

**The Reception and Application of the Encyclical *Pascendi***  
The Reports of the Diocesan Bishops and the Superiors  
of the Religious Orders until 1914

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**The Reception of *Pascendi dominici gregis*  
in North America**

Charles Talar  
(University of St. Thomas, Houston/Texas, USA)

**Abstract** Published reactions to *Pascendi* and the issues it raised reflect a perception that the Church in the United States was little affected by Modernism. Much the same evaluation is present in English speaking Canada, with the added judgment that Modernism there is a Protestant problem, not a Catholic one. In both the United States and Canada, there is some concern over a “modernistic spirit” present that could provide a receptive climate for modernist ideas. For the most part, reports from the hierarchy made to Rome concur. The appointment of censors and Councils of Vigilance are duly noted. In a few cases measures instituted to ensure continued insulation of the diocese from modernist ideas are listed. Where ideas condemned by the encyclical are acknowledged to be present, they are carefully positioned as isolated instances that are being dealt with. A partial exception is the response from the Archdiocese of New York, in which the *Dunwoodie Review* had been suppressed for its publication of modernist authors. This response contained reassurances that articles in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* were being carefully scrutinized for their orthodoxy. Neither in published reactions nor in communications to Rome from the hierarchy is there evidence of a sense of connection between Americanism and Modernism. Seeing the two as disjunct and very different in their focal issues enabled the perception that Modernism found little resonance in North America.

**Keywords** Modernism. Americanism. *Pascendi*. Bishops.

I cannot understand America. With its freedom and intelligence, its representatives ought to be in the forefront of the modernist movement. Yet Modernism has produced there hardly an echo. The Church in America is asleep; and I can conceive nothing that will awake it but the production of some book native to the soil which will raise so loud a cry of freedom that all who have ears must hear.<sup>1</sup>

The early historiography of Modernism reinforces Tyrrell’s judgment. To be sure, it was acknowledged that the United States was not completely innocent of modernist influence. For example, Jean Rivière’s *Le Modernisme dans l’Église* does mention [William L.] Sullivan as the anonymous author of *Letters to His Holiness Pope Pius X by a Modernist* (1910), and as par-

1 George Tyrrell quoted in Sullivan, *Letters to His Holiness Pope Pius X*, XIII.

ticipant at the 1913 Congrès international du christianisme libre et du progrès religieux, but nothing substantive is said of his contributions.<sup>2</sup> John Slattery is known uniquely through his 1909 article, "The Workings of Modernism", which serves mainly to exemplify tendencies Rivière is developing rather than to delineate Slattery's involvement with Modernism.<sup>3</sup> Earlier, Albert Houtin had been only slightly more forthcoming regarding the contents of Sullivan's *Letters*, and contented himself with a simple bibliographic reference to Slattery's 1909 article.<sup>4</sup> Houtin does devote a few pages to the repercussions of Modernism's condemnation, citing the suppression of the *New York Review* at Dunwoodie for modernist tendencies and changes in that seminary's faculty; the denunciation of Edward Hanna as a Modernist, stemming from articles that had appeared in the *Review*; the severance of Henri Poels from the faculty at the Catholic University of America where he taught Scripture; and denunciation of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* then in course of publication. The archbishops of the United States were successful in preventing the Indexing of the latter in return for the guarantee that the project would be conducted along the strictest lines of orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup> These two studies of Modernism may be taken as representative of the perspective that was long dominant: Modernism in the United States was confined to a handful of individuals and a few incidents only. It received, at best, passing mention, overshadowed by developments on the continent.

In Canada, judging by the coverage of Modernism in the Toronto Catholic press, the modernist peril was perceived to be largely confined to a small number of European Catholics, with faint echoes in the United States. Hanna is mentioned, but although he is seen to have committed "grave doctrinal error" in his *New York Review* articles on the knowledge of Christ, he is not considered to be guilty of modernist error.<sup>6</sup> An article in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* is faulted for its defective view of tradition, but it is clear that core modernist issues of biblical criticism and modern philosophy found little resonance among Canadian Catholics. The papal censure is applied to Protestants and a number of universities, American

2 Rivière, *Le Modernisme dans l'Église*, 400, 459. There he is identified as 'Sullivan'.

3 Rivière, *Le Modernisme dans l'Église*, 23, 351, 424, 431, 435. In the article in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* on Modernism the sole mention of America occurs in relation to the claim made by the *Revue moderniste internationale* that it had collaborators in that country. Its author, Vermeersch, judges *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* to "contain in their doctrinal conclusions the infallible teaching of the Vicar of Jesus Christ". Cf. Vermeersch, "Modernism", 420.

4 Houtin, *Histoire du modernisme catholique*, 287-8, 318, 434, 436.

5 Houtin, *Histoire du modernisme catholique*, 239-43.

6 Murtha, *Modernism and English Speaking Canadian Catholics*, 72-3.

and Canadian, where critical scholarship is notable.<sup>7</sup> In North America, evolutionary theory posed a bigger challenge to biblical faith than historical criticism. Advocacy of a theistic understanding of evolution, as put forth by the American priest John Zahm, sparked a controversy in the Anglophone Canadian press, evidently of greater concern than the work of an Alfred Loisy, George Tyrrell, or Antonio Fogazzaro.<sup>8</sup>

French-speaking Canadians were kept abreast of developments in France and in the United States through the twice-monthly *Vérité*, under the editorship of Jules-Paul Tardivel. It may be taken as faithfully representing the opinion of the French-Canadian conservative elite on issues concerning the Church on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>9</sup> *La Vérité* followed closely the progress of Americanist ideas, giving extensive coverage to the controversy raised by the French translation of Walter Elliott's biography of Isaac Hecker.<sup>10</sup> After 1900, however, less attention was given to events in France. The censure of Alfred Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église* by several French bishops in 1903 and the condemnation of five of his books by the Holy Office later that year received only brief notice in *La Vérité's* pages. Tardivel himself appears not to have made any connection between Loisy and John Ireland. In short, the dominant perception of Modernism in Canada may be summed up in words of Archbishop Bégin in the cover letter that accompanied the transmission of *Pascendi* to his clergy: Modernist errors "have not yet invaded our Canada" even if "they are currently in vogue in countries with which we maintain continual relations".<sup>11</sup>

Published responses to Modernism in both Canada and the United States reflect an ambiguity that is present in *Pascendi* itself. On the one hand, Modernism is viewed as the product of a small, closely-knit group of Catholics and under that guise has been successfully dealt with by the papal condemnations. On the other, there is an ongoing anxiety over a "modernistic spirit" that constitutes an ongoing danger to Catholics unprepared to meet it. In an article published in 1908 in *The Ecclesiastical Review*, it was alleged that while the American church may not possess

7 Murtha, *Modernism and English Speaking Canadian Catholics*, 74, 87-99, note 219. The University of Chicago, Harvard and Magill are mentioned.

8 On Zahm see Appleby, 'Church and Age Unite!'. On the controversy over Darwinism in Catholicism more broadly, see Artigas, Glick, Martinez, *Negotiating Darwin*; chapter 4, "Americanism and Evolutionism", is devoted to Zahm.

9 Savard, *Jules-Paul Tardivel*, 462. Tardivel could count several archbishops and bishops among its longtime subscribers. Tardivel, "Histoire sommaire de la *Vérité*".

10 In addition to articles published in *La Vérité*, Tardivel published *La Situation religieuse aux États-Unis*, an overtly partisan work in which he countered claims made by Americanists and their supporters regarding the status and future of Catholicism in that country.

11 *Mandements des évêques de Québec*, 10, 88, cited in Savard, *Jules-Paul Tardivel*, note 361.

“prominent manufacturers” of modernist ideas, it did not follow that it was “impervious to [their] noxious influence”. “It is our frank opinion that the evils of which the Pontiff chiefly complains exist to a very large and dangerous extent in the United States”. While not so pronounced as expressed in the Italian “Program of the Modernists” or in the pronouncements of certain German professors, “much of the modernist teaching has filtered into the minds of our population”. Conditions in the United States were seen to create a receptive climate for modernist ideas:

first, a widespread desire for novelties; secondly, a lack of thorough training and knowledge of the positive elements in apologetics and religion, and a consequent superficiality which is apt to accept as true whatever is plausible; thirdly, a disdain for tradition, and in certain circles, where speculative science is being taught on modern lines, a depreciation of the scholastic philosophy by one whose knowledge of it is only superficial.

In line with the encyclical’s claim of modernist dissembling of ideas, assertions of an absence in America of adherence to modernist professions of faith “must be taken as a protest without much truth, in so far as it may imply a tendency to disguise erroneous tenets and thereby not only propagate them more effectively but also to escape the consequences which deviation from the Church’s teaching implies”.<sup>12</sup> Citing this article, the Canadian *Catholic Record* claimed that “some of the causes indicative of modernistic tendencies exist among us”.<sup>13</sup> Among those tendencies were a love for novelty and a non-supportive attitude to Catholic schools. Modernism, then, could function as a convenient label for any ideas that deviated from those of paramount concern to the hierarchy.

Before proceeding to responses to *Pascendi* from the American and Canadian hierarchy, the relation between Americanism and Modernism requires brief treatment. The errors targeted by *Testem Benevolentiae* (1899), the Apostolic Letter that addressed issues raised by the controversy over ‘Americanist’ ideas, engage practice more than doctrine. As such they appear removed from the methodological and philosophical concerns expressed in *Pascendi*. Americanist errors, however, do not stand independently of underlying opinions from which they are held to derive. The desire to adapt the Church to modern civilization is not limited to its rule of life, but extends to doctrine, and to doctrines in which the deposit of faith is contained. Americanists were accused of passing over certain

12 “Modernism in the Church in America”. *The Ecclesiastical Review*, 38, 1908, 1-10.

13 “Modernism in the Church in America”. *The Catholic Record*, January 28, 1908, 4, cited in Murtha, *Modernism and English Speaking Canadian Catholics*, 107.

doctrines, or of softening their meaning, so that those who dissent from Catholic doctrine might more easily be converted to it. Moreover, the issue of authority is clearly present, in the guise of individuals who seek doctrinal and practical adaptation rather than leaving that to the judgment of the Church. These underlying opinions surfaced in *Testem Benevolentiae* find their counterparts in modernist symbolist readings of dogma and claims for the authority of scholarly expertise vis-à-vis magisterial authority. Remaining implicit in *Testem* are presuppositions regarding the relation of Church and State that shaped its approach to the spiritual life. In imitation of civil society there were those who wished to introduce into the Church a certain liberty, such that individuals could act more freely in pursuit of their own natural bent and capacity.<sup>14</sup> Taking account of the expressed need to adapt Catholicism to the intellectual and political evolution of modern society, a modernist like Albert Houtin and anti-modernists like Charles Maignen and Emmanuel Barbier could find a common nexus between Americanism and Modernism in Liberalism.<sup>15</sup>

While there is evidence that connections between Americanism and Modernism were made in Rome, little of that is reflected in either the United States or in Canada. Because Modernism was held to be about theology in the strict sense, Modernism had nothing to do with Americanism. In the United States this had the effect of limiting Modernism to a

14 Joseph Cinicci renders explicit the connections between these presuppositions and the various practical issues targeted in *Testem* in his *Living Stones*, 124-6.

15 Houtin (*L'Américanisme*, 82) wrote: "Au total, le courant américaniste que l'on rattache au P. Hecker n'est point isolé. Le besoin d'adapter le catholicisme à l'évolution intellectuelle et politique de la société moderne avait antérieurement déterminé en France un courant similaire: le menaisianisme. Si les deux mouvements ont eu une fortune diverse, il faut en chercher l'explication dans la différence des milieux où ils se sont produits et dans leur distance de Rome". In a two-volume work, *Le Progrès du libéralisme catholique en France sous le pape Léon XIII*, published in the spring of 1907, not long before the Vatican condemnations of Modernism, Barbier addressed the complex relations between Americanism and Liberalism in a way that invites comparison with Modernism. As a doctrine liberalism seeks to substitute a State founded on reason and nature for one founded on tradition. Liberalism's principles of liberty and equality are opposed to those of authority and social hierarchy. When liberalism passes from the political order to the religious it becomes less doctrinaire and assumes more the guise of a tendency, while remaining permeated by an evolutionary spirit. This spirit is manifested in Americanism, which offered to French liberals a system that joined together political evolution and religious evolution. The evolution of political arrangements toward democracy has necessitated an evolution in religion: beyond religion's relationship with the State, an evolution in religious authority, in religious discipline, in religious life. See Barbier, *Le Progrès du libéralisme catholique en France*, 1, ch. 1. Maurice Blondel receives passing mention in Houtin's book (*L'Américanisme*, 292-3). A retrieval of Blondel's name may serve as a reminder that, underlying relations between natural and supernatural virtues are notions of the proper relations between the natural and supernatural orders, notions that had surfaced in the aftermath of Blondel's so-called "Letter on Apologetics" of 1896.

few individuals.<sup>16</sup> In Canada, the American struggle to bring the Church and the age into dialogue had touched a receptive chord over the 1890s up to 1907, but without any connection being made with Modernism as defined by *Pascendi*.

To sum up, judging by published reactions to *Pascendi* and the issues it raised, contemporaries reflected Tyrrell's judgment that the Church in the United States was little affected by Modernism. The same evaluation is present in English speaking Canada, with the added perception that Modernism there is a Protestant problem, not a Catholic one.

How, then, did matters look from the perspective of the hierarchy, as reflected in their reports to Rome?

First, it may be noted that a number of dioceses self-reported the establishment of Councils of Vigilance in the U.S. Catholic Directory over the years immediately following the Vatican condemnations of Modernism. Relatively few of the dioceses that listed a Council of Vigilance in the directory had established one as early as 1908; a few more are represented in 1909; 1911 apparently was a good year for such councils - or at least for a formal listing of them in the directory.<sup>17</sup> From the documentation from the Roman archives it is apparent that additional dioceses had established such a committee, but simply failed to list in the Catholic Directory.<sup>18</sup> For Canada, documentation was found in the archives for six dioceses.<sup>19</sup>

The majority of these communications to Rome from U.S. and Canadian sources follow a standard format:

- Customary address: "Humbly prostrate at the feet of His Holiness, etc.";
- Reference to prescriptions of the encyclical *Pascendi*;
- Establishment of Council of Vigilance and appointment of diocesan censors;

**16** Modernism in the United States was limited to a canonical cast of three characters provided by John Tracy Ellis: John Slattery, William L. Sullivan, and Thomas Mulvey, a priest of the Brooklyn Diocese who announced that he could not in conscience accept *Pascendi* and resigned. Portier, *Divided Friends*, 27.

**17** A sampling of arch/dioceses in the Catholic Directory over the years immediately following the Vatican condemnations of Modernism for the presence of Councils of Vigilance has yielded their presence in the following (those for which Roman archive materials have been found are given in *italics*): *Albany*, Alexandria, Belleville, *Bismarck*, Burlington, Chicago, *Cleveland*, Crookston (established March 1910), Dallas, Fall River, Fort Wayne, Galveston, Harrisburg, Hartford, Lincoln, Manchester, Marquette, Monterey and Los Angeles, *Natchitoches*, Newark, Ogdensburg, Oklahoma, Peoria, Philadelphia, *Pittsburgh*, Portland, Providence, Richmond, Rochester, *Saint Cloud*, Savannah, Springfield, Superior, Wheeling.

**18** Arch/dioceses and apostolic vicariates which did not list having a Council of Vigilance in the directory but for which correspondence has been found in the Roman archives are: Baltimore, Boise City, Brooklyn, Brownsville, Covington, Helena, Indianapolis, Natchez, New York, Sacramento, Saint Louis, San Francisco, and Seattle.

**19** There were Chatham, Chicoutimi, Hamilton, Ottawa, Toronto, and Trois-Rivières.

- Denial of any presence of modernist ideas or activities in the diocese
- Closing.<sup>20</sup>

There are some exceptions to this.

Albany (1909) mentions a book, *The Modern Catholic*, produced by men little esteemed in Albany, that the bishop has taken care to denounce and warn that it not be introduced into Catholic homes.

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the memory of the condemnation of Americanism was in itself enough to motivate scrutiny regarding Modernism, and the presence of the Catholic University of America in the archdiocese reinforced that motivation. The first report of the Baltimore committee of vigilance made in November of 1908 reported that nothing of an unfavorable nature had been discovered, except a doubt on the part of Henri Poels about acceptance of certain decrees of the Biblical Commission.<sup>21</sup>

Bismarck (1916) attests to finding no modernist error in the diocese, or any other error contrary to the faith (reaffirming what was said earlier in 1911). It does, however, acknowledge that a very small number of Catholics are to a small extent infected with socialist errors. Priests and other learned laity have worked both orally and in writing to address such deviations and instill better knowledge of the faith.

Brooklyn (1909): Some young priests who were educated outside the diocese (Dunwoodie?) had a professor who expressed the so-called advanced school of higher criticism (if indeed Dunwoodie, this would likely refer to Francis Gigot or, possibly, Joseph Bruneau). During the period prior to the condemnation of Modernism, Gigot held views that were subsequently at variance with decrees of the Biblical Commission, e.g., on Isaian author-

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20 (Arch)diocesan communications that reflect this general format or restrict themselves to a simple denial of the presence of modernist errors include those from Bismarck, Brownsville, Cleveland, Covington, Helena, Natchez, Natchitoches, Pittsburgh, Sacramento, Saint Cloud, Saint Louis, and San Francisco.

21 At Catholic University in Washington, D.C., the fresh memory of Americanism's condemnation rendered the administration anxious to prove its orthodoxy. The Board of Trustees wrote to Pius X giving their obedience to the encyclical. In their fall meeting the trustees established a committee that had among its responsibilities a survey of modernistic books in the library of the University and to make recommendations in light of their findings. Barry, *The Catholic University of America 1903-1909*, 176-7. As a faculty member at the Catholic University of America, Henry Poels published a series of articles in the *Catholic University Bulletin* detailing his views on questions raised by critical biblical scholarship. They clearly showed the influence of Loisy's and Tyrrell's thought, but he claimed that the positions set forth in them were in conformity with *Providentissimus Deus*. The Vatican disagreed, and Catholic University which had earlier been suspected of Americanism now came under the shadow of Modernism. Poels was ordered by Rome to swear a prescribed oath to the decrees of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Since he was unable to do so, he was relieved of his teaching position. Appleby, *Church and Age Unite!*, 209-16.

ship, the historicity of Jonah and Job, and the Synoptic Problem.<sup>22</sup> Bruneau had been taught by Loisy before coming to the United States and served as agent for the placement of several articles by his former teacher in the *American Ecclesiastical Review* in the 1890s. Bruneau himself later came under suspicion of modernistic tendencies for his translation of H.E. Oxenham's *The Catholic Dogma of the Atonement* (1909).<sup>23</sup>

Cleveland (28 October 1915): The materials concern a priest, the Reverend Niko Geskovich, president and owner of a publishing Company that issued *Hrvatski Svijet* (Croatian World) which styled itself as "The best Croatian Daily with larger circulation than any other Croatian Newspaper". The Vigilance Committee included an English translation of an article that appeared in the paper that advocated a religious indifferentism. The upshot of the article is that Christ is the life-giving source, whether that source is contained in Catholicism, Orthodoxy, or Protestantism. Persecution - whether it be formerly directed against Waldensians or Calvinists or more recently against Modernists - is done, not in the name of Christ, but in the name of denomination. The question of which denomination is the correct one is one that directs undue attention to the vessel, and detracts attention to the living contents it contains. It is a question that focuses on the differences that divide, instead of what is held in common and unites. It is time to replace the old question with a new one: "in what are our religions the same?". The answer: in all that which leads to salvation. Hence the conclusion: any denomination wishing to save its life must relinquish the notion that it is the unique road to Christ, to salvation. The denomination which acknowledges its secondary character in comparison with Christianity, acknowledging its imperfections in humility, "shall inherit all other denominations and introduce the people in the kingdom of God". The Vigilance Committee comments that Geskovich has used his position in the Church to acquire funds to build up his newspapers that he now uses against the Church. He sows nationalism and the idea of a future reign of Serbs among Croatian Catholics.

Helena (2 August 1910) makes reference to one instance in which a trace of modernist error was detected, but does not elaborate. It also notes the great distances that must be covered in order to meet in the diocese, and asks that, given the paucity of priests and the pastoral needs, faculties be given for the Council of Vigilance to meet less frequently.

Indianapolis (1909): One priest, an alumnus of the American College of Louvain, ordained four years, was called a Modernist, but he has changed his sentiment.

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22 See McDonald, "Biblical Brinkmanship", 222-41. Scripture in the *Review* is surveyed in Lienhard, "The New York Review and Modernism in America", 69-71.

23 DeVito, *The New York Review*, 301-2.



Ottawa (1908) notes the appointment of censors and a Council of Vigilance but is exceptional in elaborating, relative to many of the other, much shorter communications, the steps the ordinary has taken to see that the syllabus and encyclical were communicated to the clergy in the diocese, more specific instructions as to how these directives were to be implemented, a listing of institutions of Catholic teaching there and assurance that scholastic philosophy and theology are adhered to. There is some concern expressed regarding laity, a “fear that their faith may be unsteady”. As for causes, the “spirit of party politics, the lack of a sufficient depth of knowledge of religion, their relations with free thinkers coming out of France and with so many Protestants who have lost all religious faith and who do not let any occasion pass to decry Catholic principles” are invoked as prominent factors. “In this diocese, with just a few exceptions, the faith is maintained; but here, as in other parts of the country, one finds too many Catholics ready to place the interests of their political party above the interests of the Church and who seem to follow this false principle that, when it concerns a question at once both political and religious, the Church must not intervene, or, as is said, the bishops and priests do not have a right to speak”.

Seattle (1909) is interesting for its apology that its ordinary has not done anything with regard to the requirements set forth in the encyclical, pleading the territorial extent of his diocese which extends far and wide “as the whole of France or of Italy itself”. This situation is rectified in the 1911 communication. The geographical scope of the diocese has necessitated the establishment of two Councils of Vigilance, one meeting in the western part of the diocese, the other in the eastern portion. The pastoral demands of the diocese absorb the energy of its priests, so no surprise that nothing in the way of modernist errors has been found in books authored by priests. By exception, there is one book by Philip Van Ness Myers<sup>24</sup> (title not given), a work of history imbued with rationalism and religious evolution, stricken from the list of books for our youth.

Trois-Rivieres (1908): Notes that the syllabus, encyclical and *motu proprio* of 18 November<sup>25</sup> have been communicated to the clergy of the diocese, then goes on to specify instructions that have been given in addition:

1. In all houses of higher teaching in this diocese, the philosophy of Saint Thomas will continue to be put at the foundation of sacred sciences, to the exclusion of all others;

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<sup>24</sup> Philip Van Ness Meyers (1846-1937), Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati and a prolific author of textbooks on history.

<sup>25</sup> Reference is made here to “*Praestantia Sacrae Scripturae*, On the Decisions of the Pontifical Biblical Commission”. *American Ecclesiastical Review*, 38, 1908, 62-4. Eng. trans. in *Rome and the Study of Scripture*. St. Meinrad: Abbey Press, 1964, 40-2. *Praestantia* made the Commission’s decisions binding in conscience for Catholics.

2. The study of the profane sciences will not occasion any injury to that of sacred sciences;
3. In the higher classes, Christian apologetics will be the object of regular teaching;
4. The students, even the most advanced, will not receive either newspapers or periodicals without the authorization of the Ordinary;
5. All members of the secular or religious Clergy, who wish to assume the direction of a newspaper or periodical, or even be a collaborator, will be previously required to furnish permission of the Ordinary;
6. [Personnel forming the Council of Vigilance and also serving as Censors are named];
7. Lastly, the presence in the diocese of “certain newspapers printed outside the diocese... of a liberal tendency and open to broad ideas” is noted and a careful watch is being kept upon them.

The archival letter of most interest comes, less than surprisingly, from New York. The Archdiocese has not only established, in conformity with papal instruction, a Council of Vigilance, but has divided that into four special councils. Given the abundance of material, written in several languages, to be surveyed, the first of these councils is responsible for books, the second periodicals, the third for newspapers, and the fourth for publications in foreign languages. These four councils have been staffed with men of proven doctrinal quality, theological expertise, and competent in several languages. The letter contains assurances that, when publications that contain erroneous or harmful material are identified, appropriate measures will be applied.

In light of the doctrinal deviations detected in several of the articles in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (not only in the United States but, as noted earlier, also in the Canadian press), it is noteworthy that the letter positions the encyclopedia, already at volume 5, as “a major resource” in the English speaking region for instilling correct doctrinal practices. Moreover, the Council of Vigilance has been tasked with working diligently with the editors of the encyclopedia so that “no part of this vast work may be in any way reprehensible” and may show forth the glory of the Catholic religion.

To appreciate better what lies behind the letter, something of its larger context may be helpful.

In the years immediately preceding the condemnation of Modernism, the faculty at Saint Joseph Seminary, Dunwoodie implemented a number of seminary reforms and, intellectually, were quite forward looking.<sup>26</sup> They

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<sup>26</sup> Under the rectorship of James Driscoll (1902-1909) Saint Joseph’s became “the most avant-garde seminary in the United States”. Kauffman, *Tradition in Transformation*, 210. On seminary reform more broadly during the Americanist Era, see White, *The Diocesan Seminary*, chs. 10-1.

were conversant with European scholarship and founded the *New York Review* as a way of disseminating the findings of such scholarship in the United States.<sup>27</sup> There were a number of Americans, Dunwoodie faculty members prominently among them, who also contributed to the *Review* during its short life: June 1905-June 1908. The last issue of the *Review* carried an announcement of its termination for financial reasons, but it has been established that it was suppressed because it was regarded by Rome as modernistic and contrary to the canons of *Pascendi* concerning publications.<sup>28</sup>

The editors of the *Review* attempted to put on a brave front in view of *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*, positioning the Roman condemnations as targeting only “extreme views”. But in their optimistic assessment of “these recent decisions of authority” as “the beginning of a more glorious period of Catholic intellectual activity” they were whistling in the dark.<sup>29</sup> Archbishop John Farley soon received complaints about the Dunwoodie faculty from Rome and from the apostolic delegate in Washington. From Rome Monsignor Thomas Kennedy, rector of the North American College, informed Farley that he had “lately heard some very harsh criticisms of the review”.<sup>30</sup> Three weeks later the apostolic delegate, Archbishop Diomedeo Falconio, communicated to Farley his objections to some of the writers who had appeared in the *Review*’s pages, citing their tendencies for the condemned doctrines of Modernism. He also informed Farley that four young New York priests who were studying in Rome had come under suspicion of Modernism.<sup>31</sup> While Farley initially defended the *Review*, his faculty and the four priests in Rome, under increasing pressure he took a series of measures aimed at damage control. *The New York Review* ceased publication in June 1908. In the fall of 1909 he removed James Driscoll as rector of Dunwoodie, which appears to have allayed suspicions of Modernism among its faculty. From a center of original theological research Dunwoodie reverted to a trade school whose classes were conducted in Latin with reliance on seminary manuals. New York priests were no longer sent to Germany to obtain the sort of education

27 John Tracy Ellis called the *Review* “the most learned ecclesiastical journal to be published under Catholic auspices up to that time”. Cited in Lienhard, “*The New York Review* and Modernism in America”, 67.

28 See DeVito, *The New York Review*, 262.

29 “The Syllabus of Pius X”.

30 Thomas Kennedy to John Farley, 26 December 1907, cited in Shelley, “John Cardinal Farley and Modernism”, 357-8.

31 Shelley, “John Cardinal Farley and Modernism”, 358. The four priests in question were John J. Mitty (the future archbishop of San Francisco), Edwin Ryan, Daniel W. Sheeran, and Francis X.E. Albert.

not obtainable in Rome. Farley's support for the *Catholic Encyclopedia* changed from enthusiastic to tepid.<sup>32</sup>

In his January 1908 letter to Farley, Falconio named George Tyrrell, Ernesto Buonaiuti, Ernest Dimnet and Albert Houtin as questionable authors. Farley wrote back that Dimnet and Houtin had never published in the *Review* and, at time of their publication, both Tyrrell and Buonaiuti had been priests in good standing. It was, however, through articles by a priest that Falconio did not name, Edward Hanna, that suspicion was cast upon the *Review*.

After a brilliant academic performance in Rome, Hanna (1850-1944) returned to his diocese of Rochester, New York, where he was subsequently appointed to the seminary faculty. Since faculty members of the Rochester seminary were expected to publish, Hanna wrote an article, "The Human Knowledge of Christ", which appeared in three installments in the *New York Review* over 1905-1906. This writing would bring him under suspicion of Modernism – and, by extension, suspicion that would extend to the *Review* itself – and attract Rome's attention to two of his other articles.<sup>33</sup>

Published in 1905, it was only after the issuance of *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* that Hanna's study of Christ's human knowledge became neuralgic. Upon learning that Hanna was being considered for the appointment of coadjutor archbishop of San Francisco, one of his seminary colleagues, apparently motivated by jealousy, Fr. Andrew J. Breen, delated him to Rome, alleging that Hanna lacked firmness of orthodoxy.<sup>34</sup> This brought both Hanna and the *Review* to the attention of Roman authorities. Although Hanna wrote to Rome, affirming his love of orthodoxy and his rejection of Modernism, and despite expressions of support from members of the American hierarchy, Hanna did not receive the appointment to San Francisco at that point. He did so in 1911.

It was the Hanna case that brought unfavorable opinion in Rome regarding the *Review* and also upon the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, another project close to Farley. Given the suppression of the *Review*, one surmises that a simple declaration of establishment of a council and diocesan censors would not suffice, not would a blanket statement to the effect that modernist ideas could not be found in the diocese. Given the fate of the *Review* and his knowledge that Hanna's articles had come under critical scrutiny in Rome, Farley was constrained to say more. Also, given an anecdote that

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32 Shelley, "John Cardinal Farley and Modernism", 359-60.

33 Hanna, "The Human Knowledge of Christ". The two other articles were "Absolution" and "Some Recent Books on Catholic Theology".

34 See DeVito, *The New York Review*, 260-91.

DeVito recounts,<sup>35</sup> the mention of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* at the end of the letter is also less than surprising.<sup>36</sup>

While the majority of the letters date from the period immediately following the papal censures, there are a few that postdate the imposition of the anti-modernist oath and note its administration and adherence.<sup>37</sup>

What might we conclude regarding the presence of Modernism in North America and the hierarchy's response to the Vatican condemnations?

Published responses to *Pascendi* in both the United States and in Canada emphasized the European dimensions of Modernism. In answering the question "Who Are the Modernists of the Encyclical?" in an article of that title, the Sulpician Anthony Vieban limited the field to Europeans who had written in criticism of the encyclical and/or in vindication of Modernism. Less than surprisingly, the names of Loisy and Tyrrell figured prominently among the handful he designated.<sup>38</sup> In the pages of *The Ecclesiastical Review*, *American Catholic Quarterly Review* and *Catholic World* Vieban and others continued to inform readers of the dangers of Loisy's and Tyrrell's theories.<sup>39</sup> In the Canadian *Catholic Register* both Loisy and Tyrrell were singled out for special mention, with brief summaries of what was regarded as problematic in their writings. Romolo Murri also received attention, with mention of Tyrrell's 'misguided friends' Henri Bremond

35 "The summer in Rome [1908] for Farley must have been very hot. He went there hoping to receive the 'red hat' but from one report about an audience he had with Pius X, he had difficulty hanging on to his *zucchetto*. Around August 7, 1908, Farley had an audience with Pius X. The audience seemed to have gone on interminably long for those who were waiting for the next audience with the pope. At the end of his meeting, Farley was reported to have rushed out with a look of consternation, his *zucchetto* askew, his *ferraiulo* twisted almost completely around, his hair tousled, his countenance flushed. When the members of the next audience met with the pope they reported that Pius X walked over to a chair on which was a beautifully bound volume of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* that Farley just presented. The Holy Father, they said seized the volume with both hands, flung it to the floor of his library saying what an evil thing the Encyclopedia was because it was vitiated by suspected articles. He then said to a member of the audience that the Cardinals wanted him to make Hanna a bishop. With clenched fists the pope said that he would never make Hanna a bishop" (DeVito, *The New York Review*, 290-1). John Wynne, editor of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, had an audience with Pius X on October 23, 1908, in which the pope spoke positively of Hanna (note 291).

36 *The New York Review* had carried a positive notice of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* in vol. 3, 1907, 359-60.

37 These are Bismarck 1911, Chicoutimi 1912, and Cleveland 1911.

38 Vieban, "Who Are the Modernists of the Encyclical?". In addition to Loisy and Tyrrell, Vieban noted the author(s) of *The Program of Modernism* and Henry C. Corrance who had written "A Vindication of Modernism".

39 Vieban, "A Critical Valuation of Loisy's Theories", "Modernism and Protestantism", "Father Tyrrell and Cardinal Mercier", "Father Tyrrell's Dying Convictions"; Sheppard, "Christianity and Criticism"; and Hughes, "Catholic and Modernist Theories of Development".

and Maude Petre. The only two American names to appear were Hanna and Denis O'Connell, but only to exonerate them from modernist error.<sup>40</sup>

Official responses by the American and Canadian hierarchies reflect this perception. In most cases replies to Rome document compliance with instructions to create instruments of surveillance and assurances that Modernism has not taken root in American or Canadian soil.

While both published and official responses to *Pascendi* reflect the perception that Modernism as an organized movement is a European problem, some concern over a "modernistic spirit" does arise in American and Canadian contexts. As noted, in both of these venues evolutionary theory draws more attention than historical criticism or Kantian philosophy. In Canada, especially, one gets the impression that 'Modernism' could be a label for whatever the local ordinary found objectionable. This is reflected in the *Register's* expression of the Toronto bishop's concern over those who were not forthcoming in their support for Catholic schools and in the Ottawa letter's complaint regarding Catholic laity who place loyalty to political party over commitment to the Church. A letter from the diocese of Bismarck in 1916 acknowledges that a few Catholics are "a little infected with socialist errors" but the problem is being addressed by both clergy and educated laity. Based on these indications, one may speculate that, for many ordinaries, Modernism was a rather puzzling phenomenon that either seemed to have little resonance in their diocese or became a kind of Rorschach - an inkblot on which to project whatever they disliked or found objectionable.

In sum, in the perceptions of Catholics writing on the condemnation of Modernism, any presence of modernist ideas in the United States and Canada were overshadowed by their propagation in Europe, most notably in France, secondarily in England and Italy and, to a degree, among the German professorate. This perception of Modernism's presence in North America has, until recently, largely dominated assessments of Modernism. More recent revisionist work connecting Modernism to Americanism, and to Liberalism more broadly, and devoting attention to what would-be reformers themselves thought they were doing, has produced evidence that Modernism had a greater presence in the United States than had previously been thought. It also suggests that American ideas regarding political freedom had a closer connection in the minds of Vatican officials to critical biblical study and freedom of scholarly inquiry more broadly than had been appreciated. Part of the interest in materials in the Vatican archives is in how much of this was perceived in Rome, at the time.

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<sup>40</sup> See Murtha, *Modernism and English Speaking Canadian Catholics*, 61-74. There was a rather eclectic collection of additional names, which simply appear without elaboration. They include familiar figures such as Albert Houtin and Antonio Fogazzaro, as well as those who are obscure.

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