



**The Roman Catholic Communities of Cloyne Diocese, Co. Cork,
1700 -1830.**

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to present an understanding of the complexity of some of the responses and reactions of different eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Roman Catholic parish congregations and their clergy from Cloyne Diocese, Co. Cork to their changing and often challenging circumstances. A rich repository of source materials such as the visitation books of Roman Catholic Bishops, clerical correspondence and other sources has been relied upon. A scalar analytical framework ranging from the personal, to the intergroup, to the international is utilised. Key factors in the re-emergence of this Church and its communities such as historical and cultural awareness, the interdependent efforts of different social groups and the fact that Cloyne was never a bounded entity in the sense that it was separated from the wider Catholic world and/or other external influences are identified. While some of Cloyne's Catholics may have tended to view themselves as a "separate and injured community" (Dickson, 2005, p. 264) on account of the varied impacts of colonialism, that this may also have occurred as a consequence of social class changes cannot be ignored. That the successful social re-emergence of some Catholics and their associated communities may have come about at the marginalisation of others is factored into this analysis. Consequently, this study presents an exploration of the interplay between a spectrum of different personal, religious, cultural, geographical, socio-economic and other worlds, each of varying depths and complexities, with some overlapping, blending and intersecting, and others avoiding and/or in conflict with each other and/or with other worlds.

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Abbreviations

<i>Archiv. Hib.</i>	Archivium Hibernicum: or Irish Historical Records
C.D.A.	Cloyne Diocesan Archives, Cobh, Co. Cork.
<i>J.C.H.A.S.</i>	Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society
Ms(s.)	Manuscript(s)
<i>s.d.</i>	<i>sine datum</i> : date of publishing not given
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland
N.U.I.M.	National University of Ireland Maynooth
<i>s.l.</i>	<i>sine loco</i> : place of publishing not given
<i>s.n.</i>	<i>sine nomine</i> : name of publisher not given
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin
U.C.C.	University College Cork
U.C.D.	University College Dublin

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Chapter One: Introduction

How have different historical communities which may have experienced dispossession, marginalisation and/or prejudice overcome their limitations? How did they succeed in challenging and changing the socio-economic forces around them? Where did they go wrong? The following thesis attributes the re-emergence of a number of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Roman Catholic communities from Cloyne diocese, Co. Cork to factors such as spiritual, historic and cultural depth, to the interdependent efforts of different social groups plus the fact that their diocese was never a bounded entity. That the successful re-emergence of some communities may have come about at the cost of others, of course, cannot be discounted.

In conducting any investigation into Cloyne's eighteenth/early nineteenth century Catholics, therefore, to paraphrase Dickson (2004, p. 39), there are "no easy answers and fresh ways of looking at the issue are needed". Following Maureen Wall's refusal to accept uncritically that all of the actions of Ireland's eighteenth-century Catholics were always naturally good, wholesome or above reproach, the possibility of new vistas became possible. Irish Catholics, it emerged, were not passive, "anonymous tragic heroes" (O'Brien, 1989, p. ii) but rather intelligent, socially-minded and "credible human beings" (O'Brien, 1989, p. ii) who struggled just as much within and amongst themselves as much as they did against the legal restrictions imposed upon them.

Further revisions of Irish Catholics suffering *en masse* have been made by Cullen (1986) who demonstrated the resilience of a number of Catholic families, each embedded in their own unique social, cultural, economic and religious *milieus*. In the west of Ireland, in parts of Munster, south Leinster and around the Dublin Pale, for instance, the "flourishing" of a Catholic and convert-Catholic interest was identified (Cullen, 1986, p. 29). Such families, it emerged, evaded the restrictions of the penal laws through reliance upon trustees, through the friendly legal action with Protestants known as "collusive discovery" and through strategic conversions to the Church of Ireland. Consequently, the number of acres in Catholic hands under leasehold

agreements is demonstrated to have increased over the course of the eighteenth century (MacBride, 2009, p. 216).

Further optimistic portraits of resilient Irish Catholics “not merely adapting to their situation, but displaying creativity and confidence in the face of varying degrees of opposition” are presented by Keogh (1993, p. 1). Connolly too, found the impact of the penal laws to have been “easily overestimated”, although the existence of “multiple petty tyrannies” on the part of Protestant magistrates and landlords was accepted (Chambers, 2009, p. 167). The denial of political rights for Irish Catholics may also have been, as Connolly (1996, p. 26-7) suggests, a purely hypothetical disability. Given that conditions in Ireland largely reflected a wider European polity which was hierarchical and biased in favour of propertied elites, there is little evidence, he suggests, that plebian Catholics saw the penal laws as a serious grievance until they were taught to do so two generations or so later by middle class-led agitation. A Jacobite victory at the Boyne or at Aughrim, Connolly suggests, would have made little or no difference to the socio-political position of Catholic traders and/or tenant farmers and none at all to the “common people” so beloved of Irish nationalist historiography (MacBride, 2009, p. 216).

While most historians since the 1960s have rejected the “penal” paradigm with its subtext of a heroic but largely silenced Irish Catholic nation “smarting under unrelenting persecution” (Dickson, 2004, p. 38), to dismiss the suffering, silences and/or enmities on both sides of the religious divide, however, would be to impoverish our understanding. Nicholl’s (1985) observation that eighteenth-century anti-Catholic sentiment in Co. Cork was high but characterised “more by occasional outbreaks of petty harassment than by steady repression, let alone persecution”, for instance, fails to appreciate either the suffering involved or its long-term effects.

Irish Catholics were certainly not the only eighteenth or early nineteenth century Europeans to suffer for their religious beliefs. They were, however, a religious majority in their own country, one located within a larger and officially Protestant kingdom. Hence, the norms of other European Catholic *Ancien Régimes* such as royal protection and/or the assistance of a local Catholic gentry could not be taken for granted. Officially at least, such intolerance was generally perceived to be positive as religions in competition

with the State Church were thought to create social fragmentation and instability. Catholic Hapsburg Empress Maria-Theresé of Austria expressed a prevailing outlook:

“What could exist without a dominant religion? Toleration and indifference are exactly the surest ways of destroying the established order. What else is there to harness bad instincts?...Nothing is so necessary and beneficial as religion. If there were no state religion and submission to the Church, where would we be?”

(Doyle, 1992, p. 156)

In Cloyne, as in the rest of Ireland, the State Church was the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland, to which a small but powerful minority, mostly of external origin belonged. Well endowed with cathedrals, churches, lands and legally entitled to the payment of tithes, this Church remained the State Church until its disestablishment in 1869. By contrast, the Catholic and other Protestant Churches were subject to penal legislation, enacted by the Irish parliament following the defeat of James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. For MacBride (2009, p. 217) these laws were motivated, at least in part, by a need among some Irish Protestants for resolve in the face of what was perceived as Catholic insolence. A conquered people needed to know that they had been defeated. For Connolly (1992, p. 313), however, these laws formed a part, but not the most important part of a much longer process whereby power and resources had gradually been transferring from Catholic to Protestant hands. Writing around 1700, Aogán Ó Rathaille, a tenant farmer from south Kerry, saw things more or less in the same light. For Ó Rathaille, the penal laws represented another dimension of a more extensive project, namely, the overthrow of an Irish Catholic *Ancien Régime*:

“Gur díbreadh an rí ceart go claonmhar,
easpaig, sagairt, abaidh, cléirigh,
bráithre diaga is cliar na déirce,
agus uaisle na tuaithe le chéile.”

“So that the holy king was treacherously expelled,
bishops, priests, abbots, clerics,
holy friars and mendicant clergy,
together with the nobles of the country”

(Morley, 2011, p. 193)

This transfer of power and resources from Catholics to Protestants had been significant. In 1600, more than 80% of Irish land was in the hands of

Catholics. By 1641 it had declined to 59%. In 1688 it was down to 22%. By 1704 only 14% of Irish land officially remained in the hands of Catholics (Smyth, 2006, p. 377). In 1688, roughly one-third of the agricultural land of Co. Cork was held by Catholics. By 1703, officially at least, only twenty Catholic landowners remained in the whole of Munster (Dickson, 2005, p. 62).

On paper, harsh legislation accompanied these changes. The 1695 Disarming Act prohibited Catholics from bearing arms and, in the interests of State security, obliged them to sell any horse, however valuable, for £5. An accompanying Act prohibited Catholics from sending their children to be educated abroad while at the same time prohibited them from teaching and/or opening schools at home. The 1697 Banishment Act required Catholic bishops and regular clergy to leave Ireland. A 1703 Act prohibited them from returning. The following year, a further act required all remaining Catholic priests to register and provide sureties for their behaviour. Catholics were also barred from practising law, unless already qualified to do so, from attending university and from membership of borough and trading corporations.

Far from being a systematic code, however, recent research has outlined the Irish penal laws to have been more of “a rag bag series of initiatives” rather than a well-thought out strategy (Bergin et. al., 2011, p. 11). Connolly (1992) and Bartlett (1992) believe the laws to have been more “a product of accident, rather than design”, hence they were “often contradictory and full of loopholes” (O’Halloran, 1992, p. 155) The laws were also subject to wider considerations such as changes in the mood of the Irish parliament and within European diplomacy (Chambers, 2009, p. 167). Furthermore, the application of the laws on the ground was dependent upon sufficient numbers of Protestants to enforce them and/or local initiative to do so. In 1713, for instance, proceedings were issued against the Protestant mayor of Youghal for taking bribes to allow priests to celebrate mass in the town (O’Brien, 1989, p. 21). In Co. Cork, a number of cases of the retention of lands in Catholic hands through its assignment to friendly Protestants have been documented by Dickson (2005, p. 526). The laws may also have been counterproductive in that they pushed enterprising Catholics out of agriculture and into more lucrative activities such as trade (O’Brien, 1989, p. 65).

Most likely, different laws were interpreted and implemented differently by different people in different places at different times and for different reasons. In Cloyne, Coombes (1981, p. 42) argues that the laws regarding education were enforced. Perhaps not surprisingly, contemporaries with Cloyne connections such as Edmund Burke expressed strong views on the matter. In 1764 he referred to “those numerous and insupportable grievances under which we have long groaned” (Kelly, 2011, p. 33). In 1792 he expressed his memorable characterisation of the laws as “a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance - as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man” (Kelly, 2011, p. 33). Given such interpretations, Johnson (1974, p. 19) concludes that the Irish penal laws were responsible for creating what she suggests “was in many ways a typical colonial situation....During the eighteenth century colour and slavery were not the only badges and methods by which a small minority kept a large majority in subjugation”. Kiberd (2000) refers to the laws as “a system of apartheid between the one-fifth Anglican minority and the rest of the Irish population”. This ignores the fact, of course, that half of the “Anglican” minority referred to, were, in fact, Presbyterian (McBride, 2009, p. 5).

Such categorisations of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Irish society as a colony have proven problematic in other ways. As Leighton (1994, p.157) points out:

“After the fall of the Gaelic order, there were few aspects of Irish life which displayed marked deviation from European norms. It is this which has suggested the appropriateness of the....application of the idea of *ancien régimes* to the study of eighteenth century Ireland.”

Whelan (1988, p. 253) too, argues that the development of Tridentine Catholicism in Ireland was more akin to:

“a variant of the continental Catholic experience, replicating processes which had occurred a century or two earlier in Germany or France....In the wider European perspective, Ireland was a classic lagging area albeit tied to an efficient pan-European control network run from Rome.”

For O’Halloran (1992, p. 156), whether Ireland fitted into colonial or *ancien régime* frameworks is something of a question *mal posée*. She remarks:

“I find very puzzling this obsession with fitting Ireland into one or other category. Ireland, the argument goes, is part of *Ancien Régime* Europe or *ergo* it cannot be a colony....Both of these characters are based on models....and models are merely analytical tools....useful for illuminating certain aspects of society, but never adequate as a complete description of any historical process. Yes, Ireland exhibited many of the characteristics of *Ancien Régime* society, but on the other hand....no other conquered territory in Europe underwent such a massive process of expropriation and settlement which dispossessed virtually the entire native landed elite.”

For this reason, neither colonial nor *ancien régime* categories on their own have come to be accepted as capable of comprehensively conveying the complex realities of the Irish situation.

Even Rome accepted the uniqueness of the Irish case. In 1746 Pope Benedict XIV asked:

“What evils are not to be dreaded in a country where the clergy are few in number, where Catholics must live among an heterodox people and where they are persecuted by the magistrates on account of their conscientious adherence to the religion of their fathers?”

(O’Brien, 1989, p. 35).

Far from being part of a privileged alliance of “throne, altar and chateau” (McLeod, 1981, p. 15), therefore, Rome referred to an “Irish mission” rather than to a formal Church. During his 1765/66 parish missions, Bishop John O’Brien attributed the difficulties of Cloyne’s Catholics in fulfilling the laws of God to their “enslavement to Protestants” (Coombes, 1981, p. 86). This perception of enslavement was even shared by Church of Ireland Archbishop King of Dublin who thought that Protestant magistrates made little effort to convert Catholics because they thought that “Papists make the best tenants, as indeed they pay more rent and are greater slaves to their landlords than Protestants would ever be” (Connolly, 1992, p. 306). At the popular level, a manuscript notice, most likely posted by a United Irish activist in Cloyne village in 1797 claimed that “the poor wretches of this country are reduced to a state of degradation below that of the negroes of the West Indies” (Dickson, 2005, p. 464).

Perhaps not surprisingly, Leighton (1994, p. 8) concludes that:

“To speak of a Catholic interest flourishing under the penal laws is a useful statement about Catholic property, but it may mislead about the state of the Catholic mind, conscious of a historical community which had suffered much....While it may be legitimate to speak of a

Catholic resurgence, it should also be pointed out that this was a resurgence from a very low point indeed.” MacBride (2009, p. 217) too, finds it “hard to avoid the conclusion that there is something missing from the more optimistic accounts of Catholic Ireland typical of recent historiography.” If the penal laws were of such insignificance and could have been evaded so easily, then why, he wonders, did Irish Anglicans fight tooth and nail to preserve them? Morely (2011) adds whether it is reasonable or not to assume that the members of any denomination, in an age of faith, would have regarded laws directed against their clergy and co-religionists as anything other than a grievance. His close reading of Irish-language texts created by writers with little or no property demonstrates that they were sensitive to the impact of the laws, even to the ones that had no direct bearing upon themselves. Recurrent references to *leatrom* (oppression), *Gallsmacht* (foreign domination), *inghream ábhalmhór* (enormous persecution) *geimhligh* (shackles) *daoirse* (bondage) and *páis* (suffering) appear throughout the popular literature of Catholic Irish-speaking communities. Plebian Catholics, as Morley (2011, p. 194) points out, did not need middle-class agitators from the Catholic Committee to teach them that anti-Catholic legislation was a grievance as the idea was already well expounded in their own literature.

For Bergin *et al* (2011, p.21) much remains to be learned. Explorations of the everyday relationships between Catholics and Protestants of different social classes at regional, diocesan, local, family and individual levels, they suggest, may lead to the development of a better understanding of how the laws operated on a day-to-day basis and upon individual lives. For MacBride (2009, p. 217) while the penal laws may have succeeded in limiting public expressions of Catholicism and intimidated at least some Catholics into believing that there was no alternative except compliance with the Protestant Ascendancy, they may also have led at least some Irish Protestants into the self-justification of their position. The likes of Art O’Leary and Séamus Óg MacOitir/Sir James Cotter Jr. who refused to conduct themselves “with the deference expected of the conquered Irish” (MacBride, 2009, p. 233) could be harshly dealt with. Penal legislation, originally drafted for the purposes of military security could be employed to keep the likes of “O’Leary in his place” (MacBride, 2009, p.

234).¹ The unspoken bargain that may have emerged across much of eighteenth-century Irish society, therefore, involved *de facto* toleration from Protestants in return for varying degrees of deference from Catholics. While Irish Protestants were prepared to accept the unobtrusive presence of Catholics and their rituals, what they could not stomach were public demonstrations of “popery with attitude” (MacBride, 2009, p. 239).

For Scott (1985), however, such deference should not be taken to imply consent. While his research into social class relations in a rural Malaysian village in the late 1970s may be of questionable relevance to eighteenth and/or early nineteenth-century Ireland, his focus on everyday forms of resistance such as foot-dragging, dissimulation, desertion, pilfering and arson is an interesting one. Such acts were generally low-profile, avoided direct confrontation and “make no headlines” (Scott, 1985, p. xvii). Reinforced by “a venerable popular culture of resistance and multiplied many thousandfold”, such activities, he suggests, had the potential to “make an utter shambles of the policies dreamed up by their would-be superiors in the capital” (Scott, 1985, p. xvii). Following Scott, MacBride (2009, p. 243) calls into question representations of eighteenth-century Irish Catholics as servile or quiescent. Catholics who were not engaged in direct confrontation may not necessarily have been quiescent about their condition. Movements such as the Whiteboys, Rightboys, United Irish and Rockites certainly made their presence felt. Cloyne’s Catholics may also have been quietly assertive in undocumented, more subtle and less violent ways. At least some Catholics may also have been able to see more clearly than others that while the penal laws permitted the Irish Protestant Ascendancy to admire their confident self-portrait for a while, this would not be forever.²

The same may have been as true within different Catholic communities, of course. Whelan (1985, p. 215) insists that the social class structure within a

¹ O’Leary was killed for refusing to sell his horse to a Protestant magistrate, as he was legally obliged to do under the terms of the 1695 “Act for the Better Securing the Government by Disarming Papists” (MacBride, 2009, p. 241).

² Although not necessarily from the period under review, the Duhallow saying “Níl uasal ná íseal, ach suas seal agus síos seal/There’s neither high born nor low born, but up for a while and down for a while” offers an interesting insight into social change as viewed by some within the Irish-speaking communities of the north-west of the diocese. I am indebted to Fr. John J. Ó Ríordán for drawing my attention to this seanfhocal.

Catholic community cannot be ignored. Catholicism as an institutional entity was not, as he points out, the religion of the poor. Rather, it was “most strongly entrenched in the richer areas, the upper social classes and the towns” (MacBride, 2009, p. 230). His seminal research into a Catholic “underground gentry” (1996) also demonstrates the endurance of a number of dispossessed Catholic and crypto-Catholic gentry families who remained on or near their ancestral territories by holding lands on long leases.³ Social class also figured significantly in the movement for Catholic Emancipation (1823-9) as its leadership tended to be largely middle class, with support coming from towns and the wealthier farming districts (Whelan, 1988, p. 265).

This study also draws upon a rich tradition of writing on the Cork region (Donnelly jr., 1975, O’Flanagan and Buttimer, 1993, Dickson, 2005). MacCotter’s (2014) research into the medieval diocese of Cloyne explores the evolution of its parish and deanary system. Coombes (1981) research into the episcopate of Bishop John O’Brien provides valuable detail. Crotty (1997) and Derr’s (2013) detailed research into the episcopal visitations of Bishops MacKenna, Coppinger and Collins is also insightful.

Although Dickson’s (2005) research into Catholic-Protestant relations is impressive, his treatment of Co. Cork’s Catholics is somewhat problematic. While correct in drawing attention to the colonial dimension, referring to the “witchdoctors and wisemen” of Catholic communities (Dickson, 2005, p. xiii) may be taking colonial comparisons too far. References to “servile” (Dickson, 2005, p. 201) communities existing on the fringes of farms or estates would also benefit from further research. If such communities were servile, how and why this may have been the case requires further exploration. To what extent might such responses have been expected from communities whose members had been marginalised, their needs neglected and their dignity not upheld? The use of dehumanising language when referring to the “untamed” Irish (Dickson, 2005, p. 49) or to a “cull” (Dickson, 2005, p. 474) of United Irishmen following 1798 is also regrettable. That some Catholics saw themselves, at times, as a

³ For Barnard (1997) this term is problematic given that the ways by which the Irish defined the concept of gentry may have been different to the rest of Europe. MacBride (2009) also finds the term applicable for certain parts of Ireland only (Magennis, 2010, p. 199).

“separate and injured community” (Dickson, 2005, p. 264) is certainly correct, however.

As seen earlier, not all of Cloyne’s Catholics saw themselves as servile, passive victims. Nor, for that matter did their landlords view them as such (Dickson, 2005, p. 187). Even the most ardent of Protestant landlords such as the Earls of Shannon at Castlemartyr strategically protected branches of local Catholic “underground gentry” such as the Imokilly Fitzgeralds (MacCotter, 1993, p. 82). In the event of a French invasion, these Earls were dependent upon the surrounding Catholic majority to protect their properties, if not their lives (O’Brien, 1989, p. 105). In 1797 the Second Earl of Shannon was under no illusions regarding the vulnerability of his privileged position. He observed that “men who are dependent on me and frequently had resorted to me for kindness, are now visibly terrified at being alone with me, lest they incur suspicion and its consequences”.⁴

Although the Roman Catholic communities of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Cloyne clearly faced a challenging situation whereby they needed to rebuild without the support of the State and in the face of varying degrees of opposition, this was done within an environment where memories, monuments and structures inherited from a Christian past were already well in place. Contrary to its official designation as mission territory, then, from his study of *relatio status* sent by Irish bishops to Rome, Corish (1985, p. 104) concludes that, as early as the 1630s, the Irish Catholic situation was, in fact, “very substantially” that of a Church. In this study, therefore, a spectrum of different responses, formulated at different times, in different places and among different groups which were tailored to meet unique, complex, changing and challenging needs are explored. No uniform Catholic experiences are assumed, just as no equivalent Protestant ones are. How and at what pace different Catholic communities recovered from their losses, adapted to new realities and came to a *modus operandi* with the representatives and institutions of the Protestant State in which they lived was clearly a multi-dimensional task. In the main analysis chapter, an opening section outlines how Cloyne’s Catholics

⁴ Richard Boyle, Second Earl of Shannon, Castlemartyr, 9 Nov 1797. National Archives 620/33/27.

drew upon their spiritual, cultural and historical heritages. A second section explores to what extent they drew upon each other's help. A final section investigates the openness of Cloyne's Catholics to external assistance from outside the geographical boundaries of their diocese.

1.1 The Place

When exploring eighteenth and early nineteenth Irish Catholic communities, scales of analysis are clearly important. Substantial studies have already been completed at county⁵, provincial⁶ and diocesan⁷ scales. Island-wide studies have also been used to demonstrate the varied geographical development of what had previously been thought of as a more national church (Whelan, 1988). For this study a diocese was chosen as the most appropriate spatial frame of reference given that it acts as one of the most important spatial structures used by the Roman Catholic Church. A diocese also provides greater detail than provincial or national scales, whilst offering greater scope for geographical investigation than at the smaller parish or townland levels.

Cloyne's diversity of geographical, historical, socio-economic and cultural conditions was a further reason for making this choice. Although possessing many of the diversities of a county, this diocese, although smaller than the county within which it is located, is larger than many Irish counties. J.S. Donnelly jr.'s (1975, p. 22) observation for nineteenth century Co. Cork that "neither the quality of land, nor manner of life of the people was uniform" holds as true for Cloyne as it does for the county within which it is located.

Covering much of east, north and mid Co. Cork (Map 1.1), eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Cloyne was materially wealthy and for some at least, considered a pleasant place in which to live. In 1741, after successfully completing his visitation of the diocese, Cloyne's Church of Ireland Bishop, George Berkeley concluded that, although having been "shaken to pieces" because of its size and the poor condition of its roads, Cloyne was nevertheless akin to Tivoli where "ver ubi longum tepidasque praebet Jupiter Brumas" (Luce, 1949, p.169).⁸ In 1800 the average cash income for Cloyne's parish

⁵ Wexford (Whelan, 1990), Tipperary (Whelan, 1985, O'Shea, 1983), Kilkenny (Ó Feargail, 1990).

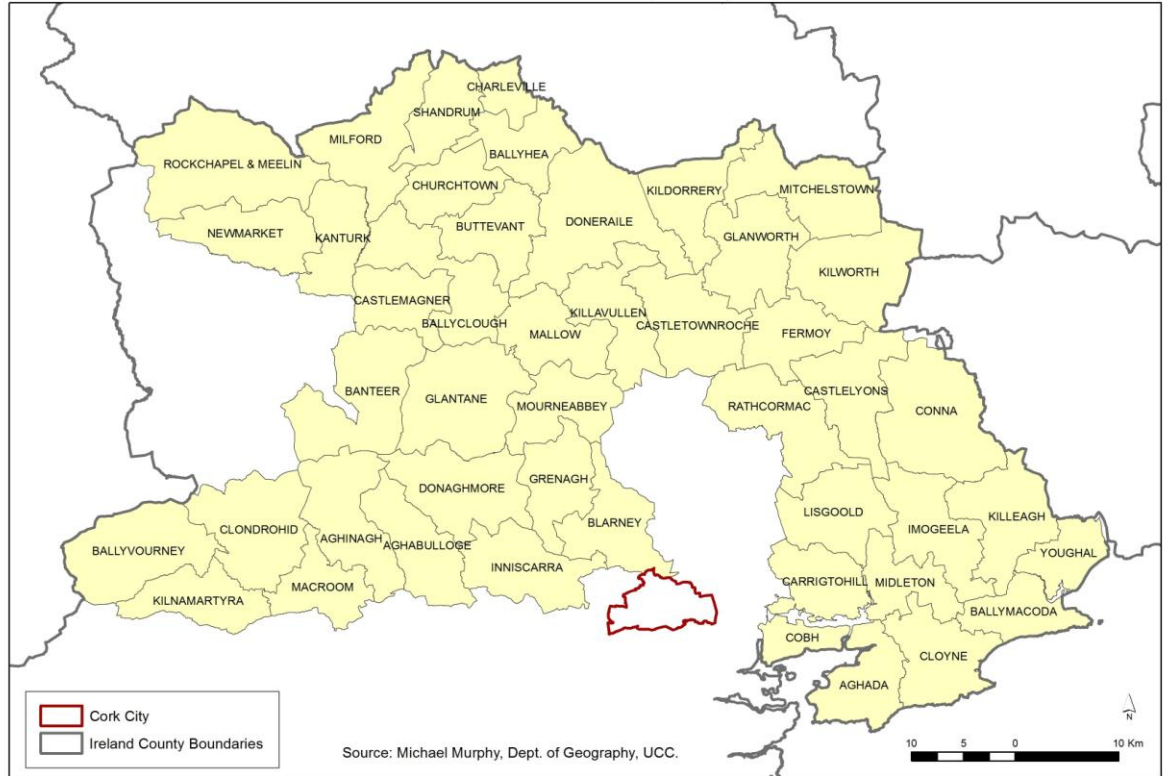
⁶ Ulster (Rafferty, 1994, Elliott, 2000)

⁷ Killaloe (Murphy, 1991), Limerick (Begley, 1906), Ferns (Grattan-Flood, 1916), Meath (Cogan, 1992), Ossory (Carrigan, 1905), Cork (Bolster, 1989), Kerry (O'Regan, 1996), Ross (Holland, 1949), Ardagh (Kelly, 1991), Clogher (Duffy, 1993), Achonry (Swords, 1997), Dublin (Kelly and Keogh, 1999, Begadon, 2009, Ó Fearghail, 1992).

⁸ Referring to Horace's villa at Tivoli where "spring is long and Jupiter provides mild winters". (Horace *Odes* 2.6. 17-18). I am indebted to Prof. David Scourfield, NUIM for this translation.

priests was estimated at between £100 to £120 per annum. In Raphoe diocese, Co. Donegal, it was £55 (Connolly, 1982, p. 48). In the same year, Daniel

Map 1.1 Modern Roman Catholic Parish Map of Cloyne Diocese



O’Connell thought £150 per annum a high average for a Catholic priest (Connolly, 1982, p. 50). It must also be pointed out that these figures relate to cash incomes only. When other customary entitlements such as agricultural produce and labour are taken into account, the living standards of Cloyne’s priests may have been impressive.

Following Whelan’s (1988) model, Cloyne may be broadly, yet not totally located within the Catholic core region of the south and east of Ireland (Millerick, 2013). By the 1750s it was among the first Irish dioceses where parish missions were being conducted by its parish clergy (Coombes, 1981, p. 86). In 1771 benediction and sung vespers were becoming the norm for its towns on Sundays (Coombes, 1981, p. 86)⁹ Along with its wealth and

⁹ Compare Cloyne with Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, where, in 1852, an Austrian Redemptorist observed that its Catholics had “never even witnessed Benediction” (Connolly, 1982, p. 93).

favourable climate, at least some of Cloyne's Catholics were also influenced by their proximity to continental European influences. The early arrival of Jesuits at Youghal in the late 1500s, for instance, had introduced continentally-inspired religious practices through this seaport town (Ó Coindealbhain, 1945, p. 129). Devotional practices associated with the cult of Our Lady of Graces at Youghal also demonstrate closer links with European traditions of pilgrimage than with local Irish ones. The focus of this devotion was Marian and not to a local Irish saint. Its date of cult formation was considerably newer than most Irish pilgrimages, which tended to be older. Legends associated with the arrival of the carved ivory image of Our Lady of Graces to Youghal were also typically continental. A silver shrine made for the image of Our Lady of Graces in 1617 by Lady Honora Fitzgerald of Cloyne further illustrates closer parallels with continental European patterns rather than with local Irish ones (Lee-Nolan, 1983, p. 432).

The enduring presence of a Catholic "underground gentry" (Whelan, 1996) such as the Imokilly Fitzgeralds or the Cotters of Carrigtwohill in the south-east of the diocese also provided wealth and a sufficiently stable environment for their church to re-emerge. Indeed, such was the extent of the Cotter influence that conferences and general councils of the early eighteenth-century Irish Catholic church were held at Sir James Cotter's residence at Carrigtwohill (Ó Buachalla, 1993, p. 475). In 1769, a young Catholic priest commented upon such favourable conditions which he encountered in this part of the diocese. "I am promoted to the care of souls in the pleasant district of Middleton" he wrote "among a peacable, good, people...the walk is cool, and the country so agreeable, that I do not find myself much hardshipped" (Coombes, 1981, p. 49).

Beneath such an apparently tranquil surface, however, lay unresolved sectarian and social-class tensions. Popular Catholic opinion in the area held that James Cotter jr./Séamus Óg Mac Coitir had been killed in 1720 because "the Protestants of Cork were so much against him and hated him so much for his independent spirit and conduct towards themselves that he was executed" (Ó Buachalla, 1993, p. 486).¹⁰ Dickson (2005, p. 270) stresses, however, that

¹⁰ Similar accounts held that:

Cotter's killing was unintended and that some of the most prominent of Co. Cork's Protestants had campaigned for clemency on his behalf. As seen earlier in the case of the Second Earl of Shannon at Castlemartyr in 1797, even the most apparently secure of Cloyne's resident Church of Ireland landlords were aware of how vulnerable and dependent their positions actually were.

Further sectarian tensions come into clearer focus in towns such as Youghal, where, by the 1740s, its religious balance continued to favour Protestants, but only just (Dickson, 2005, p. 249). In 1743 the burning and looting of the town's Catholic chapel by some of its Protestant inhabitants and soldiers was a rare phenomenon by eighteenth-century standards and more a throwback to the Cromwellian era (O'Brien, 1989, p. 24). Two years later, an effigy of Prince Charles Edward

“drest in a Highland plaid, with a halter and bonnet on his head, with a white cockade on one side and a white brick about his neck, a wooden sword on his right side, a blue rose on the other, with a bundle of Rosarys (or Padareens) hung to his nose to show his obedience to the Pope”

(Coombes, 1981, p. 35)

was once again burnt publicly with impunity. Such acts were not just provocative. Dickson (2005, p. 249) suggests that they should be read more as acts of collective insecurity than of self-confidence.¹¹

“Mr. Cotter used to hunt a fox with an orange lily fastened to it, with hounds ornamented with white roses...There is a very common tradition that his horses had frequently white roses attached to their heads and orange lilies to their tails, when drawing his carriage”.

Another account held that “Mr. Cotter used to go into court with his hat on and with a sword at his side...That the Protestants hated him, he annoyed them in so many ways. Both Sir James and his son were great shots. The Protestants were fonder of the father than of the son. The former was much a more sensible and sturdy man. He was very civil to the Protestants whilst his son annoyed them in many ways and was much disliked by the gentry who were much afraid of him...Mr. Cotter, as well as his father Sir James, used to drive four and six horses to his carriage.

Another account held that “Cotter was hated by the faction of the day in Cork. He was a Catholic. Could not drive horses under his carriage. Used to ride into Cork, his carriage drawn by four bullocks. Around their fetlocks orange ribbons to trample. He was a handsome but foolish man. Boasted of favours from wives of many leading citizens...” (Ó Buachalla, 1993, p. 486)

¹¹ Such insecurity was by no means confined to Youghal. At Bandon, Crofton Croker (1824, p. 160) observed that “over the principal gate an inscription once stated that Jew, Turk or Athiest may enter here but not a Papist”. In Cork city in 1747 it was reported that “There is no walking Cork streets without insult if you do not wear an orange cockade” (Dickson, 2005, p. 271). After opening her schools for Catholics in Cork city in the 1750s and 60s, Nano Nagle experienced “Malignant critics” who

By 1766, Youghal's Catholics countered with similar bravado. Boasting that they now had "more correspondents in foreign countries" than the town's Protestants, they taunted their enemies that, if successful, they would not permit Protestants to "get a morsel of bread in Youghal" (O'Brien, 1989, p. 77). Reflecting upon events at Youghal in 1798, Catholic Bishop William Coppinger recalled that relations had deteriorated to such an extent that "a rising of Orangemen" was expected (Moran, 1884, p. 605). By 1804, matters had improved (Moran, 1884, p. 605). Bishop Coppinger continued to remind his readers, however, that "A curse prevailed in the south of Ireland when signal evil was wished to an enemy, may the devil take him to Youghal" (Moran, 1884, p. 605). By 1820, further changes had taken place. Only 15% of the town's population were now Protestant, with Catholics having moved into what were once Protestant core areas of the town (O'Flanagan, 1988, p. 135).

In contrast to Cloyne's south-eastern parishes, its more upland western and northwestern parishes seem to have offered relatively greater freedom of expression for Catholics. While Protestant magistrates could obstruct the construction of Catholic chapels in the north and east of the diocese with relative ease, this may not have been the case in parts of the west or northwest. As early as 1733, Macroom had "a splendid mass house" built "on an eminence at the entrance into the town" (Dickson, 2005, p. 258). At Kanturk, its Catholics ignored their landlord's agent and built their chapel on the town's common without his permission (Dickson, 2005, p. 258, Kanturk Returns, Cloyne Parish Folklore Collection, C.D.A.)

Spontaneity, intimacy and gaeity were just three of the characteristics identified by Whelan (1988, p. 272) in the "enduring outliers of a robust Gaelic world" such as the west and northwest of Cloyne. All were certainly evident during the great "pattern-days" or festivals associated with saints such as Gobnet at Ballyvourney. Indeed, such was the popularity of devotion to Gobnet across Munster that Lee-Nolan (1983) categorises her cult as regional rather than local.

"upbraided her for her throngs of beggar's brats! She was cursed in the streets as an imposter and her schools were derided as seminaries of vice" (MacCarthy, 1998, p. 13)

Some contemporary English speakers failed to appreciate this cultural vitality. Once beyond Macroom, Richard Hedges, an early eighteenth century settler, described the area west of the town as “forty miles of a barbarous country” containing “not an English gentleman of note”. Its landscape was “all mountains, boggs and rocks”, its population “intirely inhabited by Irish” (Whelan, 1995, p. 13). Co. Cork’s first published English-language historian, Charles Smith (1750, p. 181) identified what he imagined to have been an east/west frontier when he wrote that Macroom was located “on the frontier of a very wild country, being all rocky and barren to the north”. Even Cloyne’s Catholic bishop, Dr. Matthew McKenna thought disparagingly of this part of the diocese while on visitation there in 1785. His terse remark “this region would want the best and most virtuous missioner” indicating his displeasure.¹²

A further distinguishing feature of this part of the diocese was its reputation as a place where the reach of the civil law was limited. Richard Hedges maintained that this was because of the absence of a resident Protestant elite. In 1714, writing from Killarney he observed that:

“some heads of Irish clans...not only carry arms and harbour unregistered...priests in defiance of ye laws...but have gained ye ascent over ye civil power by their insolence and principles, so that the ordinary course of ye law cannot be put in force against them, without hazard to ye lives of such as go about it, there being very few protestants and they overawed by ye multitude of papists”.

(Whelan, 1995, p. 13)

Ó Murchadha’s (1993, p. 236) study of nearby Inchigeela identified this part of Co. Cork as a place that fostered the development of “what might be termed anti-establishment personages and events”. Richard Griffith, an early nineteenth-century civil engineer responsible for road construction in west Munster thought this part of the diocese to have been a “wild, neglected country, without roads, culture or civilisation” (Dickson, 2005, p. 432). Given the general material poverty of its inhabitants, he thought them “turbulent” whose attendant “wickedness frequently escaped punishment” (O’Riordáin, 2007, p. 176).¹³

¹² Derr, E., 2013, p. 287.

¹³ The repeated use of categories such as “them” and “us”, “civilisation” and “barbarism”, “good” and “evil” (Gregory, 2004, p. 11) by Catholic and Protestant writers alike would clearly suggest colonial mindsets.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it was out of this part of Cloyne that the *Caoineadh Art Uí Laoghaire/Lament for Art O'Leary* was written. This popular lament indicted a former county high sheriff as the murderer of Art O'Leary, an ex-Austrian cavalry officer, in 1773. Given their relative inaccessibility, the uplands of west Duhallow and west Muskerry also provided a safe refuge for the Rockite movement that emerged during the 1820s (Dickson, 2005, p. 490). Only the gradual extension of trials, transportations, a new county police force, a programme of road construction and rent reduction managed to quell its activities in this part of Cloyne (Dickson, 2005, p. 491).¹⁴

Such open defiance of the civil law may not have been as easy to express in the north and mid-section of Cloyne. No other part of the diocese contained an equivalent number of Protestant-owned estates, such as the Aldworths at Newmarket, Percivals at Kanturk, St. Ledgers at Doneraile, Kings at Mitchelstown, Hydes at Fermoy and the Duke of Devonshire at Conna (Smyth, 1993, p. 668). Even after returning to England, Barnard (1993, p. 315) suggests that many of these families longed to return to their Irish homes as their sense of place embraced love of a particular estate and locale. This motive also accounted for their reluctance to leave during times of distress.

The construction of large estate houses, parklands, tree-planted landscapes, new field systems and the introduction of new agricultural practices in this part of Co. Cork created what Smyth (1993, p. 667) has termed a "colonial landscape". O'Flanagan (1993, p. 441) too, refers to north Cork as Munster's most conspicuously landlord embellished zone. Old settlements such as Rathcormac, Castlelyons and Fermoy were revitalised and new planned towns and villages built at Mitchelstown, Doneraile, Newmarket and Kanturk. Increased commercialisation was also encouraged through the promotion of markets and fairs, with a significant portion of the profits returning to the landlord who promoted them (Dickson, 1977, p. 519).

¹⁴ Compare the northwest of Cloyne with that of the northeast, where, given the presence of more resident Church of Ireland landlords and magistrates, the civil law could be more effectively enforced. In 1758, for instance, when Catholic Bishops John O'Brien of Cloyne and Pierce Creagh of Waterford, together with a number of Catholic priests excommunicated the inhabitants of Mitchelstown, James, Baron Kingston, the local landlord, was quick to place a bounty on their heads. Their excommunication sentence which had "the desired effect of putting an entire stop to all commerce" in the town was short-lived (Brady, 1965, p. 95).

Where landlords may have seen “improvement”, Irish-language poet Aogán Ó Rathaille saw things differently. In “An Milleadh d’Imthig ar Mhór-Shleachtaibh na-hÉireann/The Destruction Which Fell upon the Great Families of Ireland”, Ó Rathaille lamented that parts of Cloyne were reverting back to what he imagined as a wilderness:

“Gríofa ‘s Hedges gan cheilg ‘im scéalaibh,
I leaba an Iarla, is pian is ‘s céasta!
An Bhlárna gan áitreabh ach faolchoin!
Is Rath Luirc scriostaithe, nochtaithe i ndaor bhruid”

“Griffin and Hedges, without deceit is my tale,
In the place of the Earl it is pain and torture!
Blarney without a dwelling except for wolves!
And Charleville plundered, stripped bare and in deepest desolation”
(Whelan, 1995, p.13-15)

Not all of Cloyne’s Catholics were as adverse as Ó Rathaille, however, to the changes taking place. Although most of Co. Cork’s Catholic priests refused to take the Oath of Abjuration (1709), a cluster of four priests located in the north-east of the diocese did. Very likely they were influenced by Protestant landlords to do so (Dickson, 2005, p. 256). In 1731 the Catholics of Doneraile complained that their parish priest, Rev. John Hennessy was ignoring their pastoral needs, preferring instead the company of Protestants. “His chief study daily, is” they outlined “when he can get any pence, which heel seldom earn, thene to hasten to the Protesdants of Doneraile and drink that in brandy and punch” (Cullen, 1993, p. 563). Catholics were also hired by Protestant landlords as agents on the Doneraile, Orrery and Barrymore estates (Dickson, 2005, p. 325).¹⁵ Catholic and convert-Catholic families such as the Nagles continued to retain a degree of local dominance as middlemen and/or as tenant farmers on the Doneraile and King estates (Dickson, 2005, p. 187).¹⁶ Although transferred to Crown control, formerly communal estates such as “Pobal

¹⁵ Agents with a poor understanding of local conditions could be a costly liability. On the Barrymore estate in 1748 it was said of the inheriting fifth Earl that “the ill effects of employing means tools...are very palpable in his Lordship’s family already; they brought his wise father into more contempt than any other act of his life, and in the end lost many thousands of pounds” (Dickson, 2005, p. 326).

¹⁶ Catholics who had nominally converted to the State Church were referred to as convert Catholics.

O’Keefe” in the northwest of the diocese were also let out again on long leases to the Cronin clan (Dickson, 2005, p. 224).

By the mid-eighteenth century, Dickson (2005, p. 272) identifies the emergence of “pragmatic toleration” in this and other parts of Co. Cork. Far from being viewed with suspicion, Catholic priests were now, he argues, more likely to be seen by Protestant landlords as “vital instruments of social control, calming and admonishing their congregations, mediating oaths and contracts, perhaps on occasion passing on warnings to Protestant confidants”. This did not go unnoticed. Following the stance taken by some Catholic priests in opposing the Rightboy movement in 1786, an insightful priest and later Bishop of Kerry, Rev. Gerard Teahan observed:

“The clamor against the clergy for exhortations, oppression and tyrannical treatment of the poor has been so violent, and the defection of the people so general, and so long continued, particularly in the Barony of Muskerry that Dr. MacKenna seemed at length to awake from a state of lethargy....By the terror of firearms, they strove to intimidate their own parishioners....they declared war...against their own flocks”.

Teahan concluded that “The abhorrence of the Protestant Church and their respect for their own clergy has vanished. All confidence in their parish priests is lost”.¹⁷

That comparatively little wealth had made its way into the hands of the less socially privileged was just as obvious to others. In 1775 Rev. James Mockler, a Church of Ireland minister at Mallow concluded that the labouring poor of north Cork were “the most miserable and most distressed on the face of the earth... no chimney but the door, no furniture but the pot to boil the potatoes, no bed to lie upon...but fern and green rushes” (Dickson, 2005, p. 245). Mockler added that they continued to be marginalised by rising prices. He observed:

“The country around Mallow, and all over Munster is of late years, much thinned and stripped of its inhabitants to make room for bullocks, sheep and dairy cows. Rich folks were never half so fond as they have been within these 10 or 12 years past of taking farms and increasing their stocks of cattle.”

(Whelan, 1997, p. 97)

¹⁷ Rev. G. Teahan to James Butler II, Archbishop of Cashel, 24 April 1786. Butler Papers NLI.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, it was in this and in other parts of Cloyne where socio-economic extremes had not been peacefully resolved that agrarian and other secret societies became popular from the mid-1700s. The Whiteboys in the 1760s and 1770s, Rightboys in the 1780s, United Irish in the 1790s and Rockites in the 1820s violently vented their anger at the processes and people whom they perceived were responsible for marginalising and impoverishing them. Indeed, Cloyne was more affected by the Rightboy movement than any other Irish diocese (Dickson, 2005, p. 450)

However, harsh treatment could be expected for challenging the *status quo*. In 1766 three Whiteboys “with white sheets drawn over their clothes” were publicly executed at Mitchelstown, Glanworth and Fermoy (Grove-White, 1905, p. 105). Catholic priests who attempted the same through non-violent means could expect similar. In 1766, Nicholas Sheehy, the young, socially-committed Catholic parish priest of Clogheen-Burncourt, Co. Tipperary was hanged, drawn and quartered. His trial and manner of execution revolted contemporaries such as Edmund Burke, whose relatives, the Nagles, had also been implicated. When the parish priest of Doneraile excommunicated a brother of Lord Doneraile’s Catholic mistress in 1771, Lord Doneraile, accompanied by a relative, Capt. St. Ledger rode to the priest’s cabin where they horsewhipped the priest, Rev. Neal. What made this event exceptional was not the assault but the priest’s response. Finding only one Cork barrister prepared to accept his case, Rev. Neal’s legal action was successful and Doneraile forced to pay £1,000 in compensation (Corish, 1981, p. 106). Lord Doneraile retaliated by closing all mass-houses on his estate (Cullen, 1993, p. 573). In spite of this, such was its long-term success that Thomas Davis maintained that Rev. Neal’s initiative represented the “first spoils of emancipation” for Irish Catholics (Dickson, 2005, p. 447).¹⁸

Clearly then, not all of Cloyne’s Catholics were prepared to live in fear. A remarkably influential enclave of propertied Catholic and crypto-Catholic landowners has been identified by Cullen (1993) in the Blackwater Valley. The term “crypto-Catholic” refers to former Catholics who had converted to the

¹⁸ The barrister hired to defend Rev. O’Neal was John Philpott Curran, a Protestant who had grown up at Newmarket among the Catholic communities of the northwest of

established Church to maintain lands in their own or in their family's possession. Ó Buachalla (1993, p. 472) refers to this enclave as "an island of Catholic hegemony in a sea of Protestant Ascendancy". This enclave certainly provided conditions favourable for the emergence of a number of exceptional individuals such as Edmund Burke, his first cousin Nano Nagle, Cllr. Joseph Nagle, Catholic lobbyist Garret Nagle and Richard Hennessy, founder of the French cognac family. The Annakissy Nagles also provided a home and employment for Irish-language poet Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin. For the latter, it wasn't "an bhoichtineacht is measa liom, ná bheith thíos go deo/the poverty that bothers me, or being oppressed forever", but "an tarcuisne a leannan í, ná leighisfeadh na leoin/the contempt that follows it, which lions cannot cure" (Cullen, 1993, p. 574).¹⁹ The assertiveness of at least some Blackwater Catholics, however, came at the price of drawing the unwelcome attention of local politicised Protestants during periods of heightened tension such as the 1730s, 60s and 70s (Cullen, 1993, p. 538).

Outside of this enclave, Cullen (1993, p. 542) identifies the rural hinterland of Cork city as a generally oppressive environment where Catholics could make little socio-economic headway. Its oppressive political and social structures led wealthier Catholics to prefer to live in Cork city or elsewhere (Cullen, 1993, p. 542). That branches of Catholic families from Cloyne thrived in Co. Tipperary rather than in Co. Cork is demonstrated by Cullen (1993, p. 558) as indicative of the challenges they faced in Cloyne.

Those with the resources to do so looked further afield. After twelve years of "frustration and failure" in Cork, Richard Hennessy arrived at Cognac in 1765 where he started his brandy business (Cullen, 1993, p. 540). In the wake of sectarian tensions in the 1760's, David Nagle, Co. Cork's wealthiest Catholic landowner moved permanently to Bath (Dickson, 2005, p. 279). Cloyne's Catholic Bishop John O'Brien left for similar reasons in 1767. He

the diocese. This may account for his understanding of O'Neal's case (Ó Ríordáin, 2007, p. 155).

¹⁹ I am grateful to Leasa Ní Mhunghaile, N.U.I.G. and to Prof. Louis Cullen, T.C.D. for their translations of this verse. The lions referred to are the Catholic Irish abroad. Ó Súilleabháin's relationship with his employer Sean Nagle may have ended, however, when Nagle discovered that his wife had been pursuing an affair with Ó Súilleabháin. The poet was depicted as leaving "in full flight pursued by Nagle armed with a loaded gun". (Ó Ríordáin, 2007, p. 140)

died at Lyon two years later, declaring himself “an exile from his native land for defending his religion” (Coombes, 1981, p.76).

Given the “particularly repressive” (Cullen, 1993, p. 542) nature of Cloyne plus the fact that it was located within a county “notorious for its magistrates readiness to keep the penal laws alive” (Cullen, 1993, p. 576), perhaps it is not surprising that the diocese also provided two of Munster’s best known and best lamented eighteenth-century folk-heros. The killing of high-ranking Catholics such as James Cotter jr./Seamus Óg MacCoitir in 1720 and of Art O’Leary in 1773 had no parallels elsewhere in eighteenth-century Ireland (Cullen, 1993, p. 573). Towns such as Macroom, Mallow and Youghal were also sharply divided along religious lines (O’Flanagan, 1993, p. 417). In spite of Cloyne’s wealth, however, while visiting her daughter in Galway in 1766, Edmund Burke’s mother, a Nagle from the Blackwater Valley remarked upon the more affluent lifestyle of Catholics in this more tolerant western diocese (Cullen, 1993, p. 537).

Cloyne was clearly a place of contradictions. Although its formal Catholic religious leaders had suffered “more than their fair share” of persecution during the early decades of the eighteenth-century, the diocese continued to produce a vibrant Catholic *literati* (Dickson, 2005, p. 60). Nor were all Protestant gentry and magistrates “hell-bent” on destroying their political enemies or determined to make a mockery of the law (Dickson, 2004, p. 82). The enlightened presence of Church of Ireland Bishop George Berkley may have been a factor in Cloyne’s Catholics remaining “apparently quiescent” (Dickson, 2004, p. 44) when trouble might have been expected during the 1740s (Cullen, 1993, p. 564). Given its enduring cycles of violence, however, Rudé (1978, p. 3) regarded early nineteenth-century Co. Cork as “the most criminal county of all” given the number of cases brought before the assizes and quarter sessions. Among the Irish Catholic hierarchy, Cloyne had also acquired an unenviable reputation as being difficult to administer. In 1827, one bishop thought of the united diocese of Cloyne and Ross as “*ampla et faticosa*” - large and troubled (Bolster, 1989, p. 263).²⁰

²⁰ My thanks to Mgsr. James O’Brien, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Rome for pointing out that “*faticosa*” may be more accurately translated as “demanding”.

1.2 The Time-Period

The consideration of an appropriate time-period is as important as that of a spatial frame of reference. In this regard, Larkin's "Devotional Revolution" thesis (1972) has been criticised for its use of overly narrow time-spans. Such "narrow-time spaces" as McGrath (1986, p. 518) points out, can lead to a failure to appreciate "the underlying principles from which all else followed". Hence, a relatively lengthy time-period was chosen.

For Dickson (2005, p.64) the period between 1691 and 1714 marked a period of consolidation for the Protestant interest in the region. The old order, it seemed, had been broken. However, while things may have become difficult for Cloyne's Catholics they were certainly not unbearable. The 1704 Registration Act granted legal protection to registered priests, who were now free to celebrate Mass and administer the sacraments. Although periodic crackdowns continued, where clerical persecution did occur, this was mainly in urban areas and targeted against unregistered priests (Dickson, 2005, p. 257). If priests were prepared to carry out their ministries discreetly, they were generally not in danger. The system of common law also offered Catholics, if not full protection, then at least some counterweight against arbitrary injustices (Dickson, 2005, p. 271).

The use of officially authorised crackdowns could also have unforeseen consequences. The imprisonment of Catholic Bishop Sleyne in a Cork jail led to a minor international scandal, only ending when the eighty-year old was transported to Portugal in 1703 (MacBride, 2009, p. 219). The harsh treatment of priests could also backfire. At Ballynoe in 1707, the home of a Protestant who had apprehended a priest was burnt to the ground (Brady, 1965, p. 8-9). At Youghal in 1712 one of its Catholic priests escaped arrest with the assistance of a "great number of women" who came to his rescue (Burke, 1914, p. 377). The collective refusal of over 1,000 Catholic priests to take an oath abjuring the Stuart succession also embarrassed the Government into accepting that it was powerless to enforce this aspect of the 1709 Popery Act (O'Brien, 1989, p. 47).

Following the killing of Seamus Óg MacCoitir/James Cotter jr. in 1720, respect for the prevailing legal system, if indeed it had ever existed,

probably remained low (Dickson, 2005, p. 271). Charleville-based poet Seán Clárac MacDomhnaill lamented that:

“Cá fogas don tréad Éireannach codladh go ceart
is coiste na dtréad quaker I gCorcaigh is ceap”

“Sound sleep is far from the Irish when the jury
of quakers is in supreme authority in Cork”
(Ó Cuiv, 1989, p. 402)³¹

Tensions continued to simmer in the 1730s following Col. Richard Hennessey’s recruiting mission for the Irish Brigade of the French Army in the Blackwater Valley (Cullen, 1993, p. 560). Although conducted with the consent of Westminster, some of Cork’s Protestants were outraged that such recruitment could have been carried out in their midst. In retaliation, raids were conducted on the homes of prominent Catholics in Cork city. The 1731 Report into the State of Popery was also conducted particularly comprehensively in Cloyne given that much of Hennessey’s activities had been focused there (Cullen, 1993, p. 560).

From this report, a detailed picture of the material condition of the Catholic Church in Cloyne emerges. While Catholics were permitted to practice with some degree of freedom, they were expected to do so in a manner which would not offend Protestant sensibilities. At Charleville and Cloyne village, Protestant magistrates prevented the construction of new mass-houses on the grounds that they might come within view of Protestant churches and their congregations (Connolly, 1995, p. 289). That Cloyne’s Protestant magistrates and clergy were well informed as to the names and whereabouts of Catholic priests, schoolteachers, communities of Catholic religious and mass houses would also indicate a general absence of concealment (Connolly 1992, p. 149). In all, 92 priests and 70 mass-houses are listed. Few new mass-houses had been built and the ones in use were described as “mean, thatched cabbins, many, or most of them open at one end” (Cullen, 1993, p. 562).

Periodic crackdowns continued. At Castlelyons in 1733, a Protestant party retaliated against their crypto-Catholic opponents by nailing up a mass-

³¹ Given that no conscientious Quaker could perform jury service, this verse reveals just as much about MacDomhnaill’s ignorance of Quaker religious practice as it does about Cork’s sectarian tensions. I am grateful to Mr. Joe Seery, Dublin for this insight.

house and threatening its priest “not to celebrate mass for the future on pain of transportation” (Connolly, 1995, p. 289). Three days later, local Protestants were summoned to meet next to the mass-house “and there and then to seize and apprehend all priests, jesuits, monks, friars etc. as shall fall into their hands” (Burke, 1914, p. 383). Such manoeuvres were justified on the grounds that “it would prove an endless task to write of all their tyranny and oppression” (Burke, 1914, p. 383).²²

A final official crackdown came in the wake of the 1744/5 Stuart uprising in Scotland. At Youghal, its mayor reported that both of its Catholic priests had “narrowly escaped my hands” (Burke, 1914, p. 381). At Middleton, it was reported that “no popish person exercising any ecclesiastical jurisdiction does now or has resided within the liberties of this place for twenty years past” (Burke, 1914, p. 382). The mayor of Mallow stated “There is neither bishop, vicar-general, priest or deacon in this town, nor did I ever suffer more priests here than one” (Burke, 1914, p. 382). At Castlelyons, its priests had also “absconded, except for one, who expects some favour, largely on account of his age” (Burke, 1914, p. 384).

As seen earlier in the case of some of Youghal’s Protestants, this crisis brought out the worst in some. For others, however, the crisis was interpreted differently as an opportunity to see and do things differently. Cloyne’s Church of Ireland Bishop, George Berkeley, for instance, took the opportunity to address Catholics and Protestants on the issue. He urged Church of Ireland clergy to work and pray for their common safety, reminding them that if the rebellion succeeded, the work of the Reformation would be undone and their civil and religious rights lost. To Cloyne’s Catholics, he reminded them that in former days their rights to land, property and privilege had been considerable. Catholics had taken their share in the magistracy and legislature and had not been under religious disabilities. These, he held, had been lost through relying upon the false promises of France and Spain (Luce, 1949, p. 178). In *A Word to The Wise* (1749) he addressed Catholic priests, inviting them to forget their religious differences with Protestants and to join in the movement for the common good (Luce, 1949, p. 196).

²² Such remarks, of course, may have been projection.

Although Coombes (1981, p. 63) maintains that “an atmosphere of tension” continued throughout the 1750s, significant changes had taken place. For Dickson (2004, p. 44) Co. Cork’s Catholics had remained “apparently quiescent” up to this point. The “long peace” which Dickson (2004, p. 249) refers to for much of the early decades of the century didn’t last for much longer, however. Unresolved tensions led to recurring cycles of violence beginning with the Whiteboy movement (1761-5). Named after the white shirts worn over their clothes to conceal their identities, this movement declared:

“We levellers and avengers for the wrongs done to the poor, have unanimously assembled to raze walls and ditches that have been made to inclose the commons. Gentlemen now of late have learned to grind the face of the poor so that it is impossible for them to live. They cannot even keep a pig or a hen at their doors. We warn them not to raise again either walls or ditches in the place of those we destroy, nor even to inquire about the destroyers of them. If they do, their cattle shall be houghed and their sheep laid open in the fields”.

(Whelan, 1997, p. 96-97)

In response, Bishop John O’Brien wrote to the Catholic priests of the diocese in 1762:

“who are situated on the frontiers of the neighbouring counties, that have been first infected with those profligate disturbers of the public peace...As true and spiritual fathers you are not to spare the scourge of censures to your children. I hereby desire and order that you will punish and issue out in all forms an excommunication to be incurred *de facto* by all those of our communion who should happen to be engaged or acted in those parties of iniquity and works of darkness...That all may make the deeper impression upon the minds of that perverse set of people, and all those that may be exposed to their contagious seduction; you are hereby required to read this letter distinctly and audibly to your respective congregations at your chapels or mass stations”

(O’Connor, 1813, Appendix IX, p.xxvi).

O’Flaherty (1998, p. 11) argues that Edmund Burke’s anger towards the penal laws was because of their deployment against his Nagle relatives in the Blackwater Valley during the 1760s. James Nagle, a relative of Burke’s, was indicted for high treason for his alleged involvement in Whiteboy activities. The use of quasi-legal terror by some of Munster’s Protestant gentry incensed Burke who held that it was used as a pretext for the intimidation and, in some cases, the execution of innocent Catholics, such as Fr. Nicholas Sheehy in nearby Co. Tipperary.

However, from mid-century onwards, inter-denominational sociability, the conversion of Catholics to the State Church and that of Protestants to Catholicism softened at least some barriers (Dickson, 2005, p. 274). Bitter public enmities between the Butler and O'Brien factions within the Catholic Church also diminished Protestant perceptions of a Trojan Horse in their midst (Dickson, 2005, p. 259). Indeed, such was the rivalry between these families that Cloyne was separated from Cork diocese in 1750, a diocese to which it had been united since 1429. At this point, however, there was no "progressive process of thaw-out or advance of toleration" regarding the penal laws (Cullen, 1986, p. 25). Connolly (1992) and Bartlett (1992) also play down the idea of the eighteenth-century as one of increased religious toleration in Ireland, something which has been used as an explanation for the gradual relaxation of the penal laws (O'Halloran, 1992, p. 155).

Given their circumstances, some of Co. Cork's propertied Catholics increasingly align themselves with the Hanovarian regime. Since the 1750s, rising land prices and the capacity of the British State to project its power globally had strengthened a desire among propertied Catholics for accommodation with the emerging *status quo* (Dickson, 2005, p. 276). The wealth, power and number of Catholic and crypto-Catholic stakeholders in Co. Cork had also increased through their taking out of long leases during a period of rising land prices. By 1759, 124 of Co. Cork's leading Catholics had signed a declaration of loyalty which was conveyed to the Lord Lieutenant by the Earl of Shannon (Dickson, 2005, p. 277). Cork's Catholic merchants were also beginning to accumulate capital. By the 1760s rumours were emerging of "cash-rich" Catholics using their financial power to build up "friendly" Protestant debtors (Dickson, 2005, p. 272).

Improvements in the financial circumstances of at least some of Cloyne's Catholics may account for the improved condition of their chapels. Of the 71 chapels listed for Cloyne in the 1764/5 Hearth Tax Returns, only four were now described as being "in bad order" (Appendix 1). The provision of other services such as education remained poor (Coombes, 1981, p. 43). By 1775, Bishop Matthew McKenna thought that circumstances had improved to such an extent that "the government is now more favourably disposed towards us" (Coombes, 1981, p. 88). Quite exactly how different Protestant magistrates

and/or gentry thought or behaved locally, was, of course, another matter. Incidents such as the horsewhipping of the parish priest of Doneraile in 1771 or the murder of Art O’Leary in 1773 suggest that toleration could not be taken for granted. In 1775, the Catholic Bishops of Munster formally relinquished their allegiance to the Stuarts by accepting the Test Oath. This included a promise to:

“be faithful and bear true allegiance to our most gracious sovereign *lord* King George the Third, and him will defend to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatever that shall be made against his person, crown *and* dignity; and I will do my utmost *endeavour* to disclose and make known to his majesty *and his heirs* all treasons and *traitorous conspiracies* which may be formed against him or *them*; and I do faithfully promise to maintain, support and defend...the succession of the Crown in His Majesty’s family”
(O’Brien, 1989, p.111).

Public displays of Catholic loyalty may have been reciprocated to some extent with the passing of the first Catholic Relief Act in 1778.²³ This Act permitted Catholics to take leases for up to 999 years or for five lives. Catholics who owned estates or who were about to inherit them were granted the same legal protection as Protestants. By 1782 the parish priests of Mallow, Ballymacoda, Lisgoold and Fermoy swore oaths of allegiance to King George III (Walsh, 1912, p. 53-4). Further Relief Acts were passed in 1782, 1792 and 1793. A large surviving corpus of discriminatory laws remained, however (Cullen, 1986, p. 24).

The passing of such Acts and the public reassurances of some Catholics did not mean that habitual prejudices or fears disappeared. On the Catholic side such fears and/or prejudices may have been projected by some onto the Rightboy movement (1785-88). Well-organised, non-revolutionary and non-denominational, Rightboy grievances were centred around opposition to the excessive financial demands of both the Protestant and Catholic clergy (Fig. 1.1).²⁴ Catholic Bishop Matthew MacKenna initially assumed Rightboy

²³ Rather than increased toleration, factors such as the threatened failure of tax revenue, the threat of mass Catholic emigration from Ireland and the need for Catholic recruits for the British armed forces contributed to the passing of the 1778 Relief Act (O’Brien, 1989, p. 126-128)

²⁴ Poets such as Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabhain (1748-1782) were not afraid to reprimand priests for their greed, either. On one occasion, when a young priest was making fun of him, the poet responded:

Nuair a thiocfaidh an míol mór ar an Mhaing,
Nuair a thiocfaidh an Fhrainnc go Sliabh Mis,

activities to have been primarily motivated by spiritual, rather than socio-economic forces. “The enemy of mankind” he believed “has sown the seeds of riot and disorder among the lower classes” (Brady, 1965, p. 245). He dismissed their demands as a “pretended cause of complaint...which to our knowledge scarcely existed anywhere” (Connolly, 1982, p. 246). Adopting the same response as that of his predecessor, he demanded that priests excommunicate all known Rightboys.

The responses and reactions that emerged were varied and often violent. At Aghinagh, Catholics refused to attend confession or to pay their annual dues. At Aghabullogue, its Catholics refused to pay their Christmas and Easter dues.²⁵ Others “in several parishes, and especially in Inniscarra and Blarney suddenly forsook their own worship, chapels and clergy, and came in great numbers to attend divine service in the Protestant churches”.²⁶ At Ballyshoneen, Inniscarra, a group of Rightboys gathered outside the house of a Protestant gentleman in 1786:

“having information that the parish priest lay there that night...upon which the clergyman opened the window to know their business, which was to warn him, on pain of death, that not to take at any marriage more than 5s 5d, 1s 7d at christenings”.²⁷

At Donoughmore, Rightboys threatened to destroy the cattle of a priest and to give him a “warm reception” if he refused to “forgive the curse” that he had placed upon them (Bric, 1987, p. 180). This priest, with the backing of his bishop, refused. Shortly afterwards, Sir John Colthurst, one of the leading Protestant Rightboy activists in the Lee valley was reported to have protected Catholic Bishop MacKenna “from the fury of the populace, together with many other gentlemen of that religion”.²⁸ In fact, such was the degree of Bishop MacKenna’s mishandling of the movement that Catholic Bishop Moylan of

Nuair a chaillfidh an sagart an tsaint,
Is ea a thiocfaidh an chaint don bhfiach dubh.

When the whale will come up the Maine river,
When France will come to Sliabh Mis,
When the priest will abandon his greed,
Then speech will come to the raven.

(Ó Ríordáin, 2007, p. 143)

²⁵ Derr, E., 2013, p. 285.

²⁶ Donnelly jr., J.S., 1983, p. 14.

²⁷ Donnelly jr., J.S., 1983, p. 18.

²⁸ Donnelly jr., J.S., 1983, p. 22.

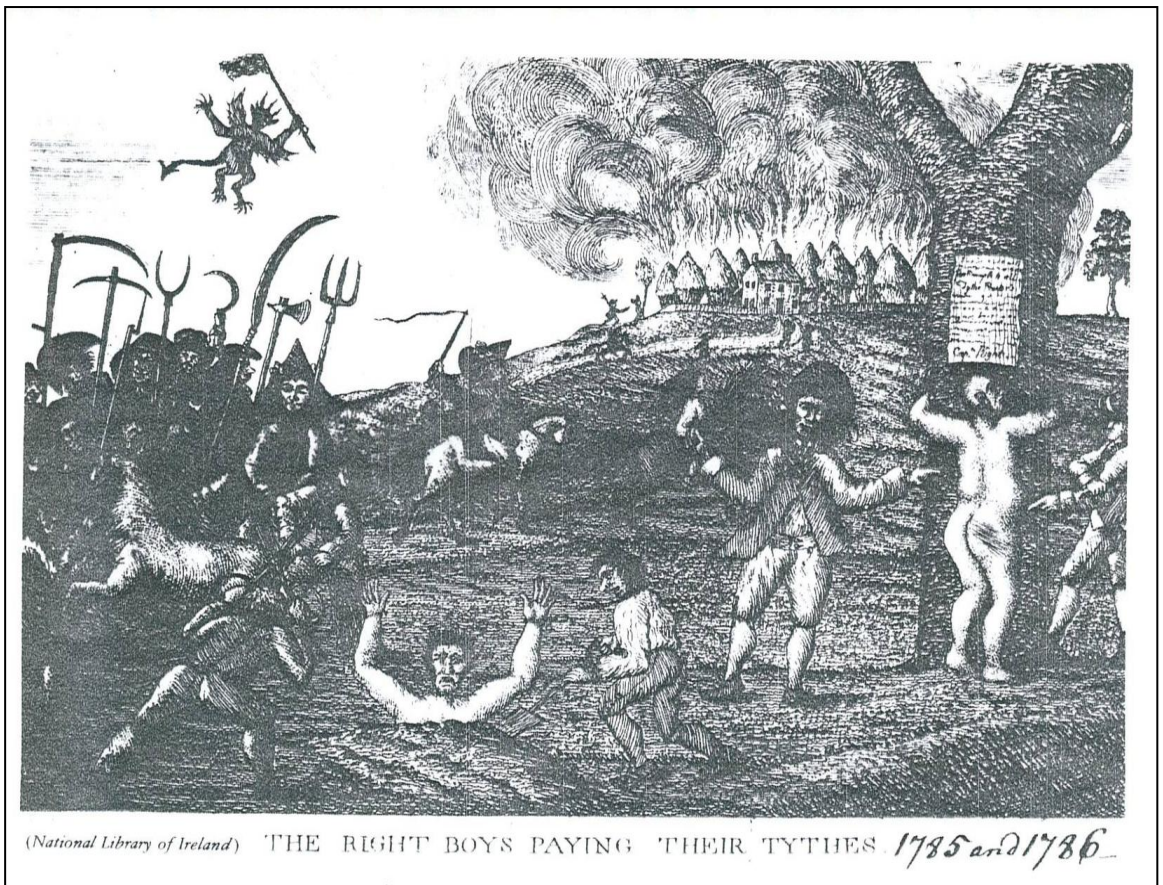


Fig. 1.1 “The Rightboys Paying Their Tythes” 1785/6. (Reproduced by kind permission of the National Library of Ireland, Dublin)

Cork wrote to Rome in 1787 requesting that he be removed from his position (Bolster, 1972, p. 66).

The matter was resolved following an initiative of the Munster Bishops. Priests who had pronounced “vindictive statements against the poor people, by pouring forth from the altar, the most shocking curses” were reprimanded (Donnolly, 1978, p. 173). Standardised rates for weddings, christenings, funerals and stations were set for each diocese. Bishop MacKenna addressed his priests:

“We earnestly desire you to be as little burdensome to the people under your care as you possibly can....and we strictly enjoin that no clergyman under our care be so meanly mercenary as to demand anything for the administrating of sacraments, but having performed the sacred functions of their ministry then gratefully accept the dues comfortable to the regulations of the prelates”.²⁹

²⁹ *Dublin Evening Post* 28 Sept., 1786. NLI, Dublin.

It would be mistaken to associate the emergence of agrarian movements in Cloyne entirely along social class lines, however. When arrested, some of the Whiteboy leadership were found to have been propertied Protestants. These, Bishop John O'Brien believed had "bullied the poor creatures to do said mischiefs" (Coombes, 1981, p. 77). Sir John Colthurst's motivation in leading Rightboy activities in the Lee Valley was also reported to have been on the basis that "removal of tithes would have led to a 50% increase in the rental income on his estates".³⁰

In spite of Rightboy efforts to avoid demonization through their refusal to hide behind disguises, their appeals "to the Gospel rule" of social justice and their public demonstrations of "their love of order" (Donnelly jr., 1978, p. 171) they were interpreted as negatively by Church of Ireland Bishop Richard Woodward as by his Roman Catholic counterpart. Woodward came to his infamous conclusion that:

"I need not tell the Protestant proprietor of land that the security of his title depends very much (if not entirely) on the Protestant Ascendancy. It is the business of the Protestant Government to preclude him (the Roman Catholic) as much as possible from influence for fear of losing the power of control".

(Dickson, 2005, p. 451)

Through this definition of Protestant Ascendancy, Woodward may have unwittingly manoeuvred Cloyne's Church of Ireland Protestants into a position of social dominance from which, in the long term, they could only lose. Nor, of course, were Woodward's fears confined to Ireland. Proposals to permit English Catholics to bear arms were met with the Gordon Riots of 1780 in London which left 285 people dead. As Connolly (1992, p. 250) observes, the perception of Catholicism as an international menace which threatened religious liberties was not "a neurosis specific to Irish Protestants" but "part of the common political culture of the three British kingdoms."

By the 1790s, although the United Irish movement was not misled to the same sectarian extremes in Cloyne as in Co. Wexford, matters may have come dangerously close. At Mallow, a second Scullabogue, Co. Wexford, where United Irishmen murdered over 100 of their prisoners in 1798, was barely avoided through the last-minute intervention of its Catholic parish priest (Ó

³⁰ Donnelly jr., 1983, p. 22.

Coindealbháin, 1950, p. 77). The parish priest of Kilworth was also accredited with saving the village of Araglin (Kilworth) from destruction through his peaceful dialogue with an army officer sent from Fermoy to destroy the village in retaliation for the murder of Col. Mansergh St. George.³¹ Writing from east Cork, Lord Longueville, the Governor of Co. Cork thought that “we are in a most dismal way here – murder everywhere committed and every smith in the country forging pikes, & the mob cutting all the trees for handles, & the French and a massacre expected every night”.³² Three months later, he believed that “vigor and vigilance are all we have to secure our lives and properties, the disposition of the people is hostile to every protestant. The non-residence and inattention of our clergy have made those families all papists, who were sound protestants in our father’s times. We never see the face of a parson, nor would it be safe for him now to show it here”.³³

The intermediary position adopted by some Catholic priests clearly saved lives on both sides. Writing from Midleton, Catholic Bishop William Coppinger stated that he had “endeavoured to bring back my deluded flock to legal subordination and spread no pains in laying before their eyes, the evil consequences of their persisting in outrages, and atrocities subversive of all law and tranquility” (Ó Coindealbháin, 1950, p. 50). Similar to Bishop MacKenna’s dismissive attitude, however, Bishop Coppinger either misunderstood and/or demonstrated little sensitivity towards the ideals of the United Irish. In fact, he ridiculed them. “Where shall you find tillers” he asked “if all shall be gentlemen?” (Connolly, 1982, p. 223). In 1803, looking back on his time at Youghal in 1798, Bishop Coppinger outlined his position at the time:

“the poor children of the town and vicinage were collected here in great numbers, twice every week, and were instructed by myself, in the principles of the Christian religion...But when the infatuation of the United Revolutionists had seized upon the multitude, a spirit of suspicion and distrust was excited in opposition to it...The United Irish oath, having been pronounced a most criminal bond of iniquity by the Catholic Bishops of Ireland, brought a number of these delinquents to my house in Youghal, sent thither by their respective pastors, from all the surrounding parishes...The United Irish Association; organised

³¹ Kilworth Returns, Cloyne Parish Histories/Folklore Collection, 1945, CDA.

³² Lord Longueville, Castlemary, Cloyne, 7 March 1798, National Archives, SOC 1015/7

³³ Lord Longueville, Castlemary, Cloyne, 3 June 1798, National Archives, 620/4/38/1-6.

upon the Gallic model, I well knew it tended, not alone to induce temporal misery, but the total overthrow of religion, which I deem a far greater misfortune. As the principal minister of that religion, I had, on the first manifestation of the evil, enjoined the Roman Catholic clergy of the diocese, not to admit any person in any case whatever to participate in the Sacred rites without a previous solemn abdication of the United Irish oath: and it is now my settled conviction that thousands were thus brought off from that League.”

(Moran, 1884, p. 606-612)

Bishop Coppinger’s opposition to the United Irish movement may have been shared by a rising generation of newly enriched Catholic stakeholders in Co. Cork who feared social chaos just as much as their bishop (Dickson, 2005, p. 479). In the aftermath of the events of 1798, a cautious alliance emerged between Cloyne’s Catholic clergy, Protestant landlords and the British military (Millerick, 2013). The pragmatic comments of a Church of Ireland minister from Blarney in 1817 demonstrates the extent to which change had taken place. “If I cannot make Protestants of the Catholics by whom I am surrounded” he wrote, “I will at least give my support, in every measure, which will tend to make them good Catholics.”³⁴

As a means of protecting their lives and interests, Cloyne’s mainly Church of Ireland landlords increasingly began to offer financial support for the building of Catholic chapels on or near their estates (Millerick, 2013, p. 105). Visible and audible signs of “popery with attitude” (MacBride, 2009, p. 239) continued to be a sensitive matter, however. At Macroom in 1790, the French consul remarked that “A tree serves as a belfry” (Ní Chinníde, 1974, p. 23). In early nineteenth-century Fermoy:

“only a small handbell dared to be rung to summon the people to Mass. When the ambitious curate...purchased...a bell of some respectable dimensions, the frightened parish priest caused it to be placed outside the precincts of the chapel yard, fearing to incur penalties if he placed it in proximity to the church”

(Brunicardi, 1986, p.4).³⁵

In 1804, Bishop William Coppinger referred to a “gentleman of the establishment” who was “known heretofore to turn a priest out” of his chapel at Clondrohid.³⁶

³⁴ Cork Mercantile Chronicle, 4 July, 1817.

³⁵ Such caution may have been advisable given that the terms of the 1781 Relief Act did not apply to priests who officiated “in any church or chapel with a steeple or bell” (Coombes, 1975, p. 37).

Shared fears on both sides may account, at least in part, for an increased separation between Catholics and Protestants. From the 1790s there had been “a sense that the tendencies of the later eighteenth-century among the upper and middling classes towards religious harmony, or at least accommodation” were halted and even reversed (Dickson, 2005, p. 483). To Bishop Coppinger’s mind, although the “horrid system” of the penal laws had been softened, “the overthrow of our Catholicity was still steadily pursued”.³⁷ The emergence of a “Second Reformation” among some Irish Protestants also left behind more sharply divided rather than united Christian communities in the wake of attempts to offer what were considered to have been superior forms of religious and cultural alternatives (Bowen, 1978, p. 95). A further striking social characteristic of the region, more apparent in 1800 than in 1700 was its increasingly complex social class structures accompanied with exceptionally unequal distributions of income (Dickson, 2005, p. 479). Dickson (2005, p. 487) believes that such structural and economic changes marked, if not the end, then certainly the beginning of the end for Protestant hegemony in south Munster. In this regard, Bishop Woodward’s assertion of the social superiority of Irish Protestants may have unintentionally brought about the opposite of their intended effect.

For the bishops and priests of the Roman Catholic Church, their first priority appears to have been that of providing pastoral care to a rapidly growing Church. The work of reconciliation with Protestants would have to wait. The scale of their challenge is evident from the visitation comments of Bishops Coppinger and Collins. At Churchtown-Liscarrol in 1824 it was noted:

“So extraordinary were the crowds that flocked from all quarters to this place on the day of Visitation that the Bishop & Clergy had to remove from the Chapel to an adjoining field in order to address the multitude. Their number was estimated at 17 or 18,000 souls. So great an assembly on such an occasion was never witnessed in that country before”.³⁸

³⁶ Bishop W. Coppinger, Middleton to Archbishop Thomas Bray, 28 July 1804. Papers of Dr. Thomas Bray, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, Microfilm P 5999 NLI .

³⁷ Bishop W. Coppinger, Undated letter to unnamed bishop, 1815, Bishop Coppinger Papers, C.D.A.

³⁸ Derr, E., 2013, p. 363.

At Blarney “The congregation assembled this day...for the purpose of hearing the Bishop has been estimated at between 15 & 16 thousand souls”.³⁹ At Clondrohid “The multitude present was immense”.⁴⁰ At Ballymacoda, Bishop Coppinger wrote that had “Confirmed 1600 at least in 2 hours & 15 minutes at a rate of 12 in a minute”.⁴¹

This demographic increase was matched by moves to peacefully integrate Catholics into Irish political life. In 1815 Bishop Coppinger thought:

“After an intercourse with a vast majority of the common people of this County continued almost without interruption during the last forty years; an intercourse necessarily general, intimate and confidential, I do not hesitate to declare that the great bulk of them are well disposed, and if, under equitable and kind treatment are susceptible of the highest moral excellence. But...if unchecked by the restraints of Religion, if once brought to disbelieve its awful truths and yield unresistingly to the dictates of passion, the French Revolution in its most tremendous paroxysms never produced more savage brutality than Ireland would exhibit. If once completely demoralised, they are capable of every enormity.”⁴²

Two years later, he continued to lament the:

“very many humbling exclusions...from the common advantages of civil life...which deeply affect the upper classes of our communion and naturally excite discontent in our body...It is at the same time an undeniable truth that a transmissive and very deep sense of injury universally pervades the great bulk of our people, disposing them to view with the utmost distrust any interference whatsoever of our acatholic rulers in the concerns of our religion.”⁴³

By 1825, although his coadjutor bishop, Michael Collins referred to the “natural feelings of good neighbourhood and social affection” that existed between Catholics and Protestants (Dickson, 2005, p. 496), as long as Emancipation was denied them, Collins believed that Catholics tended to “look upon themselves as disfavoured, almost as aliens in the country, having no common interest with the more favoured part of the community.”⁴⁴

For some, the movement for Catholic Emancipation (1823-9) successfully addressed these concerns to some extent by peacefully mobilising larger sections of the Catholic population than ever before. Perhaps because of

³⁹ Derr, E., 2013, p. 359.

⁴⁰ Derr, E., 2013, p. 365.

⁴¹ Derr, E., 2013, p. 338.

⁴² Bishop W. Coppinger, Undated letter to unnamed bishop/cardinal, 1815, Bishop Coppinger Papers, C.D.A.

⁴³ Dickson, D., 2005, p. 480.

its non-violent approach, it proved to be “a tide that was not for turning” (Dickson, 2005, p. 492). Supported by Bishop Coppinger, some of its largest financial contributions came from relatively wealthy towns in the east of the diocese such as Midleton, Youghal and Fermoy (Whelan, 1988, p. 265). In 1828 at Youghal, Bishop Collins observed that:

“The Catholic Free schools...for Male and female children excel any schools in Cork, and excel any in the diocese of Cloyne and Ross...The average attendance is 360 boys and 400 Girls. The former are taught reading, writing, and mathematical sciences, together with bookkeeping – the latter learn reading writing and needlework. The whole are well instructed in principles of Religion”.⁴⁵

By increasing discipline and improving standards of literacy in English, such schools offered their learners the opportunity to integrate into newly industrialising worlds opening up far beyond Cloyne.

⁴⁴ Dickson, D., 2005, p. 483.

⁴⁵ Derr, E., 2013, p. 380.

Chapter Two: Methodology and Sources.

2.1 Methodology

In this study I have chosen to focus on some of the more creative and imaginative responses of Cloyne's eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catholics towards their complex, changing and often challenging circumstances. By re-examining an "old story" (Gregory, 2004, p. 1), I hoped to tell a new one which might help to convey why some of Cloyne's eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catholics responded and reacted in the ways that they did. For this purpose, a scalar analytical framework was chosen. This ranged from the deeply personal to the local/regional to the international.

As a starting point, I wondered what, if any, inner resources might have been relied upon by Cloyne's Catholics in the face of tactics which might have been arrayed against them with the intention of rendering them inferior. The cultural psychotherapeutic approach pioneered by McIntosh (2012, p. 80) offered some valuable insights here. Through this method, a group remembers what has been lost, re-visions how things might alternatively be and reclaims what is needed to turn a shared vision into a reality. Just as individual psychotherapy assists in the recovery of lost aspects of individual history, so too, at the communal level, the recovery of spiritual and historical resources is regarded by McIntosh (2013a, p. 4) as vital "to the understanding of past conditioning and reconnecting with the taproot (as distinct from the mere grassroots) of personal and community empowerment". To avoid the destructive encroachment of ethnocentricity, McIntosh (2013a, p. 5) adds that it is vital that such an approach be undertaken in a spirit of inclusivity and forgiveness.

That such a generous spirit may have been lacking among some, if not many of Cloyne's eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catholics cannot be discounted. At times, some Protestant neighbours may have been viewed with caution if not contempt. The feeling, of course, may have been mutual. By the early nineteenth-century, separate school systems, separate Catholic and Protestant newspapers, separate Catholic and Protestant inns and even separate stagecoaches travelled the same routes so that business-people from either side might not endure

the discomfort of having to sit next to each other (Akenson, 1993, p. 9). Nonetheless, in 1825, the parish priest of Skibbereen referred to the “natural feelings of good neighbourhood and social affection” that also existed on both sides (Dickson, 2005, p. 496). In this opening section, therefore, Gregory’s (2004, p. 10) generalisation that “we forget the exactions, suppressions and complicities that colonialism forced upon the peoples it subjugated and the way in which it withdrew from them the right to make their own history” is tested. In spite, or perhaps because of their experiences, I wondered whether Cloyne’s Catholics continued to create not just their own histories, but also their own geographies.

A second scale of analysis was chosen to explore the interdependence of key social groups such as kin-groups, priests, teachers, midwives, lawyers and poets. However, following Freire (in MacLaren and Leonard, 1993, p. xi), the identification of these actors does not dismiss the possibility of “multiple constructions of power and authority in a society riven by inequalities of power and exclusionary divisions of privilege”. The possible existence of multiple “modes of oppression” within Catholic communities themselves is accepted. Acknowledging the oppression endured by women and people of colour in the United States, for instance, Freire (in MacLaren and Leonard, 1993, p. x) points out that:

“it is equally important to discount claims to a unitary experience of oppression, not only among women, but with respect to all oppressed peoples. I have always challenged the essentialism reflected in claims of unitary experiences of class and gender....Oppression must always be understood in its multiple and contradictory instances, just as liberation must be grounded in the particularity of suffering and struggle in concrete historical experiences.”

For this reason, I do not discount the possibility that Cloyne’s Catholics may have been complicit in their own and/or in each other’s oppression. Irish-language poets were certainly known for pouring scorn on the “crass commercialism and brute greed” (O’Donnell, 2002, p. 21) of the rising middle class, both Catholic and Protestant. Here, the strategy of a “distribution of individuals in space” (Foucault, 1979, p.141) used by the Catholic Church in the creation of a more disciplinary society is explored. For Foucault (1979, p. 25-6):

“the body is...directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it, they invest it, mark it, train it...force it to carry out

tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political investment of the body is bound up in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use....”

As Cloyne’s Catholics may have become integrated into the creation of a more disciplinary society, therefore, in whose interests such a strategy may have favoured is clearly important. That creative and/or imaginative responses may have been compromised or indeed not implemented creatively and/or imaginatively at all cannot be dismissed.

A final scale of analysis explores the openness of Cloyne to international influences. This scale is argued to have been vital to the re-emergence and distinctiveness of the Roman Catholic Church and its associated communities in Cloyne. Due to its openness to both continental European and colonial influences, the type of Church that emerged is acknowledged to have contained a mixture of both *ancien-régime* and colonial-type features.

By investigating the interplay of the deeply personal, the local/regional and the international, this study seeks to move beyond a methodology outlined in recent study of the medieval diocese of Cloyne which asserted that “This is an ecclesiastical history, and will treat of temporal matters only where absolutely necessary. Some diocesan histories take upon themselves far too much in this regard” (MacCotter, 2013, p. ix). In this study, the interplay between the religious, socio-economic, cultural, historical, geographical, *ancien-regime*, colonial and non-colonial cannot be overlooked. Here, I have been influenced by Harvey’s (1989) historical materialist reading of the construction of the Sacré Coeur Basilica on a contested site at Monmartre, Paris, which acted as a pointer to the fact that I could not ignore the socio-economic contexts out of which the Catholic Church emerged in Cloyne. As Said (2003, p. xvi) points out in his critique of essentialism, “human suffering in all its density and pain” must never be “spirited away” under a historical and/or geographical carpet. How and in what ways Cloyne’s Catholics were capable of resourcefulness in the face of adversity is the *leitmotif* of this thesis. That they were as capable of oppression towards each other and towards those who opposed them cannot be discounted, either.

2.2 Sources

Over the course of this period, at different times and in different places, some of Cloyne's Catholic communities may have largely evolved silently. Others less so, if at all. Educated at a Castletownroche hedgeschool in the 1730's along with his Nagle relatives, a young Edmund Burke probably articulated the mood of some of his Cloyne-based relatives "We live in a world where everyone is on the catch and the only way to be safe is to be silent." (Cruise-O'Brien, 1992, p. 1). By the 1760's Burke continued to caution his Nagle relatives to stay out of parliamentary politics. Writing to his cousin, Garret Nagle, he expressed his desire that "all my friends will have the good sense to keep themselves from taking part in struggles, in the event of which they have no share and no concern" (Dickson, 2005, p. 105).

This silence is further conveyed through the relative absence of source materials coming from Cloyne's Catholic priests, particularly from the early decades of the century. Under the terms of the Acts of Banishment (1698) and Registration of the Clergy (1703) parish registers or correspondence found in the hands of Catholic priests or their relatives could be used as incriminating evidence against them. For many of Cloyne's priests, therefore, the low-profile exercise of their pastoral duties, rather than the keeping of records would appear to have been their main concern. Corish's (1981, p. vii) observation that "a complex story has to be pieced together from evidence usually no better than fragmentary" would appear to apply to Cloyne just as much as it did to the wider Irish Catholic Church of the same period.

As the administration of the Church gradually improved from around mid-century onwards, everyday practice was slowly rebuilt. Diocesan regulations such as Bishop John O'Brien's *Monita Pastoralia et Statuta Ecclesiastica* (1756) and other printed works slowly began to appear. Much of this material, however, contains a cautious tone where submission to the authority of the Protestant State was emphasised. The parish priest of Castlelyons/Rathcormac, Dr. Thady O'Brien's *Truth Triumphant* (1745) argued that Catholics were obliged to be loyal subjects of the Protestant administration. In a letter attributed to a Catholic gentleman from the same parish in 1750, the author laments that following a dispute between the Catholic bishop and a local Protestant magistrate, a number of Catholic chapels in the area had been closed.

This, he lamented “make us mourn the loss of that dignity in which we are indulged by the legislative power (God bless them) to exercise and practice all the tenets of our religion” (Fenning, 1969, p. 55). Bishop John O’Brien’s *Pastoral Letter to the Whiteboys* (1762) also called for the Catholics of Cloyne:

“to be more attentive than ever to...giving our most excellent and noble minded Lieutenant and all our great and good governors, the best and most solid proofs in our power, of the just and grateful feelings we have and always should have of their lenity and indulgence towards us in our unhappy circumstances, subjected as we are...to penal laws whose weight and severity, we already find to be alleviated in great measure through the goodness and clemency of our most gracious rulers”.

(Coombes, 1981, p. 77)

While McVeigh (1993, p. 63) detects a servile response in this document, earlier research by Coombes (1981, p. 77) points to a different strategy. He suggests that O’Brien’s pastoral letter was aimed more at Dublin Castle than at Cloyne’s Catholics in the hope that greater reflection would bring about an improvement in the circumstances of Catholics. A further pastoral letter by Catholic Bishop William Coppinger in 1797 thanked Providence for the failure of the French expedition to Bantry Bay and insisted that priests promote “a cordial submission to the established authorities and the warmest attachment to their august Sovereign” (Fenning, 1995, p. 143)

Further insights into the variety of different Catholic communities and their conditions may be gleaned from the Visitation Books of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Cloyne. From 1785 to 1830, six visitation books survive from the episcopates of Bishops Matthew McKenna, William Coppinger and Michael Collins (Figs. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3). Although a visitation of Cloyne had been conducted by Bishop John O’Brien in 1764, no written record accompanied the event, presumably because of the more stressful conditions of his episcopate. Referring to the usefulness of such materials for France, Delumeau (1977, p. 134) states that such materials are by far “the most suitable documents on past religious practice.” He continues:

“These researches are yielding mines of information on mass attendance, Easter duties, the residence of parish priests, the teaching of the Catechism, the relations between the people and the clergy, the local nobilities disdain of the cloth, the neglect of Church fabric, the insubordination of the peasantry, the rusticity of mores, popular incredulity and so forth.”

(Delumeau, 1977, p. 137)

Episcopal visitation was defined by the Council of Trent as “the act of making an inquiry into existing excesses and defects, punishing what needs chastisement and amending with suitable remedies what is in need of correction...and restoring matters to their former condition wherever a relaxation has occurred” (Slafkosky, 1941, p.1). Whilst on visitation, bishops were reminded to be mindful of all things pertaining to the worship of God, the salvation of souls and the support of the poor (Crotty, 1997, p. 16). Consequently, Bishop McKenna’s 1785 manuscript provides valuable information on the number of Catholic habitations for each parish, the condition of chapels, the formation of parishes, the character of priests, their responses to Rightboy activities, the number and quality of Catholic teachers and midwives and the sexual activities of occasionally named Catholics

46

There is a danger, of course, in applying Foucault’s (1979, p. 185) concept of the “disciplinary gaze” when using visitation materials. For Foucault, this was “a normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them”. That some of Cloyne’s Catholics were subject to a bishop’s “disciplinary gaze” was undoubtedly the case for brief moments of their lives. For the rest of their lives, however, they were not. In Bishop William Coppinger’s preface to his 1818 visitation book he also outlines that consultation was a feature of his visitations. He wrote:

“not only am I ready to administer relief to penitential Delinquents...but to all those who are labouring under any mental anxiety or who may wish to consult or seek advice upon particular subjects under circumstances of embarrassment or difficulty. It is my duty as well as my inclination to bind myself to all and to confer freely with people of every description who shall desire to consult me. I shall attend in the morning from 10 to 12 for the purpose at the house of the parish priest”.⁴⁷

Given that priests may have been torn between obedience to their clerical superiors and to a popular culture where neighbourliness, conviviality and

⁴⁶ Where I have detected possible errors in Derr’s (2013) transcription of Bishop MacKenna’s Visitation Book, I have relied upon an earlier typed version by Canon Bertie Troy, Midleton.

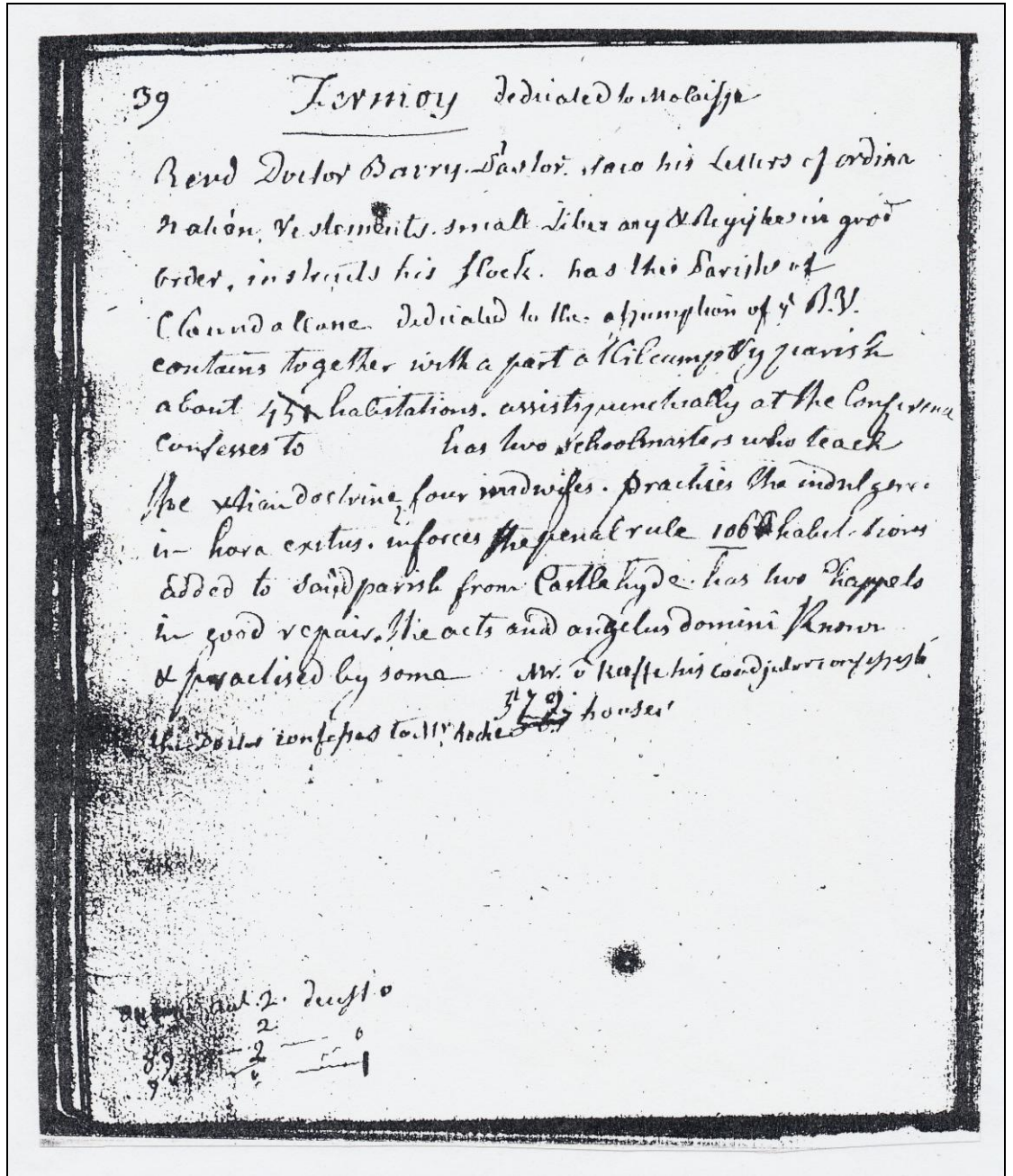
occasionally severe economic hardship counted for more than doctrinal rectitude, it is also important to distinguish between the opinions of senior clerics, such as bishops and that of priests (McBride, 2009, p. 270). In his letter of appointment of Rev. Peter O’Neill, the new pastor of Ballymacoda in 1786, the priest was instructed to “labour strenuously in reforming and instructing said flock, as you have done in all places you have served hitherto, and charge said flock by virtue of the obedience they owe to you their pastor, and to me their superior, to show you due obedience and respect”.⁴⁸ Yet, passive sympathy for the United Irish movement probably resulted in the transportation of O’Neill in 1800 (Dickson, 2005, p. 473). By the early nineteenth century the increased discipline to which priests were becoming conditioned probably brought them “more closely into line with their ecclesiastical superiors and in so doing, to broaden the gap that separated the local pastor from large sections of his congregation” (Connolly, 1982, p. 268).

Other useful sources include Irish-language materials. Smyth (2006, p. 18) outlines that such materials have sadly been all too often “neglected by Irish geographers”. Withers (1988, p. 327) argues that the relative paucity of historical documentation among nineteenth-century Scottish Gaelic communities “makes it difficult to understand the productions of the Gaels as opposed to the cultural productions imposed on them”. No such paucity can be attributed to Cloyne’s Irish-speaking Catholics, however. Although fragmentary and localised, their productions offer the opinions and concerns of Catholics not necessarily shared by their priests. Given that parts of the diocese, such as north Cork were over 90% Irish-speaking in 1791 (O’Donnell, 2000, p. 107) such materials cannot be overlooked. The *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire*, for instance, a lament traditionally attributed to Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill on the killing of her husband Art in 1773, has been referred to by Heaney (1995, p. 39) as speaking out:

⁴⁷ Derr, E., 2013, p. 329-330.

⁴⁸ Bishop Matthew MacKenna to Rev. Peter O’Neill, Ballymacoda, November, 1786. I am indebted to Kay Cullen, Ballymacoda, for this information compiled by Philip M. O’Neill for *The Barrow Uncrossed. Fr. Peter O’Neill and the events in East Co. Cork during the 1798 Rebellion, which surrounded his arrest and transportation.* (1998).

Fig.2.1 Bishop Matthew MacKenna's Visitation Book, 1785.



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 Cobh, Co. Cork)

Fig. 2.2 Bishop William Coppinger (1787-1831)



**(Reproduced by kind permission of the Cloyne Diocesan Centre,
Cobh, Co. Cork)**

Fig. 2.3 Bishop Michael Collins (1827-1832)



**(Reproduced by kind permission of the Cloyne Diocesan Centre,
Cobh, Co. Cork)**

“on behalf of the oppressed native Catholic population of Ireland, a Gaelic majority placed legally beyond the pale of official Anglo-Irish life by the operation of the Penal laws. It was an outburst both heartbroken and formal, a howl of sorrow and a triumph of rhetoric....no wonder either, that it was from the family of such an impassioned silence breaker that the great political silence breaker of early nineteenth century Ireland emerged.”

This “silence breaker” was Daniel O’Connell, Eibhlín’s nephew, who successfully helped to secure Catholic emancipation in 1829. Corkery (1924), too, famously found a “living voice” in these materials that conveyed a depth of feeling rarely found elsewhere (Walsh, 2001, p. 39). Dickson (2005, p. 264), however, finds that much of the Irish-language political poetry coming from the Catholic angle in Co. Cork was disaffected, xenophobic and, sadly, in the case of priests such as Augustinian friar, Liam Inglis, bitterly sectarian. Cullen (in MacBride, 2009, p. 8) too, has undermined the reliability of some Irish-language materials. In some cases, he believes they may have amounted to “little more than idle pub talk” which failed to reflect the problems or conditions of those who sang or wrote in Irish (Dickson, 2005, p. 263)

While some of Cloyne’s eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catholics may have chosen to remain silent, the phenomenon of Irish-language writers and speakers openly articulating their views through schools and courts of poetry challenges the perception of silenced and secretive Irish-speaking communities. In the barony of Muskerry alone, for instance, at least fifty Irish-language poets were active (Dickson, 2004, p. 64). Themes such as the hope of deliverance from a perceived political enemy, the expectation of assistance from abroad, loss and injustice (perceived or otherwise) emerge. Coombes (1981, p. 30) saw the *cúirt filíocht* as a place of healing. Other scholars attempting to account for the proliferation of poetry in eighteenth-century Munster tend to view it as a popular literature of discontent, as the voice of a displaced elite, voicing their anger at the agents of their discomfort (Dickson, 2004, p.64). While this may certainly have helped to break the silence, its abrasive qualities may have served to push apart rather than unite (Dickson, 2004, p. 69). Like much of the printed English-language pamphlet literature of the period, however, it “leaves the events of the past unobliterated by the moral

sensibilities of the present....and with the range of potential outcomes they once possessed still intact” (Leighton, 1994, p. ix).

State-sponsored materials such as the 1704 lists of registered priests, the 1731 “State of the Popery” Report and the 1764/5 Hearth Tax Returns have also proven useful. As the penal laws were relaxed and government attention turned from religion towards the analysis of social problems, various state-commissioned materials such as the nineteenth-century post-union “blue books” on education offer a wealth of quantitative data. Lawton (1987, p. 262) however, points out that Westminster had become obsessed with numbers to such an extent at this point that the qualitative dimensions of the people’s lives being enumerated became less important. The official mind may also have tended to view the re-emergence of Irish Catholics with caution and/or suspicion. Such a perspective may have softened over time. Dickson (2005, p. 255) points out that Dublin Castle tended to maintain its blanket assumptions that the Catholics of Munster were virtually incapable of loyal incorporation up to the 1770s. Cullen (1986, p. 25) also points out that it is important to remember that “a single-minded policy on the part of the establishment towards Catholics did not exist...The English government had a different perspective from that of Dublin Castle, the Lords Lieutenant...were subtly more liberal than the council which advised them and Protestant gentlemen differed widely and sometimes vociferously from one another”.

Considerable variation, therefore, must be taken into account when dealing with source-materials relied upon from large and diverse groups such as Cloyne’s Protestant landlords, their agents, magistrates and Church of Ireland clergy. Cullen (1986, p. 26) has outlined how divided Protestant gentry actually were. Liberal gentry were counterbalanced by illiberal gentry and “some gentry...supported...[Dublin] Castle in part because it favoured Catholic relief, others opposed the Castle because it threatened political liberties”. Geographical variation mattered also and, in a chronological sense, Protestant gentry attitudes were marked by sweeping reversals of outlook or policy. On the part of Church of Ireland clergy, Bishop Woodward’s bleak vision in 1786 contrasts markedly with the more accommodating perspective of the Church of Ireland minister of Blarney as outlined earlier in 1817. The estate papers and correspondence of landlords such as the Earls of Shannon at Castlemartyr

(Hewitt, 1982) that I have relied upon offer a wealth of insights into the private hopes, fears and prejudices of these “tough, highly intelligent and mainly resident” (Dickson, 2005, p.111) landlords who publicly articulated the concerns of Protestant south Munster.

To what extent their tenants were just as, if not even more tough and intelligent is a difficult question to answer. To balance the abundance of source materials from elite sections of the population with that of more marginalised perspectives, therefore, I have relied upon materials such as Irish-language poetry and, where available, the activities and testimonies of members of movements such as the Rightboys and/or United Irishmen. A further valuable resource has been the Cloyne Folklore Collection. Loosely modelled on the Schools Folklore Collection of 1937/8, information from this collection was gathered by the Roman Catholic priests of Cloyne in the 1940s. This collection focuses on issues such as the construction of the Catholic Churches, the character of local landlords and priests, interdenominational relations, the delineation of parish boundaries, holy wells and the location of other sacred sites in each parish. Occasional references to surviving folk beliefs and practices, a “dynamic and developing popular channel of culture that flows outside of the formal or official channels of elite cultural communication” (Ó Cruaíoch, 1993, p. 107) are also contained.

The vital roles of women, whether as mothers, teachers, midwives, nuns and/or emigrants in the life and functioning of their church communities is also significant. The voices of women such as Nano Nagle and the poetic voice attributed to Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill clearly offer the reader “privileged access to states of mind, thoughts and feelings...an insider’s view of human facts” (Tuan, 1977, p. 5).

A further group to which this statement is applicable are the voices of emigrants. Fitzpatrick’s (1994) use of emigrant correspondence demonstrates the wealth of insights contained in such materials. The reminiscences of Edmund Roynane (Miller and Skerrett with Kelly, forthcoming), a nineteenth-century Cloyne-born convert from Catholicism to the Church of Ireland, contains insights which might have been unwise to express in Cloyne, but not from the relative safety of North America.

In reviewing the key source materials that have been relied upon in this study, Gregory's (2004, p. xv) assertion that the past is "always plural, always contested and shot through with multiple temporalities and spatialities" is accepted. Clearly, documents are never neutral and generally reflect the goals and interests of their compilers at the time of their composition (Smyth, p. 1993, p. 661). The sources relied upon also have their limitations. The voices of women, members of secret societies and of the materially poorest and illiterate do not figure prominently, if at all. Pope Benedict XIV's encyclical *Ubi Primum* (1740) also acknowledged the shortcomings of episcopal visitation. It stated:

"There are many things concerning of which the bishop will be ignorant, many things will escape his attention and again, many things will come to his knowledge too late for any effective action, unless he betake himself to all parts of his diocese and unless he personally view every place and hear all things and ascertain which evils are to be cured, what have been their causes and in what manner their re-appearance can be providentially averted."

(Crotty, 1997, p. 97)

The accounts presented in visitation books, therefore, cannot be taken as complete descriptions of all dimensions of the life of the Roman Catholic communities of the diocese. Rather, they present the opinions of a bishop on a limited range of matters on the day of his visitation. Furthermore, the religious practices that were investigated such as the celebration of mass and/or the granting of the *indulgence in hora exitus* - indulgence at the hour of death, which Bishop Matthew MacKenna wished to know whether his clergy were practicing in 1785, given the scale of Rightboy activity in Cloyne at the time, were conducted entirely by a male priesthood. Bailey et. al. (2009, p. 264) also outline the limitations of an over-reliance upon archival materials. "[T]hat wasn't everyone's opinion, you should never believe all you read" was one response to Laurie's (2010, p. 167) questioning of a friend's representation contained in the archives of a Peruvian evangelical Christian church! While the source materials used in this study clearly have their limitations, they nevertheless serve to "people" the past of the diocese (Lawton, 1987). Furthermore, they may be argued to "bring human beings in all of their complexity to the centre stage of human geography" (Cloke, Philo and Sadler, 1991, p. 58).

Chapter Three. Heritage, Interdependence and External Influences.

3.1 Reclaiming/Recreating Places and Spaces, their Histories and Spiritualities.

In the wake of the Protestant Reformation in Ireland, the civil parishes, churches, glebelands and graveyards once held by the Roman Catholic Church became vested in the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland. Faced with this “new and bitter reality”, Whelan (1983, p. 2) argues that the Roman Catholic Church was left with little choice but to refashion a “radically new” set of spatial structures and associated features. As early as the 1630s, Corish (1985, p. 104) concludes that the outlines of a Roman Catholic parish network were already in place given the number of *relatio status* being sent by Irish Roman Catholic bishops to Rome. Earlier research by Bossy (1970, p. 158), however, points out that although Irish bishops referred to “parishioners”, this was done in a loose way of speaking and the associated territorial structures were probably not very water-tight (Bossy, 1970, p. 158). By the eighteenth century, Whelan (1983, p. 4) argues that despite the “patchy, porous nature” of Ireland’s Roman Catholic parishes, “the Tridentine ideal remained strong and as conditions ameliorated, the administrators moved rapidly to fill the gaps”.

Although perhaps not as radically new as Whelan suggests, the Roman Catholic Church in Cloyne inherited a territorial framework of 133 (or slightly more) medieval parishes which laid the foundation for its own parish network (MacCotter, 2013, p. x). The union of a number of medieval parishes into a single Roman Catholic parish was designed to provide sufficient revenue for a Catholic “pastor” as Bishop Matthew MacKenna refers to them in 1785. His visitation book suggests that although a Roman Catholic parish network was in place, it was still evolving (Table 3.1). At Ballyhaura (Ballyhea), its pastor had not yet “a collation in form”.⁴⁹ Dates for the formation of parishes are provided; 1767 in the case of Kilbrin and 1769 in the case of Kilworth. In some cases, civil parishes were divided and redistributed between Roman Catholic parishes. Adaptation to changing demographic concerns was also a factor (MacCotter, 2013, p. xi). At Kilbrin, for instance, its pastor gained 200

⁴⁹ Derr, E., 2013, p. 296.

habitations after some villages were reported to have been “dismembered”, presumably by their landlord(s).⁵⁰

Table 3.1. 1785 Parish "Unions".

Modern Name	Name(1785)	Civil Parishes
Ballyhay	Ballyhaura	Ballyhea, Cooliney, Aglishdrinagh, Ardskea
Charleville	Charleville	Rathgoggin, part of Cooliney and “40 (habitations) added to it from Ballyhea & Shandrum”.
Shandrum	Shandrum	Shandrum
Doneraile	Doneraile	Doneraile, Cahirduggan, Templeruan, part of Wallstown.
Buttevant	Buttevant	Buttevant, Templemary, Kilbroney.
Churchtown-Liscarroll.	Liscarroll & Churchtown	Liscarroll, Churchtown, prebend of Lactine.
Killavullen	Ahnakissy	Carrigleamleary, Clenor, Monanimy, “Wallstown lately added”.
Mallow	Mallow	Mallow and “part of Factna” (Rathan)
Mourne Abbey.	Ballynamona	Ballinamona and “25 houses belonging to White Church”
Kanturk	Clonfert	Part of Clonfert, Part of Kilbrin, Kilcorcoran
Milford	Killballane	Kilbolane, Tullylease, Knocktemple.
Ballyclough	Kilbrin	Ballyclough, Kilbrin, prebend of Kilmaclenin.
Banteer	Clonmeen & Killcorny	Kilmeen, Kilcorney.
Glantane	Kilsanig	Kilshannig
Grenagh	Grenach	Grenagh and “ 57 (habitations) taken from Mathehy”
Donoughmore	Donachmore	Donoghmore
Inniscarra	Cloch-Roe	Inniscarra, Carrarohane, Matheha
Castlemagner	Castlemagner	Parts of Kilbrin and Ballyclough, Prebends of Subutler and Cilbacain
Aghabulloge	Magourney	Magourney and “a part of Ahabollog”
Aghinagh	Aghinagh	Aghinagh and “a part of Ahabollog”
Macroom.	Macroom	Macroom and "the mountain

⁵⁰ Derr, E., 2013, p. 292.

Clondrohid		parish"(Clondrohid)
Ballyvourney Kilnamartyra	Tuath na Droman & Ballyvourny	Ballyvourney, Tuath na Dromen
Killeagh	Killeh	Killeagh, Dangan, Ardagh, part of Clonpriest "posessed by the late Js. Brown"
Cloyne	Cloyne	Cloyne, Churchtown, Killeskin
Cobh/Carrigtwohill Carrigtwohill.	Great Island & Carrigtouhil	Great Island & Carrigtwohill.
Ballymacoda- Ladysbridge	Ballymacody	Kilmacdonig, Kilcredan, Garrivoe, the part of Iochtormurie, Bouchalan, Shanagarry "tho' not in his collation".
Youghal	Youghal	Youghal, part of Clonpriest.
Midleton	Mid	Midleton, Ballyoachtrach, prebendary of Cahilallown, Churchtown alias Inchenabaccy, Ballyspollan
Lisgoold	Lisgold	Lisgoold, Ballycrannan, Templebodan, Templenacarrigy
Imogeela	Dungourny	Clonmult, Dungourney , Mogeely
Aghada	Union belonging to Cloyne	Aghada, Rostellan, Gurrane, Inch, Corcabeg.
Fermoy	Fermoy	Clondalane, part of Kilcrumpery & "106 habitations added to said parish from Castlehyde"
Mitchelstown	MitchelsTown	Marshalstown, Brigowen.
Kilworth	Killworth	Kilworth, Macroney, Leitrim, Kilworth, "part of Kilcumpery".
Kildorrery	Kildorrery	Kildorrery, Moluga, Farrahy, Carrigdownane, St. Nicholas.
Glanworth	Glanworth	Glanworth, Dunmahon, Killgullane, Derryvillane, Ballylough.
Rathcormac	Rathcormick	Rathcormac, Gortroe
Castletownroche	Castle Town Roche	Castletownroche, Ballyhouley, Killaty, Castlehyde.
Castlelyons	CastleLyons	Castlelyons, Britway, Coole.
Conna	Curiglass	Moguily, Ballinoe, Aghern, Knockmorny.
Blarney	White Church & Blarny	Whitechurch, Garrycloyne

Source: Bishop Matthew MacKenna's Visitation Book 1785, CDA.

Although this parish network may have appeared new, its foundations were old. A significant feature of this visitation was Bishop MacKenna's emphasis upon the saints and/or dedications associated with the parishes of the diocese. As he recorded these names during his visitation, it is likely that his informants were priests. In this endeavour, it is possible that he may have been influenced by the seventeenth-century hagiographical project of his Irish clerical predecessors in continental Europe. Their interest in Irish saints has been attributed to a number of factors. The fallout from the conquest of Ireland led to an effort to seek out and preserve a large body of hagiographical material in manuscript and oral form. Out of this, saint's lives could be constructed to edify, instruct and spiritually enrich Irish Catholic congregations. Saint's lives could also be constructed to refute what were considered to have been attempts by Protestant reformers to utilise Irish saints for their own advantage (Ryan, 2005, p. 256). From Bishop MacKenna's investigation, it is clear that whatever Cloyne's Catholics may have been dispossessed of materially, they were certainly not deprived of aspects of their rich cultural and/or spiritual heritages. For some, the absence of the former may have even enhanced the latter. Furthermore, the efforts of Bishop MacKenna to preserve at least a part of this heritage would indicate that this spiritual/cultural legacy was considered to have been a valuable resource, something which might be put to future use in the interests of his church and its communities.

Table 3.2. Civil Parish Dedications of Cloyne, 1785.

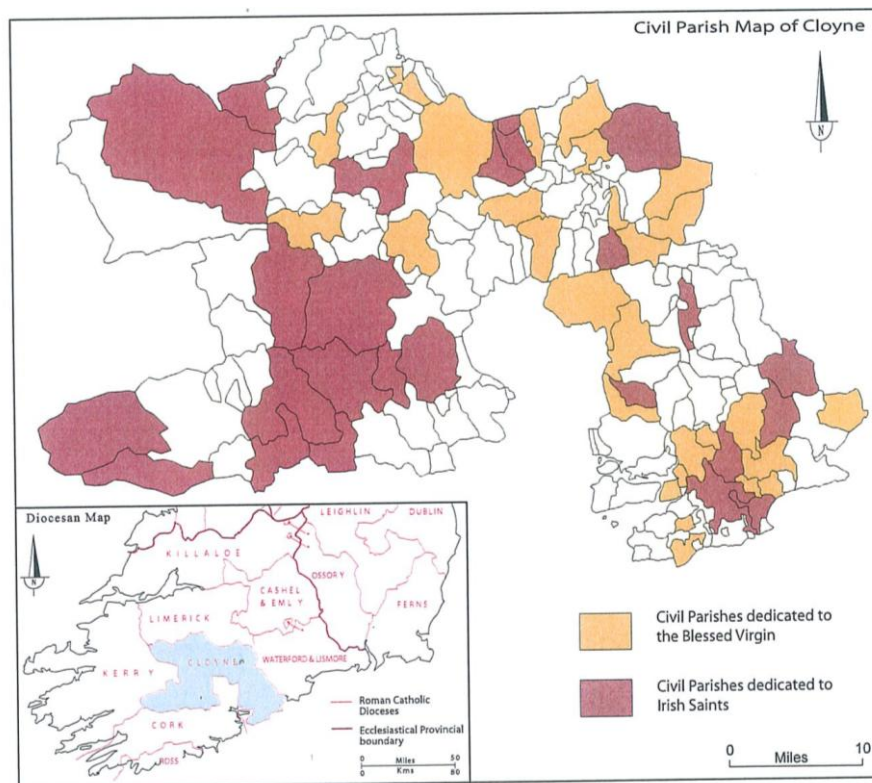
<u>Modern Parish Name</u>	<u>Dedications & Patron Saints of Civil Parishes.</u>
Aghada	St.Erasmus, Purification of Blessed Virgin, Nativity of Blessed Virgin, the Holy Cross
Ahina	St.Ruan.
Annakissy	St. Nicholas, Ste Cranette, Ste. Mary Magdalen
Mourne Abbey	St. Michael
Ballyhea	Blessed Virgin, the Holy Cross, St. Matthew St. Michael.
Ballymacoda	St. Peter ad Vincula, the Holy Cross, The Blessed Virgin.
Ballyvourney	St. Gobnet
Buttevant	St. Bridget, the Blessed Virgin
Castlelyons	St. Nicholas, St. Bridget
Castlemagner	The blessed Virgin
Coachford	St. Colman, St. Eolan
Castletownroche	The Blessed Virgin, the Nativity of the Blessed

	Virgin
Charleville	Exhaltation of the Holy Cross.
Banteer	St. Fursaesus, St. Nicholas,
Cloyne	St. Colman, St. Nicholas, the Blessed Virgin, Ste. Machua, sister to Mac Con or Colman.
Conna	St. Catherine, St. Columba
Doneraile	The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin
Donoughmore	St. Lactine
Fermoy	St. Molaisse, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the Purification of the Blessed Virgin.
Milford (Freemount)	The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, St. Benignus, St. Michael
Glanworth	The Invention of the Holy Cross, St. Bernard, The Blessed Virgin, St. Catherine
Glantane	St. Sannagh or Sennagh MacCarroll.
Grenagh	St. Lactine
Castlemartyr	The Blessed Virgin, St. Lawrence, St. Peter
Inniscarra	The Holy Cross
Kildorrery	St. Bartholomew, St. Colman, St. Molagga, St. Nicholas, The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.
Killeagh	St. Farrel, St. Glassine, St. James,
Kilworth	St. Martin, The Blessed Virgin.
Kilnamartyra	St. Lactine,
Churchtown/Liscarroll	The Purification of the Blessed Virgin, St. Nicholas.
Lisgoold	St. Macodom, St John the Baptist, the Blessed Virgin.
Mallow	The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin
Mitchelstown	The Blessed Virgin, St. Finachin.
Midleton	The Blessed Virgin, St Callachan, St. John the Baptist.
Newmarket	St. Brandin
Cove (Cobh)	St. John the Baptist.
Rathcormac	The Blessed Virgin
Youghal	The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

Source: Bishop Matthew MacKenna's Visitation Book, 1785.

By mapping this data, an interesting east/west division, one which may have long predated the Council of Trent may be detected (Map 3.1). Cloyne's western parishes were dedicated to mainly early Christian Irish saints such as Olan, Lacteen, Berehert, Brendan and Gobnait. The medieval parishes of the east, however, were dedicated to Mary, the mother of Christ. These parishes roughly correspond with the more lowland parts of the diocese which had been profoundly influenced by the Anglo-Norman presence (Dickson, 2005, p. xi).

Devotion to Irish saints and/or to Mary may also have blended well with Cloyne’s pre-Christian past. The cults of early Christian saints such as Molagga and Lacteen indicate possible associations with the pagan god Lug. Molagga was reputed to have been descended from the *clann Luchta*. His feast day, August 7, fell within the octave of the *Lughnasad*, the feast of Lug (Ó Ríain, 1978, p. 154). Píarias MacGearailt (1702-95), head of the Ballymacoda branch of the Imokilly Fitzgeralds also demonstrated no difficulty in blending the merciful characteristics of pagan goddess Clíona with those of Mary in his *Tréithe na Maighdine Mhuire/The Characteristics of the Blessed Virgin* (Millerick, 2013, p. 98).



Map 3.1: Civil Parish Dedications of Cloyne Diocese taken from Bishop Matthew MacKenna’s Visitation Book, 1785, Cloyne Diocesan Archives, Cobh, County Cork. (Map courtesy of Mike Murphy, School of Geography, University College Cork).

Although officially abandoned, it is likely that the ruins of medieval churches, friaries and/or abbey ruins also continued to be returned to (O’ Brien, 1989, p. 51). O’Donoghue’s (1997, p. 41) assertion that “Ruins are not empty. They are sacred places full of presence” may well have struck a chord with at least some of Cloyne’s eighteenth and/or early nineteenth century Catholics.

By law, the burial places connected with such ruins became vested in the State Church. A 1697 law decreed that “none shall bury in a suppressed monastery, abbey or convent”. Yet Irish Catholics continued to bury their loved ones in the places where their ancestors had been buried and few Protestant clergy interfered (O’Brien, 1989, p. 51). The ruins of a Carmelite Friary at Castlelyons continued to be used as a school. In 1795, the choir wall collapsed, killing the schoolmaster’s wife and eleven pupils (Power, 1918, p. 208). At Templecraheen graveyard, Carrigtwohill, the gravestone of “Rev. John O’Neill, Prior of the Carmelite of Castlelyons” who died in 1760 indicates that the Carmelite Order to which he belonged remained active (Ó Buachalla, 1962, p. 33). Most likely, Rev. O’Neill continued his ministry under the protection of local Catholic “underground gentry” such as the Coppingers of Ballyvolane and Barryscourt, Carrigtwohill (O’Riordan, 1976, p. 18). William Heas, a Carmelite friar was also active in the Castlelyons area up to the end of the eighteenth-century.⁵¹

At Glanworth, although its Dominican Priory had been dissolved, its friars also retained a presence. By the late eighteenth-century, an “honest” Dominican Friar named John Walsh was associated with this parish.⁵² At Fermoy, although its Cistercian Abbey had been dissolved in 1541, Catholics continued to attend a mass-house which had been built on the grounds of the Abbey ruins (MacCotter, 2013, p. 99, Brunicardi, 1986, p. 2). The ruins of an early Christian church at Coole, Ballynoe, also continued to be used by Catholics throughout the early eighteenth century (O’Riordan, 1976, p. 9). In 1731, Franciscan Friars were also reported to be living in a “thatched house” among the ruins of a Franciscan Friary at Buttevant.⁵³ Although having lost significant portions of their estates to the Earl of Cork and to the Earl of Egmont in the seventeenth century, the Barrymore Earls retained the manor of Buttevant until its sale in 1793. Significantly, these ruins contained several early Barry graves and the Barrymore mausoleum.⁵⁴

Of the remnant of the friars in the south Munster region, the 1731 Report into the State of Popery concluded that they continued to:

⁵¹ Derr, E., 2013, “Coppinger’s list of deceased clergy, 1770-1799”, p. 328.

⁵² Derr, E., 2013, “Coppinger’s list of deceased clergy, 1770-1799”, p. 328.

⁵³ Report On the State of Popery in Ireland, 1731. *Archiv Hib.*, Vol. II, 1913, p. 122

“creep into the houses of the weak and ignorant People, they confirm the Papists in their Superstition and Errors, they marry Protestants to Papists contrary to Law, they haunt the Sick Beds even of Protestants, they endeavour to pervert them from our holy Religion, and by daily devouring the substance of the poorer sort of Papists, are become greatly obnoxious even to the Papists themselves, who complain of the irregularities of these Friars, and do at least pretend to wish they were removed”.⁵⁵

Without the financial backing of their former patrons, some friars fell upon hard times. Of the friars associated with Buttevant Friary, by the end of the eighteenth-century, one was described as a “hard drinker”, another was “a drinker” who “died of a fever in Cork”. Another had become “unemployed, turned horse-jobber” but “died old”.⁵⁶

The Popery Act of 1704 had also forbidden pilgrimages to “pretended places of sanctity” (O’Brien, 1989, p. 52) such as “Gobnet’s house”, a circular enclosure at Ballyvourney and to the “Teampall Gobnatan”, the ruins of St. Gobnet’s church at Ballyvourney. However, both endured as popular pilgrimage sites. Continued devotion to St. Gobnet may be accounted for by the fact that her cult incorporated continuities with the pagan god Gobniu, the male god of metalworking who had a secondary but significant role as that of a healer. The saint’s name may have even been a female variation of Gobniu. In the popular imagination, his cult also endured in the figure of the Gobbán Saor, a magical builder (MacCotter, 2013, p. 21). Smith (1750, Vol. I, p. 185), believed that “so strong are the ignorant Irish prejudiced” in favour of St. Gobnait “that they still persevere in their superstition, which is not a little kept up by the gain it brings to the proprietor” of a thirteenth-century wooden effigy of the saint. Some members of the O’Herlihy family, a clerical family associated with Ballyvourney continued to act as hereditary custodians of this “sheela” or effigy of St. Gobnet (MacCotter, 2013, p. 20). John Richardson’s *The Great Folly, Superstition and Idolatry of Pilgrimages in Ireland* (1727, p. 70-71) states:

“This image is kept by one of the family of the O’Herlehy’s, and when anyone is sick of the Small Pox, they send for it, sacrifice a sheep to it, wrap the skin around the sick person and the family eat the sheep. But

⁵⁴ I am indebted to Mgrs. James O’Brien, Rome, for this information.

⁵⁵ Report On the State of Popery in Ireland, 1731. *Archiv Hib.*, Vol. II, 1913, p. 127.

⁵⁶ Derr, E., 2013, “Coppinger’s list of deceased clergy, 1770-1799”, p. 327.

this idol hath now much lost its Reputation because two of the O’Herlehy’s died lately of the Small Pox”.

Of this kin-group, the Cloyne Diocesan Histories/Folklore Collection (1945) states:

“The O’Herlihys, who once owned eleven townlands in the parish, were church wardens. It is said that eighteen members of the family were priests, and that they are all, with one exception, buried in St. Gobnet’s cemetery”.⁵⁷

The “priest’s grave” referred to in this cemetery was located at the south-east corner of the “Teampall Ghobnatan”, just outside the ruins of her church (Ó hÉaluighthe, 1952, p. 56).

Bishop John O’Brien’s *Focaloir/Dictionary* (1768) re-inforced a sense of attachment to ancestral lands and to the memories of former identities. The Noonans of Tullylease in the north of the diocese were referred to by Bishop O’Brien as:

“hereditary wardens of St. Brendan’s Church at Tullaleis in the county of Cork and proprietors of the lands of Tullaleis and Castlelissen, under obligation of repairs and all other expenses of the divine service of that church.”

(O’Brien, 1768, p. 514)

This kin-group demonstrates a remarkable degree of continuity. In 1059 the Annals of Innisfallen recorded the death of Dúnadach Ua hInmainéin, the erenagh of Tulach Léis (Tullylease) (MacCotter, 2013, p. 37). This position signified a hereditary lay abbot or warden of a monastery and its church. Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a number of O’Noonans continued to retain hereditary possession of the vicarage of Tullylease. Although six O’Noonans forfeited their lands at Tullylease in 1654, a member of this kin-group continued to claim the position of guardian of the ruined church complex at Tullylease as late as 1858 (MacCotter, 2013, p. 18).

As erenaghs of the church of St. Lachtín at Donoughmore, a branch of the O’Healy’s were historically responsible for its upkeep and for the cultivation of its lands. In 1638 the O’Healy’s of Donoughmore claimed to have held their lands “for five hundred years” there (MacCotter, 2013, p. 39). Bishop John O’Brien’s *Focaloir/Dictionary* (1768) referred to Donoughmore as “Domhnac Mór Ó hEaluighthe” (Donoghmore of the O’Healys) and reminded

⁵⁷ Ballyvourney Returns, Cloyne Diocesan Histories/Folklore Collection (1945), C.D.A.

readers that “Pobal Uí Ealuighthe is the ancient name of the parish of Donoghmore - the ancient estate of the O’Healys” (Collins, 1943, p. 124). Furthermore, he reminded the Lord Chief Baron and outstanding member of the Irish parliament, John Hely-Hutchinson, of his Cloyne roots.⁵⁸

In the northwest of the diocese, Ó Murchadha (1985, p. 70) estimates that the O’Callaghans had forfeited estates amounting to 24,000 acres. Bishop John O’Brien (1768, p. 77) again reminded his readers:

“Ceallaacán, (O’Ceallaáin) the family name of the O’Callaghans, descended from Ceallaacán-Carril, king of Munster, an. 936: they were dynasts of the country called Pobal I Cheallaáin, in the county of Cork, until Cromwell’s time.”

Although formally dispossessed, the O’Callaghans of Clonmeen (Duhallow barony) had recovered a significant part of their lands. As early as the 1670s they were renting out even more land (Dickson, 2005, p. 47). Cornelius O’Callaghan (c.1680-1742), the first Baron Lismore formally converted to the Church of Ireland around 1700. At the time of his death, not only had he inherited much of the former O’Callaghan estate at Banteer, Clonmeen and Dromaneen but he had also become one of the most successful Cork landowners of Old Irish descent in the first half of the eighteenth century (O’Callaghan, 2010, p. 115, Dickson, 2005, p. 273). His namesake Cornelius O’Callaghan (1775-1857), the second Lord Lismore and first Viscount Lismore retained his attachment to Banteer by providing “an acre of ground rent-free for ever” for a new Catholic chapel, £100 for its construction and “a house for the priest to be adjoined to it” in 1828.⁵⁹

3.2. Interdependence: Cloyne’s Catholic and crypto-Catholic Communities

Eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Irish Roman Catholic communities were far from socially homogenous. Indeed, their divisions reflected a wider reality whereby the society of which they formed a part was a highly status conscious one (Kelly, 1992, p. 9). Daibhí de Barra’s *Parliament na bhfigheadóirí* (Parliament of weavers) written at Carrigtwohill in the 1820’s

⁵⁸ John Hely-Hutchinson’s father Francis had been a convert Catholic from Mallow. His son was referred to by Bishop O’Brien as “an ornament of high distinction” (Collins, 1943, p. 124). John Hely-Hutchinson’s eldest son Richard was created the First Earl of Donoughmore and became an advocate for Catholic Emancipation.

⁵⁹ Derr, E., 2013, p. 368.

demonstrates an awareness of such. In it, de Barra, a small farmer and weaver, argues that while neighbouring families from other professions could afford the costs of providing their sons with a clerical education, families such as his could not (Buttimer, 1993, p. 622). In 1826, Bartholomew Crotty, President of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth and later Roman Catholic Bishop of Cloyne believed that "our students are generally the sons of farmers who must be comfortable in order to meet the expenses" of a clerical education. He added that this included other professions such as tradesmen, shopkeepers "and not a very small proportion of them are the children of opulent merchants and rich farmers and graziers" (Connolly, 1982, p. 37). When it came down to it, Fenning (in McBride, 2009, p. 250) believed that solidarity in the face of adversity was, not, in fact, a particularly Catholic Irish virtue. In spite of divisions, however, from time to time, Cloyne's Catholics appear to have been capable of attaining at least some degree of social cohesion. How this came about, where, who it benefitted the most but also at what cost are clearly important considerations.

Far from falling through the sectarian, colonial and social-class fault lines of the place and period under review, the Roman Catholic Church and some of its associated communities appear to have risen up through them. Not all, of course, managed to negotiate their way through such complex terrain. From the outset of the colonial project, inter-ethnic tensions were probably softened through intermarriage between some Old Irish elites and New English ones. For instance, Baron Castlemartyr, Col. Henry Boyle (1648-1693) was married to Lady Mary, the daughter of Murrough O'Brien, the first Earl of Inchiquin (Hewitt, 1982, p. xxviii). At Castleyons, the main branch of the Barrymore family had, by the mid-1600s, become "virtually indistinguishable from the New English in outlook and behaviour" (Canny, 1979, p. 441). In 1689 the Earl of Barrymore was the patron of a Dominican house at Castleyons, possibly located on the grounds of the ruined Carmelite Friary (MacCotter, 2013, p. 110). By the 1740s, James, the Fourth Earl, was thought by Coombes (1981, p. 25) as "impartially nasty to both Catholic and Protestant alike". Further down the social scale, Smyth's (1993, p. 670) research into the surnames of nineteenth-century Barrymore and Imokilly baronies in east Cork demonstrates the continuity of various branches of the Barrys as head-tenants.

Not surprisingly, the surname recurs among the names of Catholic parish priests in the area. In 1707 the Parish Priest of Middleton was Garret Barry. A century later, Michael Barry was Parish Priest (O’Carrigan, 1914, p. 176). The will of Rev. James Barry of Charleville (1827) states: “I leave to my nephew John Barry, priest of the parish of Ballymacoda, all my household furniture, plate, linen, beds, books of every description, to and for his sale, use and benefit”.⁶⁰

The O’Briens of Peelick and Kilcor also retained their lands under Barrymore protection. In 1672 Connor O’Brien left his horse as a gift to Lord Barrymore “to protect his wife and children from oppression” (Coombes, 1981, p. 104). Most likely, the O’Brien’s also retained the right of presentation – the naming of a cleric to the ecclesiastical authorities, thereby conferring upon him the right to hold a vacant benefice – in this case to the Roman Catholic parish of Castlelyons/Rathcormac. By the early 1700’s its parish priest was Cornelius O’Brien (O’Riordan, 1976, p. 47). In 1715, Timothy (Thady) O’Brien was parish priest. His engagement in a number of public disputes with Rowland Davies, the Church of Ireland dean of Cork and later with the Church of Ireland bishop of Cork would suggest a far from low profile. O’Brien’s *A brief historical and authentic account of the beginning and doctrine of the sects called Vaudois, or Waldenses, and Albigenses* (1743) has been described as a thinly disguised attack on Protestantism (O’Brien, 1989, p. 54). Age and necessity may have softened his approach, however. Following his death in 1747, the *Dublin Courant* stated “On account of his good behaviour and inoffensive deportment, he was greatly esteemed, not only by his own, but by those of a different communion from him” (O’Brien, 1989, p. 54).

One year prior to his death, Timothy O’Brien resigned his parish in favour of his even more combative relative, John O’Brien. Born at Glanworth in 1701, O’Brien’s father was a strong tenant farmer and possibly related to Nano Nagle’s father and to Edmund Burke’s mother (Coombes, 1981, p101). In his candidacy for the office of coadjutor Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, John O’Brien obtained the support of fifteen gentlemen from Co. Cork who testified that his family had “never degenerated by following any vile or

⁶⁰ Clerical Wills of Rev. James Barry, Charleville, May 1827 and Rev. Garret Barry,

mechanical profession but have always lived in a decent and creditable manner, in the farming way, as all other Roman Catholic gentlemen in this kingdom are generally obliged to do, ever since the Cromwellian and Revolution forfeitures of the great estates” (Coombes, 1981, p. 16). O’Brien had spent a considerable portion of his early adult life in continental Europe, studying for degrees in theology and canon law at Toulouse and at the Sorbonne. In 1747 he stated that he had even been “protected by some of the best of our nation abroad” (Coombes, 1981, p. 18). Having become accustomed to such privileged status, the deference required of O’Brien on his return to Ireland may have been hard to stomach. A combination of assertiveness and an abrasive personality, however, may account, at least in part, for his failure to remain as long in Castlelyons/Rathcormac as that of his predecessors. During the Whiteboy reprisals of the late 1760’s, he fled his parish and diocese for the safety of Lyon, where he died in 1769. His epigraph in the Church of St. Martin at Lyon suggests that he may have taken both his resentments and an equally strong sense of identification with his kin-group with him to the grave:

In this chapel, by the pious care of the canons of the noble church, lies buried the most illustrious and the most reverend John O'Brien Bishop of Cloyne and Ross in Ireland, of the royal and most ancient family of the O'Briens, a lineal descendant of Conchubhar O'Briens, surnamed the Cathac Vulgo Flanarsalas, King of Munster, 1104-1107, of whom St. Bernard speaks in his Life of Malachy. An exile from his native land for defending his religion, he died in this city.
May he rest in peace. Amen.

(Coombes, 1981, p. 95)

Bishop John O’Brien’s successor, Matthew McKenna had been among O’Brien’s supporters in his efforts to be nominated as coadjutor bishop. As a priest, MacKenna was arrested for suspected Whiteboy involvement at Youghal during the 1760s but later released (Coombes, 1981, p. 93). As in the case of Bishop O’Brien, Bishop MacKenna’s relatives figured prominently in the life of their church. During his 1785 Visitation, the Bishop’s entry for his own parish of Cobh and Carrigtwohill states that he had resigned it in favor of his nephew, Rev. Patrick Dunworth. Dunworth’s brother, Rev. John Donworth was Parish Priest of Killeagh in 1810 and 1814.⁶¹ Another of the Bishop’s

Inchinabacky, 1707. Rev. Bartholomew O’Keefe Ms., C.D.A.

⁶¹ O’Carrigan, W., 1914, p.178

nephews, Paul McKenna, was Archdeacon of Cloyne diocese in 1781.⁶² By 1785 he was Parish Priest of Cloyne. Perhaps it was not for nothing that Gerard Teahan, the Roman Catholic bishop of Kerry (1787-97) caricatured Cloyne's late eighteenth-century diocesan priests as "the junta of Cloyne".⁶³

The active presence of a Catholic "underground gentry" such as the Imokilly Fitzgeralds was a further factor in the endurance and re-emergence of their church in east Cork.⁶⁴ In the seventeenth-century, the ivory image of Our Lady of Graces was relocated from the Dominican North Abbey at Youghal to the safety of a Fitzgerald Castle at Ballymaloe, Cloyne. A silver shrine was subsequently made for this image by Lady Honora Fitzgerald of Cloyne (Kelleher, 1991, p. 87). In 1611, Sir George Carew, the Lord President of Munster complained that "My Lady Honora Fitzgerald is never without some of the fathers of Rome and priests, she gives the Roman Church a stipend from the livings she holds and enjoys" (Kelleher, 1991, p. 87). Under Fitzgerald protection, the singularly Roman Catholic feature of an altar to the Blessed Virgin was maintained at the Cathedral Church of St. Colman at Cloyne. In 1642, Sir John Fitzedmond Fitzgerald dispossessed the Anglican Bishop of his castle and lands at Cloyne and returned the keys of the cathedral to a Catholic priest who held them until Catholics were finally expelled from the cathedral in 1649. By 1704, Andrew Fitzgerald was named as parish priest of Cloyne, Aghada, Ballintemple, Corkbeg and Inch, receiving sureties of £50 each from two other Fitzgeralds from the parish.

During his visitation of Imogeela parish in 1785, Bishop Matthew McKenna found that a chalice there had been "bestowed by Mr. Pierce Fitzgerald."⁶⁵ This may have been Píaras MacGearailt, a convert-Catholic who was head of the Ballymacoda branch of the Imokilly Fitzgeralds. In his *Tréithe na Maighdine Mhuire/The Characteristics of the Blessed Virgin*, MacGearailt clearly resented that he had been forced to choose between his lands and his religion. He stated:

⁶² Crotty, M.F., 1997, p. 25.

⁶³ Derr, E., 2013, p. 267.

⁶⁴ The Imokilly Fitzgeralds had established towerhouses across east Cork at Ballymaloe, Castlemartyr, Killeagh, Ballymacoda, Cloyne, Middleton and Youghal (MacCotter, 1993).

⁶⁵ Derr, E., 2013, Visitation Register of Bishop MacKenna, 1785, p. 312.

‘Tis sad for me to cleave to Calvin or perverse Luther,
 But the weeping of my children,
 The spoiling them of flocks and lands brought streaming floods from
 my eyes and descent of tears.
 There is a part of the Saxon-Lutheran religion which, though not from
 choice, I have accepted that I do not like
 that never a petition is addressed to Mary, the mother of Christ,
 nor honour, nor privilege, nor prayers
 And yet it is my opinion that it is Mary
 who is tree of Lights and crystal of Christianity,
 the glow and precious lantern of the sky,
 the sunny chamber in the house of glory,
 flood of graces and Clíona’s wave of mercy”.

(Brady and Corish, 1971, p. 4)

Perhaps not surprisingly, MacGearailt’s attendance at Church of Ireland service was the bare legal minimum of only once a year.⁶⁶ MacGearailt’s political sympathies also remained pro-Stuart. As *Árd-Fhile* (chief poet) of the *Cúirt Éigse Uí Macaille*, the *cúirt filíocht* of Imokilly barony, MacGearailt’s *Rósc-Catha na Mumhan / The Battle Cry of Munster* (c. 1750) was a rallying cry of support for the Stuarts.

Other Catholic “underground gentry” in east Cork included Sir James Cotter, whose residence at Ballinsperrig, Carrigtwohill was the location for conferences and general councils of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. For a time, it was even the episcopal residence of the early-eighteenth century Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, John Baptist Sleyne. Bishop Sleyne was godfather to Sir James’ eldest son, Seamus Óg MacCoitir. Ó Buachalla’s (1993, p. 469) research into a *speculum principis*,⁶⁷ composed for Seamus Óg MacCoitir by his tutor, Catholic priest Dr. Domhnall Ó Colmáin points out that the cultivation of an aristocratic mindset in the young Cotter heir mirrored the *Ancien Régime* custom whereby Catholic priests acted as tutors to the sons of local lords. Given the construction of such a strong identity, it is hardly surprising that Seamus Óg MacCoitir refused to play the passive role expected of the conquered Irish. Sadly, this presented a challenge to the consolidating Protestant *status quo*, something which inadvertently led to his death, referred to earlier, in 1720 (McBride, 2009, p. 233)

⁶⁶ I am indebted to a direct descendant of MacGearailt’s, Mr. Luke Beausang, Ballymacoda, for this information.

Following Seamus Óg MacCoitir’s death, Cullen (1993, p. 559) identifies a significant geopolitical shift in Catholic/Protestant relations in the diocese. The axis of Catholic strength, he argues, moved northwards from east Cork to the Blackwater Valley. Here, branches of the Nagle and Hennessy families largely remained *in situ* as patrons of Catholic society by re-occupying and/or renting much of their former lands. The Ballygriffen and Ballyduff Nagles were protected by the Hennessys, most likely under the terms of a pre-1704 lease (Cullen, 1993, p. 552). By the 1730’s the mass-house of the Parish Priest of Doneraile, Rev. John Hennessy was situated on the grounds of the Nagle demesne at Annakissy (Cullen, 1993, p. 542). Cllr. Joseph Nagle, a lawyer who had entered the profession before 1704 continued to create legal smokescreens to maintain the ownership of lands in the hands of his relatives and other Catholics (O’Donnell, 2000, p. 105). His niece, Nano Nagle, described her uncle as “the most disliked by the Protestants of any Catholic in the kingdom” because of this.⁶⁸ The following table further demonstrates the extent of Nagle dominance among the Catholic priesthood of north Cork. Such a degree of dominance, could, of course, hinder as much as help their church (Millerick, 2013, p. 101). By 1785, Charles Nagle, the parish priest of Mitchelstown, was forbidden by Bishop MacKenna from saying mass in public and later referred to by Bishop Coppinger as “a drinker”.⁶⁹ Bishop Coppinger also refers to Richard Nagle, the parish priest of Kilavullen/Annakissy as “a drinking man”.⁷⁰

Table 3.3 Nagle Parish Priests in Cloyne, 1720-1850.

Name	Parish
Rev. James Nagle	Fermoy and Kilworth, 1720.
Dr. Patrick Nagle	Glanworth, 1785.

⁶⁷ Literally, a “mirror for princes”, this text drew upon Erasmus’ *Colloquia familiaria*, a text of Renaissance origin designed by Erasmus for the sons of the nobility to whom Erasmus was tutoring.

⁶⁸ During the seventeenth century, Richard Nagle, a member of the Carrigcunna branch was held in the same distrust by at least some of the New English élite who had formerly employed him to strengthen their legal hold over newly acquired lands and titles. The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, wrote that because of this, Nagle was more aware than most of “the weak part of most of their titles”, and consequently was amongst the most feared also (Cruise-O’Brien, 1992, p. 16).

⁶⁹ Derr, E., 2013, p. 328.

⁷⁰ Derr, E., 2013, p. 326.

Dr. Richard Nagle	Kilavullen, 1785.
Rev. Charles Nagle	Mitchelstown, 1785.
Rev. Nagle	Castletownroche, 1814.
Rev. M. Nagle	Kanturk, 1824-32

(Source: Wilson, 1959, C.D.A.)

Northeast of the Nagle/Hennessy enclave, Cullen (1993, p. 565) identifies an arc of propertied Catholics within a radius of ten to twenty miles around Mitchelstown. In 1720 the Parish Priest of Kilworth and Fermoy, Rev. James Nagle, bequeathed his vestments to Edmund Morrogh and his wife of Kilworth and gave £5 to Morrogh's daughter.⁷¹ In 1817 the obituary of Edward Morrogh of Kilworth stated that he was "related to some of the most respectable Roman Catholic families in the south of Ireland".⁷² In 1881, two chalices dated 1604 and 1644 and two silver pattens were found in a Morrogh house at Kilworth suggesting its use as a private chapel (Vaughan, 1985, p. 66). As early as 1713, Thomas Morrogh, a merchant from Kilworth had conformed to the Church of Ireland. By 1809, an Edmond Morrogh was listed as a magistrate and the churchwarden of Kilworth parish (Vaughan, 1985, p. 68).

In the uplands of the west and northwest of Cloyne, further rooted kin-groups of more Gaelic Irish ancestry also continued to retain a degree of influence. As seen earlier, the western parishes of Cloyne were home to a number of hereditary ecclesiastical families such as the O'Cremins of Aghabulloge, O'Healys of Donoughmore and O'Herlihs of Ballyvourney. The latter had been clerically prominent in Cork and Cloyne since the early fifteenth century (MacCotter, 2013, p. 40). Daibhí Bacach Ó hÍarlaithe was an eighteenth-century Irish-language poet whose home at Ballyvourney became a *cúirt filíocht*. Two of his sons, An t-Ath Uilliam and An t-Ath Pádraig became priests (Ó Murchadha, 1985, p. 197). In 1766, Thomas Herlihy was parish priest of nearby Clondrohid.⁷³ William O'Herlihy, probably Daibhí Bacach's son, is also referred to by Bishop Coppinger as the parish priest of Ballyvourney towards the end of the eighteenth-century.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Will of James Nagle, Parish Priest of Kilworth and Fermoy, 20 June, 1720. Rev. Bartholomew O'Keefe Ms. C.D.A.

⁷² Cork Mercantile Chronicle, 9 May 1817 (Vaughan, 1985, p. 66)

⁷³ 1764-5 Co. Cork Hearth Tax Returns. Names of Roman Catholic Priests compiled by Canon B Troy, Middleton. Unpublished document.

⁷⁴ Derr, E., 2013, p. 327.

Although the estate (8,488 acres) of the O'Keefes in the northwest of the diocese had been sold to the Hollow Blade Sword Company in 1703, successive O'Keefes continued to act as parish priests, mainly in the north and north-west of the diocese. In 1714, Owen Keefe was parish priest of Clonfert. His sureties were Manus Keefe and Arthur Keefe.⁷⁵ In the same year, Daniel Keefe was parish priest of Kilmeen and Cullen, and another Daniel Keefe the parish priest of Dromtarrif and Kilcorney.⁷⁶ The Duhallow-born parish priest of Doneraile, Eoghan Ó Caoimh died in 1726 (Caerwyn-Williams and Ford, 1992, p. 225). From 1811 to 1842, Joseph O'Keefe was parish priest of Glantane and David O'Keefe the parish priest of Kanturk from 1805 to 1821.⁷⁷

As outlined earlier, Clonmeen (Banteer) remained the chief seat of the O'Callaghans throughout the eighteenth century, where a branch could afford the services of a distinguished poet such as Aogán Ó Rathaile to extol their wealth (Corkery, 1941, p. 51). In 1714, Daniel O'Callaghan was parish priest of Clonmeen, where he was succeeded by Denis Callaghan. In the same year, Dermot Callaghan was parish priest of nearby Aghina.⁷⁸ By 1785, John Callaghan was parish priest of Ballinamona (Mourne Abbey) who, according to Bishop MacKenna was "potens verbo et opera" (powerful in word and deed).⁷⁹

Ó Murchadha's (1993) study of the O'Learys of Inchigeela, Co. Cork argues that their remoteness from the centralising authority of church and/or state may have been a factor in their rootedness and resilience. Producing a number of "anti-establishment personalities" (Ó Murchadh, 1993, p. 236), one of the best known was Art Ó Laoghaire. O'Leary had been an officer in the Austrian army, and like Bishop O'Brien, probably found it difficult to tolerate the deference required of him on his return to Co. Cork. Even local propertied Catholics may have interpreted his assertiveness as that of an undisciplined hothead (McBride, 2009, p. 234). A struggle ensued between O'Leary and Abraham Morris, the high sheriff of Co. Cork which culminated in a demand

⁷⁵ Burke, W.P., 1914, p. 375

⁷⁶ Burke, W.P., 1914, p. 375.

⁷⁷ Derr, E., 2013, p. 350-351.

⁷⁸ Burke, 1914, p. 375.

⁷⁹ Derr, E., 2013, p. 287.

by Morris for O’Leary’s horse.⁸⁰ O’Leary refused and returned intermittently to Macroom, where he was murdered in 1773. His killing is passionately recalled in the *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoire/ Lament for Art O’Leary*, reputedly written by his wife, Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill.⁸¹ In it, O’Leary’s portrayal, like that of Sir James Cotter of Carrigtwohill is that of a “flamboyant custodian of the old Gaelic tradition, eliciting respect and fear in equal measure” (Whelan, 1995, p. 20). As the *Caoineadh* puts it:

“D’umhlaidis Sasanaigh,
Síos go talamh duit,
Is ní ar mhaithe leat,
Ach le h-aonchorp eagla.”

“The Protestants would bow
to the ground before you
and not for their liking of you,
but through the extent of their fear”

(McBride, 2009, p. 234)

Further east along the Lee valley, although the last Lord of Muskerry, Sir Cormac mac Teige MacCarthy died in 1577, as early as 1603, his son Diarmuid MacCallaghan MacCarthy had founded an Irish College at Bourdeaux to supply Roman Catholic priests to Munster (Walsh, 1954, p. 24). Dr. Florence MacCarthy, Roman Catholic bishop of Cork (1761-1810) also possessed Cloyne connections. His father, Justin had been a physician at Macroom. Walsh (1951, p. 12) states that both were direct descendants of Sir Cormac mac Teige’s half-brother. The conversion of Cormac Spáinneach MacCarthy of Carrignavar to the Church of Ireland in 1715 probably strengthened rather than weakened surrounding Catholic communities (Coombes, 1981, p. 28). In his praise-poetry, Charleville Jacobite Sean Clárac MacDomhnaill refers to his generosity (Ó Foghlúda, 1932, p. 67). In 1720

⁸⁰ Cullen’s (1993, p. 575) research into the background of O’Leary’s murder reveals that in 1771 O’Leary had intervened on behalf of some individuals who were being proceeded against at the assizes. In a county notorious for its Protestant magistrates’ eagerness to keep the penal laws alive, the demands of Morris were most likely intended to keep Catholics in their place.

⁸¹ Cullen (1993, p. 576) has questioned the authorship of this lament, pointing out that no other manuscript compositions from O’Leary’s wife are known, and that attributing it to his widow may well have been a poetic convention. Instead, he argues, it may well have emanated out of the seething political tensions and resentments of the Cork/Kerry border area in the late eighteenth century that culminated in the O’Leary’s death.

Charles McCarthy was Parish Priest of Blarney.⁸² By 1785, Denis McCarthy, the pastor of Aghina was referred to by Bishop Coppinger as “a blustering, turbul[ent]t man”.⁸³ A MacCarthy priest associated with Clondrohid was also described by Bishop Coppinger as “a turbulent fellow intell[i]g[en]t in the Irish tongue”.⁸⁴ In 1790, *Faulkner’s Dublin Journal* contained an obituary: “Died near Blarney, Owen McCarthy Esq., commonly called Master-na-Mora” (Whelan, 1995, p. 21). At Kilmurray graveyard, Inniscarra, a monument was erected by Rev. Daniel McCarthy to his brother, a tithe proctor, who was murdered in 1799.⁸⁵ Some of the Blarney MacCarthys also continued to act as patrons of the Blarney *Dámhscoil* or school of poets. Among the first to preside over this group was Díarmuid MacCárthaigh, much of whose work consisted of elegies for MacCarthys who died during his lifetime (Caerwyn-Williams and Ford, 1992, p. 227). He was succeeded by Uilliam MacCairteáin who lived at Whitechurch, Blarney, close to the protection of the Carrignavar MacCarthys. In 1825, the Halls recorded an encounter at Blarney with an old man who stated that:

“I am a MacCarthy, once the possessor of that castle and these broad lands, this tree I planted and I have returned to water it with my tears. Tomorrow I sail for Spain, where I have been an exile and an outlaw since the revolution. Tonight, for the last time, I bid farewell to the place of my birth and the home of my ancestors”.

(Mr. & Mrs. SC Hall, 1841, p. 51)

The reliability of this informant was not referred to. The Halls continued:

“it is implicitly believed that the last [MacCarthy] Earl of Clancarty who inhabited the castle, committed the keeping of his plate to the deepest waters and that it will never be recovered until a MacCarthy be again lord of Blarney. Enchanted cows on midsummer night’s dispute the pasture with those of the present possessor, and many an earthly bull has been worsted in the contest.”

(Mr. & Mrs. S.C. Hall, 1841, p. 53)

Although no longer in possession of their towerhouses, lands and formal positions of power, a number of Cloyne’s Catholic “underground gentry” and their relatives clearly retained a privileged position in the lives of at least part of their communities. By offering leadership, resources and stability for the

⁸² Will of James Nagle, Parish Priest of Kilworth and Fermoy, 20 June, 1720 (O’Keefe, MS. C.D.A.).

⁸³ Derr, E., 2013, p. 328.

⁸⁴ Derr, E., 2013, p. 326.

endurance and re-emergence of their Church, such a role was vital in the creation of “a sophisticated system of communal organisation outside – and in a sense *against* - the formal structures of the state” (McBride, 2009, p. 252)

Although kinship ties remained important, by the early nineteenth-century, the centralising power of the institutional Church was increasingly stronger, although in some parts of the diocese more than others. Following a dispute in 1804 whereby the parish priest of Macroom, Rev. James Roche and his nephew, the curate of Macroom, were reported by their bishop to have publicly criticised the bishop’s character and cursed his chosen site for a new chapel, both were reminded that they were in breach of Canon Law and suspended.⁸⁶ Matters had clearly come a long way since Bishop John O’Brien’s 1765/66 missions. Over the course of these missions Bishop O’Brien discovered that a number of women from Glanworth had been raped in the confessional by their parish priest, Patrick Nagle. All were reported to have been afraid to accuse Nagle given his powerful relatives and the fact that, at one point, Nagle was even in the running for a bishopric (McBride, 2009, p. 256). One year later, Bishop O’Brien suspended Florence MacCarthy, a priest at Clondrohid for having been found guilty of similar crimes to those of Nagle’s. Only later, however, was Bishop O’Brien able to ascertain that MacCarthy had the backing of Archbishop James Butler I of Cashel, John Butler, the Bishop of Cork and “some Protestant friends” (McBride, 2009, p. 256).

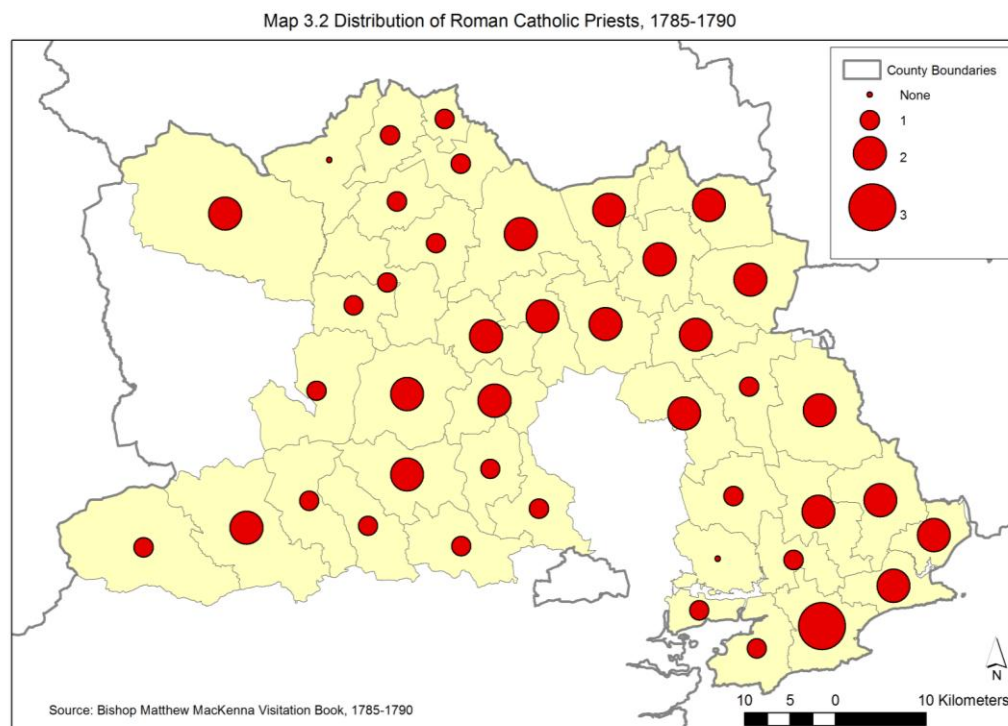
Increased episcopal power and a greater emphasis upon clerical discipline may have reduced the possibility of the recurrence of such incidents, at least for a while. In 1777 the Munster bishops met at Kilworth to draw up their *Articles of General Discipline*, a key text in the standardisation of Catholic religious practice across Munster.⁸⁷ By 1785 Bishop MacKenna was annually investigating the character of priests, schoolteachers, parish midwives and parishioners across the diocese. Priestly discipline was detailed in terms of

⁸⁵ Rev. Murphy Ms. 1909, p. 115, C.D.A.

⁸⁶ Bishop W. Coppinger to Archbishop Thomas Bray, July 28 1804. Papers of Dr. Thomas Bray, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, Microfilm P5999, NLI.

⁸⁷ *Articles of General Discipline agreed on by the Prelates at their meeting in Kilworth, the 15th and 16th October, 1777*. While this document may have strengthened the authority of bishops, it may also have diminished some of the traditional spiritual authority of priests (Dickson, 2005, p. 482).

frequency of clerical confession and the bishop took detailed notes regarding the conduct of parishioners who refused to adhere to church doctrine on matters such as usury, adultery, clandestine marriage and marriage within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity (Derr, 2013, p. 267). From Bishop MacKenna’s Visitation Book it is possible to map the geographical distribution of priests. Clearly, the number of priests was highest in the east of the diocese (Map 3.2). However, the age and/or character of priests also mattered if they were to fulfil their spiritual and temporal responsibilities.



From Bishop MacKenna’s visitations, it is clear that the Roman Catholic Church in Cloyne was successfully practicing a spatial division of labour with regard to a priest’s workload. Although primacy in matters of formal religion resided with priests (Buttimer, 1993, p. 631), the assistance of others was certainly needed. In some parts of early nineteenth-century Co. Cork, schoolteachers substituted for priests on religious occasions such as wakes (Buttimer, 1993, p. 637). A similar situation probably prevailed in parts of *Ancien Régime* France. Here, although the seminary taught priests the importance of catechism classes, “few priests seem to have relished the role of catechist and most put the task off on someone else” (Barnes, 1993, p. 154). Catechism classes had, in fact, been one of the more successful responses of the

Counter-Reformation to a growing demand amongst Catholics for religious guidance (Delumeau, 1977, p. 201). In the Irish case, catechesis stressed obedience to church authority, regular sacramental practice at Sunday mass and offered various prayers and devotions, particularly to the Blessed Virgin (Corish, 1985, p.131). Catechism classes also restructured the everyday lives of Catholics around saint's feastdays and days of religious observance (Buttimer, 1993, p. 637).

Bishop John O'Brien's *Diocesan Statutes* (1756) made the teaching of the diocesan catechism compulsory for two hours every Sunday in each parish chapel (Coombes, 1981, p. 48). To this, he added "how much more necessary is the practice in this kingdom than in Catholic countries where the catechism is taught by many others besides pastors and curates" (Coombes, 1981, p. 50). While this might indicate that catechesis was being conducted by priests only, to have referred to Catholic schoolteachers would have unwisely drawn attention to a breach of penal legislation.

As a conquered people, could the Catholic Irish have expected to have been educated above their lowly status or was such a possibility thought contrary to the divine order of things? (Kelleher Kahn, 2011, p. 24) Provision was certainly made for the education of Catholics in Protestant schools. However, how realistic such a possibility may have been in a society as divided as eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Cloyne requires further exploration. For those who could afford it, children could be sent to relatives in continental Europe. Píaras MacGearailt, along with his brothers, was educated at Cadiz where their uncle was a wine merchant (Ó Coindealbháin, 1945, p. 139). However, under the terms of the 1695 Education Act, Catholic parents or guardians who sent children to a "popish university, college or school" or to a Jesuit school, "in parts beyond the seas" were reminded that to do so would result in their forfeiting of "their goods and chattels for ever and lands for life" (Akenson, 1970, p. 42). Another option was to hire private tutors. As outlined earlier, by the mid-1760's, Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, was employed at Kilavullen as tutor to the Annakissy Nagles (Cullen, 1993, p. 535). This was in breach of a 1709 Act that decreed that any Catholic who taught privately or in a

public school was “esteemed a popish regular clergyman and prosecuted as such” (Akenson, 1970, p. 43).

In spite of the severity of penal provisions regarding education, “a lively underground intellectual life” continued to exist (Akenson, 1970, p. 49). Clearly, protest against the established order could be verbal just as much as physical (Withers, 1988, p. 327). O'Conchubair's (1982) map of the geographical distribution of eighteenth century Irish-language scribes in Co. Cork provides evidence for scholarly activity, however reluctant the poets and scribes identified may have been to make their political or religious sympathies known to the authorities (O'Conchubair, 1982, p. 1).

In 1731, officially, at least, only seventeen Catholic schoolteachers were reported by Cloyne's Church of Ireland Bishop to cater for an estimated Catholic population of 88,500.⁸⁸ By 1755, Bishop John O'Brien reported that there were only twenty Catholic schoolteachers in the united diocese of Cloyne and Ross. Coombes (1981, p. 42) maintains that these figures were such because Protestant schoolteachers would not permit open competition from Catholics. By the 1760's, Bishop O'Brien wrote to the Prefect of Propaganda, Cardinal Spinelli thanking him for a grant of 250 *scudi* for the establishment of schools in the Southern Province of Ireland (Coombes, 1981, p. 43). In Bishop McKenna's 1771 *relatio status*, he also thanked Propaganda for a subsidy for the Catholic schoolteachers of the diocese, who, he wrote, competed with Protestant teachers who received twenty crowns from Protestant ministers for every adult present in their schools (Moran, 1884, p. 338). In the same report, the bishop stated that he had distributed a number of catechisms “a mie editum in Lingua Hibernica” to priests and schoolteachers across the diocese (Moran, 1884, p. 338).

Four years later, Bishop MacKenna recorded 117 Catholic schools in Cloyne. These were probably “hedge” schools in the sense that their teachers operated outside the law and may have moved location from time to time (Dickson, 2005, p. 440). Although illegal and rudimentary, such numbers indicate that the outlines of a Catholic school system were beginning to take shape. By 1782, sections of the penal laws prohibiting Catholics from teaching

were repealed. Catholics could not teach in Protestant schools or take Protestant pupils, however. A licence from a Church of Ireland Bishop was also required and could be revoked if considered necessary (O'Brien, 1989, p. 144). In practice, however, such licences were sought for schools rather than individual teachers, with the latter probably continuing to work "under the radar", so to speak, of the Church of Ireland bishop.

By 1785, Bishop MacKenna recorded 136 schoolmasters and twenty-six schoolmistresses in the diocese. High totals of male schoolteachers are clearly evident across Imokilly barony (coastal east Cork), across much of the north of the diocese and in the upper Lee valley, close to Cork city (Map 3.3). Interestingly, the bishop found a Protestant schoolteacher to be teaching the Catholic catechism of the diocese at Mourne Abbey.⁸⁹ At Mallow, a Sunday school was held in its Market House. Presumably, Bishop MacKenna was reassuring himself when he added that, at this school, Catholics "only assist".⁹⁰ The high numbers of women who acted as teachers in the towns of the diocese would also confirm Whelan's (1988, p. 260) impression that the stereotypical representation of eighteenth-century Irish Catholic schoolteachers as male and rural fails to match the reality that, in fact "Towns were home to a Catholic "fifth column", hitherto obscure in the literature - women". At Youghal, more women teachers were recorded than men. Other parishes such as Blarney, Buttevant, Charleville and Macroom also held significant numbers of women teachers (Map 3.4). Although Dickson (2005, p. 441) suggests that these teachers may have been nuns, there is no evidence for this.

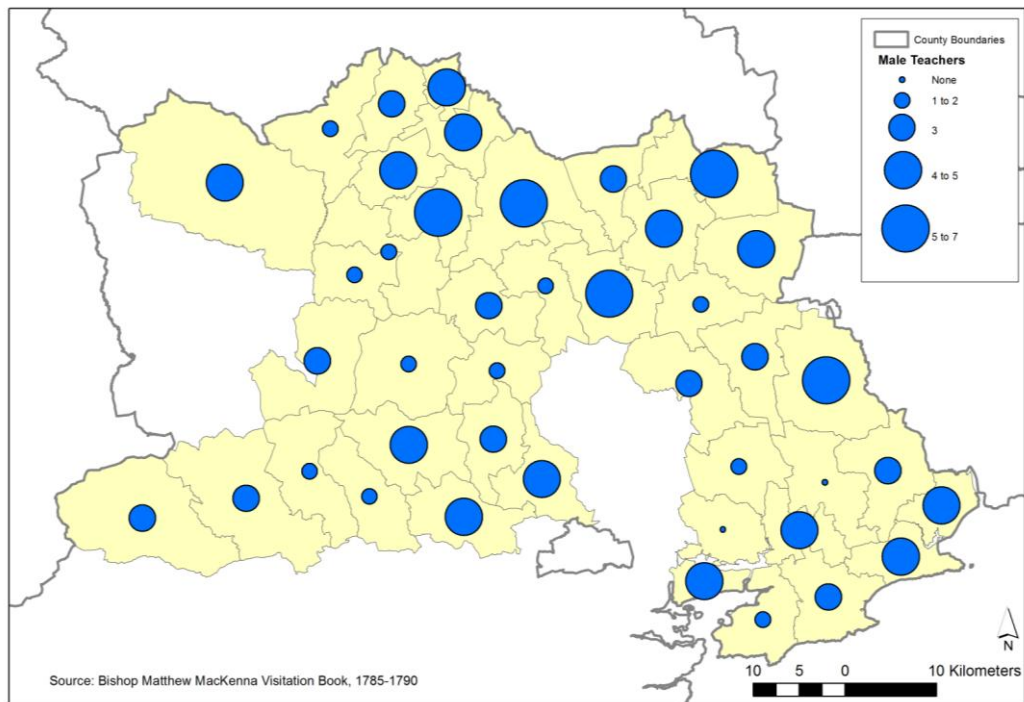
In parishes where the number of Catholic teachers were high it is likely that the corresponding presence of a Catholic "underground gentry", convert Catholics, strong tenant farmers, middlemen, merchants and/or other

⁸⁸ Report on the State of Popery in Ireland, 1731. *Archiv. Hib.* Vol. II, 1913, p. 128.

⁸⁹ Such willingness on the part of a Protestant schoolteacher to teach the Roman Catholic catechism of the diocese in parishes with large Catholic communities is hardly surprising. In the Dutch Republic, Catholic education and worship were also officially suppressed. However, Reformed teachers who taught in public schools in parts of the Republic with high numbers of Catholics diluted the confessional content of their teaching so as not to alienate parents and thereby lose potential school fees (Israel, 1995, p. 676).

⁹⁰ Derr, E., 2013, p. 297.

Map 3.3 Distribution of Male Teachers, 1785-1790



professionals were needed to support them. Whelan’s (1995, p. 39) research into the Whittys of Nicharee, Co. Wexford, for instance, demonstrates the importance of patronage. By the 1790’s, a member of this family wrote:

“My father, like other Catholics of means, determined one of his sons for the church and...he imported a profound teacher, learned in Greek and Latin from the then classical region of Ireland, Munster.”

As outlined earlier, the assistance of Catholic schoolteachers was vital for the diffusion of Tridentine Catholic religious beliefs. During the 1765/66 parish missions of Bishop John O’Brien, Dr. Matthew MacKenna distributed copies, in Irish, of the Angelus⁹¹ and the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition⁹² to priests and schoolteachers (Coombes, 1981, p. 88). In 1728 Pope Benedict

⁹¹ This prayer to the Blessed Virgin begins “Angelus Domini nuntiavit – The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary....”. Its origins lie in the First Crusade where Pope Urban II urged Christians to invoke the help of the Blessed Virgin. Although his proposal was largely unsuccessful, the clergy of the cathedral church of St. Pierre at Saintes (Poitou) recited it regularly and established the practice of ringing a bell at sunrise, noon and sunset to declare their invocation of the Blessed Virgin. Pope Urban’s successor, Pope John XXII decreed that the custom at Saintes be adopted throughout the church. Davies (1997, p. 407) concludes that the legacy of Pope John’s decision was that “The sound of the Angelus bell was to become as characteristic to the towns and villages of Christendom as the sound of the muezzin in Islam.”

⁹² Donlevy’s (1848, p. 37) catechism considered these Acts as upholding the principal virtues of the Roman Catholic Church and their recitation as necessary for salvation.

XIII had attached an indulgence to the recitation of these Acts. This was extended to Ireland by Pope Clement XIV in 1772 (Derr, 2013, p. 276). During his own 1771 parish missions, Bishop MacKenna granted an indulgence to all who went to confession, communion and fulfilled other conditions such as the recitation of the Angelus on bended knees in the morning, at midday and in the evening each day for a month. A second condition was the recitation of the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition each day for a month. Over the course of his visitations throughout the 1780s, Bishop MacKenna never failed to examine schoolteachers for their knowledge of these prayers.

In return for the support of teachers, the *imprimatur* of a priest was probably vital to the viability of a school (Dickson, 2005, p. 482). In many cases, parish priests were the *de facto* patrons. Relations between priests and teachers may not have always been harmonious, however (Dickson, 2005, p. 482). Like some priests, teachers may also have tended to become “a law unto themselves” (Dickson, 2005, p. 441). Others may have transmitted radical ideas. The “perpetual examination” (Foucault, 1979, p. 186) of teachers by a bishop, therefore, was not just vital to the transmission of Tridentine Catholic beliefs and practices, it may equally have been significant in countering the possibility that Catholic teachers might turn their schools into “centres for the inflammable mix of resentment from discrimination and democratic principles” (Corish, 1985, p. 165). The circulation of the “The Poor Man’s Catechism” by the United Irish movement in east Cork during the 1790’s would indicate that Tridentine Catholic ideals were far from the only ones that Catholics might aspire to.⁹³

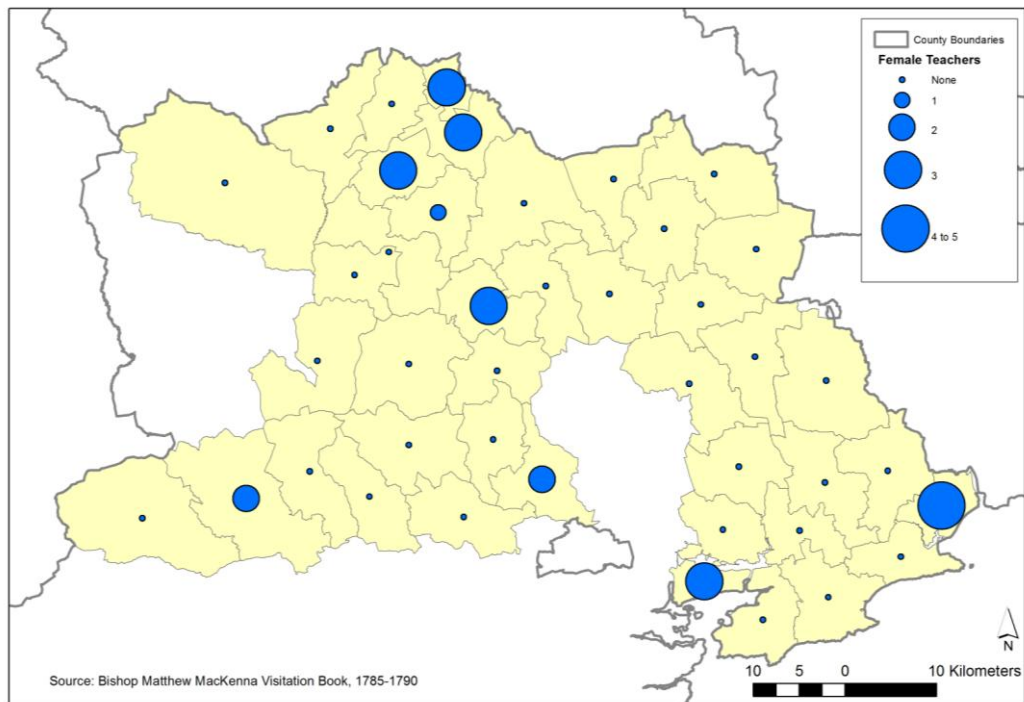
⁹³ In December 1797 it was reported to the Earl of Shannon that this catechism was in use for the swearing-in of United Irishmen. Using a branch or switch, the United Irish recruiter initiated a set of questions and answers taken from the catechism such as the following:

What is that in your hand?	It is a branch.
Of what?	Of the tree of liberty.
Where did it first grow?	In America.
Where does it bloom?	In France.
Where will the seeds fall?	In Ireland.
When will the moon be full?	When the four quarters meet.

The last reference was to the aspiration that all four Irish provinces would rise together in rebellion (Whelan, 1997, p. 95)

In response, Bishop Coppinger issued a pastoral letter condemning the movement and published a translation of Bishop Bossuet’s “Exposition of the Catholic Church in

Map 3.4 Distribution of Female Teachers, 1785-1790



By 1809, Bishop William Coppinger believed there to be 259 Catholic schools in the diocese (Dickson, 2005, p. 441). Although it is possible that the bishop’s “disciplinary gaze” (Foucault, 1979, p. 185) may have softened from time to time and from place to place, the “perpetual examination” (Foucault, 1979, p. 186) of Cloyne’s Catholics had clearly become the norm.⁹⁴ On only one occasion during his 1821 visitation, were two teachers noted by Bishop Coppinger to have deliberately failed to appear before him for examination. Not surprisingly, both were additionally reported to have not complied “with their duties of Confession and communion”.⁹⁵

What had been the norm for seventeenth-century France was clearly being replicated in Cloyne. As early as the seventeenth-century, Foucault (1979, p. 210) argues that the Catholic Church controlled a vast and complex

matters of Controversy” (Fenning, 1995, p. 140). Published in 1681, this text defended the idea of a divinely-ordained monarchy. Political passivity towards the *status quo*, was, therefore, defended as among the highest of virtues.

⁹⁴ Foucault (1979, p. 176-177) argues that “hierarchized, continual and functional surveillance” was an increasingly common feature of eighteenth-century European societies. In such cases “a network of relations” existed “from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network “holds” the whole together and traverses its entirety....its supervisors perpetually supervised”.

⁹⁵ Derr, 2013, p. 346.

“learning machine”, one that acted as a vehicle for punishing, rewarding, supervising and categorising. At the schools of St. John Baptist de la Salle (1651-1719), punishments were based around the Catholic catechism. A learner might be given four or six catechism questions to copy as a punishment, but could have these reduced by accumulating a certain number of privilege points. In 1769, Nano Nagle wrote of her schools in Cork city:

“At present I have two schools for boys and five for girls. The former learn to read, and when they have the Douai catechism by heart they learn to write and cypher. There are three schools where the girls learn to read, and when they have the catechism by heart they learn to work. They all hear mass every day, say their morning and night prayers, say the Catechism in each school by question and answer all together. Every Saturday they all say the beads, the grown girls every evening. They go to confession every month and to Communion when their Confessors think proper. The schools are opened at eight, at twelve the children go to dinner, at five o’clock they leave school. The workers do not begin their night prayers until six, after the beads.”

(Walsh, 1980, p. 346)

By 1818, Nagle’s Presentation Order had opened its first school in Cloyne at Doneraile.

While the “perpetual examination” of Cloyne’s Catholics may have brought about a degree of social control, in practice, however, it appears to have been a somewhat hollow ritual. In his *General Statistical Survey of the County of Cork* (1810), the practice of rote-learning in the Catholic schools of Cloyne and Ross led Rev. Horatio Townend, a Church of Ireland minister and magistrate, to conclude that the “Irish are the most stupid race on the face of the earth”. His knowledge of such schools, he added, led him to believe that “all the boys gobble their lessons together, as loud and as fast as they can speak”.⁹⁶

In his response, Bishop William Coppinger outlined that:

“in no corner of this kingdom, perhaps, is the instructing of the grown and the growing generation more energetically enforced. To obviate the possible neglect of it, ecclesiastical censures are the certain penalty. The children during eight months of the year are assembled one or two days of each week, in every parish for examination of the Christian Doctrine, and at every visitation, a leading question put to the Clergy before all the people, whether they are punctual in discharging this weighty obligation: the children themselves are interrogated, so that remissness in this point cannot remain undiscovered. Schools are encouraged in every parish and when we reflect upon the general

⁹⁶ MacCarthy, M. (s.d.) *Lacus Delectabiles*, p. 46. Cork County Library. R828.

indigence of the poor parents, these schools are amazingly frequented”.⁹⁷

Of the 41 Cloyne parishes visited by co-adjutor Bishop Michael Collins in 1828, however, in only one was he satisfied that levels of understanding of the Catholic catechism of the diocese were satisfactory.⁹⁸ His repeated remark that learners “have the words but not the meaning”, or similar, would indicate a very limited penetration of Tridentine Catholic thought indeed.⁹⁹ In the wider European context, this was probably far from unusual. Clerical lamentations concerning the ignorance of basic elements of Catholicism were commonplace in the *Ancien Régime* European Catholic Church (Callaghan and Higgs, 1979, p. 7). Uniform standards of orthodox religious belief were just as rare in some parts of Protestant Europe. In the Dutch Republic, teachers in State-funded Reformed schools were required to ensure that the psalms and excerpts from Scripture were recited by children, but teaching in the sense of explanation and elucidation rarely took place (Israel, 1995, p. 689). The practice of rote-learning among the young might also account for the fact that although attendance at Sunday services was high among rural nineteenth-century Lutherans in Saxony, belief in life after death was not (McLeod, 1981, p. 59). Whelan’s (1988) observation that “Catholicism as an institutional force was most strongly entrenched in the richer areas, the upper social classes and the towns” (in McBride, 2009, p. 230) may certainly have been the case for Cloyne (Millerick, 2013). At a deeper level, however, the extent to which the ideals of Tridentine Catholicism really penetrated the hearts and minds of Cloyne’s Catholics is something which must be called into question.

That the post-penal Roman Catholic Church in Cloyne was successfully practising a geographical dispersal of a priest’s workload through its use of spatial divisions of labour was clearly the case. Since other sacraments/rituals such as baptism were viewed as a necessary prerequisite for the salvation of the soul, Catholic parish midwives were utilised by their church to ensure that, in the event of death, an infant should enter the Kingdom of God (Towler and Bramall, 1986, p. 53). Parish midwives may also have been obliged to notify a

⁹⁷ Bishop William Coppinger, *To The Right Honorable, The Dublin Society. 1811*, Special Collections, U.C.C.

⁹⁸ Derr, E., 2013, p. 369.

priest of births so that registers could be accurately kept. In seventeenth-century France, Delumeau (1977, p. 194) maintains that surveillance of midwives was increased, probably less to limit abortions than because midwives were obliged to baptise the newly-born in danger of death. Chosen by the female elite of the village, a midwife publicly gave an oath with her hands between those of the *curés*. On this occasion, she also had to prove that she could also administer baptism.

Although there are no references to this ritual taking place in Cloyne, it would hardly have been difficult to replicate. The importance of baptism was certainly underlined by Bishop Matthew McKenna during his visitations. In each parish he investigated whether midwives knew “the form of baptism” or not, as he put it.¹⁰⁰ High numbers of Catholic parish midwives appear to have existed in the eastern parishes of Cloyne. Another concentration of high totals was centred around the northern parishes of Charleville, Buttevant and Kanturk (Map 3.5). By 1818, Bishop William Coppinger wrote that he expected parish midwives to present themselves during his visitation for examination. At Middleton he “saw the 3 midwives” and added that “they know how to baptize, & got the necessary directions in cases of abortions & illegitimate pregnancy”.¹⁰¹ The following day at Aghada he “lectured the midwives”.¹⁰² On only one occasion during his 1821 visitation was the bishop made aware that there were midwives at Donoughmore “in the extremities of the Parish whose names the Clergymen did not know”.¹⁰³ At Macroom, “The Schoolmasters and the Midwives underwent the usual examination”.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Derr, E., 2013, p. 378.

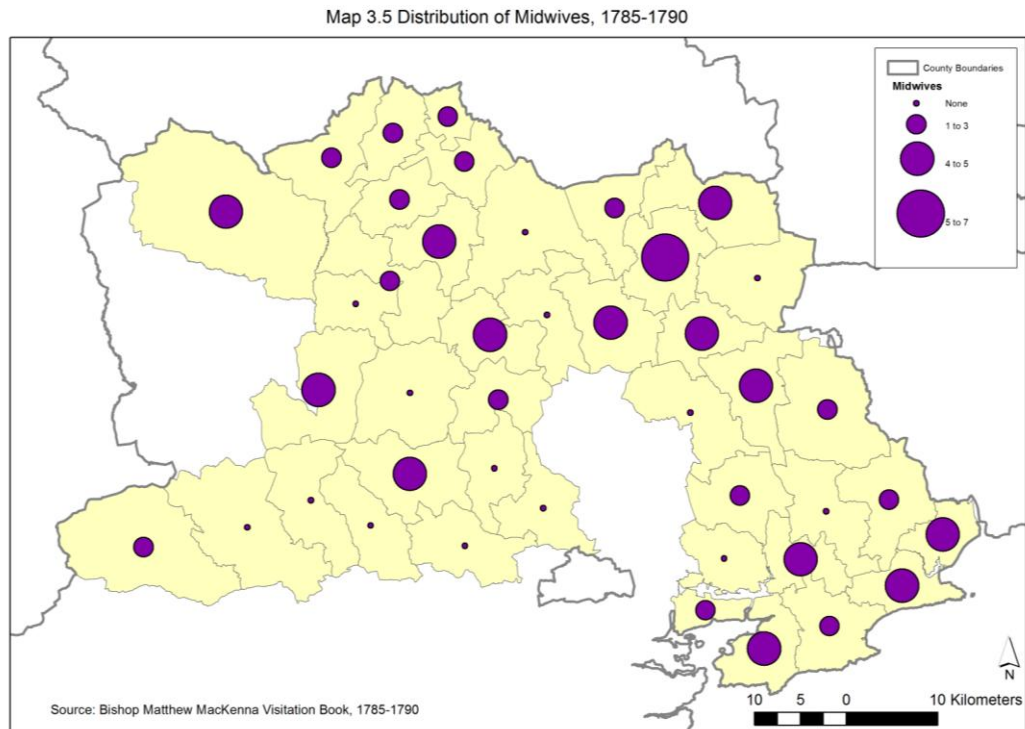
¹⁰⁰ Derr, E., 2013, p. 293.

¹⁰¹ Derr, E., 2013, p. 337.

¹⁰² Derr, E., 2013, p. 337.

¹⁰³ Derr, E., 2013, p. 347.

¹⁰⁴ Derr, E., 2013, p. 348.



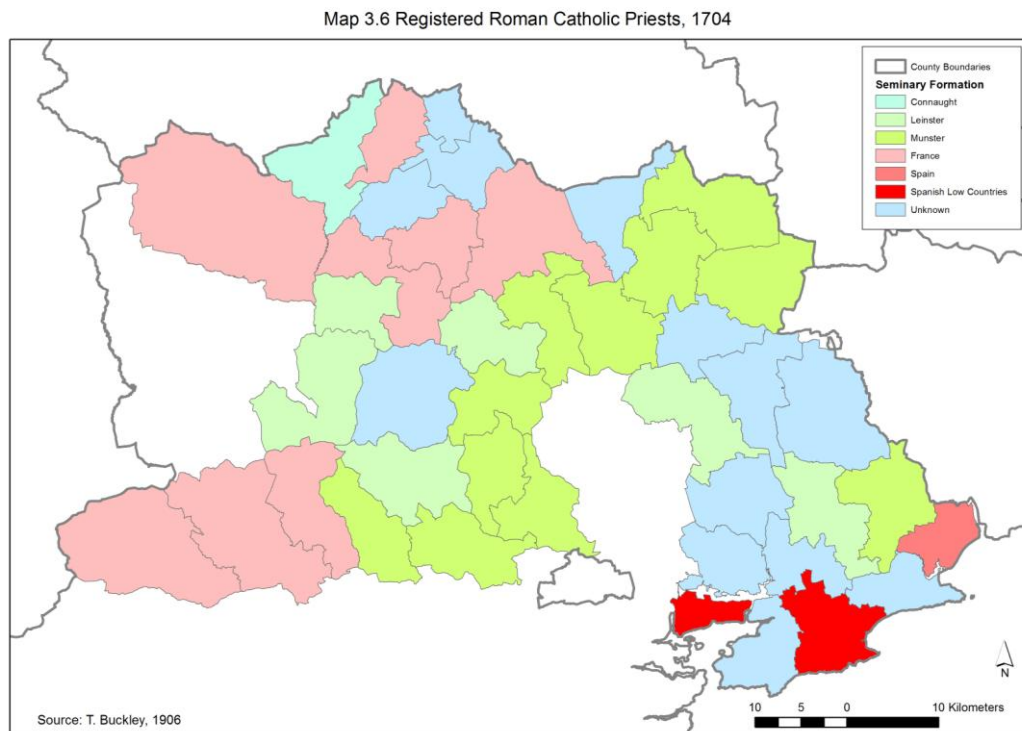
3.3 Emigrants and External Influences: Cloyne’s Catholics and the Wider World.

As seen above, at least some aspects of the kind of Catholicism that developed in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Cloyne were clearly modelled on the type of Church that had developed in *Ancien Régime* Europe. For Whelan (1988, p. 257), continentally-trained priests were not just the transmitters of spiritual values, they were just as much the “agents of the wider European Catholic world.” Institutions such as the Irish Colleges have been aptly described by McBride (2009, p. 229) as “the lifeboats that preserved the Irish priesthood following the shipwreck of 1691”. Perhaps a further unintended by-product of the penal laws, such Colleges may have strengthened, rather than diluted the continental character of Irish Catholicism (McBride, 2009, p. 17). The Irish diaspora was also a further factor in shaping the re-emergence of Irish Roman Catholic communities (McBride, 2009, p. 248). As O’Connor (2001, p.10) points out “people who leave a country do not necessarily cease to act as historical players there”. Continental Europe was also home to a Catholic Irish “displaced intelligentsia” (Chambers, 2001, p.

157), whose contribution to Irish intellectual life ensured that it remained “vigorous, diverse and European” (Chambers, 2001, p. 157).

Historic linkages between Munster and continental Europe have been acknowledged by Whelan (1988, p. 262) as among the key factors contributing to the strength of Tridentine Catholicism in the south of Ireland. Catholic trading families in the port cities and towns of the south held enduring links with the Atlantic port cities of continental Europe. By the mid-eighteenth century significant numbers of Irish Catholics had migrated to these cities and/or their hinterlands, where they joined larger Irish expatriate communities involved in a diverse range of activities; political, military, educational and religious.

The 1704 list of registered clergy (Buckley, 1906) demonstrates the degree to which some of Cloyne’s priests retained such links. Interestingly, French-ordained clergy dominated the western and north-western parishes (Map 3.6). Priests from this part of the diocese had been ordained in Atlantic



port cities and towns such as Bordeaux and Quimper (Brittany) or at inland port towns such as Rouen, on the mouth of the Seine and Toulouse, on the Garonne, but accessible via Bordeaux. Indeed, for much of the eighteenth century, the

Seminary of Sainte Anne-le-Royale at Toulouse was effectively the diocesan seminary for Cork, Cloyne and Ross (Coombes, 1981, p. 17). Other registered priests from the coastal parishes of Imokilly barony held links with Spain and the Spanish territories (Flanders) of the Low Countries. The parish priest of Youghal had been ordained at Navarre in Spain, a priest from Cobh at Namur (Flanders) and the parish priest of Cloyne at Antwerp. Flanders and Brabant formed part of the Spanish Low Countries until 1713 when they came under Austrian Hapsburg rule. These territories contained two high-profile Irish colleges at Antwerp (Flanders) and at Louvain (Brabant). It is also possible that the number of continentally-trained priests may be higher than the 1704 list suggests, given that it was not uncommon for priests to be ordained in Ireland first, thus offering them the opportunity of a steady income from celebrating masses while they lived abroad.

Seminary life, however, may have protected as much as prepared at least some clerical students from the harsh realities of their return home to the “Irish mission”. In 1759, a somewhat *naïve* newly-ordained priest from Louvain wrote that immediately upon disembarking, his books were seized by port officials at Cobh. These were subsequently sent to the customs house to be examined. “I pleaded for them personally” the priest wrote, “and recovered them with the compliment of sending them porter” (Coombes, 1981, p. 50). Soon afterwards, he presented himself in full clerical dress to Bishop John O’Brien at Rathcormac. The priest’s distinctive clerical costume so alarmed the bishop that he ordered the priest to immediately change to civilian clothing. Only three years earlier, Bishop O’Brien’s *Diocesan Statutes* (1756) had forbidden the wearing of distinctive clerical dress because it had been drawing unwelcome attention to priests (Coombes, 1981, p.50). Bishop O’Brien had also observed that while in continental seminaries, clerical students were quick to forget the Irish language (Connolly, 1982, p. 534). By 1756, he insisted that all newly ordained priests for Cloyne and Ross would not be provided with parishes unless they had completed courses in philosophy and moral theology in the Catholic colleges of continental Europe. Newer devotions, more effective methods of preaching and better techniques for imparting Tridentine

Catholicism on their return could, presumably, be better acquired abroad than at home.

Among the more successful methods for standardising Catholic religious practice was the parish mission. The first half of the eighteenth-century had been the golden age of Catholic missionary activity on the continent, particularly in the rural heartlands of France, Spain and Italy (McBride, 2009, p. 255). This was conducted by teams of priests who moved from parish to parish, visited homes, celebrated open-air masses, throughout which they preached constantly. Typically, a week or more of spiritual exercises would climax with an examination of the sinner's conscience in preparation for confession and communion (McBride, 2009, p. 255). While on his 1765/66 parish missions of Cloyne and Ross, Bishop John O'Brien wrote:

“Nothing is more consoling to us than the zeal and ardour shown by the faithful...to profit by the instructions and to receive the sacraments. A large number follow us from parish to parish, sometimes from twelve to fourteen days before being able to receive the sacraments. They always fast until evening, so eager are they to make a good and entire confession”.

(Coombes, 1981, p.87)

Indeed, such appears to have been the transformative effect among Catholics, that even Protestants expressed their appreciation to Bishop O'Brien for the swift payment of debts that ensued (Coombes, 1981, p. 87).

Bishop Matthew McKenna provides an even more detailed account of his 1771 parish missions. The mission circuit, he wrote, lasted for three months during which the bishop and his team of twenty priests travelled throughout the diocese. The bishop and priests began each day at six a.m., preached in the open air and heard confessions. They ate breakfast at eleven and continued until six p.m. at which time they ate dinner together. On the last day the bishop confirmed those who had been deemed sufficiently prepared (Coombes, 1981, p. 88).

A further pastoral innovation which may be attributed to continental influences was the introduction of clergy conferences. These were sites for the discussion and diffusion of orthodox Catholic teaching, as well as for the raising of intellectual standards among priests. A priest who failed to impress his bishop with his theological knowledge may have been considered to have been of as little value in Cloyne as in *Ancien Régime* France (Delumeau, 1977,

p. 187).¹⁰⁵ At such events, conference papers were presented and discussed. Subscriptions could also be presented, as the bishop and invited friends were often present. Priests could be punished by fines or even suspension if they failed to attend. Bishop John O'Brien's *Diocesan Statutes* (1756) placed considerable emphasis upon the conference. The priests of each deanery were obliged to attend a monthly conference where a thesis was discussed in either Latin or English. A further result of the conference was the convergence of attitudes amongst priests with those of the hierarchy (Delumeau, 1977, p. 187).

From Bishop MacKenna's Visitation Book (1785), it is clear that he expected priests to have a minimum number of books. These included bound sets of baptismal and marriage registers, the Constitutions of the diocese, lists of reserved sins and the *prône*. The latter was a book of prepared sermons and prayers which was used during Sunday Mass and a key tool in remodelling older oral versions of the liturgy to newer standardised ones. In 1771, Bishop McKenna reported that he had distributed the *prône* to priests who did not intend to preach. He also stated that the Sunday sermon was now the norm in Cloyne, leaving only a few older priests who were unable to preach (Moran, 1884, p. 338). In parts of the diocese such as east Cork, every priest had a copy, with the exception of the parish priest of Middleton who, the Bishop noted, "instructs every Sunday instead".¹⁰⁶

On returning to Cloyne, besides acting as agents for the transmission of Tridentine Catholicism (Whelan, 1988, p. 257), some priests were undoubtedly politically suspect to the secular state. The Papacy continued to recognise the Stuarts as the legitimate monarchs of Great Britain and Ireland, whose favour was a key element in the appointment of Catholic bishops to the Irish and British Roman Catholic Churches. In 1687 Pope Innocent XI (1676-89) granted James II the *nominatio regis Angliae*; the right of presentation of candidates to a see by the Stuart monarch. This privilege was upheld by his son James III, but ceased after his death in 1766 when the Papacy no longer recognised his son, Prince Charles Edward, as king. Although King Louis XIV recognised William of Orange as King of Britain and Ireland, the Stuarts were

¹⁰⁵ Of the 93 priests referred to by Bishop Coppinger in his "List of deceased clergy, 1770-1779", eleven are referred to as "ignorant" (Derr, 2013, p. 326-328).

¹⁰⁶ Derr, E., 2013, p. 311.

permitted to keep a shadow court at Saint-Germain, composed mainly of English, Scottish and Irish migrants.

While the Stuart influence and that of their court gradually weakened, the vitality of Catholic Irish abroad may have done little to placate local Protestant fears. As long as substantial numbers of Catholic Irish-born troops were engaged in military training, the Irish administration had good reason to feel threatened. Catholic soldiers and their families who had migrated following the Battle of the Boyne were followed by later generations of recruits eager for opportunities for social advancement denied them at home. Simms (1986, p. 630) estimates that around 12,000 Irish soldiers and their families had left Ireland following the Battle of the Boyne. This was followed by successive waves of emigration, whereby newer networks of migration were established. South Munster was over-represented amongst these flows (Dickson, 2005, p. 265).

On their return, some priests may also have, or at least been suspected of encouraging recruitment, of tendering oaths of loyalty to the Stuarts and promising “martyrdom and celestial reward” for those killed in battle (Dickson, 2005, p. 265). Writing from Midleton in 1722, St. John Brodrick, the son of the town’s Protestant landlord was so exercised at the sight of Catholics marching in military formation that he wrote to his father stating that he had seen:

“two or three hundred in a gang with their officers and several of their men armed and [they] have marched regularly through the country at noon-day, on their way to the seaside in order to be shipped off...the common people of the country are so much afraid of them, that though I had an account [...] that seventy of them were assembled at an alehouse near Carrigtohill in order to go aboard ship that night, I could not prevail with even our own tenants and neighbours with me to disperse them, and had this reason given me, which I confess seems to have some weight, that since the Government did not see fit to take notice of them, they saw no reason why they should officiously run the risk of being murdered or having their houses burnt for doing what they thought was more properly the business of others”.

(Dickson, 2005, p. 266)

As outlined earlier, during the “honeymoon period” of Anglo-French relations in the 1730’s, the British parliament authorised Col. Richard Hennessy and six other officers of the French Army to recruit 750 men, mainly from the Blackwater Valley for the Irish Brigade of the French Army (Cullen, 1993, p.

561). “Underground gentry” such as the Nagles also looked to France, rather than to England for aristocratic connections (O’Donnell, 2000, p. 105).

Besides the port cities and towns of France, an enduring geopolitical link between Cloyne and Rome was also maintained. Papal decrees continued to be successfully transmitted, bishops appointed and *relatio status* provided by Irish bishops to the Holy See. In 1791 an unsuccessful attempt to influence the Catholic episcopal succession by Richard Longfield, the Protestant governor of Co. Cork was documented by the Earl of Shannon. Following the death of Bishop Matthew MacKenna, the Earl wrote that:

“Longfield offered it to one Barry, priest of Midleton, the other said it was in the gift of the Pope. Longfield said damn the Pope, he shall not meddle in Co. Cork while I am governor and as you are my tenant I’ll make you bishop, the other said with much contempt he did not look so high.¹⁰⁷

By 1808, following the Napoleonic occupation of Rome, channels of communication remained open, but only intermittently. The pragmatic response of Bishop William Coppinger was that when “recourse cannot be had with the Holy City”, he would act independently, “without scruple whenever the necessities of the diocese require it.”¹⁰⁸

Links with Iberia were also significant. A silver chalice used at Youghal chapel reminded the priest there that it had been presented “From Catherine Lucas in Cadiz”.¹⁰⁹ On his return from Cadiz where his uncle had been a wine merchant, Párais MacGearailt acted as patron for a translation of parts of Friar O’Daly’s *Relatio Geraldinorum* (1655) concerning the genealogy of his branch of the Ballymacoda Fitzgeralds (Ó Foghlughá, 1945, p. 141).¹¹⁰ This manuscript had originally been composed in Lisbon. Bishop John Baptist Sleyne of Cork, Cloyne and Ross had also left for Lisbon, after being jailed in Cork under the terms of the Banishment Act of 1698. Two of his nephews already resided there. In 1698, Queen Mary of Modena, the wife of James II, addressed the General of the Dominican Order at Lisbon on behalf of Jeanne

¹⁰⁷ Earl of Shannon, Castlemartyr to Viscount Boyle, Dresden, July 6 1791. Shannon Papers, N.L.I, Ms.13,303.

¹⁰⁸ Bishop W. Coppinger, Midleton, to Bishop F. Moylan, Cork, 11 Nov, 1808, C.D.A.

¹⁰⁹ Rev. Murphy Ms., 1909, C.D.A.

¹¹⁰ As its title suggests, Friar O’Daly’s *Initium, incrementa, et exitus familiae Geraldinorum...ac persecutionis haereticorum* (Lisbon, 1655) documents the

McCarthy who wished to enter a Dominican Convent there. Queen Mary reported that MacCarthy “belongs to an old Irish family and three of whose brothers have been killed in the King’s service since the Revolution”. The following year, King James II was informed that “Mademoiselle Jeanne MacCarthy, now of Lisbon, is descended from the ancient house of the MacCarthys, and is connected with the principal Lords of that house”.¹¹¹ Well into the eighteenth-century, the Dominicans of Lisbon continued to play a role in the appointment of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Cork, Cloyne and Ross (Bolster, 1989, p. 229). In 1799, the Rector of the Irish College at Lisbon wrote to Bishop Coppinger requesting that its professor of philosophy, Rev. Bartholomew Crotty remain there “or that the house may go down, or fall into the hands of the natives as it was before by which it suffered exceedingly, from which I had the good fortune to save it”.¹¹² By 1811, Crotty had returned to Ireland, but retained his connections with Lisbon. These were useful for other priests, such as the parish priest of Castletownroche, who requested that Crotty, as parish priest of Midleton, send for a copy of Thucydides¹¹³, as well as for other books from Lisbon.¹¹⁴ Lewis (1837, p. 729) also noted that, at Youghal’s Catholic chapel “above the altar is a fine painting of the Crucifixion, brought from Lisbon”.

A significant factor in the financial underpinning of the nineteenth-century Catholic Church in Cloyne was the Goold Trust. Named after a Lisbon-born Presentation nun, Angelina Goold, her trust fund financed a number of projects in the diocese which were directed primarily, although not exclusively towards the creation of institutional places and spaces for women

perceived exile of branches of the Imokilly Fitzgeralds from Ireland to continental Europe (Ó Cuív, 1989, p. 411).

¹¹¹ J.C.H.A.S., Quarterly Notes, 1903, p. 64. In 1719, the testimonies of Donato MacCarthy, the bishop of Cork and ten priests, including that of Florence MacCarthy, the curate of Donoughmore referred to the “long, noble and true Catholic family of MacCarthy” and were used by Charles MacCarthy in the Basque country in his successful attempt to be recognized as of noble origin (Fannin, 2013, p. 300)

¹¹² Rev. M. Daly, St. Patrick’s College, Lisbon to Bishop W. Coppinger, Midleton, 21 July, 1799. C.D.A.

¹¹³ Thucydides tackles the question of how to write critically and accurately. This work may also have been important to priests because it contained the speeches of Pericles, leader of the Athenian forces and one of the foremost of the classical orators.

¹¹⁴ Rev. B. Crotty, Midleton to Rev. M. Collins, Castletownroche, 14 December, 1811. C.D.A.

(Table 3.4). Born at Lisbon in 1792, her family belonged to one of the leading Catholic merchant families of Cork city (Martin, 1988, p. 1). After leaving Lisbon for Cork, Angelina Goold joined the newly-founded Presentation Order at Doneraile, which was established there in 1818. Following the death of her parents she was left with a legacy of over £300,000. Socially and spatially, the distribution of projects funded by her trust is interesting. At Youghal, an almshouse was established for poor widows. A Magdalen Asylum was also built at Youghal to incarcerate unmarried women whose families could not or would not support them. Funds were also channelled into parishes with a Presentation presence such as Doneraile, Youghal and Midleton, where Presentation convents were located. Wallstown, Shanballymore and Kilavullen were also closely associated with Nano Nagle, the foundress of the Presentation Order.

Table 3.4. Projects Funded by the Goold Trust : 1829-50.

Year	Sum	Destination
1829	-	Magdalen Asylum, Youghal
	-	Alms house for poor widows, Youghal
1831	£40	Relief of distress, Cape Clear
	£40	Relief of distress, Skibbereen
	£500	Enlargment of Doneraile Convent
1832	£1,500	Presentation Convent, Youghal
1834	£2,060	Presentation Convent, Midleton
1835	£1000	Presentation Convent, Fermoy
	£500	Chaplaincy, Presentation Convent, Midleton.
1839	£1,500	Presentation Convent, Fermoy
1841	£320	Shanballymore and Wallstown National Schools
1846	-	Pension for two students at All Hallows, Dublin.
1847	£800	Presentation Convent, Midleton
	£200	Mitchelstown Chapel
1848	£400	Chaplaincy, Presentaion Convent, Doneraile
1849	£450	Presentation Convent, Mitchelstown
1850	£1,500	Presentation Convent, Mitchelstown
	£1000	Mercy Convent, Mallow
	£1000	Mercy Convent, Cobh

(Source: *Notes Respecting Miss Goulde's Trust Funds*-Rev. T. Murphy, Youghal, 18 September, 1857. C.D.A.)

As the effects of the French Revolution changed continental European societies, so too, they affected the Roman Catholic Church and its associated communities in Cloyne. An immediate effect was upon the Irish Colleges. Although Irish priests were not compelled to take the oath to the civil constitution because they were not French citizens, the revolutionaries attacked the Irish College in Paris several times in 1789 because it was regarded as a safe haven for aristocrats (Simms, 1986, p. 651). In the Austrian Netherlands, its Irish Colleges were pillaged by the invading French who regarded them as English and by the English who regarded them as French (Giblin, 1971, p. 24). Other institutions connected to the *Ancien Régime* such as the Irish Brigade in the French Army were also abolished by the National Assembly in 1791.

Geographically, the Catholic Church in Ireland was increasingly turning towards St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, rather than to continental Europe for the education of its priests. Founded in 1795, its students and staff were required to take the 1774 Oath of Allegiance to the Hanoverian dynasty. Some continuity with continental Europe endured, as the Goold Trust demonstrates. However, as Catholic Irish emigrant families assimilated into continental European societies, Cloyne's Catholics were looking towards the English-speaking rather than to Spanish, Portuguese or French-speaking worlds as the focus of their destinies.

As the geographical outlook of at least some of Cloyne's Catholics began to broaden, their Church did not remain unaffected. For Edmund Burke, for instance, his close ties with his Cloyne relatives had a significant effect upon his involvement in Indian affairs (O'Flaherty, 1998, p. 22). O'Donnell (2002, p. 7) argues that his empathy for the Indian people and their nobility cannot be separated from his experiences of the repression of Irish Catholics under the penal laws. Furthermore, Burke's Irish background offered him an effective mode of expression for his speeches concerning Indian affairs. The *Caoinéadh ar chéim síos na nuasal/Lament for the fallen nobility*, for instance, offered Burke a blueprint from which he could position himself, like the Gaelic poet, in the position of an "outraged observer" (O'Donnell, 2002, p.16) towards the corrupt activities of the East India Company and its officers.

By the 1770's, Burke's first cousin Nano Nagle interpreted the "great commission" to "to go forth throughout the world and preach the Gospel" (Akenson, 1996, p.147) in the following terms:

"I am sending boys to the West Indies. Some charitable gentlemen put themselves to great expense for no other motive. Only as they are well instructed, and as the true faith is decaying very much there by reason of them that leave this county knowing nothing of their religion, [this] made them lay this scheme, which I hope may have the desired effect. All my children are brought up to be fond of instructing, as I think it lies in the power of the poor to be of [more] service that way than the rich. These children promise me they will take great pains with the little blacks to instruct them. Next year I will have pictures for them that go to give the negroes that learn the Catechism."

(Walsh, 1980, p. 347-8)

The attractiveness of the British West Indies may be attributed to its religious freedoms, such as the right to vote, which were granted to Catholics as early as 1768 (Hill, 1989, p. 107).

By the early nineteenth-century, the United Kingdom and her Empire had become the world's most powerful militarised state (Lee, 1991, p. 3). When Britain and France went to war in 1793, the militarisation of Cloyne increased dramatically as Co. Cork was considered "an invitingly soft underbelly" (Whelan, 1997, p. 101) in the event of a French strike. Considerable British naval activity was focused around Cork harbour which was "always judged to be the most likely landing spot, as it was closest to France, had friendly prevailing winds, and possessed the alluring magnet of Cork city, one of the premier provision ports of the Atlantic world" (Whelan, 1997, p. 101). At Cobh, Townsend (1815, p. 56) believed that "The time of war was always its time of harvest, in consequence of fleets assembling there for convoy". The Halls (1841, p. 59) agreed. They observed:

"As late as 1780, Cove had scarcely advanced beyond the dignity of a fishing hamlet. Soon afterwards, however, the value of Cork harbour having been appreciated, its Cove gradually rose into importance; houses were built, fortifications for defence constructed, government stores established and it became the naval station of an Admiral's flag. Bustle, activity and a thriving trade followed. It was not an unusual sight to behold...three hundred sail of merchant vessels assembled, waiting for convoy...Cove was then all gaiety: the steady officers, the light-hearted and thoughtless "middies" and the "jolly Jack-tars" paraded up and down at all hours. The pennant floated in the breeze, redolent with dust, pitch, whiskey and music: the fiddle and bagpipes resounded in a district, named for what reason we do not know "the

holy ground” unless that it was sacred to every species of marine frolic and dissipation”.

The “holy ground” was the ironic name given to the town’s red-light district. In 1785, Bishop MacKenna noted the existence of “2 bawdy houses” and “many pilots Butchers & Bummers’ refractories”.¹¹⁵ Of the nearby parish of Aghada, he added “the district noted for such girls of pleasure”.¹¹⁶ In 1829, it was reported that Bishop Coppinger had opened schools at Cobh because “there was no other town in his extensive diocese where the poison of immorality and bad example made such ravages and where young females were less protected” (Hogan, 1962, p. 93).

Alarmed at the threat of French invasion, the British administration sought a further inland location to re-enforce its military presence in the south of Ireland. Fermoy was chosen. By the early nineteenth century, the number of military stationed in the town numbered close to 2,000 (Brunicardi, 1986, p. 54). Relations with local Catholics, however, appear to have been initially distrustful. In the early years of its military build-up:

“[O]ne of King George’s German regiments, who were Catholics, paraded to the Mass-house. As was their custom, at the time of the consecration, they sprang to attention and presented arms in salute to the Blessed Sacrament. The people present, however, unaware of military ways, thought they were about to be slaughtered and fled from the place”.

(Brunicardi, 1986, p. 2)

Following the abolition of the Irish Brigade in the French army, the British, rather than French forces began to attract Irish Catholics. In 1778, legislation that had barred Catholics from previously holding officerships in the British Army was lifted. Kent-Donovan (1985) traces this move to the imperial context within which Ireland was now located, and especially to the British government’s need for recruits for the American War of Independence. Between 1793 and 1815, Dickson (2005, p. 485) estimates that more than one in ten adult males from the south Munster region may have served for a time in the British armed and naval forces.

The opening-up of these forces created fresh opportunities, but also challenges for Catholic clerics. In 1798, Bishop William Coppinger, who had entertained the idea of entering the French army before opting for the

¹¹⁵ Derr, E., 2013, p. 314.

priesthood instead (J.C., 1935, p. 25) wrote of his being tipped off by “a military man” from the Wexford Regiment at Youghal of a rumoured massacre of Catholics in the town by Orangemen (Moran, 1884, p. 605).¹¹⁷ The following morning, the Bishop was brought before the magistrates and military commanders stationed in the town who demanded the informer’s name. The Bishop refused to provide it. He wrote:

“The great bulk of the Wexford Regiment were in fact Catholics. A day or two after that meeting, a soldier of that regiment came to my house and demanded to see me. He asked me whether I had divulged the man’s name. I assured him that I did not and that I never would. “It is well you didn’t” said the soldier, drawing a naked bayonet from under his loose coat “because I would not scruple to thrust this through your heart if you had”. He demanded that I should make that declaration on the next Sunday before the Regiment in the chapel. I did as he requested”.

(Moran, 1884, p. 607)

In 1799 at Mallow, the Royal Meath Militia were stationed in the town, a regiment which contained a significant number of United Irishmen. With the assistance of local United Irish activists, an attack upon the Church of Ireland congregation of civilians, Protestant yeomanry and soldiers was planned. One day prior to their intended massacre, however, the United Irish strike was revealed in the confessional to Rev. Thomas Barry, the town’s Catholic Parish Priest. The priest refused to pardon the penitent unless the plan was revealed in public. Additionally, Rev. Barry denounced the attack from the altar of his chapel. The attack was called off and the Meath Militia disarmed and escorted from Mallow by other troops. Although he had initially refused an offer of a reward from General Lake, the Lord Lieutenant awarded Rev. Barry a yearly pension of £100 because his own parishioners were reported to have reduced him to “absolute want” on account of his bravery (Ó Coindealbháin, 1950, p. 77).

¹¹⁶ Derr, E., 2013, p. 310.

¹¹⁷ The Bishop noted that “Orangism had... made considerable progress in the south of Ireland...such notions of that association prevailed among the lower orders that, in different places, whole families were afraid to lie at home and passed their nights under hedges or in ditches or in the open fields” (Moran, 1884, p. 605). Thirty years earlier, local Whiteboys had been viewed as little better than animals. In one letter written from Youghal in 1762, it was reported that “Our lads are as eager to hunt them as ever a keen pack of dogs were to hunt a fox” (Cullen, 1993, p. 568).

In 1799, after the parishioners of Ballintotis, Midleton, refused to remove a notice “against payment of tithes and assisting a clergyman to draw them” which was posted near their chapel door, Bishop Coppinger placed their chapel under interdict. The following day, the bishop and the parish priest of Midleton travelled to Cobh where they informed Maj. Gen. Sir Charles Ross of the matter and were advised “to let the people know that if any disorderly conduct of that sort should appear there again” the General “would send troops to live upon them for a month at free quarters”. In a further display of deference, Bishop Coppinger refused to withdraw his interdict of the chapel without the General’s prior consent.¹¹⁸

In 1823, an officer of the First Rifle Brigade stationed at Macroom who could not conduct an investigation into Rockite activities in the area because his horse was lame, wrote to coadjutor Bishop Michael Collins requesting information. Interestingly, one week later he received what he described as “the most comprehensive and satisfactory information that ever reached me”, which he confidentially forwarded to the government.¹¹⁹

In spite of this apparent alignment with the British military, in 1815, Bishop Coppinger appears to have pursued a cautious approach towards the Empire. He wrote:

“With the most cordial and fervent wishes for the peace and prosperity of the British Empire I deprecate an inference which in my conscience and before God I deem to be incompatible with that peace and with that prosperity. Let us then hope that while as believing Christians we pledge the stake of our eternal salvation before the Throne of the Most High to quiet the alleged apprehensions of our distrustful Protestant fellow subjects, while we moreover offer them any additional security which their most jealous caution can devise, provided it be consistent with the Essentials of our Faith and of our discipline, they will rest satisfied nor continue to oppose the boon we solicit if it not be clogged with conditions much more grating to our feelings than the legal disabilities which afflict us”.¹²⁰

By the 1840’s, however, the Congregation of Propaganda in Rome saw the potential that came with Cloyne’s integration into the Anglophone world. Established in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV, this Congregation’s mission was to

¹¹⁸ Vane, C., 1848, *Castlereagh Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 387.

¹¹⁹ Brigade Major D. Mahony, Macroom to Bishop M. Collins, Skibbereen, 4 August 1823. C.D.A.

¹²⁰ Bishop W. Coppinger, Undated letter to unnamed Bishop/Cardinal “in the Metropolitiss”, 1815. C.D.A.

regulate the global development of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1841 a missionary college was established at Youghal “under the mighty Power of Propaganda” where students were “beginning to flock in numbers”.¹²¹ By 1842 it housed 70 students “for the Foreign Missions.”¹²²

Priests who fell out of favour with either their secular and/or ecclesiastical superiors in Cloyne could also find themselves dispatched to geographically remote parts of the Empire and/or to its former colonies. By the late eighteenth-century, Thomas Flynn, a priest who had been described by Bishop Coppinger as “unempld” and “a drunkd” was reported to have “died in a prison ship” (Derr, 2013, p. 328). Another priest, Rev. Jeremiah O’Callaghan was so opposed to the Roman Catholic position on usury that he accused Bishop Coppinger of heresy on the matter (Fenning, 1996a, p. 141).¹²³ In 1823, after leaving Cloyne “[I]n expectation that America, the garden of liberty, would grant what had been denied me in Ireland, that is, to pursue my clerical office” (O’Callaghan, 1834, p. 15), he was appointed to the parish of Burlington, Vermont and subsequently acquired a legend as “The Apostle of Vermont”. From New York, he published his *Usury: Proof that it is Repugnant to Divine and Ecclesiastical Law and Destructive to Civil Society* (1834).¹²⁴

Given his “passive sympathy” (Dickson, 2005, p. 473) for the United Irish movement, Rev. Peter O’Neill, the parish priest of Ballymacoda was also transported to Australia. In his *Remonstrance to the Nobility and Gentry of County Cork* (1804) he recalled that Gen. Loftus, the commanding officer of troops stationed at Youghal swore that he would make “the popish rebel groan” for the priest’s alleged involvement in the murder of an informer and for his assumed refusal to surrender the names of United Irish activists thought to be known by him from the confessional. O’Neill was taken to Waterford and confined to a transport vessel for ten months. A Court of Inquiry was held into his case where petitions were presented for his release to the Lord Lieutenant by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. Although O’Neill was proven innocent

¹²¹ Rev. J. Foley, Youghal to Rev. T. Kirby, Irish College, Rome, 8 Jan 1842, C.D.A.

¹²² Rev. P. Cullen, Cork to Rev. T. Kirby, Irish College, Rome, 15 Oct 1842, C.D.A.

¹²³ The taking of interest on a loan was considered sinful throughout much of the history of Christianity. However, Pope Benedict XIV’s encyclical *Vix Peruenit* (1745) proclaimed that interest could be justified on some grounds.

¹²⁴ <http://www.bogvaerker.dk/Bookwright/Tales/oc.html>, p. 3.

and the Lord Lieutenant ordered his release, by the time a letter for his release had arrived at Cove, the ship on which O'Neill was confined had sailed (Costello, 1987, p. 45). On disembarking at Sydney, the Governor of the infant penal colony was not pleased to see another boatload of Irish republicans, this time containing "a Catholic priest of the most notorious, seditious, and rebellious principles" (Costello, 1987, p. 46), as he put it. Interestingly, two years later, when permission was granted for O'Neill to return to Ireland, the Governor's opinion had changed. He offered O'Neill a yearly salary of £200 to remain, which O'Neill refused (Costello, 1987, p. 48). Despite the protests of local Orangemen, O'Neill was restored as Parish Priest of Ballymacoda in 1803.



Fig 3.1 Rev. Peter O'Neill, Parish Priest of Ballymacoda 1786-1846
Source: Troy, 1998, p. 9.

By the 1820s, the transportation of Rockite convicts to the penal colonies of the Empire also had unforeseen effects for the Catholic Church in Cloyne. In 1830, a number of women in Churchtown-Liscarrol were blamed by coadjutor bishop Michael Collins as responsible for:

“a great many scandals in the parish arising out of the late disturbances in consequence of women whose husbands were transported, intermarrying in the Protestant church with other men, notwithstanding their lawful husbands still living.”¹²⁵

For some Cloyne-born priests and nuns, the challenge of ministering in colonies where Irish Catholics and even Protestants, as in the case of New Zealand (Akenson, 1996, p. 64) tended to be viewed as inferior may not have been all that different to back home. By continuing to offer pastoral care and a familiar support-system, the Catholic Church may have offered a refuge from prejudice and hostility, at least for some. Indeed, such was the influence of the Irish in Australia and New Zealand, that, when Charleville-born Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne was asked where the practice of Catholicism in New Zealand had come from, he replied: “if I might presume to constitute myself a judge of appeal, I would be inclined to say that the Church in New Zealand received its faith from Rome, through France, but that its practice came from Ireland” (Duggan, 1971, p. 1). Perhaps such a response may have had as much to say about the type of Church that Mannix had come from in Cloyne.

¹²⁵ Bishop M. Collins Visitation Notes, Churchtown-Liscarrol, June 26, 1830, C.D.A.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

One of the key roles which geography can play in the study of the Irish past is to demonstrate the importance of locating analyses of resistance and/or accommodation to colonial projects in grounded, differentiated and situated ways (Morrisey, 2004, p. 167). This study of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Cloyne offers an exploration of the interplay between a spectrum of different spiritual, religious, cultural, geographical, socio-economic and other worlds, each of varying depths and complexities, some overlapping, blending and intersecting, with others avoiding and/or in conflict with each other and/or with other worlds. Catholic societies, as Carroll (1995, p. 356) points out, can contain significant diversity. Additionally:

“It is traditional in English-language studies to compare and contrast different religious groups on the assumption that such groups have clearly demarcated boundaries and nonoverlapping memberships....This traditional approach is what legitimates the common practice of making a “religion” a variable on which an individual can occupy one - but only one - of several distinct states (Catholic, Protestant, Jew etc). Yet it is precisely the traditional approach that Gramsci, De Rosa and others have challenged in the case of Catholic societies. In such societies, the several variants of Catholicism that existed may indeed be different in a number of ways, but they are all committed to Gramsci’s “superficial” unity, their memberships often overlap....and there is a great deal of mutual interaction and borrowing among the variants.”

(Carroll, 1995, p. 356)

Davis (1974) has also criticised perspectives which tend to see the “lower” classes as merely the passive recipients of inherited tradition and incapable of religious innovation themselves. For De Rosa (in Carroll, 1995, p. 356), therefore, Catholic societies (such as Italy) contain several variants of Catholicism, each an adaptation to specific local conditions. “The scholar’s task”, Carroll (1995, p. 356) believes, “is to identify the distinctive nature of these different variants and the ways in which they interact, *not* to decide which variant is “more authentic” or “more Catholic”.

In this study, a further task is identified. While everyday forms of resistance (Scott, 1985, p. xvii) may have been important to some of Cloyne’s eighteenth and early-nineteenth Catholics, everyday resourcefulness may have

been just as important. Such resourcefulness, as demonstrated in this thesis, was expressed through recourse to formal and informal spiritualities, through the assertion of various heritages, through varying degrees of interdependence, including co-operation with Protestants (Millerick, 2013) and through an openness to external assistance.

Although resourceful, Cloyne's eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catholics were also resentful. The imposition of rents, tithes and other dues including those imposed by their own Church kept many in financial insecurity.¹²⁶ In 1733, Bishop Henry Maule, the Anglican Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross acknowledged a spatial separation which may have re-inforced psychic and socio-economic separation. A "Catholic" landscape of "miserable huts and cottages and a mass house", he believed, had emerged in contrast to the "fair little Protestant village composed of a church, an English school and a house for a Protestant clergyman, to enable him to converse with and instruct his flock" (Dickson, 2005, p. 212). Poverty, as O'Flanagan (1988, p. 403) points out, may have been just as potent a segregating force as that of ethnicity and/or religion.

Although perhaps not a sentiment shared by all, there can be little doubt that many of Cloyne's eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catholics tended to see themselves as a "separate and injured community" (Dickson, 2005, p. 264). On occasions when the olive branch was offered in public, how some Catholics actually felt in private may have been different. In 1811, for instance, in response to Rev. Horatio Townsend's (1810) assertion that Bishop Coppinger and his priests were the "narrow minded, bigoted, baneful oppositionists to the mental improvements and to the bodily comforts" of Catholics, the bishop responded:

"My Creed will not be subscribed by a bigot. It declares in the face of heaven, and it prompts me to teach others that charity in the fullest sense of the word is a divine virtue, indispensably necessary for every Christian, that this charity requires of me the most cordial love of my neighbour, comprehending under that name not alone all who are united with me in the communion of the Roman Catholic Church, but all mankind in general,

¹²⁶ Given the relatively easy availability of credit which could be found in loans secured against estates, landlords and their agents and middlemen could live well beyond their means. Smaller estates, in particular, could easily become bankrupted by interest charges outstripping their modest rental incomes (MacCotter, 2013a, p. 331).

and every individual of the human race, whatever his religious sentiments may be...while my separated brother may be convinced that the religion of his preference is the true one, let him follow it. Mine does not teach me to quarrel with him for so doing, I only ask in turn the like indulgence.

In this manner may we not live in peace and harmony; in the mutual offices of brotherly love; though we adhere exclusively to our respective religions; though we sedulously inculcate their discriminating tenet; though our zeal be actively intent upon guarding the flock under our care against the errors we impute in each other? We all lay claim to Christian charity, as we all lay claim to Christian truth. Why then, may we not peaceably agree to differ in matters of religion, while the great bond of Christianity, the love of God and man, is assumed by us all, and tends unremittingly to unite us?¹²⁷

Four years later, although he believed that “Our political horizon promises a brighter season under the auspices of our present Lord Lieutenant”, the bishop remained cautious. He stated:

“We have had heretofore many cheering indications of the approach of happy times, and you will know how invariably we have been disappointed. I am here naturally reminded of our departed friend Dr. Moylan¹²⁸ how often were his hopes and the hopes of our most enlightened confreres in those days wound up to unhesitating confidence, yet how uniformly were they all deceived by the event. Indeed, in his latter days, his experience of men & measures had so fully corrected his opinions, that he frequently in my own hearing exclaimed with indignation that there was no faith in Man. In fact, the history of Catholic Ireland for whole centuries exhibits an uninterrupted chain of public and private treachery, breach of faith, refined, relentless and unmitigated cruelty against the Old Religion and the eviscerated professors of it...ages of oppressive rule unparalleled for severity in the Civilised world have left a transmissive sense of injury deep and wide in the Common people of this country. Tho’ the detailed history of their wrongs be not present to their minds, yet from father to son, through succeeding generations, they have been and still are taught to feel that they were trampled on, that persecution and injustice and rapine were let loose against them, and that the profession of the Ancient Faith, that faith delivered to the Saints was their grand Crime, the great source of all their sufferings”.¹²⁹

In spite of these lamentations, however, Irish Catholics were far from the only Europeans to have suffered for their beliefs. In Hapsburg Bohemia and

¹²⁷ Bishop. W. Coppinger, *To the Honorable the Dublin Society* (1811), p. 7. Special Collections, U.C.C.

¹²⁸ Bishop Francis Moylan was Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork from 1787 to 1815.

¹²⁹ Bishop William Coppinger, *Address to the Irish Bishops*, 1815, C.D.A.

Austria, such was the notoriety of their mistreatment of Protestants that except where Catholic censorship was strong, incidents were reported regularly in the European press. Their Protestant aristocracy had their lands confiscated following the end of the Thirty Years War. Protestants were excluded from public office by the wording of oaths invoking the Blessed Virgin and saints. To prevent Protestants from revolting, a patent of toleration was granted in 1781 (Ward, 1999, p. 65). Catholic censorship of these events, at least in part, may account for Bishop Coppinger's blinkered vision. Rome too, had played its part by blocking attempts at accommodation between Irish Catholics and Protestants as to do so would have brought to light the issue of Catholic mistreatment of Protestants elsewhere in Europe (Elliott, 2000, p. 169).

Whatever their motivations, there can be little doubt that the penal laws had left their mark in Cloyne. In 1824, Rev. Michael Collins, the parish priest of Skibbereen and future Roman Catholic bishop of Cloyne and Ross thought that the penal laws had fostered "insolence in...[Protestants'] demeanour and in their conduct, and on the other hand, it produces in Catholics, irritation and something like indignation". Catholics, he believed, "look upon themselves as disfavoured, almost as aliens in the country, having no common interest with the more favoured part of the community...whenever there is a competition and contest between them and the Protestants", the latter usually won (Dickson, 2005, p. 483). As late as the 1840s, Richard Smiddy, a Catholic priest from Youghal, continued to reflect upon what he saw as the residual effects of the penal laws. His father, he wrote:

"when able to go to school, was sent to his grandmother's to Bansig, near Youghal...This was an advantage which he had over his father and grandfather, as the barbarous penal code had come between them and education...My uncle John Kennedy, was a very intelligent man, fond of reading stout and full...He often made me when young, presents of nice books. His father, John, that is my great grandfather on my mother's side, had received no education too, in consequence of the cruel penal code. Singular! The very barbarous laws which left those of my progenitors ignorant of letters gave existence in a foreign country to a College in which an humble descendant of theirs afterwards performed his ecclesiastical studies".¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Diary of Rev. Richard Smiddy, Oct. 6, 1840, C.D.A.

Although as resentful as much as they were resourceful, Cloyne's eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catholics were also divided. The romantic image of an underground priesthood heroically enduring on account of their faith has given way to a more nuanced portrait that includes the jockeying and backstabbing of different clerical factions in their efforts to obtain a share of their Church's insecure yet substantial income (McBride, 2009, p. 268). While a Catholic and crypto-Catholic "underground gentry" successfully held onto their lands, while Catholic merchants accumulated capital, officers in foreign armies returned home, wily lawyers and industrious and frugal craftsmen steadily went about their business (Barnard, 2003, p. 330), many other Catholics were becoming marginalised. Economic prosperity had come about at the expense of the advanced proletarianisation of the agricultural labour force, widely seen as among the most immiserated social groups in Europe and increasingly dependent upon a monotonous potato diet (Whelan, 1997, p. 96). By the early nineteenth-century, Cloyne's poorest rural labouring families had retreated to the foothills of upland parts of the diocese where they were reported to have "dragged the life and soul out of the soil" (Donnelly jr., 1975, p. 58). Other families relocated to the fringes of estate towns such as Mitchelstown where Arthur Young observed in the 1770s that the poorest had "built themselves wretched cabins on the roads" leading into the town (Maxwell, 1925, p. 275). While socially privileged Catholics could use the law and the inner workings of their Church to their own advantage, others distrusted both and resorted to secret societies as a means of redressing their grievances. The possibility of divine redress in an afterlife may have consoled some Catholics, but may not have been as persuasive further down the social scale.¹³¹ Dissenting clerical voices, such as Rev. Jeremiah O'Callaghan's regarding usury were clearly unwelcome.

¹³¹ Writing to Bishop Coppinger, John Carroll, the Bishop of Baltimore thought that: "The cruel and treacherous treatment to which the Catholics of Ireland have been so long sacrificed always excites my sympathy...but the comfort of a Christian is... that the dispensations of providence end not with this world, and that divine justice will hereafter order all things so, as to discover to all the rectitude of its ways towards mankind". John Carroll, Bishop of Baltimore, Maryland, to Bishop William Coppinger, Midleton, Sept. 23, 1802, C.D.A.

To what extent, then, did the Roman Catholic Church both challenge and re-enforce the *status quo* at the same time? Perhaps too much for some and not enough for others? From its earliest days the survival of the Christian Church in Ireland had depended upon its ability to ally itself with secular authority (Duffy, 2006, p. 44). By the mid-eighteenth century, a significant dimension which emerges was the alignment of propertied Catholics with emerging local, regional and global *status quos*. Indeed, the cautious alignment of the institutional Catholic Church with Protestant landlords and the British military may have been an additional factor in the diffusion of Tridentine Catholicism in Ireland which must be added to the factors already outlined in Whelan's (1988) model (Millerick, 2013).¹³² By 1815, Bishop Coppinger thought that priests were vital to the maintenance of the rule of law in his turbulent diocese. He wrote:

“It is now universally admitted and by those too, who are not in habits of eulogising our Clergy that their influence upon the lower orders in Ireland is salutary in a high degree: but were that influence thoroughly known; were it accurately traced; were it justly appreciated through all its ramifications, moral civil and social, as it is actually exerted by them in the laborious and detailed discharge of their pastoral duties, the most prejudiced of our rulers, the most hostile to Catholic claims would be not only most backward to weaken that influence, but most anxious to cherish and invigorate it”¹³³

This, of course, may have come at a price. One early nineteenth-century Co. Cork priest thought that the Rightboy movement of the 1780's had not just weakened people-priest relationships, but had delivered its “coup de grace” to them. “At that period” he believed “not only all influence was lost, but even that confidence in their clergy...ceased in great measure to exist among the people...The influence of the clergy is, however, still inconsiderable, indeed, if compared to what it was half a century ago”.¹³⁴

¹³² How such an “unholy alliance” may have played out at local, regional and national scales and possibly in opposition to what Satish Kumar (in McIntosh, 2012, p. 49) has termed the “sacred triune” of soil, soul and society would make for fascinating future research. I am indebted to Tony Walsh, Centre for the Study of Irish Protestantism, N.U.I.M. for this insight.

¹³³ Bishop W. Coppinger to unnamed bishop/cardinal, having returned “from the Metropolis”, 1815, C.D.A.

¹³⁴ Appendix XXIV, Newenham, 1809, p. 39.

By attempting to educate Catholics out of poverty, their Church may be argued to have challenged the *status quo* at least to some extent. As seen earlier, Bishop Coppinger's lengthy episcopate was marked by a more than doubling in the number of Catholic schools (Dickson, 2005, p. 441). His support for O'Connell's Catholic Association also challenged the *status quo*, although the latter sought to create a more equitable society in legal terms only (Dickson, 2005, p. 491). The movement failed to address the material needs of Catholics, however, most of whom were experiencing declining incomes (Dickson, 2005, p. 499). Upon his death in 1831, Bishop Coppinger was eulogised in song as follows:

“Come all ye Roman Catholic's
In mournful strains now with me join,
To lament in doleful anguish,
Our late Bishop of Cove town,
A tender hearted Clergyman,
By cruel death now called away,
And taken off in his 87th year,
To the poor of Cove a distressing day

Poor widows and distressed Orphans,
In tears now lament and moan,
For their tender Benefactor
From them is forever gone
Likewise the distressed Sick Poor
Will feel his loss full sore,
Since Bishop Coppinger is dead,
And ne'er can relieve them more.”¹³⁵

In spite of such apparent consideration, however, the spectrum of motivations which lay behind attempts by the Roman Catholic Church to shape the bodies, minds and spirits of Cloyne's Catholics and especially of the poorest must be called into question. In whose interests did it favour? Colonisation, as McIntosh (2013, p. 29) points out can be simultaneously territorial, psychological and spiritual. Was Cloyne all that different to the Hebridian island of Lewis, where, in 1837 an informant of Lady Mary MacKenzie stated: “I wish they were

¹³⁵ *A Mournful Elegy on the much-lamented death of the Rev. Bishop Coppinger, of Cove Town* (1831). Cork: J. & H. Baird. Bradshaw Collection V, Cambridge University Library. I am grateful to Dr. Maura Cronin, Mary Immaculate College Limerick for a copy of this elegy.

all religious, they would be much easier managed in every respect” (McIntosh, 2013, p. 41)? Ashcroft *et. al.* (1998, p.10) point out that “[e]very colonial encounter is different” and needs to be “precisely located and analysed for its specific interplay”. What roles, then might the Roman Catholic Church have played in the “internal colonisation” of the “Celtic fringe” of the British Isles during this period (Hechter, 1975)? In turn, what strategies of accommodation and/or resistance were employed by Cloyne’s Catholics in response to their own church? How much, or indeed little, had changed a century or so later when Tim Cashman, an east Cork emigrant to the United States resentfully recalled what he saw as the brutal alliance of strong farmers, village shopkeepers, National schoolmasters and parish priests arrayed against farm labourers and even their children (Miller, 2014a, p. 6)?

In spite of having known at least some of the brutalising effects of colonisation, it would also be interesting to know if and indeed, how Cloyne’s Catholics may have behaved all that differently when they found themselves acting on behalf of colonisers and/or as colonisers themselves. Were past colonial encounters seen as an advantage in finding common ground and/or did Cloyne’s missionaries become the unthinking agents of an “Irish clerical imperialism” abroad? Did their “empire within an empire” colonise as brutally as any other? Or worse? What role did the Catholic Church play in the desensitisation of young men who could be readily deployed in the oppression of faraway lands and peoples? (O’Farrell, 1990, p. 104)

Emigrant experiences were certainly diverse. For Piarias Cundún, a monolingual Irish speaker and poet who emigrated from Ballymacoda to the United States in 1826, native American Protestants were viewed as “a malicious host”, “treacherous, lying, vicious, [and] lewd” (Miller, 2008, p. 35) who “spend their lives in sin...until death rattles in their throats” (Miller, 1985, p. 275). Others, such as Edmund Roynane, a post-famine emigrant from east Cork recalled how, as a child in the 1830’s, his aunts taught him to have “an especial reverence and love for the Virgin Mary and a corresponding hatred of Protestants” (Roynane, 1900, p. 27-28). Roynane (1900, p. 36) continued: “In my early days the priest

was the reigning tyrant in the parish and no slave ever cringed and covered before a brutal master as did the poor unlettered Irish peasant in the presence of his father confessor” who “claimed the power of sending the poor dupes to heaven or hell at his pleasure”.¹³⁶ Such diatribes, of course, were conventional arguments, possibly recycled to suit Roynane’s evangelical Protestant readers’ prejudiced expectations (Miller, Skerrit and Kelly, 2014, p. 43).

Evans (2000, p. 306) insight that “The past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men” [sic], may have been true, at least for some of Cloyne’s more resentful eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catholics. How, over time, the “unfinished business” (Whelan, 1991, p. 23) of what was once thought of as too damaged or irreconcilable was/is transformed into being viewed as capable of being made whole again would make for fascinating future research. Irish President Mary McAleese has attributed this difficulty to the fact that:

“Inevitably, where there are the colonisers and the colonised, the past is a repository of sources of bitter division. The harsh facts cannot be altered nor loss nor grief erased but with time and generosity, interpretations and perspectives can soften and open up space for new accommodations. I am particularly proud of this island’s peace-makers who, having experienced...the appalling toxic harvest of failing to resolve old hatreds and political differences, rejected the perennial culture of conflict and compromised enough to let a new future in”.¹³⁷

How different individuals and/or groups at local and/or regional levels succeeded in transcending ethnic, sectarian and social class divisions within themselves to challenge the deeply rooted “spirals of violence”¹³⁸ (Helder Camara, 1971) of the place and period under review would make for further fascinating research.

¹³⁶ I am indebted to Prof. Kerby Miller, Missouri, for bringing my attention to Roynane’s outlook.

¹³⁷ McAleese, President M. (2011) *Remarks by President McAleese at the State Dinner in Honour of Queen Elizabeth II*, Dublin Castle, 18 May.

¹³⁸ Helder Camara (1971) believed that social injustices create primary violence. This may lead to secondary violence through the reactions of the oppressed. This, in turn, may provoke repression by social elites in their efforts to secure their privileged positions.

Appendix 1. Returns of Hearth Tax Collectors for Cloyne Diocese, 1764/5.

Civil Parishes	Chapels in Good Order	Chapels in Bad Order
Youghal	1	
Ardagh	1	
Dangan	1	
Killegh	1	
Middleton	1	
Cloyne	1	
Ballyntemple	1	
Kilmahon	1	
Bohilan	1	
Garranes (Garrankinnefeake)		1
Ahadah	1	
Inch		1
Kilteskin		1
Rostellion	1	
Corkbegg	1	
Garryvoe	1	
Kilcredan	1	
Mogeely	1	
Kilmacdonog	1	
Ballyoughter	1	
Ightermirragh	1	
Clonpriest	1	
Great Island	1	
Carrigtohill	1	
Gortroe	1	
Britway	1	
Rathcormick	1	
Castlelyons	1	
Templeboden	1	
Templenacarriga		1
Dungorney	1	
Clonmult	1	
Lisgoold	1	
Whitechurch	3	
Magourney	1	
Donoughmore	1	
Garrycloyne	1	
Mathehy	2	
Aghina	1	
Aghabollig	2	
Clondrohid	2	
Kilnamartra	1	
Mac-Crompe	2	
Kilcoorney	1	

Ballyvourny	1	
Inniscarra	2	
Grenagh	1	
Kilshannig	1	
Clonmeen	1	
Clonfert	2	
Kilbrin	2	
Knockatemple	1	

Source: Hearth Tax Returns (Youghal & Cork Walks) by R. Travers, 1765.

Civil Parish	Places of Worship
Clenor	Masshouse at Kilavullin
Monanemee	Masshouse at Monanemee
Castletown	A Masshouse
Ballyhooley	Masshouse at Gortroach
Glanworth	A Masshouse
Carrigdowning	Masshouse at Ballinvadal
Farahey	Masshouse
Mallow	A Mass-house
Mullogoo (Labbamologga)	Masshouse at Graige
Marshalstown	Masshouse at Knockagarry
Brigowen	Masshouse and Friary
Kilworth	Masshouse
S.E. Division	Masshouse at Modellago
Kilcrumper	Masshouse

Source: Hearth Tax Returns (Fermoy and Condons Baronies, Mallow Town and Liberties) by T. Atkinson, March 1764.

Civil Parishes	Chapels
Ballyhey	A Chapel
Imrick	A Chapel at Ballyhoura
Buttevant	A Chapel
Kilbrony	A Chapel
Charlivile	A Chapel
Churchtown	A Chapel in Annagh
Liscaril	A Chapel
Donraile	2 Chapels
Cardugan	1 Chapel there
Templeroan	One Chapel

Source: Hearth Tax Returns (Charleville Walk) by T. Coote, March 1764.

Appendix 2. Bishop Matthew MacKenna Visitation Book, 1785-90.

R.C. Parish	Priests	Teachers	Midwives
Whitechurch & Blarny	1	7 (5 Male, 2 Female)	
Clochroe	2	4	
Magourny	1	2	1
Ahinagh	1	2	
Macroom	2	5 (3 Male, 2 Female)	
Tuath na Droman & Ballyvourny	1	3	2
Ballynamona	2	2	3
Killsanig (Glantane)	2	2	
Dounachmore	2	4	4
Grenach	1	3	
Clonmeen & Killcorny	1	3	4
Clonfert	2	4	5
Killbrin	1	2	3
Killballane (Milford)	2	2	3
Liscarrol & Churchtown	1	5 (3 Male, 2 Female)	
Shandrum	1	3	2
Charleville	1	7 (3 Male, 4 Female)	5
Castlemagner	1	2	
Ballyhaura (Ballyhea)	1	7 (4 Male, 3 Female)	3
Buttevant	1	7(6 Male, 1 Female)	4
Mallow	2	6 (3 Male, 3 Female)	
Ahnakissy	2	2	
Doneraile	2	7	
Castle Town Roche	2	6	5
Glanworth	2	5	7
Kildorrery	2	3	3
MitchelsTown	2	6	4
Killworth	2	5	
Fermoy	2	2	4
CastleLyons	1	3	5
Rathcormick	2	3	
Curiglas (Conna)	2	6	2

Killeh	2	3	3
Youghal	2	9 (4 Male, 5 Female)	5
Ballymacody	2	4	4
Cloyne	3	3	3
Union belonging to Cloyne (Aghada)	1	2	5
Mid (Midleton)	1	4	4
Dungourny	2	5 (4 Male, 1 Female)	6
Lisgoold	1	2	1
Great Island & Carrigtouhil	1	8 (5 Male, 3 Female)	3

Source: Where errors in Derr's (2013) transcription have occurred, I have relied upon an earlier typed copy presented to me by Canon Bertie Troy, Midleton.

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