrament of all.

The task of defining Jansenist soteriological views is complicated by the fact that some of the rigorous views expressed by Arnauld, Barcos and their colleagues were also held by figures like the devout bishops Antoine Godeau of Grasse and Vence (1605–72) and Jean-Pierre Camus of Belley (1584–1652), and by pious spirituals such as Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629), even though none of these can be labelled as Jansenists. This partially explains why the Jansenists were able to draw Borromeo and de Sales into their corner, for both bishops had indeed expressed opinions and encouraged practices with which the group could empathize. The Jansenists were, after all, part of the same movement for reform within the church, and this movement undoubtedly

38. Although Saint-Cyran encouraged the nuns to communicate three times weekly when his directive was criticised: Jean Orcibal *Jean Duvergier de Hauranne: Abbé de Saint-Cyran et son temps (1581–1638)* (Louvain: Bibliothèque de l'Université ; Paris: J. Vrin, 1947), pp. 471–75.

39. Orcibal, *Spiritualité de Saint-Cyran*, pp. 114–28.

emphasized the contribution of penance to the Christian life. All of the reformers emphasized the need for personal as well as institutional renewal within the church, and demanded that Catholics display the virtues of repentance, piety and humility in their lives. They also encouraged spiritual growth through prayer, charitable work and, of course, the sacraments.<sup>40</sup> Yet, at the same time, they suspected easy and frequent communion, and qualified their support for regular recourse to the Eucharist with sturdy recommendations about the disposition of the communicants.<sup>41</sup>

Equally, all of the reformers revered the contributions that Borromeo and de Sales had made to the Catholic church, honouring the bishops' administrative energy, and hailing the fact that it was accompanied by an intense spiritual routine of prayer, study and charity.<sup>42</sup> These bishops were 'mirrors of perfection', whom every prelate should strive to imitate.<sup>43</sup> This was precisely the request that Antoine Arnauld made in *Frequente communion*. Although his primary concern was to encourage bishops to adopt the prelates' penitential opinions, he paid passing attention to their other exemplary qualities. God had offered Borromeo and de Sales to the church, he observed, for the establishment of repentant reform and the conversion of heretics respectively. Each possessed the virtues appropriate to their special tasks: Borromeo had 'all the Divine and heroic qualities necessary to a Bishop to reform the disorders of a Church', while de Sales had been given 'an incomparable mildness' that enabled him to persuade heretics to return to the Catholic church.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy (1613–84), a *solitaire* and nephew of Antoine Arnauld,<sup>45</sup> wrote in 1663 that Borromeo had cultivated the three essential qualities of the episcopal vocation: preaching, administration and, most fundamental of all, prayer. Through prayer, he had attracted 'the grace which must form and animate' preaching and administration.<sup>46</sup> This animating grace had also enabled

40. Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, p. 194.

41. Henri Brémond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours* (12 vols.; Paris, 1916–36), IX, pp. 79–80, 91–2.

42. Forrestal, *Fathers*, pp. 207–16.

43. Nicolas Caussin, *Traicte de la conduite spirituelle selon l'esprit du B. François de Sales, evesque de Geneve*, printed in *Les Oeuvres du bienheureux François de Sales Évêque et Prince de Genève* (2 vols.; Paris, 1641), II, p. 121.

44. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, pp. 587–90, at pp. 589–90: '...toutes le qualitez Divines et heroïques nécessaires à un Evesque pour reformer les desordres d'une Eglise'.

45. Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, p. 24.

46. Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy, *La Vie de Dom Barthélemy des Martyrs religieux de l'ordre de S. Dominique, archevêque de Brague en Portugal* (Paris, 1663), pp. 563–64: 'Ces trois choses sont les plus grande de toutes est l'oraison'.

him to defend the church zealously and courageously against the attempts of the secular authorities to capture its jurisdiction.

Importantly, Le Maistre made these comments in his hagiography of another early modern bishop, Barthélemy des Martyrs (1514–90), the former archbishop of Braga.<sup>47</sup> Much of the treatise's teaching fitted comfortably with the prevailing view of episcopal virtues circulating within French reform circles: Le Maistre actually suggested that Martyrs could be 'by his example the light and model of all the bishops of the great Realm'.<sup>48</sup> Like Borromeo, he had based his episcopate upon preaching, administration and prayer.<sup>49</sup> His government invariably displayed a humble sense of service, and was underpinned by a deep attachment to God. Typically for a French Catholic (and not simply a Jansenist) reformer, Le Maistre regarded detachment from the world as a contributing factor to Martyrs' love of God, for in drawing closer to the divine, the archbishop had gained the grace to resist the temptations of 'men's commerce'.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, he had avoided the luxurious trappings that so often characterized the episcopal life, using his income 'to relieve the necessities of the poor' instead.<sup>51</sup>

However, although Martyrs was certainly known and admired within the French church, his popularity never matched that of either Charles Borromeo or François de Sales. The growth of their cults both resulted in, and was perpetuated by, the fact that a considerable number of French bishops, whether Jansenist or otherwise, were influenced by them. Like François de Sourdis of Bordeaux (1574–1628) and Alain de Solminihac of Cahors (1593–1659),<sup>52</sup> Nicolas Pavillon consciously drew on Borromeo's policies when administering the diocese of Alet: declaring that he particularly admired the archbishop's

47. *Barthélemy* went through two editions in 1663, one in 1664 and one in 1678.

48. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, foreword (unpaginated): '...par son exemple la lumiere et le modele de tous les Evesques de ce grand Royaume'.

49. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, p. 563.

50. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, pp. 530–31, 543, 556, 709, 712, 782, 788.

51. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, pp. 627–37, 674, at 627: 'soulager les necessitez des pauvres'.

52. On Sourdis, see especially Bernard Peyrous, 'La Réforme institutionnelle de archidiocèse de Bordeaux au temps du Cardinal François de Sourdis (1599–1628)', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 76 (1981), pp. 5–47; *idem*, *La Réforme catholique à Bordeaux (1600–1719)* (2 vols.; Bordeaux: Fédération historique du sud-ouest, 1995), I, pp. 120–24. On Solminihac, see especially: P. Dumoulin, 'Les Visites pastorales d'Alain de Solminihac', in Pierre Pommarède(ed.), *Alain de Solminihac* (Périgueux, 1993), pp. 18–29; *Relation de ce qui se fait dans le diocese de Cahors, par Monseigneur l'illustrissime et Reverendissime Evesque dudit lieu, pour remettre la discipline ecclesiastique dedans son clergé, et les devoirs de la vie Chrestienne dedans son peuple* (Paris, 1640).

untiring administration, he too held regular synods and visitations, and preached frequently throughout his diocese.<sup>53</sup> Jean-Pierre Camus was an ardent admirer of François de Sales, and to the fore in developing his cult within France.<sup>54</sup> De Sales also influenced well-known reformers like Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld (1558–1645) and the bishop of Bazas and Arles, Jean de Barrault (1593–1643). Indeed, Barrault was a formative influence on the young Alain de Solminihac, advising him on episcopal spirituality and diocesan duties.<sup>55</sup>

In Antoine Arnauld's view, Charles Borromeo had been quite aware of the sinful dangers that beset the Christian and had laboured energetically to ensure that the faithful of Milan would not suffer their damning effects. Using Borromeo's own comments in his provincial councils, both he and Barcos painted a depressing picture of the moral state of the archdiocese on Borromeo's arrival in 1565: it was a region riddled with moral corruption, and potentially prey, as a result, to the growth of heresy.<sup>56</sup> Rather than allow this decay to continue to destroy the church and determine the faithful's fate, the archbishop had embarked on a campaign to renew strict penitential discipline, using a series of conciliar decrees and episcopal ordinances to demand that the Milanese clergy were instructed in methods expressing the Fathers' teaching on penance. For Barcos, Borromeo had fulfilled his episcopal responsibilities amply, for 'it is peculiar to Prophets and Apostles, and great Bishops...to publish the general rules of the Gospel, and of the Church's discipline, without being able to be diverted'.<sup>57</sup>

The Jansenists presented Borromeo as a proponent of the view that penitential practices should be characterized by a rigorous routine of self-discipline, with recourse to confession and the Eucharist carefully regulated in accordance with the development of spiritual perfection. Had Borromeo not argued, asked Barcos, that the unworthy soul would be served best by suspending his participation in the Eucharist for a time so that he could cultivate a sorrowful

53. Étienne Dejean, *Un prélat indépendant au xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle: Nicolas Pavillon évêque d'Alet (1637–1677)* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909), pp. 47-49.

54. Camus' *L'Esprit du bien-heureux François de Sales, évêque de Genève* was published in Paris in 1639. This was a compendium of de Sales' spiritual teaching, based on the correspondence and conversations that Camus had had with his advisor.

55. Eugène Sol (ed.), *Alain de Solminihac: Lettres et documents* (Cahors: Delsaud, 1930), pp.

80-81, Barrault to Solminihac, 12 March 1629.

56. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated).

57. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated): 'Car c'est le propre des Prophetes et des Apostres, et des grands Evesques...de publier les regles generales de l'Evangile, et de la discipline de l'Eglise, sans en pouvoir estre destournez'.

and pure spirit that would ardently desire to become closer to God through the great sacrament of Christ's body and blood? This was 'a way to reconcile myself to God, separating myself for a time from participation in his Body, in order thereby to prepare myself by a sincere Penitence'. Those who chose this path followed the examples of the 'great Apostles', Peter and Paul, both of whom had performed solitary penance as they lamented their sins against Christ.<sup>58</sup>

Arnauld recorded four rules that Borromeo had devised in his famous *Instructiones aux confesseurs*. First, the archbishop had ordered his clergy to offer absolution only to those who truly deserved it. Second, he specified rigorous criteria to determine worthiness: the penitent should provide proof that he had amended his sinful ways and shun all occasions of sin. Borromeo's third rule stated that the penitent should abandon or avoid professions such as the military, magistracy, judiciary and merchant commerce, unless a 'virtuous and intelligent' advisor permitted him to participate in them, because these offered too many occasions for the Christian to slip back into sin.<sup>59</sup> It was not sufficient, therefore, simply to confess one's sins 'by the lips'; rather, a thorough transformation of one's life was essential if absolution was to be granted. The final rule ordered that 'a Confessor must not absolve those whom he judges probably return to their sins, although they say and promise to the contrary'.<sup>60</sup> Equally, when he did finally absolve them he should impose a penance that corresponded to their sin: a public sin merited a public penance, and a serious sinner could be refused the Eucharist for some time, and perhaps until his deathbed, if he did not demonstrate a sufficiently remorseful spirit.<sup>61</sup>

This portrayal of Borromeo's doctrine and discipline corresponded precisely with the Jansenist views of penitential discipline and human nature. Arnauld took pains to stress that the archbishop had been guided by the teaching 'of the Holy Spirit, the Tradition of the Apostles, the examples of the Fathers, the Laws of the Canons', and that his revival of the ancient laws of the church was an attempt to restore the primitive purity of the Catholic church.<sup>62</sup> For Arnauld, this link with the early church offered the greatest legitimacy to

58. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated): 'une voye de me reconcilier à Dieu, en me separant pour un temps de la participation de son Corps, pour m'y preparer par une sincere Penitence'.

59. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, pp. 531-48.

60. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, p. 561: 'Ainsi selon la regle de Saint Charles, un Confesseur ne doit point absoudre ceux qu'il iuge probablement devoir retourner dans leurs pechez, quoy qu'ils disent et qu'ils promettent au contraire'.

61. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, pp. 515-16.

62. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated).



Borromeo's practices, for it meant that he participated in the great tradition of doctrine and discipline handed down through successive generations of bishops. Of course, it simultaneously legitimized his own penitential views because he was able to present them as corresponding exactly to those of the church's most enlightened leaders. Whether or not Arnould's interpretation of Borromeo's rules was correct is a complex question: for Robin Briggs, the general tone or spirit of the archbishop's disciplinary measures certainly did not preclude a Jansenist reading;<sup>63</sup> in contrast, Marcel Bernos argues that Arnould's interpretation was 'a true abuse' of Borromeo's texts. Yet, he too is forced to admit that Borromeo's penitential regulations bore some similarity to the Jansenists' rigorous views on absolution.<sup>64</sup> On balance, it is clear that it was not difficult for the Jansenists to claim Borromeo as their own. They all considered delayed absolution and strict penance as means to encourage moral improvement and piety, even though Borromeo may not have shared the more extreme soteriological opinions held by some of the Jansenist group.<sup>65</sup> Arnould knew that this vindication was crucial to the Jansenists in their fight to defend their orthodoxy, and it was a device that Le Maistre also adopted in his hagiography of Barthélemy des Martyrs. He explicitly allied the archbishops of Milan and Braga, by presenting Martyrs as a proponent of exactly the same penitential practices as Borromeo. He too had been faced with a near ruinous diocese, and had remedied its 'public and scandalous crimes' and 'disorders' through wise penitential regulations that forbade absolution and communion to those who did not display appropriate repentance and moral amendment. Again, like Borromeo, Martyrs had renewed the rules of the early church, for he knew that 'The words of God and the rules of his Saints always remain firm. They have not been established to change with the times; but to be immutable and inviolable at all times'.<sup>66</sup> Le Maistre applauded the archbishop's firm attitude, for it was the only means of discouraging superficial conformity to the ecclesiastical laws of penitential reconciliation.<sup>67</sup>

63. Robin Briggs, *Communities of Beliefs: Cultural and Social Tensions in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 305-306. See also Paul Broutin, *La Réforme pastorale en France au xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle* (2 vols.; Paris: Tournai, 1956), II, pp. 379-98.

64. Bernos, 'Charles', pp. 192-94. A similar judgement was made by J. Guerber in *Le Ralliement du clergé français à la morale liguorienne: l'abbé Gousset et ses précurseurs (1785-1832)* (Analecta Gregoriana, 193; Rome: Università Gregoriana, 1973), pp. 309-27.

65. Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, pp. 103-104.

66. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, pp. 588-90: 'Les paroles de Dieu et les regles de ses Saints demeurent toudjours fermes. Elles n'ont pas esté établies pour changer avec le temps; mais pour estre immuables et inviolables en tout temps'.

67. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, p. 591.

The Jansenist camp also used Borromeo to defend their soteriological teaching in other ways. Among the most notable features of its members was their pronounced tendency to see themselves as beleaguered advocates of truth within the church, who suffered heroically that others might benefit.<sup>68</sup> This assumption had particular resonance when applied to the specific experiences of the four high-profile bishops who supported the Jansenist cause. They could take comfort from the experience of Charles Borromeo for, throughout his Milanese tenure, he had been forced to combat accusations that he was unjust, opinionated, unreasonable and an excessively ‘severe man’, and that he had distorted the church’s sacramental regulations. Those who disliked his vigorous attitude towards sin denied that it was necessary to instigate restrictive rules on sacramental administration. For Barcos, this was tantamount to labelling the holy Borromeo a ‘strategist of the Devil’, and it risked irreparably wounding ‘his virtue and wisdom’. Borromeo had, however, risen above the unjustified criticisms, and opposed all efforts to defeat his reforms.<sup>69</sup>

The quartet of Jansenist bishops, then, felt morally obliged to undertake an apostolic and episcopal crusade because it was their duty to ‘serve and help’ the Holy Spirit’s Church’.<sup>70</sup> Henri Arnauld’s claim that he was bound to act as ‘the eyes and mouth of the church’<sup>71</sup> was later expounded by his brother, Antoine, when he wrote Nicolas Pavillon that he should always seek the church’s well-being through ‘opinions, counsels and remonstrances’.<sup>72</sup> Arnauld purposely cast Pavillon in the Borromean mould when he recommended that the bishop travel to Rome in 1668 in order to represent the position of the four bishops and perhaps ‘dissipate [the] tempest’.<sup>73</sup> This was the approach

68. Persecution was regarded as an honour by many Jansenists, who understood it to be a means adopted by God to test their spiritual strength. See Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, pp. 195-96; *idem*, *The Travails of Conscience: The Arnauld Family and the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 257-58; René Tavenaux, *Jansénisme et réforme catholique* (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1992), pp. 35-44. Barcos praised the bishops’ heroic willingness ‘de souffrir, de d’estre persecutez pour cette mesme cause’, in Goldmann (ed.), *Correspondance de Martin de Barcos*, p. 215, Barcos to Gilbert de Choiseul, 1654.

69. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated).

70. Charles-Hugues Lefebvre, *Vie de Monsieur Pavillon, évêque d’Alet* (3 vols.; Utrecht, 2nd edn, 1739), II, p. 24.

71. Henri Arnauld, *Lettre de Monseigneur l’Évesque d’Angers. Au Roy. Sur le sujet de la signature du Formulaire du clergé* (n.p., 1661), p. 4; *idem*, *Troisième lettre de Monseigneur l’Évesque d’Angers au Roy, touchant la signature de Formulaire, par laquelle il répond à la lettre de sa Majesté, du 28 Août 1662* (n.p. 1662), p. 1.

72. Lefebvre, *Pavillon*, II, p. 177.

73. *Lettres de Monsieur Antoine Arnauld docteur de Sorbonne* (9 vols.; Nancy, 1727), II, p. 332, Antoine Arnauld to Pavillon, 6 July 1668.

that Borromeo had taken in 1578 when he had personally visited the pope to defend the decrees of his fourth provincial council.<sup>74</sup> Arnault's message to the bishop was clear: he should not hesitate to defend the ancient practices of the church, just as his saintly predecessor had done, even when this seemed to bring him nothing but suffering and opprobrium.

It was crucial that the Jansenists connect Borromeo's practices to the Council of Trent, for this was the most recent touchstone of doctrinal and disciplinary orthodoxy. In the preface to *Frequente communion* Barcos observed that Borromeo and Trent had confirmed that an unworthy sinner could delay communion with the intention of approaching it later with an improved, more pure, disposition. He then admitted that Trent had not repeated the full rigour of the ancient canons, but claimed that this was only because the weakness of catholicism at the time had not encouraged this. Even so, the Council's basic intention had been to preserve the traditional discipline, and God had given Archbishop Borromeo to the church in order that this ideal might be put into practice. He was, therefore, the model to which all bishops should look because he possessed the Council's 'spirit' in abundance.<sup>75</sup>

Antoine Arnault explained the symmetry between the Tridentine and Borromean penitential patterns more clearly by observing that the archbishop had issued specific ordinances that were based on the Council's general rules: as the Council had directed, he ordered confessors to issue penances that were proportionate to the sins committed, encouraged public penances for public sins, and imposed heavy penances, such as charitable works, retreats and bodily mortifications, for grave sins.<sup>76</sup> All of these methods accorded with the Council's assumption that confession alone was insufficient for the Christian; rather, he had to confess with a contrite heart, do penance and amend in order for the sacrament to be effective in his life.<sup>77</sup> For Arnault, therefore, nothing in Borromeo's methods contradicted the decrees of the Council of Trent, for he followed 'in the footsteps of this Council' in attempting to improve the piety and morality of the faithful.<sup>78</sup>

It was, however, more difficult for Arnault and his confrères to use François de Sales to make their cause legitimate. The bishop of Geneva had a

74. Paolo Prodi, 'Charles Borromée, archevêque de Milan, et la papauté', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, lxii (1967), pp. 379-411. See also below, Section III, for further discussion of this incident.

75. Arnault, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated).

76. Arnault, *Frequente communion*, pp. 509-11, 526.

77. Arnault, *Frequente communion*, pp. 557-58; Schroeder (ed.), *Canons*, Sess. VI, ch. XIV, p. 39.

78. Arnault, *Frequente communion*, p. 578: 'marchant sur les traces de ce Concile'.

formidable reputation as a humanist spiritualist whose episcopate had been overwhelmingly characterized by the virtue of compassionate charity. His disposition was naturally milder than that of Charles Borromeo, and his biographers invariably stressed his mercy and empathy towards those who found themselves in trouble.<sup>79</sup> But, for Jansenists like Arnould and Pierre Nicole (1629–95), this did not mean that the bishop was willing to soften the church's teaching on repentance and the sacraments. It was true, they admitted, that de Sales encouraged the faithful to communicate every eight days, but he had conditioned this advice by stressing that communion should be administered only if all 'affection' for even venial sins had been eradicated.<sup>80</sup> This was not quite accurate, as de Sales had actually recommended that the faithful communicate every Sunday.<sup>81</sup> Yet, he did appear to agree that the Catholic's disposition had to be perfect before he could participate in the Eucharist. Many did not seem to possess the pure contrition that moved them to flee from sin and to embrace goodness, and Arnould was careful to claim that de Sales would never have countenanced offering them the opportunity to communicate: 'It abuses his doctrine unworthily...to apply it to the most imperfect and weakest persons'. He had envisaged that his teaching would only be applied to those who had 'acquired a very great purity by the good life'. In other words, like the church fathers, Trent and Charles Borromeo, de Sales thought that the eucharistic sacrament should be restricted to those who had reached 'an uncommon virtue'.<sup>82</sup> For de Sales, 'mortification of the spirit' produced this effect, for it enabled the Christian to become detached from the values of the world. His particular brand of spirituality asked that the Christian completely abandon himself to God's will.<sup>83</sup>

Almost as soon as the Jansenists began to use the venerable Borromeo and de Sales to justify their doctrinal and disciplinary teaching, their critics responded in kind. Once again, Raconis led the crusade, railing against the Jansenists' persistent and duplicitous attempts to lure the faithful into heresy. In his first treatise against the nascent movement, he trenchantly criticized its supporters for their failure to adopt truly Salesian methods of pastoral care. Raconis' arguments reveal that not only was his image of de Sales utterly at

79. Camus, *Esprit*, II, pp. 254-45, 295.

80. Arnould, *Frequente communion*, pp. 100-101.

81. François de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (ed. and trans. John K. Ryan; New York: Doubleday, 2nd edition, 1989), p. 115.

82. Arnould, *Frequente communion*, p. 107: 'C'est abuser indignement de sa doctrine...que d'appliquer aux personnes les plus imparfaites et les plus foibles...acquis une tres-grande pureté par la bonne vie, et avoir estably...une vertu non commune'.

83. Arnould, *Frequente communion*, p. 593.

odds with that of the Jansenists but that this resulted from a far more optimistic view of human nature and of the most appropriate means to draw men towards virtue. In his opinion, de Sales, unlike Jansen and his followers, had never dwelled upon the ‘terror of [the] judgements’ awaiting those who did not conform to God’s will.<sup>84</sup> Neither had de Sales employed ‘horrifying austerity’ or ‘rigours that brought despair’ to frighten individuals into improving their piety. Instead, the bishop had simply motivated and reassured with ‘mildness, sweetness, benignity, and humanity’, inspiring his flock to love God. De Sales saw no need, Raconis wrote admiringly, to become preoccupied with punishment and damnation as the Jansenists did, for he knew that love was the first and most natural passion of humans.<sup>85</sup>

However, according to Raconis, the Jansenists were guilty of a greater crime than misrepresenting de Sales’ pastoral method. Acutely aware of Arnauld’s recent claims about de Sales’ opinions on eucharist reception, Raconis determined to set the record straight. He could not, he asserted in the *Continuation*, suffer Arnauld’s misuse of the Salesian legacy because it was patently untrue. Raconis correctly argued that in his most famous work, the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, de Sales, the ‘glory’ of the seventeenth century, had recommended that the faithful communicate every Sunday.<sup>86</sup> He was also keen to show that Charles Borromeo, the ‘ornament’ of the sixteenth century, had favoured this practice, as had the general councils of the church.<sup>87</sup> As a result, the bishops’ examples were ‘public and authentic [testimonies], like two bright stars’, to the value of immutable doctrinal traditions.<sup>88</sup> Even so, if Arnauld can stand accused of describing de Sales’ teaching on the frequency of communion inaccurately, Raconis should also be reproved for failing, probably deliberately, to acknowledge that de Sales had qualified his eucharistic recommendation with the condition that only those without affection for sin should be admitted to communion.

### **The Contest for Government and Authority**

A further major concern that preoccupied the alert Raconis was the Jansenists’ hijacking of Borromeo and de Sales to another provocative cause: ecclesiastical

84. Raconis, *Examen*, p. 439: ‘la terreur [des] iugemens’.

85. Raconis, *Examen*, pp. 439-40, at p. 439: ‘La douceur, la suavité, la benignité, et l’humanité’.

86. Raconis, *Continuation*, pp. 309-10.

87. Raconis, *Continuation*, p. 365.

88. Raconis, *Continuation*, p. 367: ‘[les tesmoignages] public et authentique, comme deux astres brillants’.

authority and government. Here, the bishops, along with saints Peter and Paul, were combined in a powerful defence of the Jansenists' refusal to obey the attempts by crown and papacy to force them to retract their dearly held doctrinal principles. It was true that Borromeo and de Sales had encountered difficulties in their relationships with other authorities, for both possessed strong conceptions of their episcopal rights of jurisdiction. This meant that they occasionally clashed with those secular authorities that, given any opportunity, seemed to infringe upon their government. On several occasions, Antoine Arnauld also drew attention to Borromeo's struggle to ensure that his decrees were not sabotaged by recalcitrant clergy; in one episode that has already been mentioned, the archbishop was forced to travel to Rome to remonstrate against those who sought to quash the disciplinary legislation produced in his fourth provincial council. This was but one example of the archbishop's steadfast determination to lead and govern his territory, despite the underhand tactics employed against him.<sup>89</sup>

For Arnauld, Borromeo's spirited defence of his disciplinary decisions demonstrated his belief that bishops possessed, through their episcopal character, the wisdom that enabled them to guide their diocesan churches. This was a fundamental element of their leadership, for it enabled them to use their judgement in resolving matters of discipline and, crucially, of faith too. This was particularly pertinent to the pressurised position of the four Jansenist bishops, a fact that Arnauld repeatedly pointed out to them in order to fortify their resolve.<sup>90</sup> Equally, Pierre Nicole defended Pavillon's alleged obstinacy as being, in reality, an example of episcopal integrity. Pavillon's de facto stewardship of the episcopal Jansenists ensured that he perhaps attracted more than his fair share of opprobrium from those who wished to see them cowed, and Nicole's passionate vindication of the bishop's conduct highlighted the underlying convictions that drove Pavillon to behave as he did: the prelate actually displayed an admirable wish to 'support the truth' as a '[Judge] of Doctrine and Discipline'. In a pointed reference to those bishops who had not resisted the Formulary, and had therefore failed to use their episcopal judgement appropriately, Nicole claimed that Pavillon and his three colleagues 'preferred truth to all else, and principally to vain reputation'. The desperate wish to bask in the approval of the pope and the king was, he concluded caustically, the particular vice of the current century.<sup>91</sup>

89. *Lettres de Monsieur Arnauld*, II, p. 332, Arnauld to Pavillon, 6 July 1668; *ibid.*, IX, p. 174, same to same, 28 August 1666.

90. *Oeuvres de Messire Arnauld*, XXII, pp. 199-203.

91. Pierre Nicole, *L'Idée d'un Évêque qui cherche la vérité* (n.p., 1666), p. 7: 'Juges de la

For Isaac Le Maistre, Barthélemy des Martyrs provided an arresting example of enlightened leadership. Like Christ, he had given little weight to the opinions of men, for he knew that they were subject to the whims of ambition and pride. Rather, he based his decisions on the immutable word of God and, equally significantly, given the Jansenists' predilection for ancient penitential canons, on the rules of the saints.<sup>92</sup> Le Maistre also applauded Martyrs' resilience in resisting the unwarranted attacks that the Portuguese authorities made on his government. Despite intimidation, he had remained 'firm and constant', even excommunicating the president of the Chamber of Justice when he illegally claimed jurisdiction over the archbishop's territory.<sup>93</sup>

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the Jansenists had little time for those bishops who undermined their colleagues by publicly disagreeing with the decisions that they made. Antoine Arnauld reserved special criticism for Isaac Habert (1600–68), one of the first to attack the Jansenists and, from 1641, a vocal instigator of the campaign seeking their condemnation. It was Habert who, shortly after he had been appointed bishop of Vabres, organised the letter to Innocent X requesting that he judge the five propositions. Undoubtedly, Habert perceived that he was protecting the church from heresy, but, for Arnauld, he was a traitorous member of the episcopate who actually misused his episcopal power and weakened the 'inviolable' responsibility of bishops to 'examine, decide and judge' matters of faith and discipline.<sup>94</sup> Habert's episcopate was also, therefore, a far cry from the image of the office presented some years earlier by Barcos in the preface to *Frequente communion*. Like Arnauld, he emphasized the responsibility of the Apostles' successors to oversee church discipline. They were, he noted, the fathers and 'conductors' of the faithful, the rain who turned the church into a fertile garden of souls. It was inconceivable, therefore, that any bishop should renege on that duty, or that he should seek to paralyse another bishop's efforts to fulfill his governing and pastoral functions.<sup>95</sup>

This representation of episcopal rights and responsibilities resonated through the Catholic church when the four Jansenist bishops refused to sign the Formulary without adding conditions based upon their own doctrinal judgement. They were bolstered by the fact that many other bishops held similar opinions

Doctrines et de la Discipline...soutenir la verité...préferer la verité à toutes choses, et principalement à la vaine réputation'.

92. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, p. 576.

93. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, pp. 595, 597-98.

94. *Oeuvres de Messire Arnauld*, XIX, pp. 43-51.

95. Arnauld, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated).

on the episcopal power to judge faith and discipline, even though they tended to reject Jansenist soteriological teaching. They were, consequently, sympathetic to the four bishops' insistence that they should guide their flock in matters of doctrine, and at least nineteen bishops defended this stance in letters to Clement IX and Louis XIV in 1667. The Jansenist bishops were 'ornaments' of the episcopate in their care of souls, they asserted, who had acquitted perfectly the work of their episcopal charge in distinguishing between *fait* and *droit*.<sup>96</sup> Equally, when an exasperated Alexander VII made known his intention of judging the bishops by a papally appointed commission in 1667, the delegated bishops proved conspicuously reluctant to respond to the task, and at least four of the nine nominees expressly refused the commission.<sup>97</sup>

The Jansenists were well aware that prelates like Godeau and Louis-Henri Gondrin of Sens (1620–74), two of the staunchest opponents to the royal and papal campaigns against Pavillon and his confrères, held firm views on episcopal authority which could be easily linked to their cause. Le Maistre tapped into this sensitivity in his famous work on Barthélemy des Martyrs. In it, he recounted that Martyrs had been one of the leading lights of the Council of Trent, partially because he had been an exemplary archbishop long before the Council opened. His personal experience in Braga had convinced him that it was essential that Trent order bishops to reside in their dioceses, for this was the most fundamental requirement for government and pastoral care.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, Martyrs 'did all that he could to bring the Council to declare that Residence was of divine law'. Le Maistre admitted that the archbishop had failed in his quest, but argued that all bishops 'of conscience' knew that they were obliged *de droit divin* to reside permanently in their dioceses. He concluded by confirming that Charles Borromeo had also been a resolute supporter of this theory.<sup>99</sup>

Why did Le Maistre devote so much attention to this particular debate? While superficially straightforward, it was underlaid by the very contentious

96. *Lettre de plusieurs prélats de France à N. S. P. le Pape Clement IX sur la cause des quatre évêques, 1 décembre 1667* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 1-2; Pierre Blet, 'Louis XIV et les papes aux prises avec le Jansénisme', *Archivum Historicae Pontificae* 31 (1993), pp. 109-92; 32 (1994), pp. 65-148, at pp. 88-89.

97. *Oeuvres de Messire Arnould*, XXIV, p. 325; Blet, 'Louis XIV', pp. 79-84, 87, 92.

98. Raul de Almeida Rolo, *L'Evêque de la réforme tridentine: Sa mission pastorale d'après le Vénérable Barthélemy des Martyrs* (trans. Ceslas Salmon; Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1965), p. 92.

99. Le Maistre, *Barthélemy*, pp. 566-68: Il fit tout ce qu'il pût pour porter le Concile à déclarer que la Residence estoit de droit divin'.



ecclesiological problem of episcopal and papal power. The Council of Trent had almost broken up in disarray when the fathers could not agree on the jurisdictional relationship between the bishops and the pope,<sup>100</sup> and it was a major bone of contention between the papacy and the French episcopate through the seventeenth century. Knowing its significance, Bishops Camus and Godeau were among those eager to suggest that not only was residence a precept of *droit divin* but that a bishop's jurisdictional power was held *de droit divin* too.<sup>101</sup> By judiciously invoking Martyrs, therefore, Le Maistre added legitimacy to this disputed theory, and therefore, to the cry for autonomous episcopal government. This was a clever ploy, for it implied that a doctrine endorsed by the holy archbishop of Braga must be orthodox. Otherwise, he would never have supported it.

The belief that bishops possessed the authority, *de droit divin*, to guide the people of their dioceses in matters of faith and discipline led logically towards the view that they should share in the formal decision-making of the universal church. Once again, the Jansenists cleverly played on the episcopate's spirit of independence and its elevated conception of episcopal functions, for they knew that, throughout the seventeenth century, it consistently stressed its ability to 'enlighten' and govern the universal church. Not only did many bishops deny the doctrine of papal infallibility, they also embraced conciliarism as the most appropriate form of government for the church and proved increasingly keen to act as the judges of faith.<sup>102</sup> Finally, this developing ideal resulted in the Gallican Articles of 1682, in which the episcopate emphatically confirmed that the pope held no jurisdiction over the king's temporality, embraced the doctrine of conciliarism, rejected that of papal infallibility and proclaimed that the pope's power was subject to established church laws and customs, including 'the rules, customs and institutions accepted in the French kingdom and Church'.<sup>103</sup>

100. Forrestal, *Fathers*, pp. 29-31.

101. Jean-Pierre Camus, *Les Fonctions du hiérarque parfait, où se voit le tableau de l'évêque accompli* (Paris, 1642), p. 83; *idem*, *Esprit*, I, pp. 155-56; Godeau, *Éloge*, pp. 571-72. 102. A. Cognet, *Antoine Godeau évêque de Grasse et de Vence* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1900), p. 485, Godeau to Arnauld d'Andilly, 4 March 1662; C. Urbain and E. Levesque (eds.), *Correspondance de Bossuet* (14 vols.; Paris: Hachette, 1909-25), V, pp. 40-41, Bossuet to Leibnitz, 15 August 1693; Richard Costigan, 'Bossuet and the Consensus of the Church', *Theological Studies*, 56 (1995), pp. 652-72; François Gaquère, *Pierre de Marca* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1932), pp. 136-40.

103. I have used the version of the articles printed in Louis Ellies Du Pin, *Histoire ecclésiastique du xviiè siècle* (4 vols., Paris, 1714), III, pp. 533-36.

Of course, the Jansenists were able to argue that these were precisely the rules that guided their four bishops. They could push the argument further, however, and still hope to retain broad episcopal support, by implicitly questioning the fundamental justification for rendering obedience to Peter's successor. Here, they made clever use of the ancient tradition that linked both Paul and Peter to the see of Rome, using its ambiguity to cast doubt on Petrine primacy and, consequently, on the pope's Petrine authority. Ecclesiastical history customarily assumed that the Christian empire was established through the efforts of Peter and Paul. From at least the third century, the church's iconography depicted the two apostles in *concordia fratrum* or *concordia apostolorum*.<sup>104</sup> Behind this union, however, lay a puzzle about each man's presence in Rome during the first century. In Acts, Paul alone is reported to have preached in Rome, but the Apocryphal literature records that Peter was already in charge of a large congregation in Rome when Paul arrived there.<sup>105</sup> This, of course, was a significant discrepancy if Peter's successors were to be considered the bishops of Rome and the heads of the church which was centred on that city. Although Peter and Paul might be spiritual brothers, one of them was possibly the first and foremost founder of the Christian empire. If it was Peter then his successors' claim to ecclesiastical headship was considerably enhanced. But if Paul led his own Gentile congregation, that is, if he had his own episcopal ministry in Rome prior to Peter's arrival, then this suggested that he was not subservient to Peter. Indeed, it could suggest that his authority was equal to Peter's, which would accord with the common image of both apostles seated at either side of Christ. This, in turn, could be translated to later bishops and popes, including the seventeenth-century generations: the jurisdiction exercised by bishops in their ministry did not originate from the pope but from God, just as Saint Paul's jurisdiction had been given by Christ after his dramatic conversion.

This was certainly the interpretation painted by one of the Jansenists' most skilful propagandists, the artist Nicolas Poussin (1594–1666). In his famous series of paintings on the sacraments, Poussin appears to have deliberately highlighted the fact that Paul held his episcopal ministry independently of Peter.<sup>106</sup> But, significantly, it was also a prominent theme in the group's liter-

104. Herbert L. Kessler, 'The Meeting of Peter and Paul in Rome: An Emblematic Narrative of Spiritual Brotherhood', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 41 (1987), p. 268.

105. Acts 28.14-39; *The Apocryphal New Testament Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts Epistles, and Apocalypses* (trans. Montague Rhodes James; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), pp. 203, 298, 474.

106. Henry Phillips, 'Poussin's *Confirmation*: The Staging of an Image?', in Claire Carlin

ary propaganda. Barcos notoriously floated the theory in the preface to *Frequente communion* before producing an extended treatise defending it on the basis of scriptural and patristic traditions.<sup>107</sup> In *Frequente communion*, Barcos simply maintained that Paul was ‘the other eye of Jesus Christ’s head’, though he then went on to say that Peter and Paul were ‘the two leaders of the Church’.<sup>108</sup> This was an obvious swipe at the popes’ claim that they granted jurisdiction to bishops; it also suggested that the Jansenists would be quite justified in refusing to obey the pope if individual bishops advised them otherwise. Barcos denied that this was his objective, but subsequently suggested, very provocatively, that it was far better to be a bishop ‘in the perfection of his state and vocation’ than simply to be a pope with authority but without virtue: a clear defence of the irreproachable conduct of the Jansenist bishops.<sup>109</sup>

The Jansenists’ ecclesiology emphasized a particular kind of episcopal power and responsibility. Their vision of the church was monarchical, but it assumed that each bishop was a monarch within his diocese, with power, *de droit divin*, to govern and enlighten. While the pope was indeed the symbolic head of the church, he could not force bishops to submit to his decisions if a general council had not confirmed them. Because of this view, the Jansenist bishops, in particular, have occasionally been accused of an extreme separatism, but this does not do justice to the subtleties of their argument for it assumes that their stand was posited on the absolute independence of each local church within the universal. Yet they were fully aware that particular churches were part of a wider ecclesiastical structure that was composed of local or diocesan churches, each connected through shared traditions, faith and discipline. They certainly did not desire that particular churches should be completely autonomous: rather, collaboration amongst bishops, the pope and regulars was a benefit, even a necessity, for the church.

Charles d’Abra de Raconis was one of a minority of French bishops who did not share these sentiments. Resolutely ultramontane, he recognised the subversive danger that lurked behind Barcos’ twinning of Petrine and Pauline leadership. He was therefore placed in an awkward position, for he felt obliged

and Kathleen Wine (eds.), *Theatrum Mundi: Studies in Honour of Ronald W. Tobin* (Charlottesville: Rookwood Press, 2003), pp. 45-52. I am grateful to Professor Phillips for allowing me to read this article prior to publication.

107. Martin de Barcos, *De l’autorite de S. Pierre et de S. Paul qui reside dans le pape successeur de ces deux apostres* (n.p., 1645).

108. Arnould, *Frequente communion*, preface (unpaginated): ‘l’autre oeil de la teste de Jesus-Christ...les deux chefs de l’Eglise’. 109. Barcos, *Authorite*, pp. 46, 48-53.

to protect papal power but, in doing so, he risked losing the support of fellow bishops to the Jansenist side. However, his outrage ensured that he took that gamble, for he published an extended attack on the audacious claims that Barcos had made in 1645.<sup>110</sup> From the outset, he chose unequivocally to concentrate on the absolute leadership and primacy of Peter's successors; like Peter, the popes were the sovereigns of the entire earthly church: 'Sovereign power has been accorded to the Roman Pontiff on the whole Church, as to Saint Peter by our lord Jesus-Christ'.<sup>111</sup> This principle had three major implications, all of which were supported by the Fathers: Peter was the sole head of the church, with primacy over the other Apostles; he was simultaneously the bishop of Rome; the popes succeeded him as heads of the church and bishops of Rome.<sup>112</sup> For Raconis, there was only one reason why anyone would challenge these truths; if they feared the 'wrath of Rome' would bring condemnation upon their teaching and behaviour, then they would resort to any lie to protect themselves and to escape punishment.<sup>113</sup> These 'rebels and schismatics', he argued, would drive the church towards anarchy if allowed to flourish. Monarchy was 'the most perfect and useful' form of ecclesiastical government, and was the sole means of ensuring that peace and unity reigned within the church.<sup>114</sup> Without a single leader 'to regulate the desires of each individual for the community's good', there would only be spiritual 'disorder and desolation'.<sup>115</sup> As the vicars of Christ, the popes cared for the souls of the faithful, so that their authority extended to the ends of the earth.<sup>116</sup> The church had always functioned as a monarchy, claimed Raconis, and this had ensured its unity through the ages. Here, he consciously borrowed from the teaching of Cyprian by recalling the reciprocal relationship that existed between the pope and the other members of the church's episcopate.<sup>117</sup> Christ had given Peter, and therefore his successors, 'the power to rule the Church,

110. Raconis, *Primauté*, pp. 465-66.

111. Raconis, *Primauté*, p. 28: 'La souveraine puissance a esté accordée au Pontife Romain sur toute l'Eglise, comme à saint Pierre par nostre seigneur I-C'. This is a paraphrase from the Tridentine decrees: Schroeder (ed.), *Canons*, Sess. XIV, ch. VII, p. 96. 112. Raconis, *Primauté*, pp. 63-177. 113. Raconis, *Primauté*, pp. 186-87.

114. Raconis, *Primauté*, pp. 189, 254-55, at p. 189: 'la plus parfaite et la plus utile'. 115. Raconis, *Primauté*, pp. 193-94: 'regler les desirs de chasque particulier, pour le bien de la communauté'.

116. Raconis, *Primauté*, pp. 220-23.

117. Cyprian's treatise, *On the Unity of the Church* is contained in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds), *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325* (24 vols.; Edinburgh, 1867-68), VIII, pp. 377-98.

and to feed the sheep of Jesus Christ'.<sup>118</sup> This primary authority, was then extended to the other members of the episcopate, although the popes always retained 'the vital element of episcopacy' that rested on their position as 'sovereign pastors'. Yet, 'the episcopate is one', and its authority was held in solidarity by all bishops, even if that authority depended on the pope for its legitimacy and application.<sup>119</sup> Evoking corporal analogies popular at his time of writing, Raconis insisted that the pope was like the head in the human body, because he was absolutely essential to the functioning of the episcopate; the bishops, in contrast were like its arms, essential components of its wholeness, but not absolutely essential to its functioning.<sup>120</sup>

Raconis anticipated, therefore, the crisis that would rock the French church during the 1650s when he confirmed that 'Bishops must be united and adherent to the universal Bishop' or perish in schism and heresy. In his view, it was only correct that the Jansenist bishops should be obliged to obey the judgements made by the head of the episcopate, and that they should be ostracised and deprived of their seats if they refused to do so. He could not countenance, unlike most of his brethren in France, the notion that bishops held their jurisdiction independently of the pope and that they could, as a result, normally rule their dioceses quite autonomously.

The bishop of Lavaur represented precisely the kind of bishop that the Jansenists despised: devoted to the royal court and Rome, an opponent of true soteriological and ecclesiological doctrines, and, of course, a traitor to episcopal unity and power. He was, therefore, entirely removed from the episcopal ideal that they constructed in their publications, for its bishops were confident leaders of dioceses, who used their power of enlightenment to defend the church and to promote true doctrines of faith and morality. Many French bishops could appreciate these characteristics of the worthy bishop, even if they could not stomach the Jansenists' other teachings. The Jansenists' appeal to saintly prelates like Borromeo and de Sales was therefore a masterful strategy that demanded a vigorous riposte from their opponents; in tying their representations of revered prelates to the contemporary concerns and assumptions of bishops in the French church, Jansenist controversialists were able to paint their struggle as part of a wider crusade to defend the rights and privileges of this elite clerical group. For this reason, this contest to claim episcopal saints in the Jansenist affair also sheds light on the broader growing pains of

118. Raconis, *Primaauté*, p. 257: 'la puissance de regir l'Eglise, et de paistre les oüailles de I-C'.

119. Raconis, *Primaauté*, pp. 259-62. 120. Raconis, *Primaauté*, p. 265.

the Catholic church during the seventeenth century: the persistent tensions over jurisdictional boundaries and the loci of ecclesiastical authority that divided the episcopate, the papacy and the religious orders, and the bitter disagreements over the most appropriate means to reform the religious and moral practices of the laity. The Jansenist crisis did not create the fissures resulting from these dilemmas, for they were already emerging independently before it erupted. Undoubtedly, however, it exacerbated them, for in starkly pitching two alternative forms of ecclesiastical organisation and discipline against each another it provided an arena in which the future shape of French and international catholicism could be decided.