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2016 KATH George C. Herring History Graduate Student Writing Award Winner

"The Whole World Seems to be Getting Out of Joint": The Roman Catholic Response to the Election of 1860, the Secession Movement, and the Start of the Civil War in the Border South

By Carl C. Creason, Graduate Student, University of Louisville

"THE WHOLE WORLD SEEMS TO BE GETTING OUT OF JOINT": THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO THE ELECTION OF 1860, THE SECESSION MOVEMENT, AND THE START OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE BORDER SOUTH[1]

On November 12, 1860, Roman Catholic Bishop Martin John Spalding of Louisville informed his metropolitan, Archbishop John Baptist Purcell of Cincinnati, that the South had "assum[ed] a very menacing attitude" and that disunion appeared "imminent."[2] Six days before Spalding penned the letter to Purcell, Abraham Lincoln earned a majority of the electoral votes in the 1860 presidential election. As northerners celebrated the Republican victory and southern Fire-Eaters advocated secession, Catholic clergy in the Border States feared the outbreak of war in their dioceses and dreaded the effects of disunion on the American Church. Prelates and priests foresaw a dismal future for the nation and attributed the fractured state of the Union to the ill-effects of Protestantism in American society. Clergy perceived the election of Lincoln as a triumph for northern evangelicalism, the secession movement as a product of Protestant fanaticism in the South, and the war as a consequence of religious fragmentation in the United States. The secession movement and the outbreak of the Civil War thrust upon the American Church a series of dilemmas that disrupted the Catholic ministry. Many members of the American hierarchy urged the clergy to remove themselves from the political scene, arguing that the intermixing of religion and politics had given rise to the Know-Nothing movement, abolitionism, and secession. However, some prelates and priests felt compelled to support the political movements within their respective regions—either secession or union—to avoid having their loyalty questioned by the Protestant majority. Endorsing the policy of neutrality, Border State clerics proved some of the loudest voices for an apolitical hierarchy, one that would

[1] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, November 12, 1860, II-5-a, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Collection (hereafter CACI), University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, IN (hereafter UNDA).

[2] Ibid.

promote reunion and peace and work to avoid a schism within the American Church. In his November 1860 letter to Purcell, Spalding anticipated the challenges that he and other Border State clergy would face and alluded to the disorder caused by the infusion of religion—evangelical Protestantism—into national politics. As the bishop of Louisville explained: "The Lord deliver us! The whole world seems to be getting out of joint."[3]

This paper examines how prelates and priests in the Border States interpreted and responded to the presidential election of 1860, the secession crisis, and the start of the Civil War in the Border South. It illustrates how the Catholic apologist movement[4] and Catholic principles or teachings shaped the ways in which Border State clergy interpreted the events. Furthermore, the paper examines how the politics of secession and civil war challenged Border State clergy, particularly regarding the administration of the American Church. The first section covers the election of 1860 and explains why the majority of prelates and priests supported northern Democratic candidate Stephen Douglas. Although they derided the Republican Party and abolitionism, the clergy did not support secession. The second section explores the clergy's responses to the secession movement and underscores why prelates and priests associated disunion with Protestant fanaticism. Civil War-era politics undermined the unity and public reputation of the American Church, as some clergy adopted a partisan position and disrupted the Church's apolitical posture. The third section explains why Border State clergy espoused the policy of neutrality. As states in the South seceded and the nation prepared for war during the first months of 1861, prelates and priests sought to remain apolitical and neutral while urging

[3] Ibid.

[4] A term used to describe the intellectual movement spearheaded by Catholic clergy and lay leaders from the nineteenth century that defended the Church and its teachings against Protestant and secular critics. In addition to defending their faith, Catholic apologists also attacked Protestantism and argued that its principles led to the world's political, social, and economic problems.

peace and a restoration of order in the nation. Once the war began in their dioceses, the clergy focused on continuing the ministry of the Church, providing chaplains and nurses for soldiers on both sides of the war, and surviving the conflict. Experiencing firsthand the tragedies of war in their dioceses, some clergy became more critical of Protestantism and turned to their faith for comfort and guidance.

The Catholic Response to the Election of 1860

Although clergy in Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri did not publicly endorse or campaign for a candidate in the presidential election of 1860, the majority of prelates and priests privately supported Stephen Douglas, the northern Democratic candidate from Illinois. The clergy's antebellum experiences with nativism and anti-Catholicism had forged a strong bond between the Church and the Democratic Party. By the summer of 1860, however, the party had divided into northern and southern wings, forcing Border State Catholics to decide between Douglas and John C. Breckinridge of the southern Democratic Party. Although some Catholics backed Breckinridge—particularly fellow Kentuckians from the western portion of the state—most members of the Church in the Border South supported Douglas. The northern Democratic candidate promoted unionism and vowed to uphold the status quo, which Catholic clergy interpreted as an adherence to the law and the preservation of social order.[5] As historian William B. Kurtz explains, "Catholics' faith and religious worldview, which emphasized stability over reform, also made them predisposed to favor a conservative and national party."[6] Douglas gained the support of Catholics because he advocated the policy of popular sovereignty to decide

[5] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 213-216; Thomas W. Spalding, *Martin John Spalding: American Churchman* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1973), 130-131; Richard Carwardine, *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 58-60; William B. Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union: How the Civil War Created a Separate Catholic America* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 29-31.

[6] Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 29.

the fate of slavery in the West, opposed abolitionism, promised to protect the rights of immigrants, and promoted the sanctity of the Union by running a national campaign.[7] In the dispute over slavery in the western territories, for example, the Douglas Democratic platform pledged to "abide by the [*Dred Scott*] decision of the Supreme Court of the United States upon these questions of Constitutional law."[8] As a result, clergy from the Border States viewed Douglas as the candidate least influenced by Protestant liberalism and most committed to the interests of the Church and the nation.

Although Catholics demonstrated their commitment to the Democratic Party in 1860, few prelates or priests supported Breckinridge because they believed that his campaign encouraged secession. In August 1860, Spalding "'thank[ed] God"' that "'Breckenridge [sic] & his faction have been cleaned out in Ky."'[9] The bishop considered the southern Democrat '"of bad stock, & in wretched disunion company."'[10] Catholics also disparaged the southern Democrats because they utilized anti-Catholic politics to court Protestant voters. During the summer of 1860, the southern Democratic campaign included attacks against Archbishop John Hughes of New York and Pope Pius IX. The southern Democratic Party also portrayed Douglas as a drunken pawn of

[7] Ibid., 30; John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 71.

[8] Thomas C. Mackey, editor, *A Documentary History of the American Civil War Era*, volume 2, *Political Arguments* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 66. For more information about the significance of the *Dred Scott* decision, see: McPherson, 170-188.

[9] Martin John Spalding quoted in Spalding, *Martin John Spalding*, 130. Although Spalding loathed Breckinridge, the southern Democratic candidate finished second behind John Bell of the Constitutional Union Party in the presidential race in Kentucky. For more information about the election of 1860 in Kentucky and the Border South, see: John A. Boyd, "Neutrality and Peace: Kentucky and the Secession Crisis of 1861," PhD dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1999; William C. Harris, *Lincoln and the Border States: Preserving the Union* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2011), 11-41; Christopher Phillips, *The Civil War in the Border South* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2013), 2-15; Luke E. Harlow, *Religion, Race, and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830-1880* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 108-133.

[10] Martin John Spalding quoted in Spalding, *Martin John Spalding*, 130.

the pope, exaggerating his ties to the Church. Although his wife, Adele Douglas, joined the Church, Douglas never accepted the faith. Nevertheless, Republicans, Constitutional Unionists, and southern Democrats utilized his wife's membership in the Church to cast Douglas as a Catholic candidate. Indeed, one historian suggests that Douglas's association with Catholicism inhibited a merger between the northern Democrats and Constitutional Unionists in New York and other northern states. The Republican Party benefited from anti-Catholic politics and the perception that Douglas belonged to the Church.[11] Constitutional Unionists avoided an association with Douglas because many of its members were former Know-Nothings. When the Know Nothing Party declined in 1857, old Whigs and other opponents of the Democratic Party sought to form a new political organization. By 1860, former Whigs, Know-Nothings, Oppositionists, and disillusioned Democrats united to form the Constitutional Union Party.[12] Although its official platform addressed only the party's "duty to recognize no political principle other than THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNTRY, THE UNION OF THE STATES, AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS," the Constitutional Unionists' association with nativism and anti-Catholicism alienated the support of most Border State Catholics.[13]

Although they opposed the southern Democrats and Constitutional Unionists, nearly all Catholic religious and lay leaders denounced the Republican Party, its platform, and, most of all, its leaders. The 1860 Republican platform centered on preventing the spread of slavery into the West and said nothing about restricting the rights or liberties of immigrants or Catholics. Indeed,

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[11] George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 34; Douglas R. Egerton, *Year of Meteors: Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, and the Election that Brought on the Civil War*, second edition (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 4-7; Carwardine, 88-90, 124-125.

[12] McPherson, 221-222; Egerton, 89-101; Christopher M. Paine, "'Kentucky Will Be the Last to Give Up the Union': Kentucky Politics, 1844-1861," PhD dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1998, 200-270.

[13] Mackey, *A Documentary History of the American Civil War Era*, volume 2, 69-70.

the thirteenth resolution of the Republican platform safeguarded the interests of Catholics, both foreign and native-born. Party members "opposed . . . any change" to naturalization laws and pledged the "full and efficient protection to the rights of all classes of citizens, whether native or naturalized, both at home and abroad."[14] Yet prelates and priests throughout the country loathed Republicans because of the party's association with Know-Nothingism, nativism, anti-Catholicism, evangelical Protestantism, and abolitionism. As Bishop John Timon of Buffalo explained: "'There seems to be an anti-Catholic twang in much of what they [Republicans] write and say. A moderate anti-Catholic party with a concealed warfare would do us much more harm than the brutal force and open warfare of the KN [Know-Nothings].'"[15]

The anti-Catholic sentiment that clergy associated with the Republicans derived largely from the party's links to evangelical Protestantism. Historian Richard Carwardine argues that by 1858 Lincoln and his supporters had "deliberately fused appeals to Protestant millennialism and Enlightenment rationalism" to transform the Republicans into a "crusading party."[16] Although he lost the 1858 senate race to Douglas, Lincoln's message resonated with northern evangelicals, who overwhelmingly backed Lincoln during his presidential campaign and ensured a Republican victory in the November 1860 election. According to Carwardine, Lincoln's campaign embodied the fears, beliefs, and values of northern evangelicals because it combined antislavery, anti-Catholic, millennialist, and moral sentiments into a single message manifested as a political crusade for Protestant Christianity.[17] Catholics recoiled at the evangelical influence within the Republican Party. They feared that a Republican victory would lead to a reinvigorated anti-Catholic movement and clerics associated evangelical Protestantism with the radical liberalism

[14] Ibid., 74.
[15] John Timon quoted in McGreevy, 64.
[16] Carwardine, 90.
[17] Ibid., 124-134.

they thought threatened the structure and stability of American society. Spalding, for example, referred to Ohio Republicans William Dennison and Salmon P. Chase as "fanatical firebrands" who incited regional animosity and instigated civil war.[18] Catholics shared these fears with Protestant Democrats, who "derided the Republicans as 'a religious Sect' . . . the natural allies of 'blue light puritans' and 'fanatical Sabbatarians,' who were working to unite church and state, and universalize New England morality."[19] During the war, Garrett Davis, a Democratic congressman from Kentucky, argued that the "self-righteous Protestants of the Northeast" or "'Puritans'" had caused the war rather than members of the southern "Slave Power."[20] Catholics shared an alliance with some non-Catholic Democrats because both groups opposed the evangelical or "Puritan" element of the Republican Party.

Although nativism and anti-Catholicism existed within the Republican Party, Lincoln did not espouse those sentiments. Carwardine argues that Lincoln "benefitted from an anti-Catholic animus" within the party, yet the Illinoisan "had done nothing to inflame" it and "almost certainly disapproved" of its "political exploitation."[21] Throughout most of his political career, Lincoln derided those who attacked immigrants or Catholics. Although his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, complained about the '"wild Irish"' and thought that "foreigners" should be kept "within bounds," Lincoln scoffed at the Know-Nothing movement.[22] As he explained in the summer of 1855 to Joshua F. Speed of Kentucky:

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[18] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, April 11, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.

[19] Carwardine, 128.

[20] Michael Vorenberg, *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 95.

[21] Carwardine, 125.

[22] Mary Todd Lincoln to Emilie Todd Helm, November 23, 1856 in *Mary Todd Lincoln: Her Life and Letters*, edited by Justin G. Turner and Linda Levitt Turner (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972), 46.

> I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? . . . As a nation, we began by declaring that "*all men are created equal.*" We now practically read it "all men are created equal, *except negroes*." When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes, *and foreigners*, *and catholics*." When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence [sic] of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance.[23]

While a Whig congressman, Lincoln denounced the 1844 anti-Catholic riots in Philadelphia and pushed for his party to adopt a resolution for religious freedom.[24] The only documented account of Lincoln questioning the place of immigrants in the United States or expressing disgust about foreigners occurred during his 1858 senatorial campaign. In a letter penned before Election Day, Lincoln wrote that he expected to defeat Douglas as long as "'we are not over-run with fraudulent [Irish] votes to a greater extent than usual.'"[25] Lincoln confided to his law partner, William Herndon, about his fears of an "Irish constituency" or '"floating Hibernian' population" who sold "their votes to the Democrats."[26] Despite losing the election to Douglas, Lincoln refused to adopt a nativist or anti-Catholic political posture. Instead, he focused his political energies on preventing the spread of slavery into the West. Nonetheless, as a leader in the Republican Party, Lincoln developed a reputation among some Catholics as an anti-Catholic nativist. Lincoln received a letter during the 1860 presidential campaign "asking if he was 'against the people who profess the Roman Catholic Church.'"[27] Another concerned voter noted that the Irish and Germans of New York believed that the Republican Party '"opposed . . . giving

[23] Abraham Lincoln to Joshua F. Speed, August 24, 1855, in *Lincoln: Selected Speeches and Writings*, edited by Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Vintage Books/The Library of America, 1992), 105-106.

[24] John H. Silverman, *Lincoln and the Immigrant* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015), 24-25.

[25] Abraham Lincoln quoted in Ibid., 42.

[26] Abraham Lincoln quoted in Ibid., 43.

[27] Ibid., 94-95.

patronage to foreigners.'"[28] Despite Lincoln's record of denouncing anti-Catholicism, nativism, and the Know Nothing Party, his association with the Republicans meant that most Catholics considered Lincoln a radical evangelical who advocated an antislavery platform that violated Church teachings and threatened national stability.

The Catholic Response to Disunion and the Effects of Secession on the Church

In a December 28, 1860 letter to Francis Patrick Kenrick, William George McCloskey, the rector of the American College at Rome, alluded to the political situation in the Papal States. At the time of McCloskey's letter, the Vatican faced combined attacks by Italian revolutionaries, including Giuseppe Garibaldi, and the Kingdom of Piedmont. Garibaldi and the Piedmontese sought to overthrow the temporal authority of the pope and to unify Italy under a democratic government. Although French Emperor Louis Napoleon III supported Italian unification, the Catholic monarch backed the interests of the pope and the Church.[29] "We really know nothing about the real intention of those who direct the Politics of Italy," wrote McCloskey, "Emperor Napoleon & Cavour & the rest of that worthy body directs things in their own way."[30] Despite "the difficulties of [their] position," McCloskey noted that "the Holy Father remains unmoved & goes on with the duties of his station as if the world around him was perfectly calm."[31]

[28] Ibid., 95.

[29] David J. Alvarez, "The Papacy in the Diplomacy of the American Civil War," *Catholic Historical Review* 69 (April 1983): 233-234; Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 129-132; Robert Emmett Curran, *Shaping American Catholicism: Maryland and New York, 1805-1915* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 103-104; Max Longley, *For the Union and the Catholic Church: Four Converts in the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing, 2015), 133-136.

[30] William George McCloskey to Francis Patrick Kenrick, December 28, 1860, 30-P-8, Associated Archives at St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore, MD (hereafter AAB).

[31] Ibid.

As members of the European hierarchy experienced political revolution and civil war in the Papal States, Kenrick and other Border State clergy witnessed the Deep South exit the Union. By December 28, 1860, the state legislature of South Carolina had officially passed an ordinance of secession. Within a month, five more states in the Deep South had seceded and Texas and some Upper South states joined the Confederacy by the summer of 1861. In addition, the citizens of Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri contemplated whether to remain in the Union.[32] Undoubtedly, the resiliency of Pope Pius IX served as an example to Kenrick and other Border State clergy as they dealt with their own domestic insurrection. As the pope strove to continue the ministry of the Church in Europe, prelates and priests in the Border South worked to maintain the unity of the American Church. And like Pius IX, who blamed the Italian rebellion on radical anti-Catholic liberalism, clerics in the United States blamed the secession crisis on Protestant fanaticism. As religious historian Mark A. Noll explains, Church officials drew a parallel between the events in Europe and the secession crisis in the United States. Believing that they were "charged by God to uphold stability in social as well as ecclesiastical domains," members of the European and American hierarchies denounced both Italian unification and secession because they believed that both derived from radical liberalism.[33] Border State clergy—many of whom subscribed to ultramontane beliefs and remained devoted to the pope—interpreted secession as an action that contradicted Catholic teachings.

On December 1, 1860, the *Louisville Guardian*—Spalding's official diocesan newspaper—chided the actions of "'the Rev. N. Perche for setting up this right [of secession] on

[32] McPherson, 234-241, 276-284.

[33] Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, 130. According to Noll, "since the European revolutions of 1848 Italian liberals had striven to deprive the papacy of its temporal domain, and among the world's most enthusiastic cheerleaders for the Italian antipapal forces were American Protestants, the loudest of whom were the United States' best-known liberals, the party of abolitionism."

theological principles."'[34] During the winter of 1860-1861, Napoléon-Joseph Perché served as editor of the *Le Propagateur Catholique*, the official Catholic periodical of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Less than a month following the election of 1860, Perché published articles that endorsed secession as a legitimate response to Lincoln's victory. The French Catholic defended disunion by utilizing Church teachings and principles.[35] In contrast, Spalding immediately opposed secession, proclaiming in a January 1861 sermon that he hoped "'to see the glorious stars and stripes'" continue to '"wave over our undivided country.'"[36] In St. Louis, Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick adopted a similar position. On January 12, 1861, Kenrick issued a "letter to the Roman Catholics of [the] city," urging them to "avoid occasions of public excitement, to obey the laws, to respect the rights of all citizens and to keep away from public gatherings where words of passions might endanger tranquility."[37] Two weeks earlier, Kenrick had written a similar circular to the clergy of St. Louis. Kenrick advised his prelates and priests to add additional prayers during mass, including the "'*Dues Refugium nostrum*'" and "'the Litany of the Saints,'" "'to implore the Divine Mercy in the present critical situation of Public Affairs.'"[38] Kenrick also encouraged clergy to invite members of "'respective Congregations to attend these services and unite their prayers with those of the Church'" to avoid "'all causes of unnecessary excitement [disunion].'"[39] As the archbishop of St. Louis worked to discourage secession in Missouri, his brother exchanged letters with Bishop John Timon of Buffalo that condemned the actions of some southern clergy. In January 1861, Timon urged Francis Patrick Kenrick to send

[34] *Louisville Guardian*, December 1, 1860 quoted in Judith Conrad Wimmer, "American Catholic Interpretations of the Civil War," PhD dissertation, Drew University, 1979, 131n126.

[35] Ibid., 130-131.

[36] Marin John Spalding quoted in Ibid., 100.

[37] Wimmer, 100.

[38] Peter Richard Kenrick quoted in Mary Emmanuel White, "Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick and the Civil War," MA thesis, Saint Louis University, 1948, 58.

[39] Peter Richard Kenrick quoted in Ibid., 58-59.

"a kind word . . . to the Administrator at N[ew] O[rleans]," regarding the "strong secession views" espoused by the "Propagateur Catholique."[40] Timon believed that the "violence of this epedemick [secession]" would fade and added that "it is the glory of our Church that we keep aloof from politics."[41]

Although some clergy in the South accepted secession, even utilizing Church teachings to defend the action, Spalding and the Kenricks held steadfast to unionism and spoke out against domestic insurrection. Historian Michael Pasquier argues that many southern clergy, such as Perché of Louisiana and William Henry Elder of Mississippi, supported or refused to denounce secession because they identified themselves as both religious leaders "bent upon the Catholic evangelization of a non-Catholic nation and pastoral protectors of a southern way of life based on slavery."[42] Although Pasquier's work focuses exclusively on French Catholic missionaries in the region, his arguments also explain the experiences of some native-born clergy who also felt pressure to defend both their Church and region. Knowing that his colleagues in the Border States had denounced secession, William Henry Elder, bishop of the Diocese of Natchez, wrote Francis Patrick Kenrick to explain the position that he and other prelates and priests in the South faced after their states exited the Union. "While I deeply regret the destruction of the Union," wrote Elder, "I am far from finding fault with the movement."[43] Elder informed Kenrick that neither he nor his clergy had "recommend[ed] secession"; however, the clergy did "explain to those who might inquire, that . . . their religion did not forbid them to advocate it."[44] According to Edler, southern Catholics "were bound to do, what they believed the safety of the community

[40] John Timon to Francis Patrick Kenrick, January 17, 1861, 31-T-47, AAB.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Michael Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier: French Missionaries and the Roman Catholic Priesthood in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 170.
[43] William Henry Elder to Francis Patrick Kenrick, no date, 29-D-12, AAB.
[44] Ibid.

required."[45] Whether immigrant or native-born, members of the Church needed to "support [the] State Govt & the new Confederacy . . . to enrol [sic] as soldiers – to go forward with their taxes – [and] to cooperate in any way they had occasion for."[46] Like his colleagues in the North and Border States, Elder's message stressed the maintenance of law, order, and social stability. Once Mississippi seceded, the bishop accepted the decision made by the majority of his fellow southerners. In doing so, Elder supported his region and adhered to the principles of his faith. Elder and his clergy may have informed their flocks that secession did not run contrary to Catholic teachings, but the prelates and priests did not require the laity to support disunion. In his letter to Kenrick, Elder stated that those who supported secession did so "as good citizens" and not as a result of the "Church . . . having decided either for or against the propriety of secession."[47] Furthermore, Elder declined an invitation "to give the Prayer & Benediction" at a public celebration because he believed in keeping separate the political and religious spheres.[48]

Although Elder and his colleagues in the Border States reached different opinions about secession, both agreed that disunion resulted from Protestant fanaticism. Catholics from seceded states blamed secession on the fanaticism of northern abolitionists who violated the Constitution and forced the South out of the Union. Elder stated that southerners had "proceeded calmly & dispassionately," while northerners demonstrated "haste & passion" and "excitement."[49] Similarly, Bishop Patrick Lynch of South Carolina blamed secession on the zeal of "'black republicans.'"[50] Border State Catholics, in contrast, condemned both northern and southern Protestants for disunion. Spalding spoke out against the '"wretched disunion company'" of the

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Patrick Lynch quoted in Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 38.

southern Democrats, the "fanatical firebrands" in the Republican Party, and the radical Protestant preachers in both regions.[51] Throughout the late 1850s and in 1860, the *Louisville Guardian*, Spalding's official newsletter, published articles that "spoke out against the 'fanatical preachers'" of the country.[52] Border State clergy viewed the secession crisis as a consequence of the infusion of fanatical or radical religion—that is, Protestantism—in both the North and the South. Assuming a unique position within the border region, the Kenricks, Spalding, and other clergy in Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri criticized politicians and religious leaders on both sides of the secession crisis. The clergy offered an alternative or third voice during the secession period, one that suggested Catholic teachings would have prevented the crisis.

For example, in December 1860, Spalding's diocesan organ asserted the following:

> We will not believe that the men of the North are ready to rush upon the evils of civil war on account of a mere idea that their consistency is involved in the question of equal rights between the black and the white races on this continent. We will not believe that they are ready to sacrifice their own liberties through their efforts to give liberty to the slaves of the South.[53]

A month after the publication of the *Louisville Guardian* editorial, Augustin Verot of Florida delivered a sermon in a Catholic parish in St. Augustine. Offered as a "guide [to] the country in crisis," Verot divided his sermon into two sections.[54] The first part railed against northern abolitionists, who Verot believed had caused the secession crisis. The second part outlined the rights of slaves. A printed version of the sermon appeared in several Catholic periodicals and

[51] Martin John Spalding quoted in Spalding, *Martin John Spalding*, 130; Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, April 11, 1861; April 21, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.
[52] Wimmer, 108.
[53] *Louisville Guardian*, December 1, 1860 quoted in Ibid., 108n59.
[54] Longley, 145.

Verot sent a personal copy to Francis Patrick Kenrick in Baltimore.[55] In a letter to the archbishop, Verot noted that his sermon "proved the legitimacy of Slavery against abolitionists . . . render[ing] it lawful."[56] "The occasion seemed to be favourable," stated Verot, "for asserting now that Slavery is not a moral evil incompatible with practical religion."[57] Nonetheless, the Florida cleric wrote that "masters must promote morality among slaves, & have the marriage laws observed by them & not separate families, treat them proudly & give them an opportunity of knowing religious truth."[58]

Verot's sermon resonated with clergy in the Border States because the vicar apostolic of Florida articulated accurately the Church's position toward slavery and explained how secession and civil war could have been avoided. Virtually all American Catholic clergy accepted slavery as a lawful and legitimate human relation that had "'received the sanction of God, of the Church, and of society at all times, and in all governments.'"[59] In short, the law protected slavery, Catholic teachings recognized human bondage, and the Church expected slaveholders to ensure the wellbeing of their slaves. Therefore, Border State clergy argued that if a majority of Americans adhered to the Catholic position about slavery then secession and civil war could be avoided. Border State clergy deemed wrong both northern opponents of slavery and southern supporters of disunion because Protestant fanaticism influenced both. Abolitionists and secessionists violated the law, threatened the social order, led the country to civil war, and, most importantly, dismissed the principles of Catholicism. As Catholics in the North fell in line to

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[55] Ibid., 145-146; Rable, 41-42; Augustin Verot, *A Tract for the Times: Slavery & Abolitionism, Being the Substance of a Sermon, Preached in the Church of St. Augustine, Florida, on the 4th Day of January, 1861* (New Orleans, LA: Catholic Propagator Office, 1861).

[56] Augustin Verot to Francis Patrick Kenrick, January 18, 1861, 32-D-6, AAB.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Augustin Verot quoted in Longley, 145.

support the Union and Catholics in the South supported secession, Border State clergy underscored the faults in both movements, prayed for peace and a restoration of order, focused on their role as religious leaders in the American Church, and held fast to Catholic teachings that advocated reason and an adherence to law. As Peter Richard Kenrick directed the Catholics of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in 1861:

> Beloved Brethren, in the present distressed state of the public mind, we feel it our duty to recommend you to avoid all occasions of public excitement, and to obey the laws, to respect the rights of all citizens, and to keep away, as much as possible, from all assemblages where the indiscretion of a word or the impetuosity of a momentary passion might endanger public tranquility. Obey the injunction of the Apostle, St. Peter: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man can see God."[60]

Although Border State clergy advocated peace and unity, the politics of secession affected the administration of the American Church. In particular, southern clergy who supported the Confederacy openly undermined the neutral or apolitical posture of the Church. Many clergy, especially those in the Border States, argued that prelates and priests should remove themselves from speaking about politics and avoid declaring an allegiance during the war. Francis Patrick Kenrick, for example, noted that he was "averse to the practice" of raising flags above churches and praying for a specific cause.[61] Similarly, Spalding ensured that one of his July 1861 sermons "breath[ed]" only "peace and brotherly love, without committing himself to any political party."[62] As a Border State prelate, Spalding worried about preserving the unity

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[60] Peter Richard Kenrick quoted in White, 66.

[61] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Martin John Spalding, May 4, 1861, 34-K-51, AAB. In the same letter, Kenrick noted that "necessity might determine" him to abandon his apolitical stance. In fact, four months after penning the letter to Spalding, Kenrick prayed for the Union in a sermon at the Baltimore cathedral. His decision alienated some of the pro-Confederate sympathizers in his archdiocese. For more information, see: Longley, 143-144; Spalding, *The Premier See*, 175-176; John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholicism*, second edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 96-97.

[62] Journal of Martin John Spalding, Bishop of Louisville, April 8, 1860-March 27, 1864 (transcript), Box 10, Folder 9, Archdiocese of Louisville Records (hereafter CDBL), UNDA,

of the American Church. As he explained in May 1861, "There is a terrible feeling among the Caths of the extreme South against those Caths of the North who are preparing to fight against them."[63] Disunion also disrupted the appointment of prelates to various open sees in the United States. The process for filling vacant episcopates began by drafting a list of potential candidates. After secession began, the nomination of clergy who supported the Confederacy created a dilemma within the American hierarchy. During the summer of 1860, leadership positions in the Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Savannah as well as the Archdiocese of New Orleans remained unfilled. After some "hesitating" and contemplation, Michael Domenec agreed to become the bishop of Pittsburgh in December 1860; however, the two dioceses in the South went unfilled until the summer of 1861.[64]

As the archbishop of Baltimore—the premier see in the United States—Francis Patrick Kenrick played an important role in nominating new prelates. Unfortunately for Kenrick, the nomination process for the sees in Savannah and New Orleans corresponded with the secession crisis. For example, in a letter to the archbishop of St. Louis, Kenrick noted that he believed Napoléon-Joseph Perché of New Orleans "to be unfit to occupy a see" because he advocated secession.[65] Furthermore, the pro-Confederate sympathies of Father Anthony Dominic Pellicer of Alabama caused similar problems for the American Church. Two weeks after the election of

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July 29, 1861, p. 19. Peter E. Hogan transcribed the journal in April 1950 and provided a copy to the University of Notre Dame Archives. The original diocesan journal is located in the Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Mullen Memorial Library, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC The transcript will be cited hereafter as (Spalding Journal, CDBL, UNDA).

[63] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, May 18, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.

[64] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Peter Richard Kenrick, July 13, 1860; August 17, 1860; November 13, 1860; December 11, 1860 in *The Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence: Letters Chiefly of Francis Patrick Kenrick and Marc Antony Frenaye*, edited by F. E. T. (Philadelphia, PA: Wickersham Printing Company, 1920), 445-453.

[65] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Peter Richard Kenrick, February 28, 1861 in Ibid., 455-458.

1860, Kenrick noted that he "supported Pellicer" for the vacancy in Savannah, despite his "inferior" qualifications.[66] However, four months later, Bishop Joshua [Josue] E. Young of Erie, Pennsylvania—one of Kenrick's suffragan bishops—wrote that Pellicer had "notably identified himself with the Southern Revolution."[67] In the time between Kenrick's endorsement of Pellicer and Young's statement, Alabama and six other states in the Deep South seceded from the Union. Like other southern clergy, Pellicer deemed it necessary to support the newly formed Confederate States of America. To a northern bishop like Young, however, Pellicer's actions constituted "a most criminal & treasonable outrage."[68] As a result, Young informed his metropolitan that he could not support the nomination of Pellicer to the See of Savannah. Young believed that "the recommendation . . . should come from the Bishops of the new Republic [the Confederacy] or at least from those whose consciences can permit them" to accept secession.[69]

Kenrick agreed with Young that the priest's pro-Confederate sympathies were problematic. As Kenrick explained in July 1861, Pellicer demonstrated "piety," a "blameless moral character," and "human kindness," yet he had "recite[d] prayers for the Assembly for the Confederates."[70] Rather than branding Pellicer a traitor as Young had, Kenrick noted that the southern bishop "could hardly avoid" not backing the Confederacy in a seceded state.[71] Although Kenrick empathized with southern clergy who supported the government in their region, he did not support their appointments to any open sees. Ultimately, the politics of secession and the Civil War created a rift within the American hierarchy as northern, southern,

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[66] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Martin John Spalding, November 19, 1860, 34-K-38, AAB.
[67] Joshua [Josue] E. Young to Francis Patrick Kenrick, March 18, 1861, 32-O-18, AAB.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Peter Richard Kenrick, July 15, 1861, in *The Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence*, 459.
[71] Ibid.

and Border State members deliberated the appointment of new prelates. As a Border State clergyman, Kenrick navigated the middle ground between southern clergy who accepted secession as a reality and northern clergy who deemed it treasonous. In the end, Kenrick's animus toward secession led him to relinquish his support for the openly pro-Confederate clerics.[72]

The secession crisis also led to other administrative calamities for the Church in the Border South. On New Year's Eve 1860, H. A. Livers wrote Father Michael Bouchet, a priest in the Diocese of Louisville, to inform him that "nothing has been done as yet relating to your salery [sic]."[73] Bouchet had served as a visiting priest at Livers's parish and had written the lay Catholic to request payment for his services. Unfortunately for Bouchet, the uncertainty over secession had stymied business in Kentucky. The "whole country is panic striken [sic]," wrote Livers, for there was "scearstey [scarcely] a dollar in surkelation [sic]."[74] Livers hoped that after "a change [took] place" the parish would be able to pay Bouchet.[75] During the same month, Father Thomas Joyce of St. Patrick's Church in Louisville decided "to set up [his] watch at raffle in order to raise money" for the Irish Catholic parish.[76] A scarcity of currency, the priest noted,

[72] The See of New Orleans remained open until the summer of 1861, when Jean-Marie Odin was transferred from the Diocese of Galveston, Texas to Louisiana. For more information about Odin's transfer, see: Jean-Marie Odin to Francis Patrick Kenrick, April 22, 1861, 30-V-5; June 25, 1861, 30-V-6, AAB; Francis Patrick Kenrick to the Bishop of Newark, April 10, 1861, 32-A-U8, AAB. The Church filled the See of Savannah in July 1861 by elevating Augustin Verot to bishop of Savannah with ecclesiastical powers over Florida. For more information about Verot's elevation, see: Michael Gannon, *Rebel Bishop: Augustin Verot, Florida's Civil War Prelate* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1964).

[73] H. A. Livers to Michael Bouchet, December 31, 1860, (transcript)Box 4, Folder 25, CDBL, UNDA.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Thomas Joyce to ?, December 6, 1860, Box 5, Folder 15, CDBL, UNDA.

sparked a "financial and political crisis" in the region.[77] Joyce valued his "double cased gold hunting" watch at "175 dollars," and anticipated that several "one dollar" raffle tickets would be purchased.[78] Despite the priest's efforts, by late January 1861, "times ha[d] become a good deal worse" in Louisville.[79] Joyce reported that approximately "six thousand persons" had lost employment due to the "general deranged state of trade and commerce."[80] According to the clergyman, Louisville was not alone in experiencing the negative effects of disunion. "I know not of any city where prospects appear to brighten," wrote Joyce.[81] The priest met "persons coming here from various places who sadly realize the fact of Louisville being as unfortunately circumstanced as the places where they left."[82] For Bouchet, Joyce, and other clergy in the Border South, the secession crisis created a financial burden for the ministry of the Church. Unemployment and stymied commerce meant that parishioners lacked the funds to tithe regularly. As a result, clergy struggled to allocate the money necessary to maintain their parishes, schools, orphanages, and other Catholic institutions in the region. Already considering secession an avoidable and unwarranted consequence of the infusion of fanatical religion into the political process, the clergy's financial struggles during the period certainly intensified their aversion to Protestantism and served as further evidence for commending the Catholic approach. Despite their struggles, Border State clergy remained committed to continuing the ministry of the Church and promoting peace in the country. As Francis Patrick Kenrick confided to Spalding in late November 1860: "I am endeavoring to attend to my duties as a bishop."[83]

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Thomas Joyce to ?, January 21, 1861, Box 5, Folder 15, CDBL, UNDA.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Martin John Spalding, November 19, 1860, 34-K-48, AAB.

Border State Clergy Endorse Neutrality

By 1861, most prelates and priests in the Border States believed that their duties involved only the religious sphere. "I marvel that a priest, with no official, representative standing," argued the archbishop of Baltimore, "should presume to set forth in the newspapers his own opinion . . . on the most grave and difficult questions."[84] Kenrick scoffed at Father Perché's involvement in Louisiana politics. The pro-Confederate priest utilized the *Le Propagateur Catholique* to advocate the secessionist cause even after "so great a number of men had taken the oath of loyalty" in New Orleans.[85] Kenrick preferred the course of action endorsed by Bishop Timon of Buffalo, who argued that "Bishops, Priests, and Catholic Journals, should abstain from all ulta expressions . . . avoid worldly business, and the strife of parties."[86] Timon "deprecate[d] intemperate expressions, from the Catholic clergy, either on the side of Union or on that of Secession," because the bishop believed the "fever [would] pass."[87] According to Timon, clergy would gain "respect" for the Church if they focused on "the work of God, and, as far as possible, ignore[d] the storm of politics."[88] Timon believed politically active ministers had contributed to the national crisis, and the bishop of Buffalo sought to limit the Church's involvement in the sectional conflict. He argued that by removing themselves from politics prelates and priests would illustrate the value of Catholicism for maintaining order and promoting peace and neutrality.

The position advocated by Kenrick and Timon reflected the policy adopted by most politicians in the Border States. From the election of Lincoln to the fall of 1861, many statesmen

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[84] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Peter Richard Kenrick, February 28, 1861 in *The Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence*, 457.
[85] Ibid.
[86] John Timon to Francis Patrick Kenrick, February 11, 1861, 31-T-49, AAB.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

in the Border South supported a policy of neutrality. Although residents of slaveholding states, most Marylanders, Kentuckians, and Missourians demonstrated a commitment to the Union. Culturally tied to the South and politically aligned with the North, many Border State residents viewed neutrality as the appropriate course of action. Neutrality reflected their desire to preserve slavery, avert war, and maintain the status quo.[89] The policy of neutrality served political, social, and economic goals and enabled the Border States to avoid being drawn into a civil war they perceived as the product of northern and southern extremism. Historian Thomas C. Mackey compares neutrality to the modern metaphor of a "punt," arguing that Kentuckians "played it safe, played for more time, pursued their own self-interest, and waited."[90] For clergy in the Border States, neutrality corresponded with their religious principles, their anti-war position, and their commitment to an apolitical Church.

For example, Bishop Spalding of Louisville proved one of the strongest supporters of neutrality in Kentucky. On February 27, 1861, Spalding "rejoice[d] at the action of Ky," which convinced him that there would "be no border war, nor civil war of any other kind."[91] The state's commitment to neutrality led the bishop to believe that "Lincoln ha[d] been, & [would] be

[89] For more information about the policy of neutrality in the Border States, see: Jennie Angell Mengel, "The Neutrality of Kentucky in 1861," MA thesis, University of Louisville, 1925; John A. Boyd, "Neutrality and Peace: Kentucky and the Secession Crisis of 1861," PhD dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1999; Thomas C. Mackey, "Not a Pariah, But a Keystone: Kentucky and Secession," in *Sister States, Enemy States: The Civil War in Kentucky and Tennessee*, edited by Kent T. Dollar, Larry H. Whiteaker, and W. Calvin Dickinson (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2009); Phillips, 1-16; Harris, 42-158; Louis S. Gerteis, *The Civil War in Missouri: A Military History* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012), 4-6, 8-15; Gary R. Matthews, *More American than Southern: Kentucky, Slavery, and the War for an American Ideology, 1828-1861* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 225-242.

[90] Mackey, "Not a Pariah, But a Keystone," 34.

[91] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, February 27, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.

still further, frightened into moderation & common sense."[92] Spalding applauded Kentucky's nonalignment because he believed it distinguished the state from the radical voices of abolitionism or secessionism. The bishop considered Lincoln and his northern constituents aggressive fanatics determined to commence war with the South, rather than individuals of "moderation and common sense."[93] Ultimately, Kentucky's neutral position aligned with Spalding's faith, which encouraged reason, order, stability, and peace.

During the spring of 1861, Spalding spent much of his time writing the pastoral letter for the Third Provincial Council of Cincinnati, which began on April 27, 1861. In a letter to his metropolitan, Archbishop John Baptist Purcell of Cincinnati, Spalding noted that he would have to "modify" what he had written "in the Pastoral concerning our political crisis."[94] The bishop of Louisville pledged to dedicate a "portion chiefly to an exportation of peace, with a hit at the [Protestant] preachers."[95] In the same letter, Spalding commended the "immense majority in Ky in favor of maintaining peace, & the status quo."[96] Spalding utilized the pastoral letter to promote peace and neutrality and attack Protestant leaders whom the bishop believed had helped initiate the national crisis. Before mailing the letter to Purcell, however, Spalding added a postscript that expressed the "pain" he felt over the contents of the "last Catholic Telegraph."[97] "I was not prepared to see something more than this," wrote Spalding, "something favoring civil war against southern brethren at the bidding of black republicans."[98] In Spalding's opinion, the *Catholic Telegraph*, Purcell's official diocesan periodical, had breached the Church's apolitical

[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, April 21, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

stance by advocating war. In reference to the pro-war sentiment that developed from his metropolitan's see, Spalding demanded "no more."[99]

While attending the Third Provincial Council in Cincinnati, Spalding scoffed at northerners who prepared for war only one hundred miles north of his hometown. In a letter to Francis Patrick Kenrick, Spalding noted that "Cincinnati is like a camp," yet he believed that Kentuckians were "determined to resist [any northern] invasion."[100] In his diocesan journal, the bishop described in more detail the state of the Queen City:

> Wars & rumors of wars—Cincinnati a fortified camp[;] all excitement here; daily expect to hear of great battle at Baltimore or Washington. The country is on the verge of dissolution & ruin. Dona Nobis Pacem [Grant Us Peace]! . . . All the Conservatives hope that Ky will remain firm & neutral as long as possible.[101]

Spalding feared that the North's preparation for war would endanger Kentucky's neutrality. Eleven days after the Third Provincial Council, Spalding noted that "rumors of war" continued in the region; however, his "chief hope" remained the "neutrality of Kentucky, which may God preserve!"[102] In fact, the prelate believed that the "imminent difficulties" could be "settled without a bloody collision" or "at least without the desolating evils of a protracted civil war."[103] Spalding perceived the North's mobilization an unwarranted action that threatened to ruin the country before a settlement could be reached. The bishop disparaged the idea of Union Colonel Robert Anderson establishing his headquarters in Kentucky. "I hope you will keep Col. Anderson in Cincinnati," declared Spalding, "his presence here would probably do little good, &

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Martin John Spalding to Francis Patrick Kenrick, May 1, 1861, 37-D-23, AAB.
[101] Spalding Journal, CDBL, UNDA, April 26, 1861, p. 18.
[102] Ibid., May 16, 1861, p. 18.
[103] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, May 18, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.

it might do much harm."[104] Rather than keeping Kentucky "strictly quiet & neutral," Spalding anticipated that Anderson's "presence" would "strengthen the secessionists" in his state.[105]

Spalding's commitment to neutrality reflected his religious principles, promoted peace, and supported his belief in an apolitical Church. However, the North's preparation for war and plan to station Union troops in Kentucky reinforced Spalding's belief that Republicans and northern Protestants were immoderate, aggressive radicals. The bishop was convinced that Lincoln and his evangelical followers wanted to carry out a military crusade against their religious and political opponents. In contrast, Catholics, Kentuckians, and other Border State residents sought peace and compromise. In two letters from the summer of 1861, Spalding denounced the North's preparation for war as an act of Protestant aggression.[106] On May 11, 1861, Spalding wrote his colleague in Baltimore, offering up prayers for Kenrick and other Catholics in Maryland. After mentioning the "difficulties which surround[ed]" those in Baltimore, Spalding opined about the prospects of war in Kentucky.[107] "Here in Louisville, on the borders," explained Spalding, "we are somewhat anxious."[108] In particular, the bishop wondered "when it may please our modest President [Lincoln] to order his 'northern barbarians' to swoop down upon us, in spite of our neutrality."[109] Spalding's letter criticized Lincoln and the president's northern Protestant constituents because he believed they planned to disregard Kentucky's political nonalignment. The following month, in a letter penned to Jean-Marie Odin, the newly appointed archbishop of New Orleans, Spalding wrote: "We are all here in anxiety

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[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] For more information about the mobilization for war in the North, see: Russell McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).
[107] Martin John Spalding to Francis Patrick Kenrick, May 11, 1861, 37-D-24, AAB.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

about the war."[110] The prelate "trust[ed] that we may soon have peace," but doubted political negotiations would result in success.[111] "[F]or this end [peace]," Spalding noted, "I trust that the Yankees will be well and thoroughly beaten."[112]

Less than two months after he returned from the Third Provincial Council, Spalding's correspondences took on a different tone. Prior to the archdiocesan meeting, Spalding's letters championed neutrality and demonstrated his confidence that peace could be achieved without war. His correspondences after May 1861, in contrast, reflected the bishop's expectation of a northern "invasion" of Kentucky. Spalding sneered Lincoln for refusing to accept neutrality and expressed sympathy with the North's opponents. As he confided to Odin, a fellow Catholic and southerner, Spalding believed peace could be restored only through the defeat of the northern army. Events in the Ohio Valley in the spring and summer of 1861 convinced Spalding and other Border State clergy that Lincoln, the Republican Party, abolitionists, and other northern Protestants were radicals determined to disrupt the status quo. He and other clerics interpreted the North's mobilization for war and refusal to respect the region's neutrality as hostile actions plunging the nation into war. In short, Border State clergy interpreted neutrality as a "Catholic" policy that advocated peace and compromise while the North's mobilization for war reflected Protestant or "Puritan" fanaticism.

Clergy and the Commencement of War in the Border South

"War has commenced," stated Father William H. Neligan, "whilst your city is the battle field, ours is the camp."[113] Pastor of St. Columba's Catholic Church in Hopewell Junction, New

[110] Martin John Spalding to Jean-Marie Odin, June 14, 1861, VI-2-d, Archdiocese of New Orleans Collection (hereafter CANO), UNDA.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

[113] W. H. Neligan to Francis Patrick Kenrick, April 22, 1861, 30-V-1, AAB.

York, Neligan penned the note on April 22, 1861, three days after riots erupted in Baltimore. On April 19, 1861:

> the 6th Massachusetts Regiment . . . entered Baltimore on its way to Washington. No rail line passed through Baltimore, so the troops had to detrain at the east-side station and cross the city to board a train to the capital. A mob gathered in the path of the soldiers and grew increasingly violent. Rioters attacked the rear companies of the regiment with bricks, paving stones, and pistols. Angry and afraid, a few soldiers opened fire. That unleashed the mob . . . Maryland flamed with passion.[114]

In response to the event, Baltimore's mayor and chief of police ordered the destruction of several railroad bridges outside the city. Several pro-Confederate bands tore down telegraph wires and damaged railroad ties in and around Baltimore. To restore order in Maryland's capital, the Union Army arrived, declared martial law in the city, and arrested several suspected secessionists.[115] Archbishop Kenrick suspended Church activities, including mass, for three days after the riots, and a week after the event he noted: "[c]onditions in our city are very precarious."[116] On May 4, 1861, the archbishop wrote to Spalding, alerting the bishop of Louisville that the "attack of the troops on the 19th threw our city into great alarm."[117] Fortunately for Kenrick and the Catholics of Baltimore, Union troops had not "molested" their "[religious] institutions."[118] In fact, Kenrick expressed relief that "no religious bigotry" had gotten "mixed up" with the commencement of the war.[119] Conveying a similar sense of surprise

[114] McPherson, 285.
[115] Ibid., 285-288.
[116] Francis Patrick Kenrick to M. A. Frenaye, April 26, 1861, in *The Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence*, 476.
[117] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Martin John Spalding, May 4, 1861, 34-K-51, AAB.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.

and relief, the archbishop informed a friend in Philadelphia that religion had "thus far not entered [the conflict] . . . we [Catholics] have suffered no loss up to the present time."[120]

Given the archbishop's experiences with anti-Catholic and nativist riots during the antebellum period, Kenrick expected similar events to occur during the Civil War. Viewing the through a religious lens, Catholic clergy associated the Republican Party and the Union war effort with abolitionists, nativists, and evangelical Protestants, the three groups responsible for inciting anti-Catholic riots during the antebellum period. The relationship Kenrick perceived between the Lincoln administration and anti-Catholicism combined with the presence of pro-Confederate Catholics in and around Baltimore led the archbishop to believe that the Union Army would target the Church.[121] Although Kenrick wrote in late August 1861 that "Maryland ha[d] fallen," the prelate informed his brother that "[n]othing serious [in the way of loss] has thus far come to us [Catholics]."[122] Kenrick and his flock in Maryland avoided hostility in part because the archbishop demonstrated his loyalty to the Union. Although Kenrick believed that clergy should refrain for mixing politics and religion, he informed his colleague in Louisville that it might prove necessary during the war. In September 1861, a week after federal officials arrested several suspected secessionist statesmen in Maryland, Kenrick recited a prayer for the Union war effort from his cathedral pulpit. Although the prelate's political actions alienated

[120] Francis Patrick Kenrick to M. A. Frenaye, April 26, 1861, in *The Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence*, 476.

[121] For more information about the Maryland Catholics who sympathized with the Confederacy, see: Spalding, *The Premier See*, 175-177; Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 34-35; Kenneth J. Zanca, *The Catholics and Mrs. Mary Surratt: How They Responded to the Trial and Execution of the Lincoln Conspirator* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008).

[122] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Peter Richard Kenrick, August 23, 1861 in *The Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence*, 461.

several pro-Confederate members of his archdiocese, Kenrick deemed the prayer a protection for the Church.[123]

The struggles the clergy faced during the first months of the war forged a bound between members of the American Catholic hierarchy that crossed geographic regions. A month after Kenrick read the pro-Union prayer in Baltimore, the archbishop informed Patrick Lynch, the bishop of Charleston, South Carolina, about an acquaintance who had recently died in battle. He then added: "We sympathize with you in the critical con[quest] of your state."[124] Kenrick maintained a still closer bond with fellow prelates and priests in the Border South. In particular, he "sympathize[d]" with his brother in Missouri, where Catholics experienced "danger" and "peril" throughout the first year of the war.[125] In addition to the rioting and military combat within his archdiocese, Peter Richard Kenrick of St. Louis served as the religious leader of a politically divided city and state. As both unionists and secessionists sought the support of the Church, Kenrick urged neutrality and peace. Nonetheless, once the war began in and around St. Louis, the Missouri clergy became a target of their religious, ethnic, and political adversaries.

In late 1860 and early 1861, bands of secessionists and unionists organized in St. Louis. Branding themselves the "Minute Men," the pro-Confederate group received the support of some loyal Irish Catholics. Meanwhile, the unionist coalition gained many German followers. As one historian explains, the antebellum contest between Irish Catholics and German Protestants or Freethinkers shaped the sympathies of St. Louis immigrants at the outset of the war. Irish Catholics joined the "Minute Men" because they opposed the Republican Party and its German

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[123] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Martin John Spalding, May 4, 1861, 34-K-51, AAB; Longley, 143-144; Spalding, *The Premier See*, 175-176; Ellis, 96-97.

[124] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Patrick N. Lynch, October 20, 1861, 34-K-52, AAB. The letter is intact except for the final sentence, which contains a portion that has been removed.

[125] Francis Patrick Kenrick to Peter Richard Kenrick, August 23, 1861; September 7, 1861 in *The Kenrick-Frenaye Correspondence*, 461, 463.

constituents, and Germans allied with the unionists due to their disdain for Catholicism and the Democratic Party.[126] During the first month of 1861, both groups sought to obtain the weapons in the city's federal arsenal. On January 8, 1861, the commanding officer of the Missouri Volunteer Militia and secessionist sympathizer, Brigadier-General Daniel M. Frost, ordered all men under his command to assemble and defend the arsenal. Frost told officers and soldiers to assemble after hearing '"the bells of the churches sounding a continual peal, interrupted by pauses of five minutes."'[127] Rumors spread that Frost had allied with the St. Louis clergy to ring the bells of Catholic churches to summon the '"enthusiastic, reckless Irishmen'" to the arsenal.[128] Although Kenrick denied the accusation, insisting that the prelates and priests of the archdiocese remained neutral, the clergy of Missouri earned a reputation for supporting secession and the Confederacy. As a result, unionists, non-Catholic Germans, and other supporters of the Republican Party in the city distrusted the clergy and questioned their loyalty for the duration of the war.[129]

In early May 1861, the pro-Confederate state militia under the command of Frost and Governor Claiborne Jackson established a camp in the western portion of the city. After learning about Camp Jackson, Republican congressman Francis Blair of Missouri and Union Captain Nathaniel Lyon collaborated to rid the state of the pro-secessionist militia. On May 10, 1861, Lyon, commanding a group of federal troops and Missouri "Home Guards"—most of whom

[126] White, 52-60. For more information about the contention between Germans and Irish in antebellum St. Louis, see: Luke J. Ritter, "Anti-Catholic America: Nativism and Religious Freedom in the Antebellum West," PhD dissertation, Saint Louis University, 2014. For more information about the German support for the Republican Party during the 1860 presidential election, see: Kristen L. Anderson, "German Americans, African Americans, and the Republican Party in St. Louis, 1865-1872," *Journal of American Ethnical History* 28 (Fall 2008): 34-51.

[127] Daniel M. Frost quoted in White, 62.

[128] White, 63.

[129] Ibid., 63-68.

were Germans—surrounded Camp Jackson and forced Frost to surrender his troops. During the evacuation of the camp, a crowd assembled and provoked the pro-Union coalition. Unrest commenced and shots were fired, leaving twenty-eight members of the crowd dead. Supporters of Frost's militia blamed the uprising on the German or "Dutch" soldiers.[130] One secessionist sympathizer offered a lived account of the Camp Jackson Affair:

> The shooting down of 25 private citizens day before yesterday in St. Louis by those infamous German Soldiers – firing by order among men women and children, killing all together – girls 14 yrs. old some ten, and all, has roused the people to a real frenzy. It is awful, awful that foreign mercenaries should be allowed thus to invade, insult and slaughter the citizens of another State![131]

Rather than blame the event on a particular party, Kenrick adhered to his belief in a neutral Church and argued that a reliance on the principles of Catholicism would prevent future uprisings and civil violence. On May 15, 1861, the archbishop wrote to the Catholics of St. Louis:

> The deplorable events which have lately occurred admonish me to renew the exhortation I addressed you on a former occasion, and recall to your minds the great principles of our holy religion, as the only effectual means of calming the excitement that prevails . . . banish from your thoughts, as well as from your hearts, every feeling incompatible with the duty of subjecting it to the dictates of reason and religion.[132]

In addition to his call for the restoration of "public tranquility" and the "maint[enance] of order," Kenrick also reminded members of his flock "that any aggression . . . not recognized by law, from which the loss of life may follow, is an act of murder [a sin], of which every one engaged . . . is guilty."[133] Although Kenrick's message represented a call for peace and compromise, the St. Louis German press criticized the prelate for not endorsing unionism. On May 16, 1861, the editor of the *Anzeiger des Westens* scoffed at the "priests" who had "illustrat[ed] to their flocks

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[130] White, 70-72; McPherson, 290-292.
[131] Jacob Ditzler Journal, 1860-1866, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, KY, 75.
[132] Peter Richard Kenrick quoted in White, 73.
[133] Ibid.

the view that the rebellion in the Union was chiefly a German concern and that Catholics were to abstain from associating themselves with Germans."[134] The editor claimed that the clergy had "urg[ed] prayers to the patron saint of Ireland to grant them [St. Louis Catholics] greater aid than had been the case at Camp Jackson, and also to protect them during the impending uprising against the Germans."[135] According to the *Anzeiger des Western*, not only had the Irish supported the pro-Confederate state militia, but the Church hierarchy in Missouri failed to advocate unionism. Compared to the archbishops of Chicago and Cincinnati—who the editor claimed had "prayed to Mother Mary to crush the head of the secessionist serpent"—Kenrick and his clergy appeared to be either opportunists not fully committed to the Union or Confederate sympathizers whose neutrality cloaked their allegiance.[136] During the secession crisis, the editor "expected him [Kenrick] to speak out from day to day [in support of the Union]," but "there was not a whisper save for dubious and unverified rumors about the archbishop's sympathies."[137] "Finally, after civil war broke out," wrote the editor, the archbishop came "forward with a bunch of commonplaces about reconciliation, and even now he says not one word in favor of the Union, not even one word of reproval against the traitors."[138] The article blamed the fate of the Irish on the archbishop who failed to show "them the *right* way."[139] The Irish, the editor opined, were "good Union men and brave soldiers" but devious priests and a craven archbishop had misled them.[140]

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[134] The *Anzeiger des Westens*, May 16, 1861 quoted in Steven Rowan, translator and editor, *Germans for a Free Missouri: Translations from the St. Louis Radical Press, 1857-1862* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 224.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 226.

[137] Ibid., 227.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid., 229.

For clergy in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, the start of the Civil War involved religious, ethnic, and partisan conflicts. Lay Irish Catholics in the city had joined with the pro-Confederate Missouri Volunteer Militia because they opposed the Republican Party and its German supporters, both of whom had ties to anti-Catholicism and nativism during the antebellum period. As a result, the Church gained a reputation for being sympathetic to secession. By advocating peace and neutrality or failing to publicly endorse the Union—depending on one's perspective—Kenrick convinced the Unionists that Catholics could not be trusted and supported the Confederacy.[141] The archbishop's address to Catholics in the city following the Camp Jackson Affair highlighted what most non-Catholics feared about the Church and its clergy. In the antebellum era, Protestants and Freethinkers charged that prelates and priests restricted individual rights of conscience by "telling" the laity what to think and how to act. Thus, non-Catholics interpreted Kenrick's pastoral as an anti-Union address because the prelate advised or "told" his flock to follow the teachings of the Church and avoid all occasions of violence. According to the pro-Republican *Anzeiger des Westens*, by advocating peace, Kenrick undermined the Union war effort and gave support to the secessionists. At the same time, Kenrick faced the pressures of being the religious leader of a divided archdiocese. The prelate's precarious position as well as the principles of his faith led him to promote neutrality, peace, and order. The opposing perceptions of the conflict created a contentious relationship between Missouri clergy and unionists that lasted for the duration of the war and beyond.

As Kenrick entered the tumultuous summer of 1861 in Missouri, Spalding traveled throughout Kentucky, visiting the parishes, schools, and convents in his diocese. After returning

[141] It should be noted that some clergy in the Archdiocese of St. Louis openly supported the Confederacy, confirming the assumptions of many unionists. For more information, see: White, 77-85; William Barnaby Faherty, *Exile in Erin: A Confederate Chaplain's Story, The Life of Father John B. Bannon* (Saint Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2002).

to Louisville in late June 1861, Spalding suspended publication of the *Louisville Guardian*.[142] "The difficulties of the mails South & other causes growing out of the times have caused us to suspend the publication of the Guardian for some months, until these troubles will be arrayed," explained Spalding.[143] In the same letter, the bishop informed Purcell about Kentucky's June elections. In the summer of 1861, two parties—the Union Party and the States Rights Party—vied for power in the state. Representing conditional and unconditional unionists, the Union Party obtained the support of most Kentuckians.[144] "Kentucky votes today," wrote Spalding, "& I have no doubt she will again show her fealty to the Union."[145] His predictions proved accurate and Kentucky remained in the Union, but the state's strategic location along the border made it the target of both armies in the fall of 1861. As the Union and Confederate armies prepared to enter the "neutral" state, Spalding braced himself for war. On September 27, 1861, Spalding noted that the "first battle [would] probably be fought between 50 & 60 [?] miles from Louisville," with its "result" determining the "safety" of his diocesan see.[146] With the prospect of combat near Louisville, Spalding turned to his faith to cope with the anxiety. "God only knows where it will all end," he exclaimed, "our only hope is in the providence of God."[147]

As war loomed in the region, Spalding strove to remain apolitical while directing his attention to the care of soldiers on both sides. As the bishop explained in January 1862, "[m]y Diocese is cut in two by this unhappy war, and I must attend to souls without entering into the

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[142] Spalding Journal, CDBL, UNDA, May 20, 1861-June 17, 1861, p. 18; Spalding, *Martin John Spalding*, 132.

[143] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, June 20, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.

[144] Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 189-190.

[145] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, June 20, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.

[146] Martin John Spalding to John Baptist Purcell, September 27, 1861, II-5-a, CACI, UNDA.

[147] Ibid.

angry political discussion."[148] As the religious leader of his diocese, Spalding sought to ensure that Catholic soldiers, regardless of political affiliation, consistently received the holy sacraments. The Church also wanted to provide medical assistance to Catholic and non-Catholic soldiers. Throughout the fall of 1861 and winter of 1862, Spalding worked to obtain chaplains and nurses to care for soldiers, including ones of different ethnicities.[149] For example, the bishop "appointed the Rev. F. Dannis Abarth" to minister to "the Germans" in camps near the Green River.[150] Cutting through much of south-central Kentucky, the Green River served as the natural boundary that separated the Union and Confederate armies in early 1862. With Catholics encamped on both sides of the river, Spalding selected "Chaplain General[s]" for both armies, ensuring "that no soul may parish for want of God's ministries."[151] In late January 1862, Spalding spent three days at the Green River camps, where he confirmed forty-eight soldiers and administered "first Communion" to twenty-five.[152] The clergy's dedication to both armies reinforced Spalding's belief that Catholicism offered a unifying voice compared to the divisiveness of Protestantism. As the bishop explained in his diocesan journal:

> I have endeavored to do my duty towards the poor soldiers, without any reference to exciting political issues. The Catholic Church seeks to save souls, and rises, in her sublime mission, far above the passions of the hour. Deus Providebit pro Suis [God Will Provide for his Family]![153]

A month after his trip to the Green River, Spalding experienced firsthand the horrors of war. In late February 1862, the bishop visited the Abbey of Gethsemani, a Catholic monastery

[148] Spalding Journal, CDBL, UNDA, January 20, 1862, p. 23.
[149] Ibid., November 1861-February 1862, p. 21-24.
[150] Ibid., January 15, 1862, p. 23.
[151] Ibid., January 20, 1862, p. 23.
[152] Ibid., January 21, 1862, p. 23.
[153] Ibid., January 15, 1862, p. 23.

near Bardstown, to preach "to the good Monks in French and English."[154] Unable to obtain a seat during the return voyage to Louisville, Spalding rode in the "baggage room" of the train "with 4 corpses of soldiers."[155] Undoubtedly, the experience strengthened Spalding's critique of a war he considered unnecessary and contradictory to his religious beliefs. In a January 1862 lecture at St. Patrick's Church in Louisville, the bishop discussed the "Heroes & Heroines of Christianity."[156] Spalding argued that "the Christian who for his true country—heaven—sacrifices goods & life" constituted the "high[est] type" of hero.[157] Spalding's lecture differentiated "earthly & heavenly" heroism, in which the bishop noted that the "causes of the earthly hero [were] dyed in crimson & his hands drip[ped with] blood."[158] The causes of the heavenly hero, however, remained "all immaculate & immortal, & if there be blood on his hands it is his own & not that of his fellow-creatures."[159] Spalding's lecture coincided with the start of the war in his diocese and his message revealed his anti-war posture. Spalding believed that the "earthly" interests of Protestant radicals in the North and the South had brought about secession and civil war and caused the deaths of soldiers and civilians. Undoubtedly, Spalding believed the blood of the four soldiers in the baggage room lay on the hands of those preoccupied with mortal causes rather than eternal life. As Spalding explained, the Church denounced the use of violence for worldly pursuits, such as abolition or secession, and directed its members to concentrate on life in heaven rather than on earth. In contrast, the Civil War constituted a

[154] Ibid., February 18, 1862, p. 24.
[155] Ibid.
[156] "Heroes & Heroines of Christianity," Lectures of Bishop Martin J. Spalding, Box 10, Folder 51, CDBL, UNDA.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

struggle over earthly disputes—the legality of slavery and secession—and, according to Spalding, should have been avoided.

In September 1862, Spalding believed the war had come "to a crisis" because the Confederate Army occupied "all [of] central Ky, threatening Louisville."[160] On September 2, 1862, Confederate forces captured Lexington and, on the following day, they occupied Frankfort, the state capital of Kentucky. In response to the Confederate invasion, Union General Lew Wallace took command of Louisville, declared martial law, and suspended all business in the city. Wallace also organized a coalition of civilian volunteers and federal troops to construct defenses for the city. Less than three weeks after Wallace's arrival, General William "Bull" Nelson obtained command of all Union forces in Louisville. In anticipation of an attack on the city, Nelson issued an order in late September that informed residents they should be prepared to evacuate the city. Panic ensued in Louisville and the bridges to southern Indiana became overcrowded with Kentuckians.[161]

Spalding, however, remained in Louisville, vowing to "live & die with [his] children."[162] Amid all the "confusion" and "excitement in the city," Spalding offered his assessment and interpretation of the event.[163] As he explained in his journal:

> women and children ordered by Nelson to be ready to leave at a moments notice . . . all confusion – impossible to know the ground of the panic[.] All sorts of rumors afloat, one that the Federals mean to burn the city rather than surrender . . . There seems to be remaining little truth among our people, & what little there is, is hidden from us.[164]

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[160] Spalding Journal, CDBL, UNDA, September 3, 1862, p. 38.

[161] Harrison and Klotter, 199-200; Stephen I. Rockenbach, "A Border City at War: Louisville and the 1862 Confederate Invasion of Kentucky," *Ohio Valley History* 3 (Winter 2003): 35-52.

[162] Spalding Journal, CDBL, UNDA, September 22, 1862, p. 40.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

Although the bishop had visited camps, presided over prayer services for the wounded, and seen military corpses, he had never faced a genuine threat against his own life during the war. Not knowing what the following day would "bring forth," Spalding offered a "last will and Testament" to his people: "May our Sweet Mother in heaven smile upon & protect us this hour of our direst need."[165] Before concluding the entry, Spalding expressed his disdain for Protestantism and explained why its followers were responsible for the war. Spalding noted that the:

> hypocritical preachers of the North, with their cant about the Bible & Slavery, have done their work – ruin is their pathway. The innocent must suffer with the guilty, in expiation of their vile hypocracy [sic]! The counterfeit of Religion is worse than no Religion at all . . . Protestantism has ruined the country, with its disorganizing principles.[166]

The bishop hoped that "the people who have deluded to their ruin, have the light & grace to repent and return to their Mother [the Virgin Mary] whom they have . . . repudiated."[167] Spalding interpreted the potential attack on Louisville, the Confederate invasion of Kentucky, and the war as the work of fanatical Protestants. According to Spalding, the disorganization, divisiveness, and deceit of Protestantism had led to disunion, destruction, and death. The bishop also commended Catholicism, arguing that an adherence to Church teachings and principles would have prevented the national crisis. Ultimately, the bishop expected Protestants to recognize the errors of their faith and convert to Catholicism.

Conclusion

By the fall of 1862, the Civil War had commenced throughout the Border South and impacted each of the diocesan sees in the region. From the election of 1860 to the invasion of Kentucky in the fall of 1862, clergy in Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri interpreted the events

[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.

through a religious lens. The clergy's faith and their religious principles shaped their responses to the election of 1860, the secession crisis, and the start of the war. The majority of Border State prelates and priests supported Stephen Douglas's candidacy, denounced secession, advocated neutrality, and considered the war an unwarranted consequence of religious fanaticism. Furthermore, they believed that Catholicism emphasized peace over passion, reason over reform, and stability over insurrection. Influenced by their antebellum experiences with nativism, anti-Catholicism, and the Catholic apologist movement, Border State clergy interpreted the election of Lincoln, the fragmentation of the Union, the mobilization for war, and the fighting in their dioceses as evidence of how Protestantism had ruined the country. At the same time, Spalding, the Kenricks, and other clergy from the region argued that if the majority of Americans adhered to Catholic teachings and principles then disunion and civil war could and would have been avoided.

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