The Irish Flood: Famine, Philanthropy, and the Emergence of Duelling Liverpool Catholic Identities, 1845–1865

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I

The great Irish Famine of 1845–50 pushed thousands of additional poor Irish migrants into Liverpool.[1] In 1841 the number of Irish-born resident in Liverpool was 49,639; by 1851 it had risen to 83,815 out of a population of 350,000.[2] Many pre-Famine Irish migrants had consciously decided to live and to work in Liverpool for at least part of the year to take advantage of the cheap steam passage, casual labour opportunities, and the city's relatively higher wages compared to Ireland. Most Famine migrants, however, fled for Liverpool's shores out of sheer desperation.[3] When the Liverpool police arrested Famine migrants for begging, they gave them the choice whether to go to gaol or to return to Ireland. With few exceptions, the Irish chose a Liverpool gaol. One of the beggars, on being asked if he would go back to Ireland, replied, 'No, no; I shall

[2] Frank Neal, *Sectarian violence: the Liverpool experience, 1819–1914. An aspect of Anglo-Irish history* (Manchester, 1988), p. 81.
[3] See David Fitzpatrick, *Irish emigration, 1801–1921* (Dublin, 1984), pp. 26–7.

die if I go there.'[4] Many migrants who escaped death in Ireland, however, soon perished in Liverpool.

The Famine migrants who survived the often long walk to an Irish port and then the damp, overcrowded steam passage to Liverpool arrived starving, homeless, and sick. During January 1846, at the beginning of the crisis, the *Liverpool Mercury* reported that 'at no former period of dearth and destitution have such multitudes of naked and houseless wretches been seen on our streets imploring relief from the inhabitants as at present.'[5] By the end of 1846 the Liverpool select vestry was overwhelmed by the Famine influx. For the week of 24–31 December alone, the vestry relieved 4,000 families, of whom more than 3,000 were Irish, and dispensed 12,000 soup tickets and 10,000 rations (6 oz) of bread.[6] Despite its best efforts, however, Liverpool could not feed the thousands of Famine migrants who landed on its shores; it was simply too much to ask of one city.

Although the hunger problem was terrible, the housing shortage was worse. Parliament's *Report on the Irish poor in Great Britain* lamented Liverpool's desultory housing conditions in 1836, nearly a decade prior to the Famine migration. The *Report* described how in Liverpool's northern districts, the Irish languished in decaying lodging houses or cellars two or three families to a room.[7] The doubling of Liverpool's Irish population during the Famine exacerbated already dangerous conditions. In early 1847 Liverpool's stipendary magistrate Edward Rushton estimated that 27,000 Irish migrants lived in cellars unfit for human habitation.[8] Cellar conditions became so unhealthy that some members of the select vestry proposed filling up the cellars with sand, asserting that 'it is better for human beings to sleep in the streets than to herd in those receptacles of disease'.[9]

As the vestry predicted, damp, overcrowded, and poorly ventilated cellars and lodging houses cultivated a deathly typhus epidemic in Liverpool during 1847. Dr William Henry Duncan, England's first medical officer of health, noted that 17,280 people died in Liverpool due to typhus that year.[10] The highly contagious disease

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[4] *Liverpool Mercury*, 4 Feb. 1848.
[5] Ibid. 10 Jan. 1846.   [6] Ibid. 1 Jan. 1847.
[7] *Report on the Irish poor in Great Britain*, P.P., XXXIV, appendix G, pp. 15–18.
[8] Neal, *Sectarian violence*, p. 94.   [9] *Liverpool Mercury*, 25 May 1847.
[10] Neal, *Sectarian violence*, p. 94.

spread with terrifying rapidity and turned its victims into corpses even before they perished. A gastric fever, typhus's symptoms were a dry tongue shrunken to half its size and brown in the centre, thin and bloodless lips coated with sores, discoloured skin, and a putrid smell emanating from the sufferer as if the vital organs had begun to decay.[11] The Famine Irish, who seemed to bring death along with them, impelled an anecdote entitled 'The Irish are coming' from the *Liverpool Journal*:

A few years ago, the traveller, on entering Galway, read over the gate—'The Lord preserve us from the cruel O'Flahertys.' The terror then inspired in Irish cities has changed its character, and passed to English towns, for the modern prayer at the parish office is, 'Preserve us from the Irish paupers'.[12]

In the Registrar-General's report of 1847 Liverpool was rightly described as the 'cemetery of Ireland'.[13]

The Famine migration presented the greatest challenge—and opportunity—yet for the Liverpool Catholic Church. Already burdened by a poor and often unruly Irish population, the Church now faced thousands more destitute and typhus-ridden migrants from across the Irish Sea. Bishop George Brown (1840–56), never a lover of the Irish, expressed his disgust for the 'barbarians . . . all heaped together on mat straw in dark cellars—on straw wet with their own urine and liquid which has oozed out of privies'.[14] Despite their English distaste for Irish dirt and disease, however, Brown and his successor Alexander Goss (1856–72) considered these 'barbarians' as Catholic souls fit to be saved, not abandoned. In fiercely sectarian Liverpool, the Church viewed any Irish migrant who received the Catholic sacraments as one fewer person damned by Protestant heresy. The Church also realized that the Famine influx provided an army of Catholics which could aid its quest for respectability and influence. If it could transform the starving Irish masses into reputable Catholics, then the Church would have the power in numbers that it needed to build a forceful presence in Liverpool.

[11] Alban Hood, 'Fever in Liverpool', *North-West Catholic History*, XX (1993), pp. 17–18.

[12] *Liverpool Journal*, 29 Jan. 1848.

[13] Quoted in Frank Neal, *Black '47: Britain and the Famine Irish* (New York, 1998), p. 1.

[14] Leeds Diocesan Curia [hereafter L.D.C.], Bishop Brown to Bishop Briggs, 1 Sept. 1847.

Liverpool's Catholics also held deeply spiritual reasons for embracing the Famine Irish. English Catholic clergy and laity were influenced by Continental—particularly Italian—Catholic attitudes toward the poor. Many English Catholics were appalled by the urban squalor that had accompanied the Industrial Revolution and *laisser-faire* capitalism. To ease their guilt and anxiety over the 'condition of England question', they read Continental devotional literature which glorified the poverty of holy men and women such as St Elizabeth, St Francis, and St Vincent de Paul. Their reading in Continental theology elevated English Catholics' concern for the poor.[15] Increasingly, English Catholics saw the poor as holy men and women whose poverty enabled them to re-enact Christ's sacrificial sufferings. They understood that the 'Christ-like' poor needed their philanthropy, but they also realized that the poor sanctified the alms-givers' lives. Many English Catholics thus acquired a renewed respect for the 'holy poverty' of the multiplying number of Irish Catholic migrants in their midst.[16] Sheridan Gilley notes that 'the religious revival was independent of the Celtic influx, but required an outlet which the influx supplied.'[17] Inspired by the Catholic philanthropic revival, many Liverpool Catholics embraced the fallen, yet 'holy' Irish migrants.

For their part, Liverpool's priests unselfishly ministered to the Famine migrants. The need for priests during the Famine was overwhelming. During the height of the typhus epidemic, the president of Ushaw College (a Catholic seminary in county Durham) summoned future Liverpool Bishop Bernard O'Reilly and told him that he was to be ordained early. The president urged O'Reilly (an Irishman himself from county Meath) to welcome his opportunity to save Irish souls. He told O'Reilly to 'give thanks to God that He has privileged you so highly. Great is the grace He bestows for He calls you not merely to labour for Him but to die.'[18] The administration of the sacrament of last rites brought the priests into close contact with the disease-stricken migrants.

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[15] Sheridan Gilley, 'Heretic London, holy poverty and the Irish poor, 1830–1870', *Downside Review*, LXXXIX (1971), pp. 64–71; Robert Donovan Kent, 'The denominational character of English Catholic charitable effort', *Catholic Historical Review*, LXII (1976), p. 205.

[16] Gilley, 'Holy poverty', pp. 67–8.

[17] Ibid. p. 64; see also Kent, 'Denominational character', p. 208.

[18] Quoted from Hood, 'Fever in Liverpool', p. 17.

During the summer of 1847 Father Gregory Lane noted that 'I prepare for death about ten a day, I think, plus or minus, some few days it has been nearer to twenty.'[19] The *Liverpool Mercury* reported that in one house alone near St Patrick's chapel, 'there were, besides two dead bodies, twenty-eight cases of fever'. The newspaper added that it 'can scarcely, therefore, be expected that [Catholic priests] should escape the contagious influence of the pestilence which for some time has been raging with so much severity'.[20] Numerous priests, including O'Reilly, were stricken with the highly contagious disease while attending to the Irish. Ten Liverpool priests in fact died from the fever during 1847 alone.

The priests' deaths quickly became a source of Liverpool Catholic pride. In fact, several of the borough's churches displayed a silhouette depicting the ten priest 'martyrs'.[21] Fifty years after the epidemic, Monsignor James Nugent recalled at a requiem mass how the martyr priests had ventured 'into the dwellings of the poor, in attic and cellar, in the courts and alleys, where to breathe the fetid and pestilential atmosphere was death, they went fearlessly to give the Sacraments.'[22] Nugent's words underline how, even half a century later, Liverpool Catholics continued to congratulate themselves that ten of *their* priests had perished, while only one non-Catholic minister (a Unitarian) had died.[23] They boasted that the martyr priests had exhibited the Catholic Church's superior holiness.

Many lay Catholics joined the clergy in ministering to the migrants. Because they believed that almsgiving enriched both the giver and the receiver, Catholics sought to meet with the Catholic poor on a one-to-one basis. For example, the Brotherhood of St Vincent de Paul granted personalized, need-based relief to poor Catholics. St Vincent members visited the Catholic poor weekly to learn about their condition and to grant charity to those who were entitled to relief. The brotherhood also worked closely with the local Catholic church, because the majority of its financial resources derived from church-door collections. Moreover, the local clergy

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[19] Quoted from Gilbert Dolan, 'The fever year in Liverpool', *Downside Review*, XXIX (1910), p. 179.

[20] *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 July 1847.   [21] Hood, 'Fever in Liverpool', p. 21.

[22] Canon Bennett, *Father Nugent of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1949), p. 16.

[23] For a sense of the triumphalism among the Liverpool Catholic clergy at this time, see Neal, *Black '47*, pp. 144–6.

and respectable members of the Catholic community often wrote to
the brotherhood to recommend help for Catholics whom they
discovered in dire straits. Despite this clerical involvement, the
Brotherhood of St Vincent de Paul was decidedly a lay Catholic
organization. In fact, most St Vincent brothers were lower middle-
class and upper working-class Irishmen who were not too far from
poverty themselves; they would have expected the brotherhood to
assist them if they were ever down on their luck.[24]

The Brotherhood of St Vincent de Paul is only one example of the
locally-based outreach structure that the Liverpool Catholic Church
created to embrace the Irish poor and to claim them for the Church.
Along with St Vincent de Paul, other philanthropic institutions that
Liverpool Catholics supported by 1865 included a Catholic Bene-
volent Society, Catholic Blind Asylum, Boys' Refuge, St Elizabeth's
Institution for Unemployed Girls, Catholic Reformatory, Provident
Building Society, and Catholic orphanages for boys and girls.
Inspired by a combination of altruism, evangelism, and sectarian-
ism, Catholics 'claimed the depraved Irish as their particular
concern, their special mission for spiritual salvation and welfare
protection'.[25] Catholics thus created a comprehensive local relief
system to accommodate the Irish Catholic poor. From cradle to
grave, the Liverpool Catholic Church sought to meet every need of
its poor Irish congregation.[26] This social policy, imparted within a
self-enclosed network, underlined Catholic apartness and promoted
Catholic solidarity among both the philanthropists and the recipi-
ents of charity.[27]

Meanwhile, Liverpool Protestants experienced far less success in
their ministry to the city's Irish Catholics than Liverpool Catholics

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[24] John Davies, 'Parish charity: the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, St.
Mary's Highfield St., Liverpool, 1867–1868', *North-West Catholic History*, XVII
(1990), pp. 37–46; see also Gilley, 'Holy poverty', p. 72.

[25] John Belchem, 'Class, creed, and country: the Irish middle class in Victorian
Liverpool', in *The Irish in Victorian Britain: the local connection*, ed. Roger Swift and
Sheridan Gilley (Dublin, 1999), p. 205.

[26] Belchem, 'Class, creed, and country', p. 207; Martha Kanya-Forstner, 'Gender,
ethnicity and the politics of poverty: Irish women in Victorian Liverpool' (unpub.
Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Liverpool, 1997), chapters 6 and 7.

[27] John Belchem, 'The immigrant alternative: ethnic and sectarian mutuality
among the Liverpool Irish during the nineteenth century', in *The duty of discontent:
essays for Dorothy Thompson*, ed. O. Ashton, R. Fyson, and S. Roberts (London,
1995), p. 244.

did. Many Protestant denominations were reluctant to create an expansive parish charity effort based upon the Catholic model. In particular, they were unwilling to dedicate the time and the resources necessary to build a comprehensive welfare network. The struggles of the Ulster-born (county Down) Abraham Hume, a Liverpool Anglican vicar and social theorist, illustrate the troubles and frustrations that some English Protestants encountered when they attempted to compete against the impressive Catholic social welfare system. The Anglican Church's comparatively fragmented parish structure angered Hume, who especially condemned the richer parishes for doing little to help the poor. Comfortable in the suburbs, most wealthy Anglicans saw no reason to contaminate themselves by ministering to the Irish working class. Hume then turned to the Anglican middle and lower-middle classes for help, and he found enough volunteers to assist him in conducting a home mission for the Irish poor. Unfortunately for Hume, however, most Irish Catholics were suspicious of Protestant philanthropists and thus resisted the mission's endeavours.[28]

II

Irish Catholic migrants identified much more readily with Liverpool Catholicism's extensive social welfare system, because it was familiar and accessible to them. Nevertheless, before the Famine the Liverpool Catholic Church had been apprehensive about appointing Irish priests, since the authorities feared that they would promote Irish nationalism. In a letter of 1841 to Bishop John Briggs of Beverley, Bishop Brown confessed his reluctance to recruit Irish priests:

At present I am in very great straits, and what adds to my difficulties is that it is not considered prudent [by myself] to place more Irish priests among the people at present. This I only whisper to your Lordship, for the Country would be in a blaze if it were known that these are my sentiments.[29]

During and after the Famine, however, the Church could not receive enough Irish priests to minister to its exploding Irish population.

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[28] Belchem, 'Class, creed, and country', pp. 206–7; L. E. Bosworth, 'Home missionaries to the poor: Abraham Hume and spiritual destitution in Liverpool, 1847–84', *T.H.S.L.C.*, CXLIII (1994), pp. 57–83; Abraham Hume, *Missions at home: a clergyman's account of a portion of Liverpool* (London, 1850).

[29] L.D.C., Bishop Brown to Bishop Briggs, 5 May 1841. Brackets mine.

Bishop Brown wrote frequently to All Hallowe's College, a Dublin seminary, urging the superior to ordain candidates quickly, as 'my present wants are urgent'.[30] Irish priests soon became central figures in a distinctly Irish Catholic community that emerged in post-Famine Liverpool, especially its North End.[31] Here, the Irish poor contributed their pennies to build new chapels such as St Vincent's Norfolk Street, St Augustine's Great Howard Street, and St Joseph's Grosvenor Street, which catered to an almost entirely Irish population. At the opening of St Augustine's, Father Francis Murphy left no doubt for whom the church was constructed. He commented that 'their design was to erect a temple close to that spot where the heart-broken exile, flying from his own loved, but misgoverned land, just places his foot on a friendly shore.'[32] There were only four Liverpool Catholic chapels in 1832, but by 1855 the borough's Catholics boasted twelve.

The recruitment of Irish priests and the building of predominantly Irish Catholic chapels in the city helped to pass power within the Liverpool Church from wealthy gentry laymen to the clergy. Although the Famine proved an overwhelming challenge to the Church, the tragedy did enable it to acquire authority and influence. As a large and powerful institution, only the Church could mobilize the massive resources and manpower necessary to minister to the Irish poor adequately.

The Church sought to use its new-found clerical and institutional presence to claim priority over the pub and the secret society in Liverpool Irish lives. Some Protestants accused Catholics of building too lavishly, but Bishop Goss stressed that no price tag could be put upon salvation. He asserted that

it is not a question of food or raiment, but of the saving of immortal souls redeemed by the blood of the Son of God. Some say we are extravagant in our notions, and plainer buildings and less costly materials might do; then shall man dwell in a palace and God in a hovel?[33]

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[30] All Hallowe's College Missionary Correspondence, Liv 3, Bishop Brown to Revd Woodlock, 26 Nov. 1854.

[31] Colin Pooley, 'The residential segregation of migrant communities in mid-Victorian Liverpool', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, new series, II (1977), p. 373.

[32] *Liverpool Journal*, 19 Feb. 1848.

[33] *Northern Press and Catholic Times*, 9 Feb. 1861, Lenten Pastoral of Bishop Goss.

The bishop might have added that these beautiful churches brought respectability to the Church and to its predominantly Irish membership. Church leaders never lost an opportunity to stress that Catholics were respectable, moderate people. The *Catholic Institute Magazine* noted that 'refinement is not the privilege of class, or classes, but an attainment within the reach of all.'[34] Ironically, the Catholic Institute, a Liverpool Catholic secondary school founded in 1856, was well beyond the reach of the Irish poor. Nevertheless, the Church knew that in order to elevate its own standing it needed to raise the standards of its lowest common denominator: the Irish.

Father James Nugent attempted to improve the public image of the Liverpool Irish by constructing an Irish Catholic alternative to Liverpool's divisive St Patrick's Day parades. Prior to the Famine, the Liverpool Irish had celebrated St Patrick's Day by parading from Williamson Square through Liverpool's North End via Scotland Road. These processions, however, often had ended in a working-class street war between Irish Catholics and English and Irish Protestants. Liverpool's St Patrick's Day parades and their Orange equivalents during the summer were sectarian flashpoints anticipated by the working classes and feared by the Church.[35] As a result, in 1845 the Church banned Catholics from participating in the parade.

During the 1850s, however, Nugent began a tradition of celebrating St Patrick's Day 'soirées' in which Irish music, dancing, and lectures would keep the Irish sober and off the streets. Nugent was Liverpool's undisputed master of promoting Irish Catholic participation in Church-sponsored events. He angered some Protestants for inviting Irish nationalist speakers and 'professional agitators' like A. M. Sullivan of *The Nation* to 'talk treason and unsettle people's minds'.[36] Nugent knew, however, that only prominent and patriotic Irishmen could keep the Irish away from the pub on St Patrick's Day. He assured critics, moreover, that 'the moment that I allow either party or political purposes to enter into [this soirée], I shall think myself unworthy to occupy that chair'.[37] A sure sign that Nugent was true to his word was that Bishop Goss, always suspicious of Irish nationalism, supported Nugent's soirées wholeheartedly. In

[34] *Catholic Institute Magazine*, June 1856, p. 260.
[35] Neal, *Sectarian violence*, pp. 117–18, 128–9.
[36] *The Porcupine*, 22 Mar. 1862.
[37] *Northern Press and Catholic Times*, 22 Mar. 1862.

a letter of 1856 the bishop exclaimed that these soirées promoted the respectability and refinement that he sought:

> The Irish people are becoming everyday more alive to the importance of their position. Nothing can evidence it better than the peaceable manner in which the festival day of their patron saint was observed on Sunday. In a town like this, still imbued with the old Tory principles, respectability is power. And if we can only induce the people to be peaceable and sober, I have no doubt that they will rise as many have already arisen, by their natural ability and the fertility of their mental resources, to the first position of this once orange-ridden town.[38]

For Goss and Nugent, St Patrick's Day soirées under the auspices of the Catholic Church were far more palatable than drunken, violent processions.

Despite the success of St Patrick's Day soirées, Irish 'leakage' from regular Catholic practice remained worrisome to the Liverpool Catholic Church. Ireland's post-Famine 'devotional revolution', during which most Irish became practising Catholics, did not seem to affect Liverpool's Irish Catholic migrants.[39] Most of them left Ireland before the Irish Church's reforms could have influenced them. Moreover, it is debatable whether this 'revolution', which originated among middle-class farmers, could have changed the behaviour of the predominantly indigent migrants who flooded Liverpool's shores during this period. Whatever the explanation, the fact remains that attendance at Mass in post-Famine Liverpool resembled pre-Famine figures in Ireland: in 1855 only 48 per cent of Liverpool's Catholics attended Mass regularly, falling to 43 per cent in 1865.[40] As a result the Liverpool Catholic Church believed that it needed to create a devotional revolution of its own that served the Irish poor.

In order to spark an Irish Catholic return to the Church, Bishop Goss urged his clergy to embrace Irish migrants into the Church from the moment they docked at Liverpool. He wanted to ensure that Catholics reached the Irish before Protestant proselytizers did. Meanwhile, the bishop threatened damnation to Irish people who did not place their Catholic loyalties before everything. For instance,

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[38] Lancs. R.O., RCLV, box 14, Bishop Goss to James Whitty, 19 Mar. 1856.

[39] Emmet Larkin, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland', in idem, *The historical dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Washington DC, 1976), pp. 57–89.

[40] W. J. Lowe, 'The Lancashire Irish and the Catholic Church, 1846–71: the social dimension', *Irish Historical Studies*, XXIV (1976), pp. 144–5.

he repeatedly condemned mixed marriages during his tenure. Before Goss conducted a church visitation—an examination, usually every year, of all aspects of a local district church, including its books, vestments, presbytery, and school—he required the clergy to fill out a detailed questionnaire about their church. One section of the questionnaire was devoted largely to asking the number, religion, and reasons for mixed marriages. At the end of this section, the priest was asked to submit his theory why some Catholics were marrying outside his church.[41] One can imagine the priests' trepidation as they sought to give an explanation that would satisfy the demanding Bishop Goss.

Goss also fretted over Irish Catholics falling into Protestant heresy while they toiled in the workhouse. As with mixed marriages, for Goss, knowledge of workhouse attendance was power. The Church faced stiff resistance from Protestant authorities who wanted to keep the Catholic clergy out of the workhouse. In fact, Catholic priests were not formally authorized to instruct Catholics in the workhouse until 1859. Until then, they were allowed to minister there only at the request of the inmates. It was thus crucial for the Church to know the number of Catholics present in the workhouse at all times in order to minister to them effectively.[42] Goss provided a set of instructions for relatives, sponsors, and friends of poor Catholic children who entered the workhouse. The bishop emphasized that 'in case of any poor child being under the necessity of going to the workhouse, the priest of the district should be immediately informed.' Moreover, 'every child should, if possible, be accompanied to the workhouse by a Catholic, who can there state the religion of the child and that of its parents.' Without a Catholic in attendance to supervise registration, Goss worried that the Liverpool poor-law authorities would enroll Catholic children as Protestants.[43]

Goss also feared Protestant education, which he considered too liberal and secular for Catholic children. In a letter of 1856 to the Liverpool clergy he exhorted priests 'to resist incessantly the efforts

[41] Peter Doyle, 'A Victorian bishop on visitation', *North-West Catholic History*, XII (1971), p. 92.

[42] Sheridan Gilley, 'Irish Catholicism in Britain, 1880–1939', in *The Church and the people: Catholics and their Church in Britain, c. 1880–1939*, ed. Stephen Fielding (Warwick, 1988), p. 20; Brian Plumb, 'Catholicism in the workhouse', *North-West Catholic History*, XX (1993), pp. 1–11.

[43] St Joseph's College, Upholland, Bishop Goss's Materials, 'Placard' (1850s).

which are made by the enemies of the faith to seduce Catholic children to attend heterodox schools'. Dismissing Protestant taunts that the Church feared 'the enlightenment of the nineteenth century', Goss maintained that 'it is better that children should be ignorant of all secular knowledge, than that they should be wise into destruction'. He called for additional Catholic schools 'to protect the fold of Christ from the great enemy of man'.[44]

Goss, however, was most adamant that the Irish participate fully and devoutly in the Mass and the sacraments—the central rituals of Catholic life. He criticized the Irish at St Nicholas's chapel for going to an early Mass 'and then spending the rest of Sunday on amusement'.[45] He suspected that they considered attendance at Mass a chore to be quickly performed, not an event upon which they centred their day. Goss blamed his priests for Irish laziness as much as he did the Irish themselves. In 1859 he issued a circular to the clergy in which he lamented that 'I have been exceedingly pained to learn that several instances have occurred in which persons have died without the sacraments' because priests were on holiday. He emphasized that the Mother Church's sacramental embrace must be complete, from baptism to last rites.[46] Overall, Goss sought to acquire clerical control over liturgical life in order to ensure maximum participation by the Irish, as well as the utmost orthodoxy. He even insisted that priests must approve the godparents whom Irish migrants choose for confirmation, because he worried that 'their sponsors often emigrate to Australia or America whilst they are yet young'.[47] Where the Irish were concerned, Goss left nothing to chance.

III

The Church, however, was not solely reliant upon clerical vigilance. The Catholic hierarchy also urged the formation of more religious

[44] St Joseph's College, Upholland, Bishop Goss's Materials, 'A letter addressed to the clergy of Liverpool on the dangers which threaten the religion of the children of the poor in the parochial establishments of the town', 25 Feb. 1856.

[45] Lancs. R.O., RCLV, box 43, third visitation, St Nicholas's, Liverpool, 11 Dec. 1864.

[46] Ibid. box 14, circular, 12 Feb. 1859.

[47] St Joseph's College, Upholland, Bishop Goss's Materials, 'Letter'.

societies for lay people, or confraternities, as a means of encouraging Irish participation in the Church. At a conference of English Catholic bishops held in 1854, the bishops agreed that 'establishing confraternities with indulgences for those who induce others to attend Mass' was essential to stopping Irish leakage from the Church.[48] Bishop Brown and then Bishop Goss took this resolution to heart: both men promoted confraternities which would generate Irish Catholic participation in the Church.

During the 1850s and 1860s the Catholic Young Men's Society emerged as the foremost confraternity for Liverpool's Irish working-class men. Father Richard Baptist O'Brien founded the society in 1849 in the upper room of a small cottage in Limerick, Ireland.[49] The spirited curate of St Mary's church in Limerick, O'Brien was renowned for his passionate support of O'Connellite politics and for his unsuccessful attempts to reunite the Repeal Association and Young Ireland.[50] He also proved himself to be an outstanding organizer and promoter of the Catholic Young Men's Society. By delivering speeches about the society throughout Ireland and Britain, he assisted it in expanding from its humble beginnings to form hundreds of branches in Ireland, Britain, Australia, and even South Africa within two decades.[51] In 1853 the first of Liverpool's many Catholic Young Men's Society branches formed at St Mary's church. Because of its massive Irish population, Liverpool soon became the society's epicentre in England. In fact, O'Brien placed the society's main governing body for Britain, the Central Council of the General Union of the Young Men's Societies of Great Britain, in Liverpool.

The Catholic Young Men's Society devoted itself to moulding Irish working men into pious, educated, responsible Catholics—the ideal Irish Catholics, according to the Church. Father Sheridan, an Irishman himself, was the first spiritual director of Liverpool's St Mary's Young Men's Society. He acknowledged that 'unless Catholics as a class would better themselves, and particularly unless Irish Catholics would work, . . . they should become the voluntary slaves

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[48] L.D.C., 1917, 'Report of resolutions adopted at the meeting held in London by the bishops of England on the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd of April 1854', point IV.

[49] National Library of Ireland [hereafter N.L.I.], MS. 28870, 'Notes by John Jeffrey Healy on Rev. Richard Baptist O'Brien'.

[50] M. J. Egan, *Life of Dean O'Brien* (Dublin, 1949), pp. 27–9.

[51] Ibid. pp. 119–25.

of the age'.[52] To avoid Irish Catholic enslavement by their (generally English Protestant) social superiors, the Young Men's Society aimed to train an educated labouring élite. In its annual report, the society claimed that 'we seek the perfect man. We endeavour to raise him intellectually, to advance him socially, and to give to progress both intellectually and socially the impulse and security of religion.'[53]

If the new chapels served as the body of Irish Catholic associational culture in Liverpool, the Catholic Young Men's Society was its soul. By 1860 eight C.Y.M.S. branches existed in Liverpool, totalling nearly 2,700 members. The society attracted the Irish poor because of the comprehensive services which it provided. Most branches supported a library, evening classes, and a funeral fund. The *Northern Press* marvelled that the C.Y.M.S.

affords at once a club-room, a reading-room, and a literary institute for its members . . . The wealthiest aristocrat of the land cannot have more intellectual enjoyments by resorting to the Carlton, than the working man of Liverpool who frequents the room of a Young Men's Society.[54]

The society also served as a meeting place for the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the Christian Doctrine Confraternity, tontine societies, benefit clubs, and building societies. All of these groups promoted (along with the C.Y.M.S.) 'those habits of industry and frugality without which the great majority of our people cannot expect to raise themselves'.[55] For Liverpool's Irish Catholic men, their Catholic associational life revolved around the Young Men's Society.

The Young Men's Society supported recreational activities which instilled Catholic pride and solidarity in its members. For instance, it took Irish youths on excursions to Catholic holy sites like Holywell and Furness Abbey, where they recalled the heroism of past English and Irish Catholics.[56] It also sponsored religious retreats, lasting a week, which consisted of morning Masses from 5.30 until 9, evening devotions, sermons, confession, and Sunday communion. The *Northern Press* depicted a 'most edifying' communion service at a retreat in which 'the whole of the members of the Young Men's Society having marched to the church, occupied the centre, wearing

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[52] Liv. R.O., 'Report of the second general conference of the Young Men's Societies of Great Britain' (13 Oct. 1861), p. 5.
[53] Ibid.   [54] *Northern Press and Catholic Times*, 10 Mar. 1860.
[55] Ibid.   [56] Ibid. 27 July 1861; 26 July 1862.

emblems or scarfs of their separate guild, and, in respectful adoration of the Holy Mysteries, advanced to the Table of the Lord.'[57] Evidently the Liverpool Catholic Young Men's Society effectively used Catholic pageantry to display the respectability of its members. In this instance, the society used a procession, uniforms, and ceremony to show that it consisted of disciplined, devout, and reputable Catholics.

The C.Y.M.S. demanded strict adherence to its objects of 'mutual improvement, and the extension of the spirit of religion and brotherly love'.[58] For example, its rules required every member to go to confession at least once a month. Any who failed to do so was to be 'counselled by the spiritual director'. Every member was further required to attend the weekly meetings at least once a month. The meetings were opportunities to instil religious habits into the members; all of these affairs commenced by reciting the 'Little Office of Our Lady' and closed with singing 'Faith of our Fathers'.[59] As the description of the Eucharist service during the retreat indicated, each society branch was divided into several guilds, which 'formed a smaller society within the greater one'. Each guild adopted a patron saint, 'on whose festival it approaches Holy Communion, and whose virtues it endeavours to imitate'. Interestingly, the guilds were separated either according to members' occupations—similar to a medieval guild—or to where they lived.[60] This arrangement forced society members to identify everything, including their work and home lives, with Catholicism. The society's motto, 'For the Greater Glory of God', said it all.[61]

The society's rules stressed that 'politics and all political discussions and tendencies shall be strictly prohibited.'[62] Father O'Brien wanted the C.Y.M.S. to mould Catholics who would place their religion above all secular concerns. Not surprisingly, then, the society's rejection of politics also included Irish nationalist politics. The president of its central council, Lewis L. Ferdinand, asserted that 'the Young Men's Society, although originating in Ireland and embracing within its holy brotherhood half a million of Irishmen, is not national; and I need not tell you that it is not political—in its aim and object it is eminently

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[57] Ibid. 13 Feb. 1869.

[58] Richard O'Brien, *The rules and office of the Catholic Young Men's Society* (Liverpool, 1862), p. 3.

[59] Ibid. pp. 3–5.   [60] Ibid. p. 9.

[61] Ibid. p. 25.   [62] Ibid.

Catholic, practically Catholic, and essentially religious.'[63] C.Y.M.S.
leaders reasoned that the Irish poor needed education before they
could become politicians, a learning process which took time.
O'Brien insisted that 'if we are to make a public opinion, or to have
one, we must educate our people.'[64] He hoped that the Young Men's
Society would shape the Irish into docile Catholics.

IV

While the Catholic Young Men's Society catered to the Liverpool
Irish poor, the Catholic Club was the most important group for the
English and Irish Catholic middle classes. Founded in 1843 as a
successor to the Protector Society, the Catholic Club's goals were 'to
promote unity of purpose, energy in practical charity, and good
fellowship in principle, amongst the Catholics in Liverpool'.[65] Like
the C.Y.M.S., the Catholic Club sought to defend and to promote
Catholic interests while avoiding all provocative political issues—
such as Irish nationalism—unrelated to Catholic concerns. For the
next three decades, the Liverpool Catholic Club was the Church's lay
mouthpiece. The club thus considered it imperative to promote
Catholic respectability and moderation.

Even the Catholic Club, however, revealed signs of Liverpool
Catholicism's post-Famine Hibernicization. An Irish Catholic Club
was established in Liverpool during the early 1850s, although the
group assured the Catholic Club that it was founded 'not in any
spirit of antagonism, but to look after the cause of Irish Catholics,
who, during the famine years, flocked so largely to this port'.[66]
Regardless of its intentions, the Irish Catholic Club reflected the
growing numbers and influence of the Liverpool Irish.

James Whitty, a Wexford-born merchant who came to Liverpool
in 1848 to establish a woollen drapery business, soon emerged as the
Irish Catholic Club's leading figure.[67] Whitty 'had a desire to be

[63] *Northern Press and Catholic Times*, 7 Apr. 1860.

[64] Liv. R.O., 'Report of second general conference', p. 11.

[65] *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 Dec. 1843.

[66] *Lancashire Free Press and Catholic Times* (later *Northern Press and Catholic Times*), 8 Oct. 1859.

[67] C. D. Watkinson, 'The Liberal Party on Merseyside' (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Liverpool, 1967), appendix D, p. 568.

acquainted with his fellow Catholics in the town', but he considered the Catholic Club too aristocratic. He blamed its reputedly upper-class membership for the 'negligence and apathy in the way in which Catholic affairs were conducted'. Whitty asserted that 'in the bone and sinew of the middle classes consisted the activity of the Catholic body', not in the upper class.[68] He hoped that the Irish Catholic Club would attract middle-class merchants like himself in larger numbers than the Catholic Club had done.

Despite Whitty's claims that the Irish Catholic Club represented the middle classes while the Catholic Club drew on the upper class, in reality both clubs were middle class.[69] Whitty and Richard Sheil, one of the Catholic Club's founders, were both Irish-born, middle-class merchants. At their deaths, Sheil left £30,000, Whitty £14,000. Although Sheil's estate may have seemed 'aristocratic' to Whitty, neither fortune could approach the earnings of a merchant prince such as the Unitarian William Rathbone, who left nearly £235,000 when he died.[70] Whitty and Sheil represented the median income for members of both clubs. Both men were quite successful, but neither was part of the Liverpool merchant aristocracy or the Lancashire gentry.

The social similarity between the two groups led to a parallel attitude toward politics: intervene moderately, and primarily to promote or to defend Catholic interests. For instance, both Whitty and Sheil worked in local politics to protect Catholics from Protestant discrimination. Sheil served on Liverpool borough council, where he fought for Catholic rights, especially in education. When English Catholics applied for state aid for Catholic schools in 1847, Sheil helped to organize local Catholic support for English Catholicism's newly formed central organization, the Catholic Poor School Committee.[71] Whitty was a member of the Liverpool select vestry from 1853 to 1865, and a borough councillor from 1863 to 1873.[72] 'Into the task of seeing justice done to Catholics', *The Porcupine* noted, 'Mr. James Whitty threw his whole strength.'[73]

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[68] *Northern Press and Catholic Times*, 23 Oct. 1861.

[69] Belchem, 'Class, creed, and country', p. 19.

[70] Watkinson, 'Liberal Party', pp. 557, 561, 568.

[71] See 'Anglo-Catholicus', *A letter, addressed to Richard Sheil, esq., chairman of the meeting of Roman Catholics, holden in Liverpool on April the 28th to consider the education grant* (Liverpool, 1847).

[72] Watkinson, 'Liberal Party', p. 568.   [73] *The Porcupine*, 28 Apr. 1866.

Whitty defended the rights of the Irish Catholic poor in both the vestry and the council. Most notably, he lobbied for Catholic priests to be allowed to minister to Catholics in the workhouse and the gaol. Politicians out of duty, not ambition, Sheil and Whitty used the political arena to improve Catholicism's standing in Liverpool. Both men trod carefully when Catholic concerns were not directly at stake, however, because they did not want Protestants to consider them too aggressive in the political arena.

Sheil's and Whitty's response to anti-Catholicism epitomized their policy of appeasement in politics. Following the restoration of the English Catholic hierarchy in 1850 by Pope Pius IX, Lord John Russell published the 'Durham Letter' denouncing papal aggression. Later, Russell passed the Ecclesiastical Titles Act which prohibited Roman Catholics from assuming territorial church titles.[74] Russell's angry response to the Catholic hierarchy's restoration ignited Liverpool (and much of the country) into an anti-Catholic frenzy.[75] For instance, at Stockport in 1852 fierce anti-Catholic riots broke out in response to a Catholic procession.[76] In Liverpool, Sheil expressed shock and dismay at the city's backlash against the restoration of the hierarchy. 'We on our part are perfectly amazed', he exclaimed in a letter to a business associate. He added that 'we never believed that we had the power to do half so much mischief, were we ever so well inclined, still less did we believe that the people with whom we are in constant daily intercourse, entertained towards us so deadly a hatred'.[77] Sheil was hurt that Protestants whom he considered colleagues still did not consider Catholics respectable and upstanding members of the community. It appeared that many Protestants continued to deem Catholics a foreign threat to Britain.

Liverpool's Catholic élite quickly sought to reassure Protestants

[74] Joseph L. Altholz, 'The political behavior of English Catholics, 1850–67', *Journal of British Studies*, IV (1964), p. 93.

[75] E. R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (New York, 1968), pp. 52–79; Robert J. Klaus, *The pope, the Protestants, and the Irish: papal aggression and anti-Catholicism in mid-nineteenth-century England* (New York, 1987); Walter L. Arnstein, *Protestant versus Catholic in mid-Victorian England: Mr. Newdegate and the nuns* (Columbia, MO, 1982).

[76] Pauline Milward, 'The Stockport riots of 1852: a study of anti-Catholic and anti-Irish sentiment', in *The Irish in the Victorian city*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Roger Swift (London, 1985), pp. 207–24.

[77] N.L.I., MS. 32483A, Richard H. Sheil to 'Oscar', 10 Oct. 1850.

that they harboured no treasonous intentions. In November 1850 many of Liverpool's leading Protestants called a public meeting to condemn the restoration of the hierarchy. Several Catholic priests and dignitaries, including Sheil and Whitty, attended the meeting. When the priests appeared upon the platform, some Protestants greeted them with the cry 'The Philistines are coming' and 'No Popery'. As the leaders of their respective Catholic clubs, Sheil and Whitty took it upon themselves to soothe Protestant rancour. Sheil assured the angry crowd that 'Roman Catholics themselves would allow of no such interference in the affairs of their country; that they were as jealous as any class of their fellow subjects were. All they asked was equality . . . no man had a right to interfere with the religion of another.'[78] During this potentially dangerous period, Liverpool's Catholic leaders wanted to assure Protestants of their respectability and loyalty. The rapid disintegration of Protestant paranoia over the restoration of the hierarchy—the Ecclesiastical Titles Act was never implemented—revealed that in this case they largely succeeded.

The common social stature and political attitudes of the Catholic Club and the Irish Catholic Club led to their merger in 1859. The newer and more vibrant Irish Catholic Club had squeezed both members and energy from its older cousin, until Sheil lamented that the Catholic Club was 'almost mythical'.[79] To highlight the Catholic Club's weakness and to plead for Irish Catholic Club assistance, Sheil complained to Whitty that 'the entire task of collecting subscriptions for the maintenance of the Catholic Chaplain to the Industrial Schools has been allowed to fall upon me' by the 'now inanimate Club'.[80] Whitty and the Irish Catholic Club agreed to aid Sheil, and in the process absorbed the Catholic Club. In 1860 the Irish Catholic Club changed its name back to the Catholic Club because 'many English Catholics fancy themselves excluded from its ranks', although several Englishmen were in fact members.[81] Catholic Club members realized that any public identification of Catholicism

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[78] *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 Nov. 1850; see N. J. Kirk, 'Ethnicity, class and popular Toryism, 1850–70', in *Hosts, immigrants and minorities: historical responses to newcomers in British society, 1870–1914*, ed. K. Lunn (Folkestone, 1980), pp. 73–7.

[79] N.L.I., Sheil to Canon Newsham, 30 Oct. 1855.

[80] N.L.I., Sheil to the President of the Irish Catholic Club [James Whitty], 19 Dec. 1854.

[81] *Lancashire Free Press and Catholic Times*, 8 Oct. 1859.

with Ireland in a body which supposedly represented all Liverpool Catholics would rankle with those English Catholics who resented the thousands of Irish Catholics who had flooded Liverpool over the previous two decades. Moreover, one suspects that club members feared that Protestants would see an 'Irish Catholic Club' as a confirmation that Liverpool Catholicism was the domain of the dirty, drunken, violent Irish.[82]

V

The Liverpool Catholic hierarchy joined the Catholic Club in attempting to de-emphasize the Church's increasingly Irish identity. This was not difficult for Bishops Brown and Goss: both were Lancastrians, respectively from Clifton and Ormskirk, who took great pride in the county's recusant traditions. Goss once asserted that 'we owe to the Catholic gentry of this land, and more especially those of this county, much of that Catholicity that now remains here'.[83] Goss was so proud an English Catholic that he often resisted the Vatican's interventions into what he considered strictly English affairs.[84] For example, in a circular to several other bishops, Goss once complained that Archbishop Manning occupied an 'anomalous position' by serving the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide at the Vatican and 'as our own Archbishop'.[85] The bishop always resented what he considered excessive Roman influence within the English Catholic Church.

English Catholic gentlemen from the districts near Liverpool, such as Nicholas Blundell, Thomas Weld-Blundell, and Robert Gerard, also embodied this recusant identity. Moreover, they exemplified the Catholic respectability and moderation which the Church, the Catholic Club, and the Catholic Young Men's Society

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[82] For an excellent recent review of anti-Irish sentiment in modern Britain, see Donald MacRaild, *Irish migrants in modern Britain, 1750–1922* (New York, 1999), pp. 155–84. For a fine look at Liverpool's long history of sectarianism, see Neal, *Sectarian violence*.

[83] *Liverpool Daily Post*, 1 Nov. 1865.

[84] Peter Doyle, 'Bishop Goss and the importance of being English', in *Religion and national identity*, ed. Stuart Mews (*Studies in Church History*, XVIII, Oxford, 1982); R. J. Schiefen, 'Anglo-Gallicanism in nineteenth-century England', *Catholic Historical Review*, LXIII (1977), pp. 14–44.

[85] Lancs. R.O., RCLV, box 14, 'Circular to Several Bishops', 7 Apr. 1862.

wanted its Irish members to practise. The Blundells and the Gerards were active landlords and devout Catholics, but they enjoyed remaining on the periphery, exercising their power from the safe distance of their rural estates. For them, being active Catholics meant appearing for élite social and philanthropic functions like the Catholic Bazaar and the Catholic Charity Ball. The Bazaar and the Charity Ball became two of the leading events on Liverpool's social calendar, venues where the Catholic gentry could see each other and be seen, and mingle with the Catholic middle classes in the name of philanthropy. One commentator sneered that at the Catholic Charity Ball, 'the snobbishness, the offensive vulgarity, the aping of "the real aristocracy", which is so frequently exhibited by our local parvenus, is most painfully apparent'.[86] Most aspiring Catholics, however, eagerly looked forward to these rare opportunities to socialize with the Catholic gentry.

The English Catholic gentry taught the Catholics who 'aped' them that secrecy and moderation ensured Catholic survival in a militantly Protestant city. For instance, much to Bishop Goss's frustration, several Catholic gentlemen sought to maintain private chapels. The bishop tried to convince landowners like Nicholas Blundell that in the revitalized English Catholic Church—where the clergy, not the gentry, held the reins of power—he must approve all such chapels.[87] On his routine visitations of rural parishes, Goss also found special 'penal' tabernacles that recalled an earlier period when Protestants had sought to destroy all signs of Catholic activity. The bishop reported that the tabernacle at the remote Lancashire parish of Great Eccleston 'can be sunk by a spring into the body of the altar, the exterior case remaining, so that if the door were forced by the profane the interior appears empty'.[88] The Great Eccleston tabernacle revealed, however, that the recusant siege mentality was still strong in some areas of rural Lancashire.

In Liverpool, miles from the Catholic gentry's landed estates, recusant reclusiveness also flourished among the city's Catholic élite. Many members of the Liverpool Catholic middle classes considered the English Catholic gentry the embodiment of recusant decency and respectability. They learned from the gentry that the

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[86] *Liverpool Daily Post*, 23 Oct. 1867.

[87] Peter Doyle, 'Bishop Goss and the gentry: the control of private chapels', *North-West Catholic History*, XII (1985), pp. 6–14.

[88] Lancs. R.O., RCLV, box 43, Great Eccleston visitation, 6 Nov. 1856.

best way to coexist with the Protestant majority was to take a wary, defensive posture which avoided controversy. For instance, Peter Bidwell, a corn importer of Irish descent, reminded Catholic Club members of its policy:

The Catholic Club was formed not for the purpose of promoting religious or political strife in the great commercial town, but with the view of preventing such sad results by wisely protecting Catholic interests and watching over our political rights. In carrying out this object, it has been our desire to give offence to no party, and from our position as citizens to be moderate in all our acts . . . Moderation, firmness of purpose, and unity of action, should be characteristics of the Catholic body, and if they exist at all, they should be prominent within it.[89]

Bidwell's comments underscored the Catholic Club's intention to give no offence in order to prove that Liverpool Catholics were loyal and trustworthy British citizens.

VI

By the early 1860s, however, the Catholic Club's moderation often translated into apathy. One Liverpool Catholic complained that 'the Catholic Club has of late been either sly or asleep—either doing its work quietly, or not doing any work at all'. He added that during the last year, 'it has held only half of its compulsory meetings and not done a quarter of the good of which it is capable'.[90] To some Liverpool Catholics, the Catholic Club, Liverpool's only representative Catholic body, had become more style than substance.

Irish nationalists voiced the strongest criticisms of the Catholic Club. They had gradually realized that the Catholic Club identified more with the English recusant tradition than with Irish Catholic attitudes and aspirations. The *Northern Press* became the mouthpiece for Liverpool's frustrated Irish nationalists. In 1861 the paper noted that 'the club has been slow in its operations, and works in a very circumscribed sphere; it lacks vigour, having drunk in too deep a draught of English caution, and that at the sacrifice of Irish zeal and hopeful trust'.[91] Many Liverpool Irish understood that the Catholic Club, though it contained many Irish members, was too

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[89] *Northern Press and Catholic Times*, 22 Mar. 1862.
[90] Ibid. 1 Feb. 1862.   [91] Ibid. 23 Mar. 1861.

moderate—too 'English'—in its policies to represent the city's Irish nationalists effectively.

Disgusted with the Catholic Club, some of Liverpool's Irish nationalists began to meet for purely nationalist reasons. One such group, the Liverpool Irish Patriotic Society, formed in 1862 and was led by the Liverpool Irish barrister Andrew Commins. The society's circular for that year indirectly criticized the Catholic Club for not supporting Irish nationalism. It stated that 'it is believed that a large number of persons, of Irish birth and parentage, resident in Liverpool, have long felt the want of an associated body capable of giving expression to their opinions as Irishmen, apart from religious sectarianism, and of embodying for useful purposes their feelings and aspirations for the welfare of their country—the idol of their hopes—Ireland'.[92] The Liverpool Irish Patriotic Society sought to recruit all Irishmen willing to place Irish nationalist concerns above Catholic issues. The society placed country before creed because the Catholic Club had proven itself too timid to fight for the Irish nationalist cause.

Non-sectarian nationalist groups posed a threat to Catholic moderates. Catholic moderates—English and Irish alike—preferred Irish Catholics who were Catholics first and Irish nationalists second. For instance, Father Kenrick, an English Catholic priest at St Patrick's chapel, asserted in 1860 that 'we should all cultivate a Catholic spirit, and not honour great men because of their being English or Irish, but because of their being Catholic.'[93] The Ribbon, Young Ireland, National Brotherhood of St Patrick, and Fenian movements, however, scorned the Catholic Church's faltering support of Irish nationalism. As a result, they questioned the effectiveness of a religion-first policy as a means of achieving Ireland's political goals.[94]

By 1865 a generation of middle-class Irish Catholic leaders who embraced these nationalist movements was emerging in Liverpool.

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[92] Ibid. 31 May 1862.   [93] Ibid. 28 Jan. 1860.

[94] For the Ribbon and the Young Ireland movements in Liverpool, see John Belchem, 'Liverpool in the year of revolution: the political and associational culture of the Irish immigrant community in 1848', in *Popular politics, riot, and labour: essays in Liverpool history, 1790–1940*, ed. John Belchem (Liverpool, 1992), pp. 68–95. For the National Brotherhood of St Patrick, see Gerard Moran, 'Nationalists in exile: the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick in Lancashire, 1861–5', in *The Local Dimension*, ed. Swift and Gilley, pp. 212–35. For the Fenians in Liverpool, see W. J. Lowe, 'Lancashire Fenianism, 1864–71', *T.H.S.L.C.*, CXXVI (1977), pp. 156–85.

These Irish nationalists were more aggressive politically than the Catholic hierarchy, the English Catholic gentry, the Catholic Club, and the Catholic Young Men's Society had been. Moreover, they placed Irish nationalist goals above the Liverpool Catholic Church's concerns. The next two decades would witness a confrontation between Irish nationalists and Catholic moderates for control of Liverpool Catholicism's political agenda and associational life.