

edited by
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HOLY SEE'S ARCHIVES AS
SOURCES FOR AMERICAN
HISTORY





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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

AAES	Archivio storico della Seconda Sezione della Segreteria di Stato, Archivio degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari
AAS	Archives of the Archdiocese of Sydney
AASMSU	Associated Archives St. Mary's Seminary and University
ACDF	Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede
AF	Archivio Filicchi
AGC	Archivio Generale dei Cappuccini
AGOFM-Storico	Archivio Storico Generale dell'Ordine dei Frati Minori
APF	Archivio di Propaganda Fide
ARSI	Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
NARA	(U.S.) National Archives and Records Administration
PICRA	Pontifical Irish College, Rome, Archives
SOCG	Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali
TRC	The Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson University
TRP	Theodore Roosevelt Papers, 1759-1993, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division
UNDA	University of Notre Dame Archives

PREFACE

Kathleen Sprows Cummings

I am very pleased to introduce this book, which had its origins in a Seminar I convened in June 2014 in collaboration with my co-editor, Professor Matteo Sanfilippo, and one of the volume's contributors, Professor John McGreevy. The seminar focused on transatlantic approaches to writing U.S. Catholic history, with a view toward encouraging scholars of U.S. Catholicism to utilize the Vatican Secret Archives and other Roman repositories. To that end, seminar participants visited seven archives at the Holy See and throughout Rome for hands-on workshops exploring relevant sources. Contributors to this volume led several of these visits. Professor Luca Codignola expertly guided the group through the Archives of Propaganda Fide, and Professor Giovanni Pizzorusso shepherded us through the Archives of the Holy Office. Professor Sanfilippo arranged most of the other visits, and he, Professor Pizzorusso, and Professor Codignola also delivered stimulating lectures to the group. I am grateful to them, as well as Professor Daniele Fiorentino, for their in-depth and illuminating presentations, revised versions of which appear in this volume.

The Italian scholars who study Catholics in the United States have been mining Roman archives throughout their careers. For me, Professor McGreevy, and other contemporary U.S.-based scholars, however, this represents a relatively new enterprise and, to a certain extent, an embrace of the approach adopted by the earliest generations of U.S. Catholic historians. Most of them were, for the most part, clerics or members of religious congregations. Many had either studied in Europe or had close connections there. They were conversant in multiple European languages, and well understood the transatlantic

flows of people, ideas, devotions, and beliefs that shaped the church in the United States. By the 1960s and 1970s, however, the prominence of the American exceptionalist paradigm, combined with the advent of the new social history, led historians of the U.S. church to adopt a tighter nationalist frame. As a result these historians were, in the aggregate, often less interested in identifying connections between the United States and the Holy See, and less inclined to harness the potential of Roman archival repositories. In the late 1990s U.S. scholar Peter R. D'Agostino emerged as a fervent critic of this approach. His own scholarship, focused on Italian Americans, was rooted in a deep awareness of the importance of Roman sources for illuminating the experience in the United States. D'Agostino's award-winning book, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), relied on Roman sources to demonstrate the importance of papal politics for 19th- and early 20th-century American Catholic life. He chided other U.S. scholars of U.S. Catholicism for ignoring Roman archives. To do so, he maintained, was to tell a necessarily incomplete story.

The 2014 Rome seminar represented an effort to respond to D'Agostino's critique, and both it and the initiatives it inspired grew out of three overlapping developments. The first of these was historiographical. The so-called "transnational turn" gripped the American historical profession during the 1990s, and many sub-fields of American history embraced the effort to situate the history of the United States in a global perspective. In 2003, the Cushwa Center sponsored a conference on "Re-Thinking U.S. Catholic History: International and Comparative Frameworks," and ever since scholars affiliated have urged historians of Catholicism to adopt transnational approaches. Doing so, we argued, would not only offer a chance to better integrate Catholics as subjects in mainstream narratives, but would also help render more accurately the history of the Roman Catholic

Church, a body that David Bell recently characterized as “the world’s most successful international organization.”¹

The second overlapping development might be described as individual, in that it materialized out of my own particular research on American saints. In conceiving the book I intended to structure it as a social history of reception, focusing exclusively on the context in which causes for canonization were promoted in the United States. My desire to take D’Agostino’s exhortation to heart, combined with a trip to Rome in 2010 to attend a canonization, changed all that. With the encouragement and guidance of Professor Sanfilippo, I undertook research in the Vatican Secret Archives and discovered the rich array of sources available there. On that initial foray and in subsequent trips, I became increasingly convinced that canonization, and indeed U.S. Catholic history more generally, could only be properly interpreted in a transatlantic context with close attention to archival sources at the Holy See and in Rome.

The life and afterlife of Elizabeth Ann Seton (1776-1821) offers a case in point. Seton was first proposed as a candidate for canonization in 1882, and she was canonized in 1975, the first American-born person so honored. Throughout her long journey to the altars of sainthood, the epicenter of Seton’s story alternated between the United States in Europe, with axis points in Baltimore, Emmitsburg, Philadelphia, and New York in the former, and France (by virtue of Seton’s posthumous entry into the Vincentian Family), Italy, and the Holy See in the latter. In the Vatican Secret Archives alone, within the collections of the Congregation of Rites, there are 24 volumes of printed and manuscript material related to Seton’s cause for canonization. A vast amount of additional material related to Seton’s cause for canonization is housed in the General Archives of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) on the Via dei

¹ David A. Bell, “This is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network,” *New Republic*, October 25, 2013.

Capasso in Rome. The same is true for other canonized people from the United States, such as Philippine Duchesne, RSCJ, and John Neumann, CSsR. The causes for canonization of these European-born missionaries generated a tremendous amount of material in both the Vatican Secret Archives and in the archives of their respective congregations, the General Archives of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, located in Trastevere, and the General Archives of the Redemptorists on the via Merulana. Participants in our Rome 2014 Seminar visited both of these excellent repositories.

This observation brings me to the third overlapping development that inspired the Rome Seminar, which might be described as institutional. Six months before our seminar convened, the University of Notre Dame opened its new Rome Global Gateway on the via Ostilia, just steps away from the Colosseum. Guided by the vision of Prof. Theodore Cachey, its first academic director, the Rome Global Gateway is becoming a hub of intellectual inquiry and scholarly conversations. The timing of this initiative on the part of the University of Notre Dame was fortuitous, as it enabled me, in close collaboration with Professor Sanfilippo and other Italian colleagues, to undertake a more systematic effort to apprise other U.S.-based scholars of the rich promise of the Roman archives; namely, the organization of the 2014 Rome Seminar. We are extremely grateful to all the people who participated in that splendid event.

Once the seminar concluded we searched for a means to build on its momentum and, with help from Notre Dame's Office of Research, and the support of Professor Cachey, the Cushwa Center launched a more comprehensive effort to spur research in Roman Archives. We hired Matteo Binasco as a postdoctoral fellow at the Rome Global Gateway and for the last two years he had researched and prepared *Roman Sources for the History of American Catholicism, 1763–1939*, a comprehensive guide to over 50 institutional archives in Rome, detailing their sources for American Catholic studies. He has uncovered a number of

archival gems, including the following which testifies further to the breadth of Roman sources available related to Elizabeth Ann Seton. In 1862, Henry Seton, Elizabeth's grandchild and a Union Army captain, sent to the abbot of the San Paolo Fuori le Mura Basilica, the Benedictine Henry Smith, a lengthy letter describing the ordeal of the Civil War in Virginia. Binasco's guide is soon to be published by the University of Notre Dame Press, but an enticing preview appears in this volume and indicates how valuable this resource will be for present and future generations of U.S. Catholic historians.

Midway through Binasco's tenure as a Cushwa postdoctoral fellow he organized a stimulating symposium on Irish Sources for Roman Catholicism, at which Professor Colin Barr presented a version of the essay that appears in this volume. It further demonstrates the importance of looking beyond national frames, reminding scholars to consider not only the relationship between Rome and the various peripheries but also the relationships among the peripheries themselves. This point is also underscored by the essay written by Professor Florian Michel, which considers relationships between French and American Catholic intellectuals.

Our plans for building bridges between Italian and U.S. scholars of American Catholicism and for fostering research in Roman archives continue. Professor Luca Codignola now serves as an honorary Senior Fellow at the Cushwa Center, and I am very grateful to him, to Dr. Binasco, and above all to Professor Sanfilippo for all they have done to produce and encourage scholarship of the extremely high caliber represented in this volume.