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**“Une Messe est Possible”:
The Imbrolio of the Catholic Church
in Contemporary Latin Europe¹**

by

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the contemporary period, the Church-State relationship in the nation-states of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal – which we will refer to as Latin Europe in this paper – has been a lively source of political conflict and societal cleavage, both on epistemological, and ontological grounds. Epistemological, in that the person living in Latin Europe has to decide whether his world view will be religious or secular; ontological, in that his mortality has kept some sense of the Catholic religion close to his heart and soul at the critical moments of his human reality. Secular views tend to define the European during ordinary periods of life, (“métro boulot dodo,”) while religious beliefs surge during the extraordinary times of life (birth, marriage, death,) as well as during the traditional ceremonial times (Christmas, Easter). This paper will approach the question on the role of the Catholic church in contemporary Latin Europe by first proposing three models of church-state relations in the region and their historical development, then looking at the role of the Vatican, followed by an examination of some recent Eurobarometer data on the views of contemporary Catholics in each country, and finishing with an analysis of selected public policy issues in each country. Throughout, it is interested in the dual questions of whether religion still plays an important role in Latin Europe, and whether or not the Catholic church is still able to influence the direction of public policies in the now democratic nation-states of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

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INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN LATIN EUROPE

The nation-states of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal – which we will refer to as Latin Europe in this paper – share geographical, historical, political and religious space. They have, for over a thousand years, been connected to one another by a common Christian and Roman Catholic faith. Each has also been transformed by the modernizing and secularizing trends brought about by the democratic and industrial revolutions over at least the past two hundred years, usually traced to the 1789 French revolution. In the twentieth century, to varying degrees, each has experienced democracy and fascism, fought together as allies and against each other as enemies, been isolated from one another for long periods of time, and have recently come together as partners in the European Union. Throughout the contemporary period, the Church-State relationship in each of these historically Roman Catholic nation-states has been a lively source of political conflict and societal cleavage.

There are frequently complex contradictions and complications when it comes to religion and politics in Latin Europe. Grace Davie, in her important work *Religion in Europe: A Memory Mutates*, points out how the funeral Mass of former French President François Mitterrand illuminates this polemical relationship. In this case, Mitterrand, a proud heir of the anticlerical socialist and republican tradition in France, noted in his last will and testament that “*une messe est possible*” – that is, a Mass could be celebrated – at his funeral.² As if this were not sufficiently stunning, the situation got even more complicated. Two funeral masses were celebrated for Mitterrand: the Bishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, celebrated a state funeral at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, and later that same day, a small mass for family members was celebrated in his hometown church of Saint-Pierre de Jarnac. Mitterrand’s wife, Danielle, attended both masses with their two sons. Also seated with the family was Mitterrand’s mistress, Anne Pingeot, and the twenty-one-year-old daughter, Mazarine Pingeot, she had out of wedlock with him. Neither supporters nor opponents of Mitterrand were pleased: the anticlerical left was horrified to have their fallen leader in the hands of the clergy, feeling that Mitterrand had sold them out in death; the clerical right was disgusted that the Church would grant such privileges to a man who, although baptized Catholic, had lived a non-Christian life. In their view, even in death, Mitterrand managed to mock their faith when his mistress and their illegitimate daughter appeared at Mass alongside of his wife and other children.

For our present purposes, this story about a Catholic funeral mass for an agnostic president may just reveal something fundamental about French culture. That is, in death, Mitterrand admitted something about himself and about France that he denied in his political life: that his baptism continued to carry some significance for him, and that the Catholic Church has a role, perhaps an important one, to play in French society. All of this is quite reminiscent of the character of Jean Monneron, created by the French Catholic author Paul Bourget in his 1902 novel, *L’Etape*. In this novel, Monneron converted to Roman Catholicism after a secular upbringing by republican, anticlerical parents, explaining, “I’ve decided to become what my family was for centuries. I want to get back, back to the depths of France. I can’t live without my dead.”³ In this regard, and as also evidenced by the funeral Mass for François Mitterrand, the need to be among one’s dead may represent a sort of “last stand” for Catholicism in France, and perhaps throughout the region, a point we will return to later on.

²Mitterrand passed this written request to his doctor, Jean-Pierre Tarot, on Sunday 7 January 1996, the eve of his death.

³Paul Bourget, *L’Etape* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1902), quoted in Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 114.

Suffice it to say for the time being that the issue of religion and politics in this region is complex, both on epistemological and ontological grounds: *epistemological*, in that the person living in Latin Europe has to decide whether his worldview will be religious or secular; *ontological*, in that his mortality has kept some sense of the Catholic religion close to his heart and soul at the critical moments of his human reality. Secular views tend to define the European during ordinary periods of life (“*métro boulot dodo*”), while religious beliefs surge during the extraordinary times of life (birth, marriage, death,) as well as during the traditional ceremonial times (Christmas, Easter).

This divide may well summarize the contemporary Catholic approach to religion in Latin Europe, and it appears to be what recent surveys of Catholics indicate. That is, even though the Catholics of contemporary Latin Europe continue to participate in the same sacraments, flock to the same pilgrimage sites, venerate the same saints, and look to the Holy See for spiritual guidance as traditionally practiced, there are also some significant differences from the past: present-day Catholics fulfill their religious obligations less and less frequently, resulting in empty churches; their children have not been opting for a religious life, creating a major crisis of vocations; and they have failed to properly support their churches financially, prompting some financial problems for certain dioceses.

This paper will approach the question of the role of the Catholic church in contemporary Latin Europe by first proposing three models of church-state relations in the region and their historical development, then looking at the role of the Vatican, followed by an examination of some recent Eurobarometer data on the views of contemporary Catholics in each country, and finishing with an analysis of selected public-policy issues in each country. Throughout, this paper is interested in the dual questions of whether religion still plays an important role in Latin Europe, and whether or not the Catholic church is still able to influence the direction of public policies in the now democratic nation-states of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

COMPETING MODELS OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

Historically, the church-state relationship in Latin Europe has been rather fluid. To try to get a fix on the general trends, we could say that, *grosso modo*, there have been at least three overlapping models of church-state relations in these countries: the *authoritarian* model, the *secular, anticlerical* model, and the *strategic actor* model. While the genealogy of each model can be traced to a particular historical moment or period, the intellectual space each occupies is not bound by time. Further, there is a time lag in each country. That is, whereas each country has experienced these various models, they rarely experienced them at the same historical moment. The fact that all four countries currently operate under similar economic and political arrangements is a historical oddity, not the norm. In many ways these three distinct models are at once overlapping, contradictory and divisive. They also neatly sum up the historical evolution of the church-state relationship in Latin Europe. Let us now briefly look at each model.

First, there is the *authoritarian* model. The archetypal Catholic authoritarian model of political authority and legitimacy — known as the doctrine of the divine right of kings — held sway in Latin Europe until the democratic revolutions of the modern era. That authoritarian doctrine was successfully used by many monarchs, perhaps none better than the French Sun King, Louis XIV, to centralize power and authority in Paris. Another monarch associated with the authoritarian, hierarchical, intolerant form of political Catholicism is Spain’s King Philip.⁴ The

⁴Renaissance Iberia was home to many centers of humanistic learning for members of the Church hierarchy. Universities in Coimbra, Salamanca, and Alcalá de Henares, offered courses in humanism, law, philosophy, astronomy, as well as theology; the effort was to include Renaissance humanism in the training of

Roman Catholic Church legitimized the monarch's claim to divine authority, and, in turn, typically received special privileges. The relationship between them was generally stable and jointly advantageous.

Second, and in opposition to the authoritarian model, the *secular, anticlerical model* emerged after the French Revolution of 1789. This model sought to limit, or even remove, ecclesiastical authorities from the political equation. The unification of Italy and the loss of Papal territories in 1860 became a great source of political intrigue and turmoil for the Vatican and the new secular democratic regime in Rome. The pope at that time, Pius IX, argued that the liberal democratic revolutions, which promised free elections and free markets throughout Europe, represented a danger both to society and the Church. In response, he penned a document called the *Syllabus of Errors* in 1864, which strongly denounced the materialism and individualism of both liberalism and republicanism. The *Syllabus* suggests that these modern philosophies were inimical to Biblical truth.⁵ Pius IX convened the First Vatican Council in 1870 to address the modern challenges. The Council developed a new doctrine of papal infallibility, placing the papacy at the center of Catholic opposition to modernity. Thomas Bokenkotter noted in *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* that the results of the First Vatican Council led to the creation of a distinct antiseccular Catholic culture.⁶ Indeed, the Vatican did fight against the democratic and liberal revolutions of the modern era, and defended traditional authority relations in Latin Europe.⁷ Robert Putnam observes that in Italy, "For more than thirty years the Papal *non expedit* forbade all Catholics from taking part in national political life"⁸ For their part, more and more republicans began to believe that the Catholic Church needed to be removed from politics, society, and education, among other areas, if the promise of the democratic and liberal revolutions were ever to be realized.⁹ Education became a main public-policy battleground precisely because it represented a chance for the State, or the Church, to influence the next generation with thoughts of revolution or reaction.¹⁰

Third, the *strategic actor, or interest group model*, which emerged most notably of the second half of the twentieth century in France and Italy, and after the democratic transitions of the 1970s in Spain and Portugal, appeared to turn the tables on the First Vatican Council's approach to politics. That is, whereas Vatican I led to the growth of anticlerical attitudes among many elite groups in Latin Europe, especially in France, this new model provided a means for both the institutional Catholic Church and practicing Catholics to participate in democratic society. For instance, in the late 1940s during the Fourth French Republic, the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire*, founded by

priests. Payne, *Spanish Catholicism*, 39. See also, Lu Ann Homza, *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2000). These universities provided the means for the great political theorists, Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suárez, Domingo de Soto and Luis de Molina, to argue against the injustices of the New World Conquest and to craft natural-law arguments in favor of civil rebellion. Alongside these early modern applications of natural law, the sixteenth-century was also a time of spiritual development. Ignacio de Loyola, San Juan de la Cruz and Santa Teresa de Jesús (also known as Teresa de Ávila) articulated spiritual practices that brought a believer into a personal relationship with God. Catholicism on the Iberian Peninsula was both formal and experiential, both hierarchical and personal. That all three of these mystical thinkers spent time in ecclesiastical prisons before achieving sainthood points to the breadth of Iberian Catholicism; the Church included inquisitors, saints, and the people who canonized them.

⁵See Chadwick, 1975.

⁶Bokenkotter, Thomas. *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday Image Books 1990).

⁷See Conway, 1997.

⁸Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Italy*, p. 107.

⁹See Gildea, 1994

¹⁰See Gipson, 1989.

Catholics, combined Catholic social teachings with the secular welfare state.¹¹ In Italy, the Catholic position found a home in the Christian Democratic Party from the late 1940s until the various political scandals of 1992.¹² No such close affiliation with political parties has existed in Portugal or Spain in the contemporary period, but the Church has found support among right-wing, traditional and conservative parties. Although Catholic values and worldview arguably still maintain some hold on the imagination, identity and behavior of this population, an allegiance to church no longer translates into a reliable, faithful, traditional voting block.¹³ As a result, Church leadership has had to come up with other solutions to remain a player in public-policy debates. The declarations and documents of the Second Vatican Council, most notably *Gaudium et Spes*, were important catalysts in this new approach to politics.¹⁴

Carolyn Warner, in *Confessions of an Interest Group*, suggests that the post-1945 institutional Catholic Church behaves as a “strategic actor,” or an interest group, in the public square. That is, it has attempted to influence public policies in Latin Europe by leveraging both its moral authority and its great numbers of followers — as potential voters — to secure health and welfare benefits, to stop liberalizations of divorce, abortion, the death penalty and, more recently, homosexual marriage, among other policy priorities.

These three models – authoritarian, anticlerical, and strategic actor – point to the varying degrees of influence the Church has had on Latin Europe’s governments: from the close ties of the Holy Roman Empire, when monarchs such as Philip II depended on the Church for legitimacy, to the hostilities of the eighteenth-century republics, when governments found legitimacy at the expense of the Church, to the strategic maneuvers required when the Church found itself as just one of several competing interest groups. These three models, however, fail to explain why a socialist President, who had built his career within an anticlerical tradition, allowed his funeral to be celebrated with a Mass, or why Spain responded to the railroad bombings in Madrid by celebrating Mass, the first state funeral held since Franco died. To understand those phenomena, we must open the discussion to include the Church’s influence on the framing of moral questions as well as its capacity to give meaning to life and death.

Therefore, as we consider whether the Church is losing its influence in Latin Europe, we will also look at the role religion plays in contemporary society, from both an epistemological and ontological perspective. The polling data offered by the Eurobarometer point to people’s preferences on public policy, their epistemological choices. The ontological aspect, however, is generally not garnered in opinion polls but in the Church’s teachings on what it is to be an animated member of society. Before we consider the formal structures of church-state relations, and the polling data on the Church’s influence on society, let us understand how the Church defined what it meant to be part of an evolving Catholic society.

THE VATICAN’S CHANGING SOCIAL POLICY

¹¹William Safran, *The French Polity*, p. 84.

¹²Spotts and Wieser, *Italy A Difficult Democracy*, p. 9

¹³Latin Europe has produced the only three women doctors of the Church (Saint Thérèse de Lisieux, Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Catherine of Sienna), and the national holidays celebrated in these countries include Catholic Holy days. National holidays in Latin Europe include Epiphany (January 6), Holy Thursday and Good Friday, Assumption (August 15), All Saints’ Day (November 1), Immaculate Conception (December 8), and Christmas (December 25);

¹⁴See Austin Flannery, O.P., ed., *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Northport NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996), 163-282. *Gaudium et Spes*, “The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” was issued on 7 December 1965.

From the teachings of Leo XIII, who emphasized a personal piety in line with the corporatist hierarchy, to John XXIII, who emphasized a personal authority that demanded state accountability, the Church shifted from an institution that looked back longingly on the absolutist model, which was a time of guilds and Catholic kings, to the contemporary strategic actor model, featuring a Church willing to engage in a critical dialogue with the modern world.

The basis of Catholic political and social teaching can be found in Thomas Aquinas's *De Regimine Principum* and the *Summa Theologica*.¹⁵ According to the "Angelic Doctor," the perfect society is analogous to a human body. Members of society, performing different functions, do not compete with one another but work together for the common good under the guidance of a single controlling authority, likened to the head. "For Aquinas," explains Michael Bauer, "the common good does not refer to an aggregate of otherwise unrelated individual goods; rather the common good refers to the perfection or actuality of a community of individuals who themselves reach their perfection or actuality in and through the community that they collectively constitute."¹⁶ The term for this arrangement, corporatism, takes on different tones depending on whether the single controlling authority is understood to be a dictator or a representative of the general will. Stanley Payne suggests that the original Catholic theories "emphasized societal corporatism from the bottom up, avoiding the centralized control of a powerful state."¹⁷ Payne distinguished societal corporatism from statist corporatism, which he sees as a twentieth-century invention in which bargains are negotiated from the top and imposed on the masses below. In all fairness, Aquinas's works could support both a top-down and a bottom-up arrangement, particularly given the primacy of the human body metaphor, a metaphor that St. Paul in his first Letter to the Corinthians speaks of in terms of equality and harmony.¹⁸ What matters in this third "ism" is that all members of the body politic are assumed to share a common goal. Marx's emphasis on class consciousness has no place in this arrangement, as that would disrupt the natural and organic whole. Nor does political liberalism make much sense since it assumes that individual members need protection from the state. Within a corporatist framework the individual only exists inasmuch as he or she belongs to and participates in the state.¹⁹

The Vatican officially endorsed corporatism as a virtuous political system in the 1931 encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno*.²⁰ The "fortieth year" Pius XI marked was the anniversary of an earlier encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, in which Pope Leo XIII, drawing on Aquinas's teachings, delivered the Vatican's position on capital and labor in an industrialized world. *Rerum Novarum* addressed the needs of laborers by asserting the natural right of private property and the need for state-supported moral and religious education as provided by the Church. He condemned the socialists for playing on men's envy, creating class conflict and abolishing the natural right to hold property.

It is important to stress that Leo XIII did not downplay the suffering of working people. He was well aware of "the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class," a condition he attributed to the absence of medieval guilds, but he had a far different solution than that proposed by Karl Marx.²¹ In good corporatist fashion, he recommended

¹⁵See Thomas Aquinas, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics*, edited by Paul E. Sigmund (New York: Norton, 1988).

¹⁶Michael Bauer, "Natural Law and the Legislation of Virtue: Historicity, Positivity, and Circularity," *Vera Lex, New Series* 2 (Winter 2001): 51-70, 54.

¹⁷Payne, *Spanish Catholicism*, p. 162.

¹⁸See I Corinthians 12:12.

¹⁹Wiarda and Mott, *Catholic Roots*, p. 94.

²⁰Payne, *Spanish Catholicism*, p. 161.

²¹Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1891), para. 3. Available at the Vatican website: www.vatican.va.

workingmen's unions, "private societies" which promoted Christian values and which worked with the state for the good of the whole. It should be noted that Leo XIII was unequivocal in giving states absolute authority in determining what was the good of the whole. For instance, unions that threatened the health of the state, such as Marx's revolutionary proletariat, must be banned. In *Rerum Novarum*, we see a Church fearful of socialism and in league with anti-democratic regimes as long as they promoted Catholic values. The single controlling authority, then, not the various members of the whole, was in charge of directing the state.

Leo XIII also took this opportunity to emphasize the primacy of the family over the needs of the State. "The socialists," writes Leo XIII, "in setting aside the parent and setting up a State supervision, act against natural justice, and destroy the structure of the home."²² A more "natural" arrangement, one in keeping with Catholic social teaching, is to give the wage earner better working conditions and a just wage, thus allowing mothers and children to stay at home. As far as Leo XIII is concerned all social problems can be resolved through personal piety, private property and corporatist politics.

If Leo XIII's encyclical on social justice shored up corporatist regimes, that legitimacy was beginning to erode by the early 1960s. With the unholy union of economic liberalism and political fascism, it became clear that promoting family values and protecting private property were not enough to insure justice for the working class. Natural-law arguments against socialist regimes did not address the sins of capitalist greed: the exploitation of workers and the vast disparities between rich and poor people and between first- and third-world nations. When John XXIII revisited *Rerum Novarum* in his 1961 encyclical on Christianity and Social Progress, *Mater et Magistra*, he reaffirmed the rights of workers to a just wage and to hold private property, recognizing, however, the right to "all classes of citizens."²³ Rather than focus on the failings of socialism, John XXIII focused his concern on the inequitable structures of capitalism. First-world nations, who consumed the earth's resources at the expense of the developing world, were in danger of committing structural sins.

It would be easy to polarize the teachings of the pre-Vatican II Church, as represented by *Rerum Novarum*, and the teachings of John XXIII. So much has been written on the differences in social doctrine before and after John XXIII's papacy that it would be easy to conclude that the pope who convened the Second Vatican Council had made a radical break from the past. In fact, John XXIII cites much of *Rerum Novarum* in his encyclical, describing the earlier work as a "defense of the earthly interests of the poor."²⁴ For instance, both Leo XIII and John XXIII used Jesus's teachings on caring for the poor to censure the superfluous wants of the wealthy.

A key difference between the two encyclicals, however, is that *Mater et Magistra* emphasizes experiential authority while *Rerum Novarum* looks to hierarchical authority for moral answers. When writing about labor groups, John XXIII encourages them to "treat their individual members as human persons and encourage them to take an active part in the ordering of their lives."²⁵ In the section on "Theory and Practice," he argues that formal instruction in Catholic social thought "must be supplemented by the students' active co-operation in their own training."²⁶ Simply obeying the hierarchy is no longer enough. The students must "gain an experimental knowledge of the subject, and that by their own positive action."²⁷ The members of the body poli-

²²Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, para. 14.

²³John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, para. 113. Available at the Vatican website: www.vatican.va.

²⁴*Mater et Magistra*, para. 15.

²⁵*Mater et Magistra*, para. 65.

²⁶*Ibid.*, para. 231.

²⁷*Ibid.*

tic must be reanimated. Seventy years after *Rerum Novarum* appointed the state as the watchdog of social groups, the members of the body politic had regained their authority through positive action.

Along with other documents from the Second Vatican Council, *Mater et Magistra* established the Catholic Church not just as a defender of the poor but as a promoter of democratic participation from the bottom up. For liberal Catholics in Italy and in France, as well as for the average Spanish and Portuguese worker struggling to survive in the difficult conditions under the Franco and Salazar regimes, the Pope's words were a godsend. For the two Iberian dictators, both of whom were used to being in charge, the changes occurring at the Vatican were problematic, to say the least.

THE DICTATORS AND THE CHURCH

One frequently associates the authoritarian Catholic model of authority relations in the twentieth century with the Iberian dictators. This is a reasonable association, given the longevity of these regimes. However, it is also important to point out that this model also had resonance in Italy and in France during that period. D.A. Binchy's *Church and State in Fascist Italy* demonstrates how some supporters of Mussolini were convinced "that a synthesis between Fascist and Christian doctrine can be achieved."²⁸ These Catholics were clearly reacting, at least in part, to the secular and anticlerical regime which was the First Italian Republic. For his part, Benito Mussolini negotiated an important Concordat with Pope Pius XI in 1929, the so-called Lateran Pact, which undid the anticlerical legislation of the First Italian Republic, established Catholicism as Italy's state religion, and arrived at a financial settlement over the Papal States taken during Italian reunification.²⁹ There were certainly areas of disagreement and tension between the Pope and the dictator, but they did manage to co-exist more than had been the case with the Church and the Italian First Republic. One can only wonder how long this absolutist model would have continued had Mussolini survived the Second World War in the same way that Franco and Salazar did.

As for France, a similar belief existed among some conservatives that the Catholic Church could get a better deal from Henri-Philippe Pétain's government than had been the case under the anticlerical and secular Third Republic – and certainly after the Popular Front swept to power in the 1936 elections. This was an extreme situation, to say the least. The German authorities invited Pétain, the eighty-three-year-old French hero from the First World War, to lead the Vichy government. From almost a perverse sense of nationalism, he agreed, so that some of France could remain under French control. Of course, the Vichy government was established just as an administrative convenience for the Germans, and France remained occupied. And yet, some conservatives found reason for hope with this new government, as Robert O. Paxton observes:

Most Catholics longed for official support for religious values and for undoing old wrongs that still smarted: the "expulsion of God" from public schools in the 1880's, the quarrel over church property at the time of the separation of church and state in 1905, laws that discriminated against religious orders. The new Catholic left, while it horrified traditional Catholics by its denunciations of capitalism and the laissez-faire state, was if anything more hostile to the secular republic than the others. And so Monseigneur Delay was speaking for most Catholics when he told Pétain at the end of 1940 during one of the marshal's triumphal tours, "God is at work through you, Monsieur le maréchal, to save France."³⁰

²⁸D. A. Binchy, *Italian Fascism and the Church*, p. viii.

²⁹Spotts and Wieser, *Italy A Difficult Democracy*, p. 242.

³⁰Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 149.

Under Pétain, the traditional republican slogan of the French revolution of “*liberté, égalité* and *fraternité*” was reworked to “*travail, famille, and patrie*” – work, family and fatherland. This revised fascist slogan was considered to be more in keeping with traditional values. So, even in France, with its long democratic history, one can find a longing for the authoritarian model well into the twentieth century. The eventual defeat of fascism in the Second World War returned France to its democratic trajectory, but this absolutist interlude remains noteworthy.

It was in Iberia where the authoritarian model was most rooted in the twentieth century. Salazar and Franco were in common agreement that *Rerum Novarum* was a useful tool. Both Antonio de Oliveira Salazar and Francisco Franco made use of the authority granted by *Rerum Novarum*, banning any interest groups or associations they felt were contrary to the good of the whole. Labor and management were grouped together by type of industry, not by class allegiance. Private property was protected and traditional family values promoted. Any change that occurred was orchestrated by the elites and imposed in a top-down fashion. Particularly in the early years of the dictatorships, those who disagreed were persecuted and either exiled or executed.

Of the two, Salazar was closer to the principles of Catholic teaching. Howard Wiarda writes that Salazar had been “a seminarian, trained for the priesthood, and active in Catholic social movements; he was thoroughly imbued with the Catholic-corporatist conception.”³¹ Franco, on the other hand, was a career military man. He was also a pragmatist. Rather than consult Church doctrine to resolve political problems, Franco was engaged in keeping powerful interests in check, the Church being only one of them. Another interest was the Falange, which was far more interested in repressing Marxist or liberal elements than in promoting Christian social justice. Interestingly enough, even though the Church was a competing interest in Spain, from the look of formal documents, it was the only game in town. The concordat signed with the Vatican in 1953 began with the following decree: “The Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion, being the only religion of the Spanish nation, enjoys rights and prerogatives which are its due conforming to Divine and Canon Law.”³² The concordat granted the state the right to intervene in the alteration of ecclesiastical jurisdictions, particularly the right to appoint bishops, a right that became increasingly problematic as the Church sided more with the concerns of laborers and against the repressive policies of the regime.³³ In exchange, the Church, recognized as a “perfect society” and a juridical personality, received tax exemptions and government subsidies for salaries and the maintenance of cathedrals, parishes, religious orders, and other ecclesiastical institutions. Besides the financial benefits, the Church controlled family matters: all marriages had to be celebrated by a priest, divorce, contraception and abortion were prohibited, and Catholic religious education was obligatory. The Church held the right to censure all educational material while its own publications were free from state censorship.³⁴

By contrast, the Portuguese 1940 Concordat used far less insistent language. The appointment of bishops was subject to “objections of a general political nature,” and priests were subject to military service, admittedly as chaplains. The state subsidized parochial schools “if they were located in missionary areas” and Catholic religious education was required of all students, unless parents requested an exemption. Public education followed Christian principles, which were understood as “traditional principles.” Divorce was banned unless the parties were not Catholic, a condition that created a two-tiered society, where those who remained wedded remained Catholic

³¹Wiarda and Mott, p. 44.

³²Cited in the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, p. 690.

³³See Audrey Brassloff, *Religion and Politics in Spain: The Spanish Church in Transition, 1962-96* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1998).

³⁴*World Christian Encyclopedia*, p. 690.

and those who divorced became non-Catholic.³⁵ The moderate and flexible terms of this Concordat may explain why it is the only one still in existence in Europe.³⁶

The 1933 constitution, something that Franco never bothered with, proclaimed Portugal to be both a republican and corporative state. Of the two houses of parliament, one was based on geographical representation and the other on functional representation. The Catholic Church, along with other corporatist interests such as the military and the wine industry, was guaranteed a certain number of seats.³⁷ Yet under the terms of the Constitution, the Church was not formally recognized. Even though Salazar used *Quadragesimo anno* as a blueprint for his government, the official status of the Church was less visible than in Spain. For instance, in Article 45 Portuguese confessionality is represented as follows:

The State, recognizing its responsibilities before God and man, assures freedom of worship and organization to those religious bodies whose doctrines are not contrary to the fundamental principles of the existing constitutional order, nor offend the social order or good morals, and whose worship respects the life, physical integrity and dignity of the person.

Anyone apprised of the situation would immediately realize that the only religious body “whose doctrines are not contrary to the fundamental principles of the existing constitutional order” is the Roman Catholic Church. But Salazar, perhaps recognizing that republican virtues were tied to American foreign aid, and cognizant of the persistent anticlerical feelings in Portugal’s southern region, did not give the Church official status. Rather, in the following article (46), the Church is recognized for its role in Portuguese culture.

The Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion is considered to be the traditional religion of the Portuguese nation. The Catholic Church possesses existence as a legal body. The principle regulating relations between the state and religious bodies is that of separation, without prejudice to the existence of concordats or agreements with the Holy See.³⁸

Through careful rhetoric, Salazar was able to promote freedom of religion *and* constitutional recognition for the Church – to be, as he claimed, both republican and corporatist.

After Vatican II, the Spanish Church became more alienated from the regime. Younger priests, who were more familiar with the poverty of the working class than Republican persecutions, took up the demands of urban pastors. Ecclesiastical base communities started appearing in poor and working-class neighborhoods in Madrid and other large cities.³⁹ As early as 1960, younger clergy, particularly in the Basque region, protested the close ties between the hierarchy and the Franco regime.⁴⁰ Eventually, the younger generation found some sympathy in Cardinal Vicente Enrique y Tarancón, known as “Paul VI’s man,” who became the Archbishop of Madrid-Alcalá in 1971, much to Franco’s dismay.⁴¹ Tarancón was eager to bring Spain more in line with

³⁵Citations from *World Christian Encyclopedia*, p. 609.

³⁶Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 19.

³⁷Wiarda and Mott, p. 44.

³⁸Both of these articles from the 1933 Portuguese Constitution were cited in the *World Christian Encyclopedia, Second Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 609.

³⁹Brassloff, *Religion and Politics*, pp. 69-70; Payne, *Spanish Catholicism*, p. 201.

⁴⁰Payne, *Spanish Catholicism*, p. 197.

⁴¹Brassloff, *Religion and Politics*, p. 43.

Vatican II teachings and to prepare his flock for life after Franco. He was, in Stanley Payne's words, the "optimal" leader during the transition to democracy.⁴²

Opus Dei provides an entirely different face for Spanish Catholicism than these left-leaning priests. Founded in 1928 by Josemaría Esquivá de Balaguer during the civil strife preceding the Spanish Civil War, Opus Dei (God's work) has developed into "the strongest pressure group within the Roman Curia, which runs the Catholic Church."⁴³ Now an international organization with "chapters" in at least eighty-seven countries, Opus Dei is credited with being the engine behind the Spanish economic miracle of the seventies and eighties, when economic growth rates were around 8 percent of GNP, and is reportedly one of the biggest players in the Euromarket.⁴⁴ In its focus on economic capitalism, Opus Dei is not unlike the Falange, an ultra-Catholic (read repressive and intolerant) organization, more interested in economic efficiency than social justice. Unlike the Falange, the source of Opus Dei's power is not the dictatorship but the current Pope, who granted Opus Dei the official title of "personal prelature" in 1979, and who canonized Esquivá in 2003. With its authoritarian hierarchy, Opus Dei puts a contemporary face on statist corporatism.

Unfortunately, it is hard to know anything for sure about Opus Dei because it operates, for the most part, in total secrecy. It is believed that members of Opus Dei are involved in the center-right party, *Partido Popular* (PP), and that the former prime minister, José María Aznar, appointed many Opus Dei members to his cabinet and gave them key civil service positions.⁴⁵ If these assumptions are correct, the Roman Catholic Church, or at least its personal prelature, has enormous influence on the political life of Spain. Opus Dei's influence on the social quality of Spanish Catholicism is not quite as apparent.

THE DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTIONS AND THE CHURCH

As discussed earlier, by the 1960s the Vatican began to move away from an absolutist model, even though this system was still being used by Portugal and Spain.⁴⁶ The democratic transitions in Iberia in the 1970s were the means by which the absolutist model came to an abrupt end, and ushered in a new model of church-state relations. Under the new democracies, in principle at least, all religious organizations were granted equal rights in the eyes of the secular authorities, although the Roman Catholic Church has managed to negotiate some special privileges. The constitutional provisions regarding religions in each country establish the official framework for this model, and based on its actual behavior over the past thirty years, the Church has abandoned an absolutist model and has moved to a strategic-actor approach throughout Latin Europe.

Grace Davie suggests that, whereas Italy, Spain and Portugal remain solidly Catholic – at least in terms of their culture – France displays some unusual characteristics. In her words, "France is a hybrid case ... it is culturally part of Catholic Europe but far more like the Protestant North in terms of its religious practice or patterns of belief. It is, moreover, the country of Western Europe which embodies the strictest form of separation of church and state."⁴⁷

Indeed, the secular and anticlerical model has been institutionalized in France to such a degree that it cannot even tolerate the idea of religion in public places. For instance, the French govern-

⁴²Payne, *Spanish Catholicism*, p. 213.

⁴³Robert Hutchinson, *Their Kingdom Come: Inside the Secret World of Opus Dei* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1999), p. xv.

⁴⁴Hutchinson, *Kingdom Come*, pp. xv and 138.

⁴⁵Hutchinson, *Kingdom Come*, p. 438.

⁴⁶See Dorr, 1992

⁴⁷Grace Davis, *Religion and Politics*.

ment has recently been battling the religious practices of Islamic women in the so-called “*affaire du foulard*.” The issue involves whether the wearing of Muslim headscarves and other religious symbols at state-run schools violates the secular nature of state education. Parliamentary leaders have expressed their commitment to secularism and recently passed a measure banning the practice. The French Constitution of 1958 prohibits discrimination on the basis of faith, and incorporates a 1905 law in France on the separation of religion and State. Combined, these legal provisions only authorize a religious organization as legal in the three areas of baptism, marriage and funeral. The 2001 law on the “Prevention and Repression of Sect Movements,” known as the Picard law, extends the reach of government into the operations of religious groups, even granting it authority to dissolve sects if they are found to be in violation of law.⁴⁸ Although state education is completely secular in France, some 20 percent of French school children are enrolled in Catholic schools, around 40 percent in Brittany. Citizens reacted strongly against the Socialist attempt in the early 1980s to cut state funding for Catholic schools. In the early 1990s, the state actually increased its support, including helping the Catholic schools with salaries for teachers. French parents tend to appreciate the educational value of Catholic schools, which perform an important societal function.⁴⁹

Unlike the situation in France, the so-called “*crucifix affair*” in Italy had a surprising outcome. In this case, a Muslim immigrant argued that Catholic symbols such as crucifixes had no place in officially secular state buildings, including schools and government buildings. Recently, a high court reversed a lower court ruling, and found that the crucifix is a “symbol of the country’s identity” and may remain. Just as France distances itself from its religious heritage, Italy has been trying to blend its Roman Catholic identity with its secular government.⁵⁰ So, whereas the Italian constitution recognizes the state of Vatican City to be an independent, sovereign entity, the 1984 revision of the 1929 Concordat granted the Catholic Church certain privileges. The Pope himself, and the Italian Bishops’ Conference, both play important roles in articulating the Catholic vision in the public square, in particular after the collapse of the Christian Democratic Party in 1992.⁵¹

On its face, the Spanish Constitution of 1978 has also severed all ties between the state and the Church. Section 16, paragraph 3 declares, “No religion shall have a state character.” Still, the Roman Catholic Church is the only confession to achieve some amount of formal recognition. The following line states, “The public authorities shall take into account the religious beliefs of Spanish society and shall consequently maintain appropriate cooperation with the Catholic Church and other confessions.” One of the places where that “appropriate cooperation” is most visible is in the matter of education. Paragraph 3 of Section 27 guarantees the “right of parents to ensure that their children receive religious and moral instruction in accordance with their own convictions,” a guarantee posted on the walls of many a parish. Given the Church’s de facto responsibility with respect to the moral and religious education of Spanish students, a service the State continues to pay for, the collective memory of Christian symbols and rites is unlikely to disappear very soon. Unlike neighboring France, where a basic understanding of Christian teaching is “precarious,” students in Spain continue to recognize Christian references in art and music. While many Europeans are no longer able to

⁴⁸Representative Catherine Picard is the sponsor of the bill.

⁴⁹The Catholic community is represented by the Council of Bishops. Other religions are represented as follows: the Protestant Federation of France (1905), the Central Consistory of Jews of France (1808), the national French Council of the Muslim Faith (2003). The government distinguishes between “*associations cultuelles*” (associations of worship, exempt from taxes) and “*associations culturelles*” (cultural associations, not exempt from taxes).

⁵⁰From Agence France Presse, 11 December 2003: “Church and pope defend crucifix in Italian schools.”

⁵¹Its voters, anti-communist, northeast “white-belt.” The Christian Democratic Party was founded in 1943. It was in power from 1947-1992.

follow the story in European art and music, Spaniards continue to catch the references. And, despite constitutional claims to the contrary, democratic Spain continues to provide a de facto “church tax system.” In Portugal, private funding for the Church remains “generous.”⁵²

The Portuguese Constitution of 1976, which has been amended twice, provides for freedom of religion. The two most important documents relating to religious freedom are the 2001 Religious Freedom Act and the 1940 Concordat. The former provides non-Catholic religions with the same benefits previously reserved for the Catholic Church;⁵³ on-going negotiations seek to revise the latter. Unlike the anticlerical and secular *Lei de Separação* in 1911, which essentially placed the Church under the control of the State, the civil authorities now seek to find a settlement with the Church authorities providing for both secular and clerical space in Portuguese society.

In their totality, these constitutions invite the Catholic Church to participate in the public-policy process, not as an official state member, but as an important religious organization in civil society. Secularization has changed the political and social landscape in Latin Europe, leading one to consider – following Grace Davie – to what extent religion remains at the center of the Latin European value system. For answers to that, let us now look at the contemporary Catholic makeup of these countries.

THE CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LATIN EUROPE

In terms of gross numbers, the number of people in Latin Europe who are at least nominally Roman Catholic is significant. As indicated in Table 1, of the approximately 228 million people living in Latin Europe, some 154 million are Roman Catholic.

Table 1: Catholic Population of Latin Europe

	Total Population	% Catholic	Catholic Population
Italy	57,998,353	96	55,678,419
France	60,180,529	83	49,949,839
Spain	41,478,000	95	39,002,000
Portugal	10,328,000	95	9,343,000

Sources: <http://www.catholicierarchy.org/country/sc1.html><http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>; *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Almanac (2004)*

Table 2 breaks down the Catholic clergy population, and gives a sense of the problems faced throughout Latin Europe. Portugal, Spain and France are also on the verge of a vocation crisis; the French church has responded by increasing the numbers of laymen to the diaconate.

⁵²Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe*, p. 41.

⁵³The Act allows religions established in the country for at least thirty years, or those recognized internationally for at least sixty years, the same rights as granted to the Catholic church. These include tax-exempt status, legal recognition for marriage and other rites, chaplain visits to prisons and hospitals, and respect for traditional holidays

Table 2: Population of Clerics and Religious in Latin Europe

	Dioce- san Priests	Reli- gious Order Priests	Permanent Deacons	Religious Male	Religious Female	Parishes	Priest to Parish Ratio	Seminari- ans
Italy	33,684	17,611	2,594	23,051	106,498	25,823	1.99:1	6,205
France	18,179	4,910	1,684	8,639	45,102	19,835	1.16:1	1,428
Spain	17,580	8,925	203	15,028	58,663	22,679	1.14:1	2,732
Portugal	3,119	960	143	1,411	6,063	4,364	0.93:1	535

Sources: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/sc1.html>;
Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Almanac (2004)

One can clearly discern the problem of vocations by looking at the ratios for seminarians to priests (both from religious orders and diocesan). In France there is only 1 seminarian to 16.2 priests; in Spain, 1 for every 9.7; in Italy, 1 for every 8.3, and 1 for every 7.6 priests in Portugal.⁵⁴ Reacting to this situation, especially in France, Pope John Paul II suggested that “the crisis the Church is going through is in large part due to the repercussions of social changes, new forms of behavior, the loss of moral and religious values and a widespread consumeristic attitude,” adding that “growing de-Christianization is the major challenge at the moment.”⁵⁵ In this regard, Roger Price has observed that, in the case of France,

The collapse of religious vocations in the 1950s and the resultant ageing and sharp decline in the number of priests are clear signs of a crisis and of an inability to combat secularization, especially on such crucial moral questions as abortion and contraception and this in spite of a less rigorist moral theology. A new Sunday, for a new society, and a mass culture emerged in the 1960s.⁵⁶

Price’s point is well taken.⁵⁷ Certainly, by demographics alone, the center of Christendom has shifted from Europe and North America to the developing world. Philip Jenkins’s provocative research outlines how few Europeans are still practicing their faith while Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans are steadily converting and reanimating their faiths.⁵⁸

⁵⁴See <http://www.catholic-heirarchy.org/country/sc1.html> and *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Almanac (2004)*

⁵⁵Keesings Contemporary Archives , 24 January 2004.

⁵⁶Price, p. 301.

⁵⁷*AD2000* Vol. 14, No. 1 (February 2001): 20. Father Gerard Lachivert, secretary-general of the Conference of Religious Major Superiors of France, spoke at a 1-4 December 2000 meeting of major superiors of French men’s and women’s religious orders and congregations. They met in Lourdes to address the challenge posed by the crisis in vocations and its consequences. Lachivert stated that, “In general, we can speak of the certain death of religious families that rose in the nineteenth century for educational, charitable and health purposes.” He also noted the birth of “new communities” in France since the 1970s, including Emmanuel, the Beatitudes, New Way (“Le Chemin Neuf”), Bread of Life (“Pain de Vie”) and others from the Charismatic Renewal. The new groups have become the principal seedbeds of vocations to the priesthood in France. Franciscans and Dominicans have also seen a resurgence of vocations. Also, in France, the vocation crisis has led to more Masses led by laity, and women frequently lead. This is allowed under the guidelines set forth by ADAP (“Assemblées Dominicales en l’Absence de Prêtre”).

⁵⁸Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Of note, Jenkins points to the number of converts outside Europe as evidence of a shifting center of a New Christendom. Hervieu-Léger sees converts and pilgrims as “the two ideal types” through which we can understand the religious life of modern societies. Most of the recent Catholic converts are

Latin Europe is no exception to this trend. There are fewer men willing to sign on to a life of chastity and fewer still who are willing to live out their lives as priests. Given this shortage of clergy, Spanish and Portuguese parishes have had to recruit priests from Latin America. In terms of their immigrant status, these new recruits should have much in common with their parishioners: Jenkins makes a strong case that the faithful in the New Europe will be the New Europeans, those who have recently arrived from the evangelized developing world.⁵⁹ And yet the numbers clearly indicate that religion is neither disappearing nor dying in Latin Europe. By mid-2025 the overall population is expected to drop to 9.3 million and the percent of baptized Roman Catholics to drop to almost 89 percent.⁶⁰ By these figures it is hard to support the Pope's thesis that Latin Europe is experiencing a "dechristianization."⁶¹

When asked if they considered themselves religious, a significant percentage of Catholics throughout Latin Europe answered affirmatively. Table 3 shows that the number varied widely, with Portugal and Italy on the more religious side, Spain and France less so. However, even in France, the single largest group of respondents considered themselves to be religious.

Table 3: Are You Religious?

	Religious	Not Religious	Agnostic	Atheist	Don't Know
Portugal	89%	6%	1%	2%	2%
Italy	82%	4%	8%	3%	3%
Spain	66%	18%	7%	7%	3%
France	46%	24%	5%	19%	7%

Source: Eurobarometer, 1995

The question of whether or not a person trusted the church revealed a significant cleavage among Catholics in Latin Europe. As displayed in Table 4, whereas respondents in Portugal and Italy indicate that they do trust the Church by a significant margin, respondents in Spain were almost evenly split, and a slim majority of the respondents in France stated that they do not trust the Vatican.

Table 4: Do You Trust the Church?

	Yes	No
Portugal	75%	20%
Italy	58%	30%
Spain	49%	45%
France	41%	46%

Source: Eurobarometer, 2001

These results suggest that a more pressing concern for the social health of Catholicism would be the increasing privatization of religion, a phenomenon that some sociologists claim often follows modernization – especially when one compares the results in Table 3 and 4: the number of people

living in Africa, many of the recent pilgrims, however, are traveling to Portugal, Spain and other parts of Europe.

⁵⁹Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, pp. 96-99.

⁶⁰*World Christian Encyclopedia*, p. 607.

⁶¹Cited in Davie, *Modern Religion*, p. 161.

claiming to be religious does not automatically translate into trust in the institutional church.⁶² The numbers also indicate that practice of formal religion is down. In the case of France, for example, William Safran has observed that

Religious practice is relatively insignificant in selected regions around Paris and more noticeable in the rural areas of Brittany, Alsace, and Auvergne. But throughout the provinces there are many small communities from which the priest has departed and where churches are in a state of disrepair.⁶³

Certainly, one could posit that secularization has influenced the behavior of French society more than the rest of Latin Europe, but its influence is felt throughout the region.

When asked how often they attended Mass, and consistent with the results of Table 4, only 17 percent of French Catholics stated that they attend Mass weekly, in contrast to 37 percent of Portuguese Catholics, 35 percent of Spanish Catholics, and 42 percent of Italian Catholics. These results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: How Often Do You Attend Services?

	Several times a week	Once a Week	A Few Times a Year	Once a Year	Never
Portugal	6%	31%	35%	21%	7%
Spain	7%	28%	35%	18%	13%
Italy	7%	35%	39%	11%	8%
France	9%	8%	19%	26%	19.5%

Sources: Eurobarometer, 1995; Information France from Group GSA TMO 21 April 2002⁶⁴

The percentage of those attending church weekly has dropped significantly throughout Latin Europe, most significantly in France. It is too soon to know whether France is a bellweather country for the rest of Latin Europe or an exception, but the trend against the regular practice of one's faith appears to be pervasive throughout. Take Italy, for example: whereas a 1956 study found that almost 70 percent of Catholics attended Mass regularly, Table 5 indicates that that number has dropped by over twenty-five percentage points in the last forty-six years.⁶⁵ Surveys also indicate that the elderly, females, and people living in rural areas attend Mass more frequently than other population groups. And yet, despite of the fact that majorities of Catholics do not attend weekly services, and may not accept all aspects of Church teaching, many people still consider religion to be important, as indicated in Table 6.

⁶²See, in particular, Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" and "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 129-156 and pp. 267-301, respectively.

⁶³Safran, *The French Polity*, p. 33.

⁶⁴*Italy: A Country Study*, p. 265. It also notes that women, elderly and people in rural areas attend Mass more frequently than are men, the young and people in the cities.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

Table 6: Is Religion Important?

	Very Important	Rather Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important
Portugal	17.1	39.1	26.7	17.2
Spain	24.1	31.3	27.3	17.3
Italy	30.7	37.0	20.7	11.6
France	13.9	28.8	27.9	29.4

World Values Surveys, University of Michigan, 1981-1997

Of note, the family continues its hold on the population of Latin Europe. Roger Price observes that, although religion has “declined to insignificance as a feature of daily life,”⁶⁶ ... “family loyalties remain of central importance” in France. The results of both Tables 7 and 8 confirm this insight in the French case and broaden it to all four countries.

Table 7: More Emphasis on Family Life Is?

	Good	Bad	Don't Mind
Portugal	95.3	1.9	2.9
Italy	90.6	1.6	7.9
France	89.8	1.4	8.8
Spain	94.4	2.3	3.3

Source: World Values Survey, 1981-1997

The family has traditionally been that social unit where religion has always been cultivated and nurtured and, at the very least, Table 8 shows that a large percentage of Spanish, Italian and French claim to be satisfied with their family life.

Table 8: Are You Satisfied With Your Family Life?

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Spain	87	3
France	86	6
Italy	82	18

Sources: International Gallup Poll, 1996, Information from Italy comes from Pew Research Survey 2002

The traditional family-based Catholic rites of baptism, marriage and last rites continue to be administered and accepted by majorities of the Catholic population in Latin Europe. These are performed at higher rates in Italy, Spain and Portugal than in France.⁶⁷ Grace Davie notes baptisms in France for children at 58 percent, down from 92 percent in 1958; there is an increase in adult baptism (there were 11,000 adult baptisms in 1996), a new phenomenon. Current statistics on the number of people being baptized in the Church in Iberia are still very high. The *World Christian Encyclopedia* reports that the number of professing Catholics in Spain, based on baptisms, is 96.1 percent of the total population (over 39 million) in mid-2000, with a drop to 94.7 percent expected by mid-2025 (when the population is expected to drop to under 37 million).⁶⁸ In Portugal,

⁶⁶Price, *A Concise History of France*, p. 300

⁶⁷*World Christian Encyclopedia*.

⁶⁸*World Christian Encyclopedia*, p. 687.

which in mid-2000 had a population of 9.8 million, the percentage of the population baptized Roman Catholic was almost 91 percent. Davie notes that over 80 percent of marriages in Spain, Italy and Portugal are performed according to Catholic rite, but only 55 percent in France.⁶⁹ These figures may suggest that the hold of Roman Catholicism remains located the Latin European family unit.

In spite of some of their religious views, the French are not necessarily that much more progressive than the rest of Latin Europe. In a revealing study, 83 percent of respondents in France thought that the mother, not the father, ought to care for children, compared to 80 percent of Spanish respondents. This traditional view of the family may indicate that the French just may have more in common with the rest of Latin Europe they would like to admit.

Table 9: Which Parent Should Take Care of the Children?

	Mother	Father	Doesn't Matter	Don't know
France	83	4	13	1
Spain	80	1	19	0

Source: International Gallup Poll, March 1996

Finally, Table 10 offers a view of how Latin Europeans view religions other than Roman Catholicism. The status of Jews in Latin Europe is an ongoing concern, and there is a real fear that the Jewish population may completely disappear from the region. Grace Davie reports that combined, the rate of Jewish deaths and emigrations to Israel greatly outnumber new Jewish births. Jews marrying people from other religious traditions are increasingly common. Combined, these patterns endanger the Jewish future in Latin Europe.⁷⁰ For their part, the rate of Muslims entering Latin Europe is increasing at a rapid pace. They also face a hostile environment, and, as indicated in Table 10, an important question is whether the larger population will tolerate them.

Table 10: Are You Disturbed by the Presence of People of Another Religion?

	No	Yes	Don't Know
France	78%	17%	5%
Italy	84%	12%	4%
Portugal	89%	10%	1%
Spain	92%	6%	2%

Source: Eurobarometer 1995, 2000

These results are fascinating: in France, where religion is not considered very important by 56 percent of the population, 17 percent consider an alien religious tradition disturbing. In the three other countries, this number is significantly less. Perhaps the perceived Muslim threat, and the question of headscarves in public schools, is responsible for these results.

In their totality, the results from the ten tables suggest that we should not assume that the Roman Catholic Church will necessarily become marginalized in Latin Europe. Families remain strong, religion remains important, and Catholic rituals continue to be practiced. However, secular pressures are clearly altering the face of Catholicism in Latin Europe. To be sure, under the dictators, the Roman Catholic Church enjoyed enormous privilege, legal, political, and moral. Yet

⁶⁹Grace Davie, *Religion and Society*, p. 74.

⁷⁰ Davie, pp. 18-19

the Church's effectiveness at creating a truly confessional society even with these privileges is in doubt. In 1973, the Catholic journal *Vida Nueva* reported that, according to a survey, the majority of Spaniards lived their religion as something "peripheral, conventional, formal and with no great depth of conviction and corresponding commitment." By 1975, sociologists were claiming that Spain was experiencing a "phase of dechristianisation." Later Pope John Paul II would refer to this phenomenon as "Spanish neopaganism."

Terms such as "dechristianization" and "neopaganism" are a bit misleading in that they suggest an evolutionary process. In all fairness, Catholicism in Latin Europe was never particularly deep, at least not in a formal sense. The faithful of Portugal, most of whom live in northern rural areas, have been more interested in making a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Fátima or in worshipping a local saint than in following pronouncements issued in Rome, let alone the archdiocese of Lisbon. One can identify similar patterns in Lourdes, France. Ruth Harris argues in *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in a Secular Age*, that the devotion to the Blessed Mother really had more to do with the religiosity of a small rural community within a secularizing France at the midpoint of the nineteenth century than with the institutional church. Or, in her words, "Lourdes in the early decades is a story about France, about the struggles of Catholicism in the aftermath of revolutionary turmoil."⁷¹ In Spain and in Italy, where local saints still get far more attention than formal doctrine, Spaniards and Italians have historically used the Church for baptisms and weddings, but their experience of the faith has been more local than doctrinal. Perhaps it is not surprising that when the Iberian dictatorships gave way to democracies, regular church attendance fell off substantially. Can we really claim that Latin Europe is truly becoming dechristianized?

In our view, a better case could be made that Latin Europeans are privatizing their religious life by "cherry-picking" through the Church's social teachings. For instance, a 1994 survey conducted by the International Social Survey Program on "The Family and Changing Gender Roles II" reports that almost half of all Spaniards interviewed believed that abortion was not a bad thing.⁷² In Portugal, allowing non-Catholics to divorce created a two-tiered society, where people left the faith, particularly in Lisbon and other large cities, in order to pursue personal goals. This brings us to the question of contemporary public policy in Latin Europe.

SELECTED PUBLIC POLICIES AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

An aptly named article "A flock that strayed," appearing in the 6 January 1996 edition of the *Economist*, observed that:

As befits a people who have the Vatican in their midst, nine out of ten Italians call themselves Catholic. Nearly 100% are baptized, and almost as many pass out of this world according to the rites of the Catholic church. Scratch below the religious surface, however, and things look very different. In Italy, the pope's writ does not run far. So reveals a survey backed by the Italian bishops' conference and carried out by sociologists at Milan's Catholic University.⁷³

Since the end of the Second World War, the institutional Catholic Church has had to compete as an interest group, or a strategic actor, with other groups in each country of Latin Europe over a variety of public policy issues. In some cases, the institutional church has fought for policies against the wishes of a majority of its own membership, causing a serious lay-clerical cleavage within the church itself. We will limit our observations to just three issues: abortion, capital pun-

⁷¹Harris, introduction

⁷²See <http://religionstatistics.bravehost.com/gendaten.htm>.

⁷³*The Economist*, "A Flock That Strayed," Vol. 338, Issue 7947 (6 January 1996).

ishment, and homosexual marriage. Combined, these serve as a representative sample of the public policy challenges currently faced by this church-as-an-interest group.

First, let us look at abortion. Considering life as God’s greatest gift, the Catholic Church has termed abortion to be a grave sin. This teaching has only some resonance with the population of Italy and Spain, and less so with the French, as indicated in Table 11.

Table 11: Abortion Should Be Allowed in the Early Months of a Pregnancy If the Woman Wants It

	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Don’t Know
France	52%	23%	11%	10%	4%
Italy	30%	23%	15%	25%	7%
Spain	35%	17%	14%	26%	8%

Source: Times Mirror, 1991

Seventy-five percent of the respondents in France support a pro-choice position, compared to 53 percent of Italians and 52 percent of the Spanish. As for the Portuguese, a 1998 referendum on the legalization of abortion was defeated by a 50 percent to 48 percent margin, with almost 70 percent of the voting public abstaining. The very fact that such a large percentage of voters chose not to voice their opinion on the matter speaks volumes to a deep-seated confusion as to the right path to take.

In Spain and Portugal, the two countries that do not allow abortion on demand, the procedure can take place if the health of the mother is in jeopardy. In 1998 the Spanish parliament rejected a bill which would have permitted the termination of any pregnancy in the first twelve weeks if it created a personal, social or family conflict for the woman – a bill condemned by the Catholic Church. Portugal and Spain both distribute the so-called French abortion pill RU486 pill through their national health systems.

Chart 1: Abortion Policy in Latin Europe, 2003

COUNTRY	GOVERNMENTAL POLICY
France	The 1975 Veil Act legalized first-trimester abortion on request is legal. An unmarried minor needs parental consent or a judges approval in order to obtain a legal abortion.
Italy	Since 1978 first-trimester abortion is legal on social grounds and free-of-charge. In 2001 Silvio Berlusconi's proposed amending the law to include subsidies and family therapy to try to persuade women to avoid having abortions.
Portugal	Abortion on request is illegal. First-trimester abortion may be obtained in extreme cases, including rape, incest or if the life of the mother is in danger. Medical personnel are not required to perform the procedure if they conscientiously object to abortion.
Spain	Abortion on request is illegal. Spanish law allows abortion through the first 12 weeks of pregnancies in cases of rape, incest, fetal malformation or if the pregnancy is judged by a doctor to be dangerous to the mother's life or mental health.

Sources: www.prolifeinfo.org/pol5.html; <http://www.ecrealty.info/aborto/aborto-1.htm>; www.pregnancy.mb.ca/quote-4.htm; http://ippfnet.ippf.org/pub/IPPF_Regions/IPPF_CountryProfile.asp?ISOCODE=ES, <http://www.iri.europe.org/europewatch/europewatch2000-1.html>

During the papacy of John Paul II, the Catholic church has condemned a creeping “culture of death,” which, in his view, devalues humanity. Although his views on abortion get a lot of press attention, John Paul has also condemned the death penalty. All of the countries of Latin Europe have banned this penalty, three of them taking the step during John Paul’s papacy. This is not to suggest that the governments adopted this policy because of the Pope’s strong stance, but it was arguably a contributing factor.

Chart 2. Death Penalty in Latin Europe

COUNTRY	LEGAL STATUS	SINCE WHEN	MOST RECENT EXECUTION
France	Illegal	1981	1977
Italy	Illegal	1994	1947
Portugal	Illegal	1976	1847
Spain	Illegal	1995	1975

Source: <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/deathpenalty-abolitionist1-eng>

In recent years, the question of same-sex marriage has come up in Latin Europe. For its part, the Vatican has asked Catholic politicians throughout the world to fight legislation allowing gay marriages.⁷⁴ The issue of same-sex marriage certainly challenges the traditional organization of Latin European society and has not yet found many supporters. There is significant resistance to the idea, even in France. For instance, during the last presidential campaign in France, the conservative Gaullist party candidate Jacques Chirac observed, “I think that every child needs a mother and a father – female references and male references – to construct his identity.” Socialist Lionel Jospin agreed with Chirac’s assessment, and, as such, same-sex marriage was not a cleavage issue in the French electorate’s decision to re-elect Chirac.⁷⁵ In fact, and as indicated in Chart 3, none of these countries allow for same-sex marriage, but each is dealing with the question of civil unions.

Chart 3: Legal Status of Same-Sex Couples in Latin Europe

France	Same-sex couples may not marry. They may register their partnership under the 1999 social union law, know as PACS (Pacte Civil de Solidarité). The government is considering an anti-bias law would write homosexual protections into an existing law that outlaws slurs based on race and nationality.
Italy	Same-sex couples may not marry. They may register as domestic partners in Pisa and Florence. This is not recognized elsewhere and is not legal marriage
Portugal	Same-sex couples may not marry. Legislation passed in 2001 grants same sex couples who have lived together for more than two years the same rights as heterosexual couples in common-law marriages.
Spain	Same-sex couples may not marry in Spain’s Navarra and Basque regions; same-sex couples who live together for a long period may also receive the same benefits as heterosexuals under common-law unions.

Sources: http://www.ilga.org/Information/Legal_survey/Europe/supporting%20files/supreme_court_deems_same.htm; <http://www.datalounge.com/datalounge/news/regions.html?region=1489>

In 1999, the French parliament passed legislation allowing homosexual couples to register their partnerships with the civil authorities, known as PACS, or the “*Pacte Civil de Solidarité*,” and to

⁷⁴kv-ljm/csg/sj/cmlJuly 30, 2003

⁷⁵Agence France Presse, 29 July 2003.

benefit from some of the rights of heterosexual married couples. In Portugal, 2001 legislation passed grants same sex couples who have lived together for more than two years essentially the same rights as heterosexual couples in common-law marriages. The incoming socialist Spanish government has promised to take up this issue in the next year.

There is no clear pattern among the three important public policy issues. Whereas the Vatican has, on balance, been on the losing side on abortion decisions, the opposite is true regarding capital punishment. The question on same-sex marriage is still open, but the Vatican seems to have the upper hand, at least for the time being. Ronald Inglehart's findings in *Modernization and Postmodernization* may provide some insight. He identifies a distinct geographical and religious space in Europe, which he calls "Catholic Europe," including Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. "Catholic Europe" differs from "Protestant Europe" on the basis of so-called "survival values." Inglehart found that Catholics showed preferences for law and order, strong political leaders, jobs and economic growth, a hierarchical religious structure, and a social structure predicated on a two-parent heterosexual family unit. This finding suggests that a Latin Europe may exist, at least in terms of these shared values.⁷⁶ Perhaps these shared values hold the key to understanding public-policy decisions in Latin Europe. To the degree that an issue is based on Catholic values, then the Vatican may maintain a strategic advantage over competing interest groups in that policy area.

CONCLUSION: THE CHURCH A STRATEGIC MORAL ACTOR

As we have seen, the church-state relationship in Latin Europe is fluid. On the question of the three models (authoritarian, secular-anticlerical, and strategic actor), the strategic actor model certainly contains explanatory value in how the Church attempts to influence public policy. The Vatican often acts like an interest group, rallying support and negotiating deals. On the other hand, the Vatican certainly did not push for Mitterrand's funeral Mass, a private decision on his part that indicated a sense of the Catholic religion close to his heart and soul at the critical moments of his human reality. The recent state funeral in Madrid after the March 2004 terrorist attacks is another example of a European society responding to a national tragedy first by voting in the socialists and then by genuflecting.

All three models provide some insight into the church-state relationship. The authoritarian model has been losing salience, whereas the other two maintain supporters. Given that all four countries are currently liberal, democratic regimes, the strategic actor model – Carolyn Warner's useful analysis comes to mind – may hold the most explanatory value in the contemporary period. To the degree that Warner's argument involves the ontological aspect of the Church's strategy (that is, not as a political actor who hopes to gain influence and effect specific public policy but as a moral actor who changes the terms of the political debate by opening it up to a larger question of being), it makes a great deal of sense to us to apply the strategic actor term to the Vatican II documents. However, if one were to apply the strategic actor label to the Church purely in terms of interest group behavior (a strictly positivist analysis), then we would suggest the analysis would be lacking in fundamental ways. We propose that the Church has behaved more exactly as a "strategic moral actor" in the years since the Second Vatican Council, in that it has both sought political influence and has also offered important moral criticism of existing systems, not to mention its capacity to make sense of extraordinary events in one's life.

The new democracies and the on-going effects of secularization have posed a variety of challenges for the Catholic Church. The faithful are less likely to automatically obey the Vatican, and there are fewer and fewer priests. At the same time, and as Owen Chadwick argues in *The*

⁷⁶Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization*

Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century, the epistemological state of human fragility and mortality leaves a space for religion, and the Catholic Church, for many people. The triumph of secularization notwithstanding, religion serves to comfort and provide answers to the unknown. Even François Mitterrand turned to Rome at the end of his life.

There is not enough evidence to accept the proposition that Latin Europe is being dechristianized. To the contrary, there is ample evidence of the vibrancy of Catholicism there. France, for example, long known as the “eldest daughter of the church,” and having gained a twentieth-century reputation for being one of the most secular and hostile nations to the church, is showing some signs that it could be the Church’s prodigal son in the next century.⁷⁷ In this regard, Sophie Sahakian-Marcellin and Franck Fregosi have argued that Catholicism in France, in spite of appearances to the contrary, is not disappearing, but rather is presently evolving into a new form.⁷⁸ Similarly, William Safran notes that

In many respects, France ... manages to be a thoroughly Catholic country. The town cathedral remains in subtle ways a focal point for French culture. Most public holidays are Catholic holidays, and public institutions are shut down. There is still little commerce on Sundays, and the major newspapers do not appear on that day ... Catholic celebrations tend to be more cultural-familial than theological, and religion in general more personal than institutional.⁷⁹

These words apply throughout the region, and underline the vibrancy and strength of the Roman Catholic Church and faith in Latin Europe. One of the more interesting issues facing Europe now is whether its Christian heritage will be mentioned in the new European Constitution. The Spanish, Portuguese and Italian governments have all supported the Pope’s call to include some reference to Europe’s Christian heritage in the new Constitution of the European Union. French President Chirac has also stated that he agrees with the Pope on this matter. If they present a united front, the four countries of Latin Europe could help get this language inserted into the final text.

Sociologists of religion suggest that we take a broader look at how religion functions in society, not just, say, as a promoter of Christian values or social corporatism, but as a collective memory. In *Vers un Nouveau Christianisme*, Danièle Hervieu-Léger argues that, although modern societies tend to corrode traditional practices, including religion, a condition she calls amnesia, they also require solutions to existing problems that oftentimes only religion can solve, what she refers to as a need for utopia.⁸⁰ Grace Davie describes Hervieu-Léger’s conclusions as “the paradox of Modernity, which in its historical forms removes the need for and sense of religion (the amnesia), but in its utopian forms cannot but stay in touch with the religious (the need for a religious future).”⁸¹ Roman Catholicism, then, is not just the hierarchy or the formal liturgy; it is

⁷⁷“France, the eldest daughter of the church” refers to that country’s long association with the Catholic Church. Legend has it that the Christian faith was brought to France by Mary Magdalene. One can still visit the cave in Provence where she lived. The Baptism of Clovis in Rheims on Christmas Day 496 by Bishop Rémi was a decisive moment in French history. Clovis became the first king; he united France into a single strong state, and his eventual successors, Louis XIII and his son, Louis XIV, became important Catholic monarchs. France also boasts some important saints, including Joan of Arc, Saint Denis, Saint Geneviève and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

⁷⁸Sophie Sahakian-Marcellin and Franck Fregosi, *Etre Catholique en France Aujourd’hui* (Paris: Hachette, 1997), pp. 235-249.

⁷⁹Safran, *The French Polity*, p. 33.

⁸⁰Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Vers un Nouveau Christianisme* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1986).

⁸¹Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe*, p. 31.

also Latin Europe's collective memory, a place to go when looking for answers to current problems.

The Eurobarometer data presented earlier clearly support this last point. They demonstrate that secular practices control the quotidian epistemological experience of the average Latin European, and that religious practices dominate their periodic, ontological moments. As such, we conclude this paper by suggesting that it is indeed in the realm of possibility that these 155 million Roman Catholics in Latin Europe share a "collective memory" of their church and their faith. In the end, the fictional character of Jean Monneron may very well encapsulate this collective memory. His cry, "I can't live without my dead," brings us to the ontological notion that the shared memories of Catholics in Latin Europe will continue to influence their societal behavior, political activities and their beliefs in God.

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