
Rosemary R. Gagan
tions. The editors of Riots should be congratulated for a useful retrospective that manages both to introduce students to a literature and to invite old hands to critically reflect on it.

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British historian Paul Johnson has observed that more than any other country in history the United States affords a unique opportunity to examine the interaction of religious belief, culture, and politics. However, historians who are now rightly addressing gender, class, race, and ethnicity as factors shaping American society have been slow to include religion, and specifically Roman Catholicism, as equally significant. This omission is all the more glaring for urban history because by the twentieth century Roman Catholics comprised up to 70 per cent of the population of many northern American cities. John McGreevy's Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North is a refreshing and stimulating antidote to this neglect. Utilizing archdioecesan records and Catholic university archives, McGreevy reveals the centrality of the parish to the social and spiritual structure of Catholicism. He contends that the solid and effective parish structures firmly in place by the 1930s fueled racism directed against Afro-Americans and hindered the creation of an integrated community even as the Roman Catholic church spoke against discrimination.

In the interwar years the parish assumed both a geographic and a cultural meaning for its people, many of who were recent immigrants. Within parish parameters, European ethnic and racial identities were sustained by Catholic institutions that were the counterparts of secular organizations and by priests who encouraged home ownership in the parish to keep their flocks under scrutiny and to fortress the Church against state control specially of education. What emerged, in effect, were many urban villages, like Gesu Parish in Philadelphia, with distinct ethnic characteristics and institutions and the Roman Catholic Church as the focus of the community's activities. Residents identified with the parish rather than the city. This fusion of educational, social and religious communities created a barrier to Afro-Americans who began to migrate north in large numbers in the 30s.

Except for the liberal lay people and theologians who were always a minority, there was remarkably little concern within the Catholic church for the new arrivals. Pius XII urged Catholics generally to show consideration for black Americans but, McGreevy notes, rhetoric and reality rarely coincided. With increased employment opportunities created by World War Two, migration increased and so did racial tension, partly McGreevy suggests, from a heightened awareness by Euro-American Roman Catholics of their white racial identity. To avoid Afro-American neighbours, many white people left for the suburbs. The exodus created an opportunity for the Roman Catholic priests and nuns to serve Afro-Americans in the now deserted recreational and educational facilities; but in Chicago, Detroit and other northern cities, these new black parishes ironically resembled other ethnically distinct communities. The war itself may arguably have fostered a sense of ecumenicalism rooted in a common cause, but, McGreevy contends, most clergy still directed little energy at interracial harmony largely because they feared alienating one group at the expense of another. Afro-American interests had the lowest priority.

In the 1960s, the nature and influence of the parish began to undergo irrevocable changes that the Church could no longer control. Educated Catholics moved up the social ladder into the middle class; with more marriages among ethnic groups, the parish was less insular and insulated. Furthermore, the earlier generation of European-born pastors who zealously guarded their domains was retiring. The results of this transformation were far from uniform in northern cities; in Chicago the Church supported urban improvement and renewal but many housing projects elsewhere were viewed as detrimental to parish interests. Striving to thwart neighbourhood abandonment without directly condoning segregation, priests often reinforced intolerance. The convergence in the mid 60s of the American civil rights movement and the Second Vatican Council that envisaged a more inclusive global church at last alerted American Catholics to the racial discrimination in their own jurisdictions. Some priests, but perhaps more nuns, who compared their situation as disadvantaged persons to Afro-Americans, marched with other Catholic lay men and women on Washington and at Selma. By the late 60s, two groups had become visible within the Church: theological and social liberals who questioned the roles of the clergy and of women and the traditional function of the parish; and those who resisted and reacted against change. This rift extended to Catholic institutions — schools, seminaries, religious orders — to liturgy, rituals, and to neighbourhoods. In some cities, Philadelphia, for example, Catholic liberals were able to integrate schools but the cost was high with overt hostility directed at the nuns and priests who individually and collectively participated in marches and protests. McGreevy's depiction of a Catholic crowd cheering loudly when a nun was hit by a rock during a 1966 Chicago protest is telling evidence of the degree of racial hatred that abounded. Bussing replaced housing as a focal issue and again many white Catholics opposed efforts at integration. McGreevy argues that the support of Catholic politicians such as Edward Kennedy was probably more detrimental than beneficial to the cause.

Inevitably Afro-Americans questioned the Church's sincerity about universalism. Some accepted traditional forms and ritu-
als, but others, discontented over the dearth of black priests and nuns, left the Church. At the same time, Catholics of all ethnic backgrounds sought parishes whose practices suited their personalities and requirements; few young people were attracted to religious orders. By the 1990s many urban parishes were simply shut down.

On a positive note, McGreevy points out that by the mid 1980s there were ten African-American bishops, and in 1990, almost 10 per cent of Afro-Americans were Catholic (although this 10 per cent might equally be interpreted as an indication of the Church's failure to reach out to Afro-Americans.) McGreevy applauds present-day Catholicism for fostering a sense of community and for its receptivity to newcomers from around the world, but he cannot deny that, in the final analysis, caring for the white majority in the parish made Catholics, like members of other religious denominations, unable and unwillingly to extend their concern to Afro-Americans whose immigrant experience so closely mirrored their own encounters with the dominant culture a generation earlier.

McGreevy should be commended for his energy in tackling this complicated and sensitive aspect of urban history. Far more than an examination of the interaction of Catholicism and racism, the book charts the rocky course of a two thousand year old institution, its personnel and its members trying to come to terms with the modern world. In his quest to validate Catholicism's part in shaping historical consciousness, McGreevy may have glossed over the nuances of gender (women religious seem badly neglected) and the relationship between class and religion in forming racial attitudes, but overall this is a very significant contribution to urban history that Canadian historians would do well to consider.

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Between 1886 and 1917, by donating funds to build public libraries in large cities and small towns across the United States, Andrew Carnegie followed existing trends towards free public library establishment and philanthropic support of cultural institutions. However, according to Abigail Van Slyck, Carnegie's emphasis on efficiency and corporate practices helped transform both the design and use of public libraries and the exercise of philanthropy in general.

Van Slyck's approach to studying Carnegie libraries places architectural processes firmly in their social context, stressing that Carnegie buildings as material culture should be under-