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HOLY SEE'S ARCHIVES AS  
SOURCES FOR AMERICAN  
HISTORY





First edition: December 2016

ISBN: 978-88-7853-737-8

ISBN EBOOK: 978-88-7853-606-7

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Art Jacket: St. Peter and the Vatican City  
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## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

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

## PREFACE

*Kathleen Sprows Cummings*

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



THE CONGREGATION *DE PROPAGANDA FIDE*, THE HOLY  
SEE AND THE NATIVE PEOPLES OF NORTH AMERICA  
(17<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

*Giovanni Pizzorusso*

1. PREMISE

This chapter deals with the interest that the Holy See has had towards the native peoples of North America and their conversion to Catholicism. This interest has manifested itself mainly through institutional organism of the Papal Curia dedicated to controlling missionary activity. The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, simply called Propaganda (now Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples), is basically a specialized ministry of the papal government dedicated to the propagation of the faith. We will see in the first part of this chapter how it is organized and how this congregation functions. In the second part we'll see how it developed an interest in indigenous populations of North America.

But before we start we can ask a preliminary question: why should Propaganda and its sources be of interest for the study of the history of North America? Two things are to be noted right away.

The first observation relates to the dates, to chronology. Propaganda was founded in 1622, exactly in the decades in which the states of Northern Europe founded their first colonies in North America. The stability of these settlements also made the arrival of Catholic missionaries who began their work of conversion possible. So we can say that Propaganda followed the development of the North American colonies from their beginnings.

The second caveat relates to the importance of the jurisdiction of Propaganda for the history of the Catholic Church in North America. Propaganda concerned itself with apostolic missionaries who arrived with high hopes to convert millions

of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. As we shall see this was not easy or possible. Much more often, missionaries must provide spiritual assistance to the Catholics settlers in the new reality of the New World who did not find the religious reference points to which they are accustomed in Europe (parishes, priests, bishop ... ). The religious are active then both to the indigenous peoples “infidels or pagans,” and to the settlers. We can say that the Church in North America is actually made up of two parallel realities which are related to each other: the missionary Church and the colonial Church. From the point of view of the Holy See, both of these activities fell under the jurisdiction of Propaganda.

We can then start from this premise: Propaganda was the organism of the Roman Catholic Church in North America since the beginning of colonization until 1908 when Canada and the United States will be largely withdrawn from its sphere of jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The best survey on the history of Propaganda is *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*, edited by Josef Metzler, 3 vols. (Rom-Freiburg-Wien: Herder, 1971-1975); see also Giovanni Pizzorusso, “Agli antipodi di Babele. Propaganda Fide tra immagine cosmopolita e orizzonti romani (XVII-XIX secolo),” in *Storia d’Italia Einaudi Annali 16: Roma la città del papa. Vita civile e religiosa dal Giubileo di Bonifacio VIII al Giubileo di Papa Wojtyla*, edited by Luigi Fiorani and Adriano Prosperi (Torino: Einaudi, 2000), 476-518. About Propaganda and North America in early modern age: Luca Codignola, “Rome and North America 1622-1799. The Interpretive Framework,” *Storia Nordamericana* 1, 1 (1984), 5-33; “Roman Catholic Ecclesiastics in English North America, 1610-1658. A Comparative Assessment,” *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Historical Studies*, 65 (1999), 107-124, and “Le missioni nell’area nord-atlantica. Linee interpretative,” in *Ad ultimos usque terrarum terminos in fide propaganda. Roma fra promozione e difesa della fede in età moderna*, edited by Massimiliano Ghilardi, Gaetano Sabatini, Matteo Sanfilippo, and Donatella Strangio (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2014), 245-253.

## 1.1 PROPAGANDA

As I said I'll start trying to explain, in very general terms, what Propaganda is, how it was founded, with which skills and how this organism is the instrument of a universalist global policy of the Holy See.

Propaganda is one of the congregations that make up the Roman Curia. The congregations are the organs of government through which the pope governs the Church. Some serve a function in the government of the ecclesiastical State, others to regulate the universal Church. This system of government based on congregations developed during the sixteenth century. The most important is undoubtedly the Inquisition (or Holy Office, the current Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), which was founded already in 1542, before the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which was to safeguard the orthodoxy of the Catholic Faith, and the Congregation of the Council (1564), which was to correctly interpret the decrees of the Council of Trent and ensure their strict observance. The strongest impulse in this government organization was given in 1588 by Pope Sixtus V that fixed the number of congregations at 15, but did not create one for the missions. After his reign the structure of church government based on the congregations could now be said to have been formed, although in later centuries other congregations were created: the system of papal government was always characterized by the coexistence of governing bodies and the allocation of functions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A recent survey on the early modern papacy in a worldwide perspective is *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima età moderna*, edited by Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Roma: Viella, 2013), see the introductory essay by Visceglia, "The International Policy of the Papacy: Critical Approaches to the Concepts of Universalism and Italianità, Peace and War," 17-62. Other original interpretation of the double dimension Italian and international of the papacy, with a survey on the congregations of the Curia, Antonio

Despite this intense institutional activity, at the end of the sixteenth century the Holy See did not yet have a congregation that was responsible for missionary activity. Not even the great reform of Sixtus V had done so, while by then missionaries were scattered all over the planet. As mentioned above, Propaganda was founded in 1622, with a significant delay with respect to the development of missions: for example, the Jesuits were already present in four continents around 1560, twenty years after the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540.

Why was this so slow? To examine this delay and the difficulties that gave rise to it helps us to understand the characteristics of Propaganda and some limits of its possibilities of action and political action that are particularly important to the New World. At the time of the geographical discoveries and colonial expansion of Spain and Portugal in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, the papacy was in a state of great weakness on the international scene. The development of strong national churches in the monarchies of Europe (particularly in France and Spain) had reduced the power of the pope's intervention in international politics. The papacy also participated in the wars in the Italian peninsula acting as a local prince rather than as a universal authority. At the time of the discovery the pope was called as a arbiter between the two Iberian powers for the division of the world (the bull *Inter cetera* 1492), but it could no longer perpetuate its role based on a medieval model as it no longer had any real political power. In fact, as is well known, the dividing line between Spain and Portugal was moved thanks to direct agreement between the two states (Treaty of Tordesillas, 1493). Despite the fact that the Church once understood that the discovery of the New World led to a development in evangeliza-

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Menniti Ippolito, 1664. *Un anno della Chiesa universale* (Roma: Viella, 2011). A very recent survey in English, namely on 17<sup>th</sup> century: Péter Tusor, *The Baroque Papacy (1600-1700)* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2016).



tion, because of its weakness, the papacy could not make a commitment to direct missionary activity. It was in fact delegated to the two crowns of Catholic Spain and Portugal, through the system of the Royal Patronage (*patronato real, padroado régio*). This system had originated in the late Middle Ages in the Iberian Peninsula during the time of the Catholic Reconquest (*reconquista*) of the territories still under Islam and was extended in territories outside of Europe through numerous papal bulls granted to benefit first Portugal and then Spain. According to this Patronage the king had the right to send missionaries and to appoint bishops, to establish the territory of parishes and dioceses. In addition, the pope forfeited the collection of church taxes, the tithe called the *decima*, which instead went to the king, who financed the sending of religious and paying the costs of maintaining religious and their buildings. So the pope and Rome were recognized as the leaders of Catholicism, but with a formal role only. Instead, the effective government of the missions and the colonial church was in the hands of the monarchy.<sup>3</sup> In Spain, the decisions in ecclesiastical matters re-

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<sup>3</sup> On Real Patronage: Antonio de Egaña, *La teoría del Regio Vicariato Español en Indias* (Romae: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, 1958); Pedro de Leturia, *Relaciones entre la Santa Sede e Hispanoamérica*, 3 vols. (Caracas-Roma: Sociedad Bolivariana de Venezuela, 1959); William E. Shiels, *King and Church: The Rise and Fall of the Patronato Real* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1961); Alberto de la Hera, "El Patronato y el Vicariato regio en Indias," in *Historia de la Iglesia en Hispanoamérica y Filipinas (siglos XV-XIX)*, edited by Pedro Borges, 2 vols. (Madrid: BAC, 1992), 63-80; James Muldoon, "Solorzano's De Indiarum Jure: Applying a Medieval Theory of World Order in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of World History*, 2 (1991), 29-45; Rosa María Martínez de Codes, "Evangelizar y gobernar: el derecho de patronato en Indias" in *Orbis incognitus. Avisos y legajos del Nuevo Mundo. Homenaje al profesor Luis Navarro García*, edited by Fernando Navarro Antolín (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2007), 249-263.

garding the Americas were taken by the *Consejo de Indias* and approved by the king. In particularly important cases (e.g. the appointment of a bishop) the decision was sent to Rome to receive a formal ratification. However, if the Pope wanted to make some decisions relating to the New World, the documents issued had to be verified and approved by the *Consejo de Indias*, which granted permission, called *pase regio*.<sup>4</sup> The American church took on many Spanish characteristics: the great majority of the clergy was Spanish since foreigners were viewed with suspicion. There were, perhaps, Italian subjects of the king of Spain, that is, from the Kingdom of Naples or from the State of Milan. In particular, the missionaries were members of religious orders (Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and then Jesuits). They belonged to the Spanish provinces of their orders. This situation led to a dual loyalty or fidelity, fidelity to the pope as religious, but a more specific and decisive fidelity to the king in everyday matters.<sup>5</sup>

Until the mid-sixteenth century the papacy adapted itself to this situation all over the world, both in the Portuguese colonial world (Africa, Asia, Brazil), and in the Spanish colonial world. In the Americas, in particular, the Spanish monarchy thoroughly used its ecclesiastical power granted to it by the foundation to establish dioceses and regular orders of missionaries

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<sup>4</sup> Benedetta Albani, “Nuova luce sulle relazioni tra la Sede Apostolica e le Americhe. La pratica della concessione del ‘pase regio’ ai documenti pontifici destinati alle Indie,” in *Eusebio Francesco Chini e il suo tempo. Una riflessione storica*, edited by Claudio Ferlan (Trento: Fondazione Bruno Kessler Press, 2012), 83-102.

<sup>5</sup> Lazaro de Aspuz, *La aportación extranjera a las misiones españolas del Patronato Regio* (Madrid: Consejo de la Hispanidad, 1946); Giovanni Pizzorusso, “La Congregazione romana de Propaganda Fide e la duplice fedeltà dei missionari tra monarchie coloniali e universalismo pontificio (XVII secolo),” *Librosdelacorte.es*, 6 (2014), 228-241, (<https://revistas.uam.es/librosdelacorte/article/view/1632/1719>).

already in the first half of the sixteenth century. The presence of the Church was in fact an essential element in the structure of the Spanish government, as was reiterated in the second half of the century at the time of Philip II. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it could be said that Catholicism was firmly established in the New World in the Spanish territories but that it did not correspond to the entire continent.

However, at that time (early seventeenth century), the indifference on the part of the papacy with regards to the missions changed over half a century. In fact, by the 1560s projects arrived that pushed the pope to a direct intervention in the governance of the missions. These projects came from different backgrounds, and they also had specific motivations, but they all urged the pope to take on a different role and be more present than before. For example, at the beginning it was the Jesuits who wanted to be sent as missionaries to the Americas to push Pope Pius V in 1568 to form a commission of cardinals dedicated to the missions. This pope even wanted to send a papal nuncio, that is his direct representative in the Americas. This proposal was decisively rejected by Philip II. The Spanish king also saw the existence of a pontifical commission that dealt with the issues of the American church, perhaps in opposition to Spanish policies, as very negative.<sup>6</sup>

However, the American missions were not a top priority for Rome. In those same years, the Holy See was much more worried about another form of heresy, that of the Protestants in Germany and across Europe in general. Other popes of the

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<sup>6</sup> Francesca Cantù, “Il papato, la Spagna e il Nuovo Mondo,” in *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima età moderna*, edited by Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Roma: Viella, 2013), 479-502. Giovanni Pizzorusso, “Nuovo mondo cattolico: chiese coloniali, chiese missionarie, chiese locali (XVI-XIX secolo),” in *Il papato e le chiese locali. Studi - The Papacy and the Local Churches. Studies*, edited by Péter Tusor and Matteo Sanfilippo (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2014), 205-255.

sixteenth century elaborated initiatives for missions, especially in Europe, to counter the Protestant threat and in favor of the dissemination of the principles of the Council of Trent. But in the Americas, Philip II reinforced his control over religious matters, serving as a true vicar of the pope (enacted in the *Ordenanza de patronazgo* of 1574)<sup>7</sup> and sending bishops who spread the principles of Trent. In addition, he also established the Inquisition in Mexico and Lima and authorized the Jesuits to enter the Spanish colonies. This energetic policy of Philip II, who was called the royal vicariate, was seen as an undue interference of the king's power in the affairs of the Church. The popes protested vigorously but certainly had to largely accept or at least tolerate the situation.<sup>8</sup>

The theory of the royal vicariate was countered by some in Rome who held that the direct intervention of the pope in the missions were part of his pastoral duty (*officium pastorale*). A petition presented by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino collected declarations of support from various parts of the missionary world in favor of papal authority.<sup>9</sup> This policy was embodied in various ways. Gregory XIII founded many colleges in Rome

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<sup>7</sup> John F. Schwaller, "The Ordenanza del Patronazgo in New Spain, 1574-1600," *The Americas*, 42, 3 (1986), 253-288.

<sup>8</sup> Agostino Borromeo, "Felipe II y la tradición regalista de la corona española in Felipe II (1527-1598)," in *Europa y la Monarquía Católica*, edited by José Martínez Millán, III, *Inquisición, religión y confesionalismo* (Madrid: Parteluz, 1998), 111-137; Id., "Patronato Real," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, edited by Hans J. Hillebrand (New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), *ad vocem*.

<sup>9</sup> Emanuele Colombo, "Il libro del mondo. Un documento di Antonio Possevino," in *Milano, l'Ambrosiana e la conoscenza dei Nuovi Mondi (secoli XVII-XVIII)*, edited by Michela Catto and Gianvittorio Signorotto (Milano-Roma, Biblioteca Ambrosiana-Bulzoni editore, 2015), 335-362.

for the preparation of national missionary clergy, that it, with members of the same peoples that had to be evangelized. Thus the German, English, Scottish, Maronite and many other colleges were created. Later, at the end of the century, Pope Clement VIII decided to found a Congregation de Fide Propaganda (1599) composed of some of the most influential Roman cardinals (Giulio Antonio Santori, Robert Bellarmine, Caesar Baronius). This congregation took care of issues related to China and Japan, the Middle East and Northern Europe, but remained in operation for a few years. In 1602 its work was already completed. In fact, Spain still had a great influence in the Roman Curia and exerted strong opposition against this organism. Another strong opponent to this project was the Society of Jesus with its General Claudio Acquaviva, linked to the Spanish crown. In the second half the sixteenth century the missionary presence of the Jesuits was worldwide, but other religious orders pushed to be present in the different continents. Thus, in 1600 Clement VIII had revoked the monopoly of the Society of Jesus in the eastern missions. Hence the Jesuits were opposed to a pontifical body that would no doubt have reduced their power in the missions. To assess the global dimension of the influence of Spain, it should be noted that between 1580 and 1640 the King of Spain (Philip II, III, IV) were also King of Portugal, and the Spanish opposition to patronage also extended to the Portuguese colonies, that is, to the whole world.<sup>10</sup>

The standoff continued in the early years of the seventeenth

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<sup>10</sup> Giuseppe Piras, *Martin de Funes S.I. (1560-1611) e gli inizi delle riduzioni dei gesuiti nel Paraguay* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1998); Giovanni Pizzorusso, "La Compagnia di Gesù, gli ordini regolari e il processo di affermazione della giurisdizione pontificia sulle missioni tra fine XVI e inizio XVII secolo: tracce di una ricerca," in *I gesuiti ai tempi di Claudio Acquaviva. Strategie politiche, religiose e culturali tra Cinque e Seicento*, edited by Paolo Broglio, Francesca Cantù, Pierre-Antoine Fabre, and Antonella Romano (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2007), 55-85.

century. However in 1622 the situation suddenly unlocked. Spain accepted that the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, the organism of the Curia which had jurisdiction extending over the whole world be founded anew. However, Spain was able to receive the concession that the Holy See could not intervene directly in its American territories and in the Philippines and in fact in its founding documents Propaganda does not mention the Americas. How do you explain the sudden development of the situation? Many historians believe that Pope Gregory XV's decision had been driven by European needs. In Europe, the Thirty Years' War, the last major religious war, had broken out. In the early years the Catholic forces had achieved significant victories, with the financial help of the Holy See to the Hapsburgs of Austria allied with Spain. The pope then wanted to follow up on the military victory with the conversion of Protestants, a point on which everyone agreed. In this way, according to this historiographical interpretation, the pope would be able to overcome Spanish opposition, while accepting the conditions that we talked about in regard to the colonial territories.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2 HOW PROPAGANDA WORKED

This long story clarifies a crucial aspect to allow us to understand how Propaganda worked and what it dealt with. In fact, the Congregation took upon itself a complex task that combined missions to "infidels" in the continents outside Europe, Lutheran or Calvinist "heretics" in northern Europe and also to the "schismatic" Orthodox Christians of Eastern Europe. It is a concept of a cumulative mission that brings together both peoples who have never known the Catholic faith, and the "enemies" of

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<sup>11</sup> Eutimio Sastre Santos, "La fundación de Propaganda Fide (1622) en el contexto de la guerra de los Treinta Años (1618-1648)," *Commentarium pro religiosis et missionariis*, 83 (2002), 231-261; Id., "La circolare ai nunzi comunica la fondazione di Propaganda Fide, 15 gennaio 1622," *Ius Missionale*, 1 (2007), 151-186.

the Church of Rome, those who have turned away from it and are fighting it. An element of the defense of the faith was added to this very extensive program of spreading it. Precisely because Catholicism had become a world religion, there were many communities of Catholics loyal to the Pope of Rome located in non-Catholic territories that had to be maintained in their faith by missionaries (e.g. Catholic minorities in Protestant countries such as the Irish in the territories under the British crown, or the Catholic communities of the Latin Rite or Eastern Rite present within Islamic territories). Propaganda was founded on the basis of an idea of mission that had its roots in the spirit of the Counter Reformation that proposed a huge effort for both the spread of the faith and for its defense. This composite shows the activity of the Congregation in the long process of foundation and shall remain in force for almost three centuries. Only in 1908 will a major reform of the Curia under Pope Pius X lead to a major change in the situation. Propaganda would no longer have jurisdiction over Protestant and Orthodox countries and its action will be directed exclusively to missionary territories, in large parts of Asia and most of Africa.<sup>12</sup>

The nature of Propaganda's jurisdiction has to be taken into account in order to explain the way it operated in North America. In fact, during the years in which the Congregation was founded, stable colonies of the states of northern Europe, England, France and Holland began to form. Two out of three of these colonial powers are Protestant. News of this non-Spanish presence in the New World was only received slowly by the Congregation slowly which, at the beginning, only had very superficial knowledge about North America. In fact, at the time of its foundation in 1622 America was considered to comprise the

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<sup>12</sup> Giovanni Pizzorusso, "La Congregazione pontificia de Propaganda Fide nel XVII secolo: missioni, geopolitica, colonialismo," in *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima età moderna* edited by Visceglia, 149-172.

West Indies, hence territories under Spanish rule (except Portuguese Brazil). It is known, however, that the Spanish organized their church in their colonial empire, but failed to send missionaries to the rest of the continent. There were many indigenous peoples who had not yet received the true faith due to the lack initiative and laziness of the Spaniards.

Soon after the founding of the Congregation, however, the news about the new colonies began to arrive. This gradually changed the situation and aroused the interest of Propaganda. The French arrived in North America. Even if some of them were Huguenots, the French crown in general encouraged and funded the presence of missionaries. These missions were not under the patronage of the King of Spain and thus Propaganda could oversee them. Furthermore, the arrival of the Dutch and the British in particular meant that for the first time there was a danger of the spread of the Protestant religion. America entered the Protestant world that Rome wanted to fight in Europe through Propaganda's missionary activity. In addition, in Rome there were fears that Protestants could spread their religion among the indigenous peoples. This dual concern (the Protestant presence in a continent hitherto not "contaminated" by heresy, the failure to convert the indigenous people to Catholicism and the risk of them becoming Protestants) was expressed by a report submitted to Propaganda by a Franciscan, Gregorio Bolivar, who came in Rome in 1625.

In it, he describes the indigenous peoples of Virginia, divided into eight tribes living in vice (drunkenness, witchcraft, polygamy and ceremonial cannibalism) that the British did not bother to fight. He offered to serve as a missionary, if the pope were to send other religious. The mission was especially urgent in Virginia because of the need to oppose British "heretics."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Josef Metzler, "Die älteste Bericht über Nordamerika im Propaganda-Archiv: Virginia 1625," in *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft/Nouvelle Revue de sciences missionnaires*, 25 (1969), 29-



In addition, the North European colonial presence was not limited to North America, but it also established itself in the numerous islands of the West Indies, where there was a thriving cultivation of tobacco and especially sugar cane and the slave trade. These colonies, founded simultaneously with those of North America, were much closer to the Spanish territories and were considered a threat to Madrid. In these islands French missionaries established themselves who had been authorized by Propaganda. This angered the Spanish cardinal who was a member of Propaganda, who protested vigorously, though now through Urban VIII, that the papacy had abandoned the exclusive link with Spain and was now much closer to France.<sup>14</sup>

This new situation considered that the idea that patronage throughout the continent according to the papal bulls of the discoveries was outdated, that is to say, in the places the Spanish did not have a real control of the territories. Propaganda could not exercise its jurisdiction over the Spanish Church and its missions, but it could make decisions with respect to the missions in the territories of the French or English and Dutch territories in the Americas. In this way, we can say that the presence of these new colonies, whether of French Catholics or English Protestants, favored the intervention of Propaganda and, therefore, of the Holy See in the New World from which Spain had excluded it due to the agreements on royal patronage. From then on, Spain could defend the right of patronage only over

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37; Purificación Gato, "El informe del P. Gregorio Bolivar a la Congregación de Propaganda Fide de 1623," *Archivo Ibero-americano*, 50 (1990), 493-548; "Father Gregorio Bolivar's 1625 Report. A Vatican Source for the History of Early Virginia," edited by Edward L. Bond, Jan L. Penkowski, Alison P. Weber, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 110, 1 (2002), 69-86.

<sup>14</sup> Giovanni Pizzorusso, *Roma nei Caraibi. L'organizzazione delle missioni cattoliche nelle Antille francesi e in Guyana (1635-1675)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1995).

the American territories it actually controlled. In the rest of the continent the Catholic kings could not prevent the formation of colonies of other states, or the presence of non-Spanish missionaries under the control of Propaganda, that is, of Rome.

However, this opportunity was only partially exploited. Here we must mention some other limitations of the intervention of Propaganda in the Americas which remained valid until the nineteenth century. I will indicate three.

First Propaganda had no directly and independent economic resources to organize missions, which were funded by the state or by wealthy Catholic nobles. The Congregation's spiritual jurisdiction stretched over existing missions that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, covered a small part of the continent. In addition, this fact also led to the consequence that the financial backers could affect the activity of the missions. This happened especially in the French colonies in which the monarchy wanted to have a strong influence even over the ecclesiastical organization according to the principles of the Gallican church.<sup>15</sup>

A second limitation was the relationship that existed between Propaganda and regular orders. As mentioned above, the latter were active in missions from before the foundation of the Congregation and had been given permission to carry out the apostolate directly by the pope. Many orders submitted themselves to the jurisdiction of the Congregation, others considered themselves autonomous. This was the case of the Jesuits who were one of the main active missionary orders in North America. The relationship between the Society of Jesus and Propaganda was always very difficult. On the one hand, the congregation appreciated the results achieved by the Company in all parts of the world. On the other hand it blamed the fact

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<sup>15</sup> Guillaume de Vaumas, *L'éveil missionnaire de la France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1959); Claude Prudhomme, *Mission chrétienne et colonisation, XVIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 2004), 49-65.

that it did not want to submit itself to the missionary dicastery on the grounds that their missionary activity had already placed their foundation directly under the sole jurisdiction of the pope. For this reason, in general, communication between Jesuits and Propaganda was quite rare.<sup>16</sup>

The third limit is rather a feature that could also become a positive resource. It should also be recognized that the jurisdiction of Propaganda consisted not only in direct control of the missions, often in the Americas, which, as we have seen, the Congregation failed to impose. Propaganda's most important task was related to the acquisition of information, either to exercise such control or to have an overview of the missions. For this reason Propaganda collected not only reports about the missions but also regarding evangelization projects of territories and peoples, many of them quite fanciful, but which all contribute to making of Propaganda a center for collecting information on the whole world, even on areas that escaped its jurisdiction such as those subject to patronage.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.3 PROPAGANDA'S ARCHIVES

This information gathering is undoubtedly the most important role that the Congregation had during the Early Modern period, in particular, for the Americas where, for all the reasons given above, it could only partly carry out its direct jurisdic-

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<sup>16</sup> Luca Codignola, "Few, Uncooperative, and Ill Informed? The Roman Catholic Clergy in French and British North America, 1610-1658," in *Decentring the Renaissance. Canada and Europe in Multi-disciplinary Perspective, 1500-1700*, edited by Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 173-185.

<sup>17</sup> Matteo Sanfilippo and Giovanni Pizzorusso, *L'America iberica e Roma fra Cinque e Seicento: notizie, documenti, informatori*, in *Gli archivi della Santa Sede e il mondo asburgico nella prima età moderna*, edited by Matteo Sanfilippo, Alexander Koller and Giovanni Pizzorusso (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2004), 73-118.

tion. These activities of both gathering information and its jurisdiction, produced a large amount of documents kept in the archives of the Congregation. Normally the documents issued by the Pontifical Congregations are deposited in the Vatican Secret Archives. However, for very few offices of the Curia there is an exception. The main two offices are the congregations of the Holy Office and Propaganda that retain the historic part of their archives in their current headquarters because any document, even centuries old, may be useful for decision-making. In particular, Propaganda's archives has kept its papers continuously since its foundation and following a uniform classification method that reproduces the system of the bureaucratic operation of the congregation. In addition, Propaganda's archives were not damaged by being transported to Paris by order of Napoleon Bonaparte, as the archives of the Holy Office were which suffered heavy losses. Another major difference between these two archives is the date of their access to scholars. Propaganda's archives were opened to scholars in the same period as the opening of the Vatican Secret, that is from 1881 with the decision of Pope Leo XIII. The Holy Office had to wait another century, until 1998.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> On the Archives of Propaganda, see Nicola Kowalsky and Josef Metzler, *Inventory of the Historical Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or "de Propaganda Fide"* (Rome: Pontifical Universitas Urbaniana, 1988<sup>3</sup>); *Vatican Archives. An Inventory and Guide to Historical Documents of the Holy See*, edited by Francis X. Blouin, (New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 38-62. On the Holy Office, see my text in this volume. About the Archives of the Congregations of Holy See and of the Index (now in the Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith): *Vatican Archives. An Inventory and Guide to Historical Documents of the Holy See. Supplement #1: The Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, edited by F.X. Blouin (Ann Arbor : Bentley Historical Library, 2003); on these two archives for the history of French North America, see *L'Amérique*

The importance of the archive of Propaganda for American studies was highlighted immediately after it opened and the documents have been used by historians as the Jesuit Thomas Aloysius Hughes for his *History of the Society of Jesus in North America. Colonial and Federal*, published in London from 1907 to 1917.<sup>19</sup> But the work that brought the archives of Propaganda to the attention of American scholars and Americanists is undoubtedly the *Guide to the Materials for American History in Roman and Other Italian Archives* by Carl Russell Fish, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin.<sup>20</sup> This work was part of a major project of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Department of Historical Research led by the famous historian John Franklin Jameson, to publish a series of guides to European archives relating to American history. Some historians were sent on missions in various European capitals. Fish went to Rome for a year from October 1908 until August 1909. His task was enormous: in Rome he had to take into account the archives of the Vatican, the other Roman ecclesiastical archives, the public archives of the Italian state and some private archives

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*du Nord française dans les archives religieuses de Rome, 1600-1922. Guide de recherche*, edited by Pierre Hurtubise, Luca Codignola, and Fernand Harvey (Québec : Les Editions de l'IQRC, 1999), and Giovanni Pizzorusso, "Les archives des Congrégations romaines de la Propagande et du Saint-Office et l'histoire de la Nouvelle-France et du Québec (XVIIe-XXe siècle)," in *Le Saint-Siège, le Québec et l'Amérique française. Les Archives Vaticanes, pistes et défis*, edited by Martin Pâquet, Matteo Sanfilippo, and Jean-Philippe Warren (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2013), 27-48.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Aloysius Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America. Colonial and Federal*, 4 vols. (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1907- 1917).

<sup>20</sup> Carl Russell Fish, *Guide to the Materials for American History in Roman and Other Italian Archives* (Washington DC, Carnegie Institution, 1911).

belonging to noble families. In addition, he also had to see some public archives of the great Italian cities that had been state capitals until fifty years before. I recall that the formation of the Kingdom of Italy took place in 1861, Venice was merged in 1866 and Rome in 1870. Fish's objective was to assess the amount of sources relating to North America (Canada and U.S.), but also to take account of the documentation on the Spanish empire, English and French colonization and that of the Dutch in the West Indies. In fact, he saw documents from the discovery of America until 1830, the chronological limit at the archives at the time when Fish was working. The result of this great enterprise was a volume of nearly 300 pages, published in 1911 in which the importance of the archives of the Holy See as a resource for American history was made evident. 200 of those 300 pages relate to ecclesiastical archives and only 100 to public or private archives which are not ecclesiastical. Of the 200 pages relating to ecclesiastical archives 100 concern the Vatican Secret Archives, 75 regard Propaganda and the rest of the Vatican Library and other minor archives. Fish's working method was very practical and functional. He gives an overview of Propaganda's archival sources, but for some of the most interesting volumes he provides a short summary of the contents of the individual documents. In this empirical way, he illustrates the overall framework and at the same time shows concrete examples of individual documents, and gives an idea of their content and use. In this way he manages to present a very rich documentation which is of interest for the scholar.

Nowadays, Fish's book is still useful to learn about the structure of the archive even if the pagination of documents and the names of some of the series have changed and its references are inaccurate today. However, Fish's importance for knowledge about Propaganda is not only archival, but it is also historical. Indeed, he clear up what had been the task of the congregation and the role of missionaries in the missions: "The business of the [...] congregation was the direction and correlation of these

forces [ the missionaries ], and only secondarily actual missionary work.”<sup>21</sup> In Propaganda’s archives then we can certainly find reports of missionaries regarding their activities among local populations with interesting ethnological information, but above all we can get a picture of the “government” and the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome over this activity. Perhaps for this reason, despite Fish’s excellent work, Propaganda’s sources have been used less than documents from the religious orders, which mostly means that of the Jesuits in North America. Reuben Gold Thwaites’s edition of *Jesuit Relations*, published in Cleveland in 1896-1901, and thus before Fish’s Roman mission, has been used by historians, ethnohistorians, anthropologists more until today because their reports contain specific information regarding missionary work.<sup>22</sup> For this type of interest the Archives of the Society of Jesus (*Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*) remains the main site for research. Heavy Jesuit centralization favored direct communication between Rome and the American missions and the establishment of rich Roman archives.

Returning to Propaganda’s archives it is therefore particularly interesting to understand Roman jurisdiction over the missions, which as we have seen, the Holy See obtained after

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<sup>21</sup> Fish, *Guide*, 119.

<sup>22</sup> *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents. Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites 73 vols (Cleveland: The Burrow Brothers Company, 1896-1901). The other summa for the Jesuit sources (in French) is *Monumenta Novae Franciae* 9 vols., [1602-61], edited by Lucien Campeau (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu and Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu; Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval; and Montréal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1967-2003). For a discussion about these two works, see Luca Codignola, “The Battle is Over: Campeau’s *Monumenta* vs. Thwaites’ *Jesuit Relations*, 1602-1650,” *European Review of Native American Studies*, X, 2 (1996), 3-10.

great difficulty. It should also be said that many aspects of this jurisdiction that were previously considered in a purely ecclesiastical light have resulted in new interpretations of great interest and I will make an example of this shortly.

We must also point out that the archive, in addition to reflecting the operation of the congregation, is also a huge deposit collection of documents. For this reason, there is also a lot of documentation coming directly from the missionaries of those missionary religious orders who, unlike the Jesuits, did not preserve their documents. For example, a very active missionary order in North America like the Capuchins did not have a centralized deposit for documents in the Early Modern period and its sources were dispersed for various reasons. We can say that the numerous documents submitted by the Capuchin missionaries to Propaganda constitute the missionary archive which that order does not possess.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. THE CONVERSION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

After this very general introduction, we come to talk more specifically about the issue of the conversion of indigenous peoples. From the above, I think that the limits of what we can expect from Propaganda's activity and the information collected in the archive are clear. Before reviewing certain documents relating to indigenous peoples which are of specific interest, I would make some general considerations that begins with a question: is there any new element of a general nature that Propaganda brought into the relationship between missionaries and the indigenous peoples of the Americas?

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Church had assumed the missionary method as it is defined in the six-

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<sup>23</sup> Giovanni Pizzorusso, *Propaganda Fide e gli Ordini religiosi nel XVII secolo. Note di ricerca con particolare riferimento ai Cappuccini*, in *I Cappuccini nell'Umbria del Seicento*, edited by Vincenzo Criscuolo (Roma, Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 2003), 309-334.



teenth century with the important contribution of the Jesuits, in particular José de Acosta with his work *De Procuranda Indorum Salute* (1590). It realized that a long and patient process of training and also, of civilization and control were necessary to be able to successfully introduce the principles of the Catholic religion and to instill orthodox behavior on the part of the neophytes. At that time, the controversies about missionary methodology were especially in Asia with the famous question of Chinese and Malabar rites, but it was a problem that arose due to the attempt to adapt Catholicism to cultures which developed in China and India. As for the Americas instead the problem was primarily the fight against idolatry and religious syncretism and also the danger posed by the corruption and violence of the Spanish world. In fact, the Jesuits began to develop the system of reductions, i.e. bringing together indigenous peoples and their education, even if it meant establishing stable missions and fundamentally altering the Ignatian missionary method, based on itinerant missions.

The other religious orders in America now espoused similar behavior. It can be said that the effort to maintain some indigenous traditions and especially languages (of which many missionaries were excellent scholars from Bernardino de Sahagun to Acosta himself) was instrumental in the effort to communicate the principles of the Christian religion and culture, which of course were viewed as superior. In addition, it was known that the Amerindians who were converted tended to resume their beliefs and their religions if they were left to it and abandoned by the missionaries. From this point of view, therefore, the situation was not satisfactory: the Spanish church, with all its dioceses and its great monasteries, did not yet fully control the situation. It had not achieved a genuine and profound conversion of the Amerindians. On the basis of information received from informants, Propaganda claimed that the Spanish clergy concentrated on the activities inside the colonial world, that is, the spiritual assistance of the Spaniards, and did not

make an active effort in the missions.

As a remedy for this situation in the early years of its existence Propaganda worked on a policy for the local clergy. This policy brought the strategy of the Church which wanted to promote the national and local churches to its ultimate consequences. We have already recalled that there had been a push towards the formation of a “national” clergy since the founding of colleges for nations by Gregory XIII. This policy was limited to Europe or even the oriental rites united with Rome such as the Maronites. Now instead Propaganda spread this policy at a global level. According to the Secretary Francesco Ingoli each local church would remain in a primitive state (which he defines as a “Chiesa bambina,” a “baby” Church) if it did not develop a native clergy.<sup>24</sup> As regards the Americas and accusations that the Amerindians were all ignorant and drunkards, Ingoli puts the blame on the Spaniards who did not give them a proper education.<sup>25</sup> In truth, in the sixteenth century there were attempts to train young people from the Aztec elite as priests, but the project was never carried out. Regular orders, especially the Jesuits, had always refused to admit the Amerindians as religious, even when the best conditions were in place for this to happen. For example, in the reductions of Paraguay where the indigenous peoples, under the Jesuits, occupied public offices as such as that of *alcalde* (mayor), the Jesuits did not allow the indigenous people to become priests, but only catechists. For this reason, on the basis of information obtained from an informant that came to Rome, the Augustinian Pedro Nieto, Ingoli

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<sup>24</sup> Francesco Ingoli, *Considerationi del Secretario Ingoli intorno al negotio de scalzi Agostiniani*, (1638-1639), APF, SOCG, vol. 259, f. 25rv, 30rv, see *Memoria Rerum*, vol. III/2, 694-695.

<sup>25</sup> Francesco Ingoli, *Compendio della scrittura particolare del Padre Pietro Nieto, Agostiniano, circa l'ordinatione degli Indiani* [...] (1628), APF, SOCG, vol. 189, f. 163rv, 171rv, 224r-225, see *Memoria Rerum*, vol. III/2, 678-679.

accused regular orders of not wanting native priests so as not lose their dominant religious presence.

Propaganda then tried to form a native secular clergy, that would not be dependent on bishops and religious orders. This program was implemented throughout the world, not only in the Americas. Other national missionary seminaries were founded and also an International College in Rome, the Collegio Urbano or Urban College, where young men were trained as future missionaries from various parts of the world. However, for the Americas, due to communication difficulties on account of Royal patronage, Rome did not actively recruit missionaries. For example, the case of the young Indian of New Granada, Juan de la Cruz, who came to Rome in 1645 was completely isolated. The Secretary of Propaganda, Francesco Ingoli listened to his testimony which presented, not surprisingly, a strong anti-Spanish polemic: the Amerindian toiled in the mines and the Spaniards taught them only the main prayers and did not give a true religious education. Ingoli then thought of turning the young Amerindian into a missionary, to be sent back to his original population and kept him in the Collegio Urbano, where he died three years later, never having really settled in. No experience of this kind was had by the indigenous people of North America, at least until the nineteenth century, as we shall see later.<sup>26</sup>

From what has been said up to this point, it is possible to understand what kind of documentation one can expect to find about North American indigenous people. Today, we have tools for systematic research. Two major works have been prepared which allow an almost complete search. For the U.S. there is the Calendar published by the Academy of American Franciscan History, *United States Documents in the Propaganda Fide*

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<sup>26</sup> Giovanni Pizzorusso, "Indiani del Nordamerica a Roma (1826-1841)," *Archivio della Società romana di Storia patria*, 116 (1993), 395-411.

Archives, of which so far there are 13 volumes of inventories of documents until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> For North America in general, there is the *Guide to documents relating to French and British North America in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" in Rome, 1622-1799*, published in Ottawa by Luca Codignola.<sup>28</sup>

## 2.1 THE FIRST PHASE

As Codignola points out in this book, the documents that arrive to Propaganda on North America in the early years after the founding of the Roman congregation are especially about missionary projects. In these projects the indigenous people were certainly protagonists: their conversion was the main task of the missionaries. However, these projects were processed directly without knowing the reality and so they were optimistic and enthusiastic. In the 1620s Gregorio Bolivar, denouncing the danger of English colonization in Virginia, also called for the establishment of a mission to the indigenous peoples, thinking that the conversion would have been easy. In the same years the English Discalced Carmelite Simon Stock, in a mission project in Newfoundland, spoke of "innumerable" peoples "of an excellent benign and human disposition," the indigenous peoples

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<sup>27</sup> *United States Documents in the Propaganda Fide Archives: A Calendar. First Series*, edited by Finbar Kenneally, 7 vols. + index (Berkeley CA: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1966-1981); *United States Documents in the Propaganda Fide Archives: A Calendar, Second Series*, edited by Anton Debevec *et al.*, 6 vols. (Berkeley CA: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1980-2006).

<sup>28</sup> Luca Codignola, *Guide to Documents relating to French and British North America in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" in Rome 1622-1799* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1991).

“desirous to be Christians.”<sup>29</sup> In 1634 the colony of Maryland was founded by the Catholic Baron Calvert. The Jesuit missionaries had three objectives: to strengthen the faith of Catholics, convert heretics, spread the faith among the pagans and barbarians. In the document Calvert related that the colony between New England and Virginia was full of Calvinists and that the missionaries had no material support either from the heretics alien to the faith, or by the Catholics who were mostly poor, or from the barbarians who lived like animals. The Jesuits had also prepared a grammar, a dictionary, and catechism in the “barbarous tongue.” The indigenous people did not seem very docile, however they noted the need to convert them, also due to the danger that they might adhere to Protestantism, as the Maryland colony was close to other Protestants. Nearly thirty years after the report of the Jesuit superior of the mission showed that the converts were few and in fact the missionaries were limited to preserving the faith among the few Catholics who were tolerated in the colony.<sup>30</sup>

The transition from the enthusiastic project to the sad reality is also reflected in the missions in New France, however, which had a concrete beginning with the Franciscan Recollects

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<sup>29</sup> Luca Codignola, *The Coldest Harbour of the Land: Simon Stock and Lord Baltimore's Colony in Newfoundland, 1621-1649* (Kings-ton - Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

<sup>30</sup> ACDF, S. Ufficio, Stanza Storica, D 4a “Facultates extraordinariae (1622-1642),” fasc. “Circa Missionem ad Provinciam Marilandiae in America Septentrionali,” f. 727r-748v; many documents are in APF, see Codignola, *Guide, ad vocem* “Maryland;” cf. also T.A. Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus*, vol. I/1, *Text: From the First Colonization till 1645*, 246-252; Charles Edward O'Neill, “North American Beginnings in Maryland and Louisiana,” in *Memoria Rerum*, I, 2, 718-723; James Axtell, “White Legend: The Jesuit Mission in Maryland,” in Id. *After Columbus. Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 73-85.

(1615-1629), the Capuchins (1632-1658 in Acadia), and especially the Jesuits. The Recollects tried to return to Canada in 1635 at the instigation of Cardinal Richelieu and asked for the support of the papal nuncio in Paris and Propaganda which sent a report with information on the various indigenous nations (Montagnais, Algonquins, Iroquois, Hurons, Neutrals and Sorcerers), with many details about the flora, fauna, geography and way of life of the places, citing Gabriel Sagard, author of a text on the Hurons and also recalling the Jesuit mission. In the case of the Recollects, it is seen how the information which reaches Propaganda is often second-hand and is produced on the occasion of request from authorization of missions. In these cases, it is especially the superiors of the European provinces of the orders who write to Propaganda, providing the first-hand observations made by the missionaries. On other occasions they enclose documents, in original or in copies, of the direct testimony of the missionaries, along with their requests.<sup>31</sup>

The second-hand documentation is no less interesting than that which comes directly from the missions, especially if it is all that is available to researchers. For example, the news about the Capuchin missions in Acadia come from someone very close to Propaganda, Pacifique de Provins, a former missionary in Persia and the Levant that wanted to devote himself to the American missions. In 1645 he made a trip to the French West Indies, exalting the possibility of converting the indigenous peoples of the Orinoco coast (now Venezuela). Knowing Propaganda's jurisdictional system very well, he claimed to be an Apostolic prefect for the Americas. On this occasion he provides information on the Capuchin mission in Acadia and its failure. It should be noted that Pacifique presents himself to Propaganda as a real informant continuing to give news about

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Codignola, *Guide, ad indicem*; see also Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire. Les missions françaises au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 241-276.

all the missions where his Capuchin brothers are, from Brazil to the east and in Acadia.<sup>32</sup>

Documents on American missions, and in particular on the indigenous people arrive at Propaganda through very different paths, some of which we cannot know. A very interesting document that describes the society of New France after the war between the Iroquois and Hurons is a long letter from a lay settler, sent in 1651 to Tours where it was translated into Latin and then went to Rome. In it we find details on the people, nature and the landscape, agriculture and mining, colonial administration and justice.<sup>33</sup>

As in this case, the accumulation of information in Propagation can be random.<sup>34</sup> However, Propaganda's jurisdictional system is also a system of news gathering which works better

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<sup>32</sup> Luca Codignola, "Pacifique de Provins and the Capuchin network in Africa and America," in *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society, Martinique and Guadeloupe, May 1989*, edited by Patricia Galloway and Philip Boucher (Lanham: University Press of America, 1992), 45-60.

<sup>33</sup> APF, SOCG, vol. 260, f. 310r-313v, see Codignola, *Guide*, series 3, item 276. For further details see Luca Codignola, "Les Amérindiens dans les archives de la Sacrée Congrégation de Propaganda Fide à Rome (1610-1799)," *Canadian Folklore Canadien*, 17, 1 (1995), 139-148.

<sup>34</sup> Two general references are Luca Codignola, "The Holy See and the Conversion of the Indians in French and British North America, 1486-1760," in *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, edited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill NC - London: The University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1995), 195-242; Id., "The Holy See and the Conversion of the Aboriginal Peoples in North America, 1760-1830," in *Ethnographies and Exchanges: Native Americans, Moravians, and Catholics in Early North America*, edited by Anthony G. Roeber (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 77-95.

when there are corresponding officials of the Congregation on the mission field. For this reason, in 1641 the Secretary Ingoli wanted a priest from Lyon to be sent to Canada and appointed bishop in order to provide information on the Jesuit missions, which, as we have said, Propaganda did not have access to. On that occasion Ingoli also expressed concern that the Jesuits do not properly transmit doctrine to the indigenous people.

Ingoli's concern for the presence of a bishop was finally overcome in 1657, after the death of the secretary (passed away in 1649), when François de Laval was appointed an apostolic vicar with the title of bishop. He was the first bishop outside of Spanish or Portuguese America, and thus the first who had a more direct contact with Propaganda. This gives us even more abundant information on the indigenous peoples. However, as was the case in the Spanish colonies, including New France, the interest in missions decreases. The indigenous peoples in 1660 are increasingly a military problem and only to a lesser extent a religious goal, despite that there are still missionaries that go to the west. In addition, the bishops successors of Laval have a really sporadic contact with Rome. In fact, in 1674 Laval had changed his status: from apostolic vicar he had been promoted to full bishop of Quebec. This situation represents a change: the vicarage, for its missionary character had a direct link with Propaganda. The bishopric instead was part of the French, Gallican Church, which was very independent from Rome.<sup>35</sup>

## 2.2. THE SECOND PHASE

A second phase of the interest of propaganda to the Ameri-

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<sup>35</sup> Lucien Campeau, *L'évêché de Québec (1674). Aux origines du premier diocèse érigé en Amérique française* (Québec, La Société historique de Québec, 1974); Matteo Sanfilippo, "Curia di Roma e Corte di Francia: la Fondazione della diocesi di Québec," in *La Corte di Roma tra Cinque e Seicento "Teatro" della politica europea*, edited by Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Roma, Bulzoni, 1998), p. 489-516.



can indigenous people corresponds to the revival of French missions along the Mississippi River in the eighteenth century. This renewed contact is also determined by the presence of different orders, always French, in addition to the usual Jesuits, Capuchins, Recollects and secular priests of the *Seminaire des Missions Etrangères*. According to a secular missionary of the Séminaire des Missions Etrangères writing in 1729, at that time the diocese of Quebec, is no smaller than Europe as a whole, although not very populated. But there is a big difference between the four largest cities, three of which are on the St. Lawrence river: in Quebec, Trois-Rivières and Montreal and Nouvelle-Orleans on the Mississippi, and the rest of the diocese. In the cities there are only French and not many *mestizos*. The forests instead “were something else.” It is therefore necessary to bear in mind that the Canadians are of two types, “two kinds of men, so to speak, some are Christians, humane and civilized, educated and among whom some candidates for the clerical state can be found. The others are idolaters, brutish, fierce, inconstant, but, in spite of all this, purchased, like all of us, by God’s blood, and worthy of the assistance of priests which they cannot become.” This quote shows us how, exactly a century after the Secretary of Propaganda Ingoli claimed that a church that does not have its own clergy is likely to remain “a baby,” the situation was exactly the same in North America. On the one hand the European clergy saw the indigenous people as “savages” and “barbarians,” on the other it believed to be invested with the duty of the spiritual leadership of these people.<sup>36</sup>

During the eighteenth century Propaganda received documents that largely explain the development of the French missions, in particular in Louisiana, during the second half of the century, when the sovereignty of the territories frequently changed. The indigenous tribes are described alongside the

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<sup>36</sup> APF, SOCG, vol. 670 (1731), f. 248rv-249rv, see Codignola, *Guide*, series 3, item 501.

missions. For example, the French Capuchin missionary Hilaire de Geneveux describes the missions between New Orleans and Mobile, where there are Apalachees immediately after the division between Spanish and English with the Proclamation Line of 1763.<sup>37</sup> Former Jesuit François-Philibert Watrin in 1765 (the Company of Jesus was abolished in France the year before) describes the indigenous peoples of the many Jesuit missions. The picture remains very critical and patronizing towards the native peoples. For example, the Jesuit vindicates the action of conviction towards the Choctwas tribe to prevent the British from turning them against the French and then highlights the passive position of the indigenous peoples. From the religious point of view, however, there is no reason for satisfaction. Among these populations, such as the Alabamas, there is widespread idolatry, the worship of the spirit of evil, superstition. This was blamed on French merchants. The situation northward into the territory of Illinois was even worse (some tribes are mentioned in detail such as the Kaskaskias, Peorias, Kitchigamis, and Kaokias). The devil is openly an object of worship; it is worshiped at night so that it will provide light the next day; the practice of polygamy is widespread; the traffic of spirits is rampant. The Miamis really understand the idea of a supreme being, but feel no need to worship it. The missionary also provides demographic data: the whole Illinois tribe is made up of 9000 people, while the Choctaws are more numerous. Going further north towards Missouri there are the Osages, Kansas and other tribes, but the missionary confesses that these have never had contact with religious and their only contact with Europeans was with French *voyageurs*.<sup>38</sup> This detailed report shows how a clear picture of the situation could be formed in Rome. But even

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<sup>37</sup> APF, Fondo Vienna, vol. 37 (1761-78) ff. 17r-22v, see Codignola, *Guide*, series 4, item 37.

<sup>38</sup> APF, Congressi America Centrale, vol. 1 (1673-1775), ff. 424rv-430rv, 433rv, see Codignola, *Guide*, series 6, item 267.

in the eighteenth century, the transmission system of continuous information was not from America but from an informant in Europe that gathered the news and sent it to Propaganda. By now the news came more and more frequently via Paris, such as when the vicar of the bishop of Quebec was Pierre de la Rue Abbé de l'Isle Dieu, who resided in the French capital, in a strategic position between France, Rome and the Americas.<sup>39</sup>

Between the seventeenth and eighteenth century the indigenous peoples of North America were quite obscured in the panorama of the world that Propaganda progressively built in Rome. We can see this from time to time in the general reports that Propaganda's secretaries made to describe the missions around the world. For the first secretary in 1631 Ingoli, they are "barbarians, coarse and sordid" that the British are trying to "pervert" into Protestant heresy. Ingoli, however, confides in the French, that have domesticated these barbarians who "in New France showed themselves less proud, even more human."<sup>40</sup> Almost half a century later, in 1678, the secretary Urbano Cerri showed less attention to the indigenous peoples, recalling the end of the missions among the Hurons because of the war with the Iroquois in Canada and Virginia, Maryland and Avallonia (i.e. Newfoundland) are mentioned only as past attempts.<sup>41</sup> In 1709 the report by the Secretary Niccolò Forteguerra shows that the indigenous peoples are separated by Europeans and are living in the interior of the continent. Although he mentions their "vices" such as the worship of the devil, polygamy, and idolatry in general, as well as the cannibalistic practices, Forteguerra admires their physical beauty, their courage and military virtues

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<sup>39</sup> Codignola, *Guide, ad indicem*.

<sup>40</sup> Francesco Ingoli, *Relazione delle quattro parti del mondo* (1631), edited by Fabio Tosi (Roma: Urbaniana University Press, 1999), 254.

<sup>41</sup> Urbano Cerri, *Relazione [...] alla Santità di Nostro Signore Innocenzo XI*, (1678) APF, *Miscellanee Varie*, XI, 167v-168v.

based on surprise warfare. The description of the indigenous people of Virginia are particularly long and accurate and they mention the natives of California and New Mexico of the Spanish empire.<sup>42</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the report drawn up by Cardinal Di Pietro, the prefect of Propaganda, portrays a completely different world in North America, especially through the existence of the United States and some dioceses: for him it is a Church composed mainly of European faithful.<sup>43</sup>

This general tendency to diminish the role of indigenous people in the vision of America and the transformation of the American church in a European church with the arrival of immigrants from the Old World should not obscure a reality that is still linked to the missions to the indigenous peoples. This aspect emerges when Propaganda exercises its jurisdiction, at the request of the missionaries on the field. The dispositions of the Holy See on various aspects of religious life in the missions raises many doubts that turn into questions that are sent to Rome. This seemingly strictly bureaucratic documentation has an ethno-anthropological value which is very important because it highlights the practical difficulties of applying a European religious framework in a completely different cultural context. A very important point is undoubtedly that of intermarriage between indigenous people and European settlers. Luca Codignola recently studied this problem for all of North America for the seventeenth and early eighteenth century and the contrast that arises between marriages celebrated according to the Tridentine rite and those “in the local manner” which posed problems of validity and illegality. The Church sets conditions for the validity of such marriages. The main condition is

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<sup>42</sup> Niccolò Forteguerra, *Memorie intorno alle missioni*, edited by Carmen Prencipe Di Donna (Napoli: D’Auria, 1982), 126-132.

<sup>43</sup> *Geografia ecclesiastica scritta nella maggior parte dal card. Di Pietro*, APF, Congressi Missioni, Miscellanea, vol. 10, f. 83-96.

the conversion and baptism of the indigenous side. This conversion and baptism must be considered, especially when it comes to the conversions of adults. In addition to the missions baptism take place in conditions that are often not canonical, hence it is necessary to examine the validity of the sacrament, to check what has been consciously received. The administration of the sacraments, such as marriage or baptism is a mix of the spiritual and substantive aspects and the formal and ritualistic ones that missionaries must address. Doubts transmitted to Rome show the problems resulting from the application of these rules and their consequences in the social and family life of the indigenous converts. The official introduction of Tridentine legislation in New France in 1702 provokes questions on the part of the bishop on various aspects of religious life: baptism, marriage, especially, but also about other sacraments and the celebration of mass. In these cases Propaganda must submit these questions the theologians of the Holy Office. In 1703, the issues were put together in a dossier of 26 points. About baptism the missionaries asked, for example, if they could baptize children if they still live with non-baptized adults such as as the nomads and “superstitious” Algonquin; or if sacraments are valid if ritual ceremonies cannot be performed; or if an indigenous adult can be baptized who does not show repentance for sins that have been previously committed, particularly if it is not clear that he or she has renounced polygamy. Here we come to the questions on marriage: can a Christian woman who cannot find a Christian husband marry a non-baptized through a dispensation? Are marriages indissoluble? (A concept which was not easy to understand for the indigenous people). Other rites are considered: can dispensations be given from fasting during Lent? Can the Eucharist be celebrated without wine? The dossier was examined by four advisory theologians of the Holy Office. Their opinions are compared and presented at a meeting of the Holy Office in the presence of the pope who approved or modified them. The answers were then transmitted to Propaganda, which

in turn sent them to the Bishop of Quebec. So the issues raised by missionaries in Canada reached the summit of the Roman Church.<sup>44</sup>

Another typical case concerns Roman intervention about the Micmacs of Nova Scotia. Here the Jesuit missionaries realize that the translation of the formula of baptism: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” translated into the Indian language did not correspond in meaning to the Latin. In fact, it became something like “I wash thee in the name of the one who has a son [i.e., the Father], the one who has a father [i.e., the Son] and that which, for communication is a good spirit.” The Bishop of Quebec, the vicar in Paris, Abbé de l’Isle Dieu, the theologians of the Sorbonne, the assistant of France of the Society of Jesus from 1755 to 1757 were consulted regarding this convoluted formula which is unclear and possibly unorthodox. The thick 120 page dossier contains a linguistic analysis of the Micmac language. The missionaries of course are afraid that all the baptisms that have been administered to the indigenous people are invalid. The Sorbonne stated that the formula can be used while the theologian consulted thought it could not. The pope at the meeting of the Holy Office ordered a closer investigation on the part of the Bishop of Quebec and the matter was put to rest. Of course, in these cases a compromise was looked for. To annul conversions and baptisms would have created a scandal among the converted indigenous peo-

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<sup>44</sup> ACDF, S. Ufficio, De Baptismate, vol. II (1700-1714), fasc. IV (1703 *Quebeck*), f. 25r-124r and 5 pages not numbered; see also Stanza Storica, UV 19, f. 20r-115v. Cf. Luca Codignola, “The Issue of Tridentine Marriage in a Composite North Atlantic World: Doctrinal Strictures vs. Loose Practices, 1607-1738,” *Journal of Early American History*, V, 3 (2015), 201-270. On this matter see *Administrer les sacrements en Europe et au Nouveau Monde: la Curie romaine et les Dubia circa sacramenta*, edited by Paolo Broggio, Charlotte de Castelnau-L’Estoile, Giovanni Pizzorusso, *Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome, Italie et Méditerranée*, 121, 1 (2009), 5-217.

ples. Even more difficult would be to explain the repetition of baptism to them. The Church provides a sacrament that should ordinarily be received only once in a lifetime.<sup>45</sup>

Although to a lesser extent, also in North American English Jesuit missionaries had problems with mixed marriages. Luca Codignola presented some cases are from Maryland which were presented to Propaganda. In these cases slaves could also fall under the term “pagan.”<sup>46</sup> Certainly the fact that there was a bishop in New France favored the presentation of these cases to Rome with respect to the poor missions in English America. Also in New France the application of Tridentine marriage was considered important not only because the indigenous converted to follow the precepts of the Church, but also to prevent the French Catholic settlers from entering into *de facto* unions which were not marriages, taking them away from religion by constituting an exception to the socio-religious control of the colony. So there is a strong link between jurisdiction over the missionary Church and the one over the colonial Church. Both work together in what we call the disciplining of Euro-American society.

### 2.3 THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

We can take a quick look at the situation that occurs in the nineteenth century. In his text in this volume Luca Codignola note that the transition phase between 1760 and 1830 was marked by a different relationship with the British Crown, after having taken possession of the whole continent, in which the Catholic Church needed to continue to exert control on local society. In addition, Protestant missionary activity had become so massive and the Catholic Church had to respond with increased effort. In general we can say that the Catholic Church underwent great de-

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<sup>45</sup> ACDF, S. Ufficio, De Baptismate, vol.IV, Canada, 1757, XXIII, f. 645-764.

<sup>46</sup> Codignola, “The Issue”, *passim*.

velopment in North America with the founding of many dioceses. The arrival of an increasing number of Catholic immigrants from Europe led the church to care much about them. However, the beginning of the nineteenth century was also a time of great missionary revival, especially in France, which is also reflected in North America. The dioceses that are based in the Great Lakes area and beyond towards the West still have a missionary character. Their bishops, mostly French, made visits to their huge dioceses that became long adventurous journeys on horseback or on foot in the wilderness. For example, the Bishop of Quebec, Jean-François Hubert, arrived in Detroit describing many missions to the indigenous people. In 1819 the Bishop of Bardstown, Benoit-Joseph Flaget, went to Quebec and described several indigenous ceremonies. As a result, missionary bishops such as Frederick Rese of Detroit or Frederick Baraga of Sault-Sainte Marie sent reports of their activities among the indigenous populations to Propaganda that, as it has been said, was responsible for North America, until 1908. The archives of Propaganda received reports concerning the relationship of these missionary bishops throughout the nineteenth century and it is not possible here to provide a review of them.<sup>47</sup> An example of this type of prelate is recounted in the novel by Willa Cather, *Death comes for the archbishop*, a fictionalized biography of the first bishop of New Mexico Jean-Baptiste Lamy. This book also explains quite clearly the relationship between these bishops and Propaganda.<sup>48</sup> It can be said that in the first half of the nineteenth century Propaganda thought that the indigenous peoples could still be subject to conversion and be partners in a continent that was, lest we forget, above all Protestant. In this perspective, Propaganda resumed ancient projects such as the development of the local clergy. In the 1830s

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<sup>47</sup> Robert F. Trisco, *The Holy See and the Nascent Church in the Middle Western United States (1826-1850)* (Rome: Gregoriana University Press, 1962).

<sup>48</sup> Published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1927.



four young indigenous peoples were sent to Propaganda's Collegio Urbano to be educated as missionaries that they should return to evangelize their own people. This initiative did not have a happy outcome. Two indigenous people were Ottawas who came from L'Arbre Croche on Lake Michigan and were sent to Rome by Bishop Fenwick of Cincinnati. One of them died in Rome very soon, the second, who was the son of a Canadian and a Kinnichagan, Augustin Hamelin, fell ill and was sent home. Leaving the ecclesiastical career, this young man became a Chief of the Ottawas, and even went to Washington to deal with the U.S. government. In Rome he had learned Italian and had remained in contact with his superiors of Propaganda. In a letter he hoped for a compromise with the government, which, however, would allow the indigenous people to be threatened and forced to abandon their lands. From the response of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda in one can see how Rome cultivated the hope that adherence to Catholicism on the part of indigenous "civilized" people who were inserted in the American system could be an important element in the continent. Also in the 1830s two other young indigenous people were brought to the Urban College from California and were part of the Luiseño tribe. Also in this case one of them died almost immediately, the other continued his studies for six years, but he too died of smallpox in Rome in 1841.<sup>49</sup> Yet he left a manuscript on the language of Luiseños that attracted the attention of Roman scholars and ethno-linguistics which was recently published by a scholar at the University of Berkeley.<sup>50</sup> Ultimately, the death of three out of four young men

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<sup>49</sup> Giovanni Pizzorusso, "Du Nouveau Monde à la Ville Eternelle: les séjours romains des Indiens de l'Amérique du Nord (1826-1841)," *Canadian Folklore Canadien*, 17, 1 (1995), 154-158; Codignola, "The Holy See and the Conversion," 89-91.

<sup>50</sup> Lisbeth Haas, *Pablo Tac, Indigenous Scholar: Writings on Luiseño Language and Colonial History, c. 1840* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011).

discouraged the further sending of other young students to the Collegio Urbano.

Other elements show the interest of Propaganda towards American indigenous people in the early nineteenth century. For example, in 1826 a missionary, Jean-Baptiste Norman Fauvel, arrived in Paris accompanied by an Iroquois member of the Mohawk tribe to ask alms for the mission. Fauvel was also able to print a catechism translated into Iroquois using, he said, an “alphabet” simpler than that used by Methodist missionaries, also hunting for the souls of the indigenous people. The solemn behavior of the Iroquois and his allegorical language were very successful so that the nuncio in Paris sent Fauvel and the Iroquois to Rome where the missionary wanted to be recognized by Propaganda and also funded. Fauvel argued that the development of indigenous missions would also offset the expansion of Protestantism. After receiving the Pope’s blessing and a gift of a relic, the missionary became popular in Rome, but during his stay there were negative rumors about him. In fact, in later years Propaganda made an inquiry at the behest of Bishop Fenwick of Cincinnati, who discovered that the Iroquois was not a Mohawk leader but an impostor and that Fauvel had not been ordained a priest. A few years later, in 1829, another self-styled French missionary with three members of the Osage tribe, also asking for alms for his mission showed up at Propaganda. This time, recalling Fauvel and the fake Iroquois, Propaganda became angry and accused the Frenchmen of exploiting the indigenous people for profit.<sup>51</sup>

These special events can be explained in the context of the genuine interest that was created in Rome and in Italy for the indigenous peoples of the Americas and which is also confirmed by other elements. In the 1820s the *Giornale di Roma*, a newsletter informing about the activities of Roman Curia, printed several articles on the progress of the Iroquois toward

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<sup>51</sup> Pizzorusso, “Du Nouveau Monde”, 149-153.

civilization. In 1825 the newspaper reported that American ethnologist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft claimed that the Chickasaw and Miamis had abandoned cannibalism and that now it was even considered shameful. The idea that civilization could lead to conversion: the old method of the sixteenth century, as set out by José de Acosta, was still being proposed.<sup>52</sup>

Even the missionaries in North America collaborated in this project, pushing for a direct contact between the indigenous people and Rome. In 1832, the mission of Lac des Deux Montagnes, near Montréal, sent a letter of devotion by the heads of the tribes of Algonquian, Iroquois and Nipissing to the pope. To this was joined a precious wampum on which the adherence of the indigenous people to the Catholic religion was represented. The event was given huge publicity in the *Giornale di Roma*. The interpretation of wampum and the account of the ceremony that took place in the mission when the solemn papal letter of thanks to the Indian leaders was read out was also described. The pathos of the description of that event in the news did not fail to mention the moment in which a Protestant was also converted. We can see then how in Rome the attention to the conversion of the indigenous people is connected to an anti-Protestant attitude, according to a rather continuous pattern that dates back to the founding of Propaganda in the climate of the Counter-Reformation.<sup>53</sup>

On the other hand, this positive attitude on the part of Rome contrasts with the difficulties of cultural confrontation

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<sup>52</sup> Giovanni Pizzorusso, "Gli Indiani del Nordamerica in due riviste della prima metà dell'Ottocento: l'Antologia e il Diario di Roma (1821-1834)," in *Gli indiani d'America e l'Italia*, edited by Fedora Giordano (Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 1997), 115-127.

<sup>53</sup> Giovanni Pizzorusso, "Documenti ottocenteschi relativi al wampum indiano conservato nel Museo Missionario Etnologico," *Bollettino dei Monumenti Musei e Gallerie pontificie*, XX (2000), 245-264.

with the indigenous people which the missionaries in the scarce amount of conversions. As Luca Codignola writes, “The farther the distance from the real aborigines, the stronger the impulse to assist them in their salvation and to trust in their goodwill. The closer one got, however, the less sympathy was felt, cultural or otherwise, and the weaker the conviction that these primitive and civilized people could be converted.”<sup>54</sup>

This contradiction, already announced at the end of the eighteenth century, was resolved only with the transformation of American reality determined during the nineteenth century massive arrival of Catholic immigrants (Poles, Italians, Germans). This will be the mass of the population that will strengthen Catholicism in Protestant America. Progressively, the Church of Rome will be convinced that it will be important to assist those Catholics than to convert a few indigenous people. So ethnic parishes and dioceses, will be created, religious orders will send men and women to care for the immigrants. The official observers of the Holy See, sent as diplomats, had no more doubts that the fate of the indigenous people was now marked, as shown by Matteo Sanfilippo.<sup>55</sup>

However, the missions for the indigenous people continue to be there. We must not forget that one aspect of the missionary impulse is the providentialism of the religious. In their minds, conversion is a divine plan; man does not know when it will be fulfilled and therefore must continue commitment to it. So the Jesuits reenter the game after the reconstitution of the Company with the missions of the Belgian Pieter-Jan De Smet and, in

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<sup>54</sup> Codignola, “The Holy See and the Conversion,” 90.

<sup>55</sup> Matteo Sanfilippo, “Le Saint-Siège, les délégués apostoliques en Amérique du Nord et les autochtones (1853-1915),” *Canadian Folklore Canadien*, 17, 1 (1995), 159-168; Id., “E gli autoctoni?,” in Giovanni Pizzorusso and Matteo Sanfilippo, *Dagli indiani agli emigranti. L'attenzione della Chiesa romana al Nuovo Mondo, 1492-1908* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2005), 223-231.

the second half of the nineteenth century, there were missions of the Society of Jesus in the Rocky Mountains from California to Alaska. In northern and western Canada missionary orders continue to send religious. Missionary activity in the nineteenth century was financed more efficiently than in the past with the Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi in Lyon that collected donations and sent them to the missionaries. This collection is also based on the development of what the Church calls the “apostolate of the press,” i.e. publications that advertise missionary activity through the publication of missionary reports, but also using new tools such as photography and the organization of exhibitions with objects and paintings from the missions. Propaganda still received this material that accumulated in its archives. However, because until 1908 it continued to deal even with dioceses such as Boston or New York, where we can follow the development and modernization of American society, Propaganda can easily realize how the indigenous presence and the problem of conversion was becoming increasingly confined to the distant peripheries of the North American continent.

*(translated by James Nelson Novoa)*

