

policy were based on an inadequate theology of religious liberty would have strengthened the author's welcome commentary on *DH*. It resulted in the Catholic State's placing restrictions on non-Catholic worship and propaganda but such was not the expression of the definitive doctrine of the Church. A pre-Vatican II theological thesis widely held in the Church cannot be said to have represented the Church's unchanging and infallible teaching. It was never declared by either the Church's Extraordinary or Ordinary and Universal Magisterium to constitute irreformable and infallible doctrine.

James Likoudis

*Catholics United for the Faith, President Emeritus*

**James M. Woods, *A History of the Catholic Church in the American South, 1513–1900*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011. 498 pages. \$69.95, cloth.**

The work of historians proceeds with the processes of research and synthesis. Forgotten topics and newly discovered caches of sources frequently produce important monographs while grand narratives synthesize new research into a compelling story. James M. Woods, professor of history at Georgia Southern University, has written *A History of the Catholic Church in the American South, 1513–1900* to collect the research, appearing mostly in obscure books and academic journals, on Catholicism in the South. Well-written, informative, and well-researched, Woods's "institutional narrative" of the Church in the South is a major historiographical contribution to American religious history and will become the standard work on the subject (xiii). Although Woods disclaims originality in his introduction, his unique analysis emerges through his view of Catholicism in the South as a "tapestry of faith" with many influences (xiii, xv). Woods argues that Southern Catholicism "is a unified cloth of religious doctrines and beliefs, to be sure, yet with many different colors and hues spread across its texture" (xv). The varied influences on southern Catholicism explain both its successes and failures.

Woods first covers the colonial era, demonstrating that the Spanish and French experiences in what would become the American South laid an uneven foundation for the Catholic religion. Spain planted missions and settlements in Florida, parts of what became Georgia and South Carolina, and Texas. Despite the work of many missionaries, the missions did

not provide a lasting foundation for Catholicism. Numerous problems intervened. Woods demonstrates that conflicts between church leaders and state officials as well as quarrels among missionaries weakened efforts. The harsh climate, both for Indians and Europeans, meant that sustained missionary labors would be difficult. Both Texas and Florida drained cash and manpower from the Spanish throne. When Spain lost Florida to Britain in 1763, all but eight Catholics left for other Spanish colonies within a year (31). France suffered from similar problems. French Louisiana was a difficult environment and had been settled by a population that included a strong and active criminal element. Woods indicates that there was little popular interest in religion, a condition several government and church officials attributed to the lack of French women of marrying age in the colony (whom they hoped would pacify the male population) (81–82). Jesuits and Capuchins quarreled for decades over jurisdiction, further diminishing the prestige of Catholicism. The Ursuline sisters, who founded a convent in New Orleans, made a positive impact on the region, educating women and reaching out to women of color (93–94, 103). By 1731 Louisiana had a black majority population, introducing another set of challenges for Catholic leaders as they sought to deal with contentious issues of slavery and race (102–04).

The English Catholics who settled Maryland in the 1630s struggled with a different set of cultural problems. Woods shows how the “gentry” origins of English Catholicism shaped the colony significantly (108–09). English Catholics, a persecuted minority, pursued their religion in a different style. English gentry Catholics like the Calverts understood that they would operate as a religious minority in their society. Thus they approached the faith pragmatically, supporting religious toleration and adopting a quieter religious behavior (110–11). Like Louisiana, Maryland by the eighteenth century contained a large enslaved population (118). Catholics, Woods maintains, tended to accept slavery, but argued that slaveholders had to treat their enslaved workers justly (132–33). Catholics in Maryland quickly became a persecuted minority in their own colony, which only reinforced the gentry-style of English Catholicism. Despite two centuries of effort among Catholic missionaries, the colonial period ended with a weak Catholic presence in North America.

Woods moves to the Revolutionary and antebellum periods in the next section, an era of growth for southern Catholics. He discusses the careers of Charles Carroll of Carrollton and his cousin and first bishop of the United States, John Carroll. The Carrolls understood the challenges of American Catholicism. They sought to spread Catholicism in a geographically large country with a predominantly Protestant population. For the

Carrolls, Woods notes, the American Revolution offered the opportunity to promote religious freedom. The Revolutionary-era South became more dedicated to religious freedom than any other region of the new country, a promising situation for southern Catholics (154–55).

As Spanish rule ended in Florida and Texas, Catholicism there remained rather weak. Spain had regained Florida in 1783, and Spanish Catholics rebuilt churches and re-established their religion there. When Spanish rule ended in Texas in 1821, only 3000 people lived in the area. Woods summarizes, “After a presence of more than three centuries within the American South, Spain appeared to have accomplished very little considering all the time and treasure it had spent spreading Catholicism” (210).

Thanks to Thomas Jefferson, Louisiana came under U.S. control, but Catholic institutions struggled due to the small number of priests. Bishops of New Orleans possessed jurisdiction over a vast territory with poor communications, making practical administration virtually impossible. Similar problems greeted “the second Catholic bishop in the South,” Benedict Flaget, at Bardstown, Kentucky in 1811 (171–72). In 1820 the new dioceses of Richmond and Charleston reduced the burdens on the Archbishop of Baltimore, who had previously overseen the area. Bishop John England, the first bishop of Charleston, became the “most significant prelate in the South, and perhaps the whole United States, during the antebellum era” thanks to his attempts to integrate Catholicism into American culture (249). But despite the growth in southern Catholicism, it was still a small minority religion in the region. At the beginning of the Revolutionary period, Catholicism in America, Woods notes, was “more rural and still largely based in the South” (252). By 1845, industrialism and massive Irish immigration transformed American Catholicism to a northern, urban phenomenon.

The final section covers the effects of the Civil War and increased immigration on southern Catholics. Woods maintains that the nativist battles of the 1850s bound Catholics more tightly to the Democratic Party (274). When secession came in 1860–1861, Woods observes that most southern Catholics outside of the border states “enthusiastically supported the Confederacy, sharing in its pain, humiliation, and defeat” (295). After the War, southern Catholics often identified with the Lost Cause ideology. Woods summarizes the career of Fr. Abram Ryan, whose sympathetic poems about the Confederacy became famous throughout the South. Woods asserts that because southern Catholics were a minority, they believed that “they must support the status quo” (339). Thus their loyalties to both the Confederacy and the Lost Cause demonstrated their acceptance of southern culture. The

post-bellum southern Catholic Church gained members not from conversions but from new immigration, particularly from Germany and Italy (373). This confirmed the suspicions of non-Catholics that the religion was “foreign” and un-American. In addition, bishops struggled to address the racial questions raised by the growth in segregation. Woods briefly details the career of Archbishop Janssens of New Orleans who created black parishes and schools in the city. Janssens “sincerely believed that such parishes fostered vocations and lay leadership” but his decision did not sit well with many black Catholics (311). Woods covers the participation of southern bishops at Vatican I, particularly Bishop Edward Fitzgerald of Little Rock who voted against the definition of papal infallibility (296–98). He also notes that during the Americanist controversy many southern bishops had Americanist leanings and ties (332). During the post-bellum period, Woods shows, southern Catholics declined as a percentage of the Catholic population of the country.

Woods’s narrative demonstrates that Catholicism, despite its small number of faithful in the region, embodied the political and cultural history of the South to 1900. The face of southern Catholicism is as Woods notes a “tapestry.” French, Spanish, English, Irish, African-American, German, and Italian—all have left lasting imprints on southern Catholicism and the region. Ironically, the American South is usually portrayed as the land of whites and blacks. Ethnic identities are rarely mentioned. The history of Southern Catholicism challenges this image. That is what makes its history so interesting and so complex at the same time. Southern Catholicism is as its name implies, catholic. Woods has reminded scholars of that reality.

Adam Tate  
*Clayton State University*