

Rome Stoops to Conquer, by E. Boyd Barrett



I got discouraged to see the article I just posted from The Converted Catholic Magazine, [The Enigma of The Jesuits by J.J. Murphy](#), the same article I already posted from the Lutheran Library a year earlier! I found that article on onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu. I deleted the older one because I think what I posted today to be better.

To my encouragement, on the [April 1946 edition of The Converted Catholic Magazine](#) I saw a list recommended books, and one of the books, [Rome Stoops to Conquer, by E. Boyd Barrett](#), looked interesting because it says that the author, E. Boyd Barrett, is an ex-Jesuit! I consider any former Catholic priest, especially ex-Jesuits, to be excellent sources of information. They are literally risking their lives to publish books like this!

Rome

STOOPS TO CONQUER

by

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"The Jesuit Enigma"

"While Peter Sleeps"

"The Magnificent Illusion," Etc.

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Foreword

"We must have in this country the right to speak
our honest thoughts or we shall perish."

CHAPTER I. Twilight Revolt

FROM an insignificant group of 25,000 adherents, shepherded by thirty poor priests, in 1789, the Catholic Church of America has grown to be a congregation of 20,000,000, led by thirty thousand priests. From being propertyless, she has become a rich institution, whose wealth exceeds two billion dollars. From being a despised and scattered flock, she has become the most perfectly organized body in the world enjoying immense influence and power. Bearing in mind her material and spiritual autonomy, her individualism, her close-knit interests and definite aims, her sharp separateness from all other institutions, one must regard her as a unique entity in the nation, an entity whose swift and ceaseless growth indicates a great destiny.

The American people watched with concern and suspicion the development of the Catholic Church in this country. They strove to thwart her growth with contempt and occasional blows. They had little sympathy for her. Wrote Cardinal Gibbons in 1876: "Upon the Church's fair and heavenly brow her enemies put a hideous mask and in that guise exhibited her to the insults and mockery of the public." Fifty years later the same kind of injustice was complained of by Archbishop McNicholas: "The Catholic Church has been held up

to men as an object to be hated and feared. She has been described as anti-Christ; the epitome of evil. She has been scorned as an alien incapable of assimilating American ideals. She is said to await only the opportunity to effect the destruction of American institutions."

But neither animosity nor injury succeeded in stemming the tide of Catholicism. The battle was lost. Irony, contempt and blows failed of their purpose. The "mustard seed" has grown into a mighty tree. Today the American people are silent about the Catholic Church: silent and apprehensive.

The Catholic Church has dug herself securely into American life and her social status has improved from year to year. She is highly esteemed for her good citizenship. In a hundred walks of life Catholics rank as leaders. In the Great War Catholics were as foolishly patriotic as other citizens and as generous in the sacrifices they made. In commercial and civil life individual Catholics mix and mingle and their identity as Catholics is completely submerged until, perhaps, some practical interest of the Church crops up and then their religious affiliation is revealed.

The Catholic Church has gained in the esteem of religious-minded and conservative Americans because of two salient characteristics; namely, her consistency in moral doctrine and her constancy of purpose.

The Church has a moral code and has stuck to it. In no serious respect has she deviated from traditional morals. In an age of subversive and bewildering theories she has remained her sober, dogmatic self. With unwavering consistency she has opposed divorce, free love in all its forms, contraception in its modern mechanical forms, godless education and Marxism. On the whole she has been splendidly faithful to her duty of teaching "hard sayings" while other Churches have shamelessly compromised on many moral doctrines.

Her constancy of purpose in pursuing the ambitions which she holds to be legitimate is equally outstanding. From the first she has laid claim to a unique divine mission which entitles her to "teach all nations." She has held and still holds it her exclusive right and duty to teach Americans, "to make America Catholic" (Archbishop Ireland). In holding, as she holds, that she is "the pillar and the ground of truth" and that her teaching is inerrant and indefectible, she is perfectly logical in her conduct: Her ambition to dominate American thought and regulate American manners is self-confessed. "She has no secrets to keep back... . Everything in the Catholic Church is open and above board" (Cardinal Gibbons). She calls on all Americans to hear her voice and obey her counsels. Error has no rights in her eyes, nor is it ever lawful to hide the truth. No other church shares with her this sublime, if often misrepresented, intolerance.

The Catholic Church in America is strong; stronger than any other group; stronger perhaps than any possible confederation of groups. Her strength does not derive from her property alone, nor from the mere numbers of her children however many they be, but from the enduring cohesion which possesses her organization and from the mysterious, inflammable texture of the Catholic mind.

Her strength has grown apace under the remarkably able leadership of the present Pope, Pius XI. He has given the best of his singular ability to the supervision and direction of the Catholic campaign in America. For him our country is a battlefield on which is being waged the greatest struggle of the Church's history. **The conquest of America is the supreme objective at which he aims.** He despairs of the Old World with its interminable outbreaks against the Church and the multiplicity of divisions between peoples that entail internecine strife among his children. Besides, the Old World is in receivership. Pius is well aware that **the Catholic Church can never hope again to dominate the civilized world until America kneels, beaten and penitent, at her feet.**

It is characteristic of the Pope's strategy in guiding American Catholics that he has launched them on Catholic Action, and that he has taught them to enlarge and remodel the Catholic Press.

Catholic Action is not avowedly politics, indeed, in theory is far removed therefrom. It is the share the laity takes in "the apostolate of the bishops"; work done by laymen and laywomen on behalf of the Church under obedience to their pastors. But in fact, a large proportion of Catholic Action partakes of politics, and is a political penetration, an infiltration into the political world of a new force and agency. In writing to the Knights of Columbus, Cardinal Pacelli, on behalf of His Holiness, delicately avowed this aim. He urged on the Knights to a widespread rally of Catholic manhood as necessary for "the practical solution of those problems of social and civil life which put such severe tests on the souls of Catholics."

In teaching American Catholics this new phase of Catholicism, this active phase, and in sanctifying it with his blessing, Pius XI rendered inevitable many significant changes in the life-course of this nation.

Of the new Catholic Press there will be much to say later on. It suffices for the moment to refer to its outspoken boldness and to its remarkable success in stirring up the spirit of the Catholic masses and awakening in them a sense of their immense power. Thanks largely to their Press, a seething energy fills American Catholics. From end to end of the land they are men of action, united, confident of the future, and militant. Of late they have given many remarkable displays of their mobility as a force to influence public manners. The Legion of Decency was such a display. At the word of the bishops ten thousand meetings were held; a hundred thousand inflammatory pieces were printed in the Catholic Press; ten million Catholics signed pledges. The move was so sudden and violent that a score of non-Catholic bodies were carried along with it and joined ranks with the Catholics. The energy and organizing genius of Catholic Action was demonstrated. No such stupendous social maneuver could be achieved by any other American group.

Writes the editor of the Catholic journal, *Commonweal*: "The Catholic Church today is positively active on a scale and with an intensity of disciplined energy which is of vital concern to all thoughtful men and women who wish to know something of the great forces which are contending today for the leadership and control of the thoughts and actions of mankind. . . . That the Catholic Church is, to say the least, certainly one of the major forces of

the world . . . is generally admitted. Its own claim, of course, is that it is incomparably, uniquely, **the supreme spiritual power in all the world.**"

This "admittedly major force of the world" is focused today on the problem of the future of this country. The possibilities of the situation provoke deep and enduring interest. To minds that distrust Catholicism, what is called "the menace of Rome" looms greater than ever before. To minds that see in Catholicism the regenerative force of the world, the future is bright with hope.

The importance of mass meetings as well as mass movements in maintaining the morale of their subjects is well known to the Catholic hierarchy of America. No diocese is left long without a well-staged display of numbers and strength. The effect of these demonstrations on the Catholic mind is well illustrated by a story told of a poor woman who attended a vast meeting organized by Archbishop Curley at Baltimore in June, 1934, to celebrate "The Birth of Maryland." There were 70,000 priests, nuns, papal knights and laity present. The poor woman had come a long journey but what she witnessed compensated her for her pains. "When you see all this," she cried, "you can only say that the Catholic Church can do anything."

The purpose of the meeting was avowedly to remind the American people of the contribution which the Catholic Church had made in the person of Lord Baltimore, to the doctrine of religious freedom. The Jesuit editor of America, in commenting, described it as "another of those events which bear overwhelming testimony to the fact that the Catholic Church is bound up with all that is great in America's past, present, and future." His bold claim that America's future greatness already belongs demonstrably to the Catholic Church is indicative of the profound confidence that Catholics feel as regards the future career of the Church in this country.

What is the official view of the Catholic Church about America? What does she think of our moral condition? How does she envisage her duty towards us?

Frankly, the Church has a poor opinion of the social and moral status of the nation. She sees America hastening to destruction and decay. "America is in a sad state today with vast groups of our people clamoring for new gods, new standards of morality, and in their mad desire they are worshipping material wealth and deifying self." The disease she diagnoses as Neo-Paganism. Americans are no longer godly; they are godless; godless in education, in social relations, in industrial relations, and largely godless in government. "The world... outside the Catholic Church . . . is almost entirely pagan, completely materialistic in its philosophy and outlook ... with the breakdown of family life and the sanctity of marriage." This disease permeates every walk of life and corrupts young and old alike. It is the forerunner of something still worse: Communism. Communism is militant bloody Paganism with its sword unsheathed to strike down the Church. "Bolshevism is already battering at our doors," cries Bishop F. C. Kelley.

Officially the Catholic Church sees America in the direst straits in the matter of morals and religion, and sees Catholicism as the only possible way of salvation for the nation. She sees in Catholic Action all that is left of

true American Action. She sees herself as the last defender of true Americanism. She claims, for instance, that the banishment of religion from public schools is an invasion of the Constitution and that the endowment of purely secular education is an unrighteous as well as an un-American favoring of atheism.

Having consecrated the slogan "Catholic Action means American Action," the Church no longer regards any "interfering" on her part with American manners and customs as un-American. All that she does is, she claims, done in the best interests of America. Her program, a long and varied one, provides for the reform of theaters; the censorship of books and reviews; the prevention of birth control propaganda; the defeat of the eugenics movement; the introduction of religion into the public schools; the obtaining of State aid for sectarian schools; the reform of industrial relations in accordance with papal encyclicals; the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Vatican; the acquisition of a more than presidential veto on legislation and on the policy of the Foreign Office, etc. Even these items comprise but a part of the Church's program. In general that program constitutes the domination, for the good of America, of American thought, manners, and government by the Catholic Church.

The program, did it remain a mere matter of pious hope and a subject of prayer, would be harmless, but the American Catholic hierarchy is not content with passive Christianity. It is busy mobilizing all its forces to put across its program. It feels assured that it will outlive opposition and will succeed in the end. What are ten or twenty years in the life of the Catholic Church? What is a century for that matter? But confidence in the inevitability of victory does not damp its present ardor for immediate action. Thanks to the present disintegration of American life the hour for action has struck. There is today a Catholic camp where banners float and bugles blare. The great campaign has begun.

That the Catholic Church is deadly in earnest in campaigning to "save America from herself" cannot be doubted. It is fully in accord with her traditions and her psychology. In whatever country she may be, the moment she feels herself strong enough to dominate thought, conduct and government, . she makes the attempt to do so. "The Church has always done so," writes Hilaire Belloc, "and always will, please God!" She regards it alike as her duty and her divine mission. She is subject to that "expansiveness" or, as it is called, apostolicity, which is the characteristic of the Catholic spirit.

The revolt, or revolution, or uprising-whatever it may be called-which she has engineered in our midst is the necessary result of her faith. It is a unique phenomenon in our history because no other church or organization is like the Catholic Church. It could not have happened sooner because heretofore the Catholic Church was not strong enough to make the attempt.

Its coming has been foretold in various terms. Dean Inge, the inveterate hater of the Church, wrote a decade ago: "The determined effort of the Roman Catholic Church to capture the great Republic of the West makes the most interesting chapter in modern religious history." Years later the Catholic poet Theodore Maynard wrote: "The plain fact is that America will soon become

the decisive battle-ground of the faith." Maynard did not envisage the struggle as a revolution, though it is difficult to call it anything else. Yet, though a revolution, it is not formally seditious. The Church is under arms against those she considers the enemies of this nation, and so far she is fighting under the forms of lawful civic strife.

To American citizens who are not so profoundly apprehensive about the future of their country as is the Catholic Church, the present turmoil seems unjustifiable. They consider that the Catholic Church is aggressive. Catholics, they say, have not suffered any injustices or hardships. They have been favored if anything, and certainly enjoy the same privileges as other citizens. There is no discrimination against them or against their Church. Their case is not like that of the German Catholics under Bismarck when their rights and liberties seemed to be endangered by the Kulturkampf. American Catholics, in assaulting the institutions, manners and morals of this country, are not conducting a war of defense but one of attack and aggression. It is from them that threats issue and not from the government or the major portion of the population.

Be that as it may, the revolt is in motion and the question to be asked is, how far is it likely to go? With what additional powers will the Catholic Church be satisfied? What is the ultimate objective at which she aims? Does she intend, should the power be hers, to change and modify the Constitution? Does she mean to discard the American principle of the separation of Church and State? In fine, does she aim at being *the established church* of the United States?

This last question, a disturbing one for non-Catholics, was authoritatively answered (as it then seemed) by Alfred E. Smith, the Catholic lay leader of America, during his presidential campaign in 1928. He stated more than once and unequivocally: "I believe in the American doctrine of the absolute separation of Church and State." This statement became known as Smith's *Credo*. It was accepted at once by American Catholics, lay and clerical, as their *Credo* also. They all said "Amen" to it. And since that time neither the hierarchy nor the laity have repudiated it. Indeed, we frequently find reiterations of Smith's *Credo* from important Catholic apologists. Thus recently Father Elliot. Ross, the Paulist, wrote: "Catholics in the United States yield nothing to their fellow-citizens in their devotion to the American principle of religious liberty and separation of Church and State."

Smith's *Credo* reassured American non-Catholics and silenced for the time being the taunt of "divided allegiance" that has for so long been uttered against Catholics. But Smith's *Credo* did not solve the terrible dilemma of American Catholics. It was impotent to wipe out the Roman decrees and encyclicals which establish as Roman Catholic doctrine the *desirability* of the union of Church and State. In point of fact, Smith's *Credo* was heresy. Objectively at least, **it was a bid to trick and deceive the American people into a false conception of Catholic doctrine** on the relationship that ought to exist between Church and State.

A year after Mr. Smith's pronouncement, namely, in 1929, this writer ventured on a prophecy: "Pius XI... has no choice but to administer a sharp rebuke to

his recalcitrant American Children and assert his authority. No doubt he will wait a little while until the election heat has cooled down. Perhaps too his rebuke will be indirect; there may be no mention of America at all in his encyclical but everyone will know for whom it is intended."

On the last day of the following year, Pius XI issued his encyclical "Casti Connubii" in which he definitely repudiated the "absolute separation" heresy of Alfred E. Smith and enlarged upon the desirability of "union and association" between Church and State. He was in fact putting before the American Catholic Church the *ultimate objective at which she should aim*.

As this recent and really authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church on the burning question of the relationship of Church and State is vitally important, and as it is given the minimum of publicity by American Catholics, it may be well to quote it fairly fully." It has obvious reference, as indeed has the whole encyclical, to American conditions, as viewed from the Vatican.

We earnestly exhort in the Lord all those who hold the reins of power that they establish and maintain firmly harmony and friendship with this Church of Christ so that through the united activity and energy of both powers the tremendous evils, fruits of those wanton liberties which assail both marriage and the family and are a menace to both Church and State, may be effectively frustrated.

Governments can assist the Church greatly in the execution of its important office if in laying down their ordinances they take account of what is prescribed by divine and ecclesiastical law, and if penalties are fixed for offenders. . . . There will be no peril or lessening of the rights and integrity of the State from its association with the Church. Such suspicion and fear is empty and groundless as Leo XIII has already so clearly set forth.

Continuing, and making the teaching of Leo XIII his own, Pius XI says:

"It is in the interest of everybody that there be a harmonious relationship" between Church and State, and that "if the civil power combines in a friendly manner with the spiritual power of the Church it necessarily follows that both parties will greatly benefit."

He adds:

"The dignity of the State will be enhanced and with religion as its guide there will never be a rule that is not just; while for the Church there will be a safeguard and defense which will operate to the public good of the faithful."

Pius XI then holds up to the American people as "a clear and recent example" the solemn Convention between the Vatican and Italian Government whereby the latter "assigns as civil effects of the sacrament of matrimony all that is attributed to it in Canon Law."

There follows the official Catholic teaching, from the lips of Pius XI, which

blasts the Smith *Credo* and all the equivocal misrepresentations of Catholic doctrine that the American Catholic Church has foisted on the American people. Pius XI says: "This" [the Vatican-Mussolini pact] "might well be a striking example to all of how even in this our day, *in which sad to say the absolute separation of the civil power from the Church and indeed from every religion is so often taught*, the one supreme authority can be *united and associated* with the other without detriment to the rights and supreme power of either thus protecting Christian parents from pernicious evils and menacing ruin." (Italics are ours.)

To return to the questions asked earlier: Does the Church intend, should the power be hers, to change and modify the Constitution? Does she mean to discard the American principle of the separation of Church and State? In fine (ultimately), does she aim at being the established church of the United States? One cannot doubt, in view of the present Pope's teaching, which indeed is simply the reiteration of age-old Catholic doctrine, that the answers should all be in the affirmative.

If the aim of Catholic Action is to fulfill the mission of the Church, to dominate and chasten the soul and the manners of America, why should Catholic Action stop short of setting up Catholicism in a position of supreme authority in this country? The uprising that has begun, the strong nationwide Catholic movement "to save America," the revolt against the Neo-Pagan state of the nation, can have, logically, no other termination than that outlined above by His Holiness.

Translated into strictly Catholic thought and language, the foregoing ideas are well expressed by Michael Williams, one of the lay leaders of American Catholicism. Having stated that the ecclesiastical statistics for 1934 "amply prove that the Church in the United States is advancing steadily and strongly, practically all along its far-flung front" and that "the epic of Christianity lies concealed beneath the surface of the statistics," he concludes: "Meanwhile all Catholics with even a modicum of imagination cannot fail to be thrilled with the vision of the vast Catholic force . . . the force of the Church in action, permeating the national life, the leaven in its mass, uplifting its ideals, directing its way toward the only road which is consonant with humanity's true nature; the road of Christian civilization."

Continued in [CHAPTER II. Catholic Action](#).

All chapters of Rome Stoops to Conquer, by E. Boyd Barrett

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