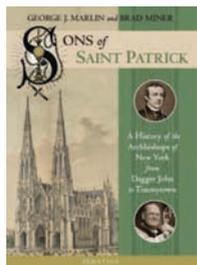


The Powerhouse On Fifth

KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ



Sons of Saint Patrick: A History of the Archbishops of New York from Dagger John to Timmytown, by George J. Marlin and Brad Miner (Ignatius, 506 pp., \$34.95)

“IN a manner of speaking,” the archbishop of New York “becomes the leader of the world, or at least of a world,” *Catholic World* magazine editorialized in 1939. “He has a greater opportunity to battle evil and to amplify good than any other one man except the Holy Father. There is no see in Christendom with such potentialities as New York.”

That world is in transition, to say the least. No less than the current leader of New York Catholics, Timothy Cardinal Dolan, a St. Louis native, has said that “in the public square, . . . the days of fat, balding Irish bishops are over,” acknowledging both a changed culture and a more diverse Church.

In their new book, *Sons of Saint Patrick*, George J. Marlin, a former executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and Brad Miner, a former NATIONAL REVIEW literary editor, write that the question of whether the influence of New York archbishops “is currently waxing or waning is a matter for debate.” But that quote from *Catholic World* about the archbishops’ potential is one of many archival treasures that jump off the pages of this book—telling us that we might find, in the past, some clues about what the future will look like. Marlin and Miner have done a great service of recovered memory and identity.

They write about Cardinal Spellman:

Francis Joseph Spellman had the good fortune to head the archdiocese during the

golden age of the Church in the United States. . . . Throughout his record-breaking, 28-year administration, Cardinal Spellman leveraged this power to become the nation’s leading religious spokesman and advisor to presidents, governors, members of Congress, and mayors. His residence at 452 Madison Avenue was rightly called the Powerhouse, and politicians of every stripe visited to seek the cardinal’s blessing on bended knee.

The rich history—immigrant, courageous, missionary, feeding, educating, serving, healing, leading, praying—of Catholicism in New York is displayed on the bronze doors of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Manhattan, in the persons of Saints Isaac Jogues, Kateri Tekakwitha, Mother Cabrini, and Elizabeth Ann Seton. They remind us that the Church has always had different flavors of leadership: male and female, religious and lay. Before he was Cardinal “Dagger John,” John Hughes was turned down as a seminarian at Mount St. Mary’s in Maryland and “got a job nearby working for Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton and the Sisters of Charity at St. Joseph’s School.” Mother Seton “not only hired Hughes as her gardener, but she listened to him describe his longing to be a priest and she admired his passion for serving God.” She wound up successfully making the case to the seminary’s rector, and the rest is history. (There were mixed reviews as to whether this was a blunder on her part or her first miracle.)

Sons of Saint Patrick begins with an account of religious persecution. (Marlin chairs Aid to the Church in Need USA, a

human-rights group focused on helping Catholics who are victims of religion-based violence and oppression.) A “Mohawk hunting party” submitted Isaac Jogues, a Jesuit missionary, to torture in captivity in Auriesville in upstate New York. They found him “hard to kill,” and he ended up being rescued by Dutch Calvinists. The authors quote historian William Harper Bennett’s description of Jogues: “A bronzed, dark bearded face, lined and drawn with suffering, but in the eyes and expression ‘that peace which the world knows not of.’ Of the forefingers and the left thumb of his hands only the jagged red stumps remain. Every finger shows a partially healed wound and from all, the nails are gone.”

The Calvinists weren’t heroes of religious freedom, though: In what would become “America’s largest and most Catholic city,” Marlin and Miner write, “Dutch tolerance went only so far”:

It was the rule . . . that in New Netherland only one religion was to be practiced: Calvinism. No Masses could be said in the colony, and the turmoil of the late-Reformation period in the Netherlands was reflected in laws that essentially gave second-class status to all religions but the one established. . . . The vaunted Dutch tolerance towards Catholics was in some measure due simply to the scarcity of Catholics.

The Dutch were still the least of Catholics’ problems. “After a brief convalescence in France,” Jogues, who had been dubbed “the indomitable one” by

‘PREFERRING THESE BRIEF, TEMPERATE WINTER SESSIONS . . .’

Preferring these brief, temperate winter sessions
Beyond the dawn to any in the seasons,
But realizing they will leave impressions,
Not memories, for temperamental reasons,
I linger on my way, while wind drives brown,
Long, desiccated maple leaves across
A south where distant traffic whispers drown
Behind hale houses, shaded with Spanish moss.

My adult mind from childhood retains
No images of these, but merely hearkens
To fledgling feelings, like the yellow stains
On handkerchiefs as ichor dries and darkens.

Reaching into my pocket, I retrieve
The ones he left to soothe me, and believe.

—JENNIFER REESER

the Mohawks for his courage, returned to have “his neck . . . hacked through with a tomahawk” and be thrown into the Mohawk River in 1646. “All in all, it was not an auspicious beginning for Catholics in New York.”

The ancient assertion that “the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church” is more relevant now than ever. There have been, by some counts, more martyrs in the tyrannical regimes of our time than there were in the early days, when Christians were thrown to the lions.

Even in today’s developed and relatively free countries, there is a hostility to the Church’s teaching. This opposition tends to focus on Catholicism’s teachings about the nature of men and women and family. The witness of the likes of Jogues suggests that truth is worth living and dying for, out of love. In a day when “spiritual, not religious” is a mantra of the mayor, and is subscribed to by many Millennials, the Church alive in “love for one another” (John 13:35) is the only compelling way forward. Marlin and Miner close their book with a quote from an Independence Day message of Cardinal Dolan:

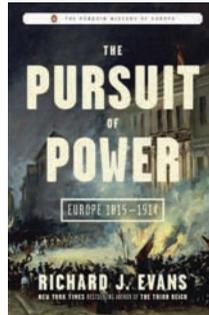
Amid the culture of death that we find all around us, our faith is something that our neighbors will find compelling and may even be something they want for themselves. We must show the culture that seeks to marginalize us that our faith is a living and life-changing reality. The more fundamental challenge needed for us to preserve our American ideals is to boldly live our faith, to boldly proclaim it, and to boldly love God and our neighbor. As Jesus taught, “Let your light shine before all.”

That’s not real estate; that’s life and culture changing.

A few blocks down from Trump Tower, St. Patrick’s Cathedral still stands in the center of everything. Its location—before the skyscrapers, you could see both the East and the Hudson Rivers from it—was the result of what Marlin and Miner rightly identify as a “genius” move on the part of Hughes. In recounting the monumental achievements and losses, the saints and sinners, *Sons of Saint Patrick* serves not just as history but also as a call for an examination of conscience. A healthy Catholic culture has implications beyond anything institutional. What will they say of our time? It is decisions made in faith, actions taken today—and not just by archbishops—that will determine our legacy. **NR**

Rise to Dominance

DONALD T. CRITCHLOW



The Pursuit of Power: Europe, 1815–1914, by Richard J. Evans (Viking, 848 pp., \$40)

At the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, Europe lay devastated. A century later, a new Europe had been created, organized around powerful nation-states. It featured expanded suffrage; better diets and health for its citizens; greater rights for the majority of the rural population, women, and religious minorities, notably Jews; increased levels of literacy for the masses; and advanced transportation, communication, and technological systems. By 1914, Europe stood as a global power, with colonies all over the world. Little did Europeans know—as British historian Richard Evans observes in his magisterial, nearly encyclopedic study of their continent’s 19th-century rise—that the world stood on the verge of an incomprehensible catastrophe.

An estimated 5 million people perished during the Napoleonic wars, including one in five Frenchmen born between 1790 and 1795. This was followed by a devastating harvest in 1816, which caused grain prices to skyrocket. Cholera, spread from trade and troop movements in India, broke out in Europe in the 1820s and returned in 1848–49; typhus and other diseases remained persistent public-health problems. In 1815, Austria stood as the most

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powerful state on the Continent, but hopes for a balance of power in Europe eroded owing to the emergence of a powerful and unified Germany and nationalist rebellions in Central Europe. Greece and Italy became unified nations. Poland, divided by the great powers of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, was the most notable nation that failed to find independence.

The French Revolution left a legacy of social conflict, social equality, and revolutionary outbursts in 1848 and again in the 1870s. Utopian socialism expressed itself in French thinkers such as Fourier and Saint-Simon, while revolutionary Communist ideology was given powerful coherence by Karl Marx; and Mikhail Bakunin provided justification for terrorism by anarchists and nihilists.

Liberals across Europe called for legal and constitutional reform to expand the electorate and allow freedom of the press and recognition of political parties. These reform efforts were most successful in England and, for a brief period in the 1840s, in France. Revolutionary upheavals that swept across Europe in 1848 brought moderate liberals and diehard conservatives “closer together,” Evans observes, “in a shared fear of the masses.” A new breed of politicians, such as Cavour in Italy, Bismarck in Germany, Louis Napoleon III in France, and Disraeli in England, realized that, in Evans’s words, “the preservation of order and stability required radical measures to co-opt the masses into support of the state”; “nationalism was becoming increasingly powerful, indeed unstoppable, and in their different ways they sought to exploit it for their own purposes.”

The rise of nationalism proved integral not just to national-unification movements but also to the strength of colonialism and empires. This coincided with reorganized armies and arms races. The Franco–Prussian War revealed the superiority of the Prussian military. The Prussian king, Wilhelm I, and his prime minister, Bismarck, used the war to unify Germany, setting the stage for the First World War.

In this century of political turmoil, Europe also underwent a technological and economic transformation, with England playing a critical role in