Final Report
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The Cause of God and Church: Roman Catholicism and the Political Battle to Educate the Poor
Grant Code: EGTUA1

UCM’s internal Level I grant allowed me to complete the research that I had been doing toward the publication of my long-term project, titled The Cause of God and Church. This was an extension of my dissertation completed at Florida State University in 2001. The book project consisted of an examination of the English Catholic Church’s efforts to educate its flock in mid to late Victorian Britain against the backdrop of a constantly-evolving education system in England and Wales. Against the odds, the English Catholic Church slowly built an elementary education system at mid-century, despite widespread Catholic poverty, and then spent much of the later century trying to defend that system, along with other denominations like the Anglicans, from the growing assault of secular education and its siphoning of funds away from denominational schools. My argument was that this struggle helped to unify the Catholic community and also transform its identity, as members of England’s Catholic minority evolved from passive onlookers to active, sometimes aggressive, participants in the late Victorian political world.

What this grant allowed me to do specifically was to expand my access to Catholic primary sources, my previous access having been limited by time and funding as a graduate student. I was able to expand my examination of three dioceses to six, and to increase my access to the papers and correspondence of several more bishops across a wider geographical region. Previous reviewers of my book manuscript had noted that while the arguments were sound, it was too narrowly focused geographically. Thus, with the funding this grant provided, my study could be fleshed out so that my arguments could be applied to the entirety of England and Wales. In addition to the new diocesan archives that I visited, I was also able to obtain materials that those dioceses collected from other, more far-flung dioceses, such as the Catholic dioceses in Wales, which I would not be able to visit.

The main project outcome was the submission of the expanded book manuscript to a publisher who had shown some initial interest in the project but wanted to see that some of the concerns raised by the reviewers were addressed. As a result, I received a book contract from Pickering and Chatto Publishers of London in July 2009. I submitted the finished draft in January 2010, completed revision in March and April 2010, and the book was published at
the end of May 2010. Its official title is *English Catholics and the Education of the Poor, 1847-1902*.

With the new research permitted by this grant, I also took my new material to two British history conferences in Fall 2010. I presented the paper titled, “Religion … must be no bar to the enjoyment of civil rights’: English Catholics, Education, and Equality in Late Victorian Britain,” to the Northeast Conference on British Studies in Burlington, Vermont, in September 2010, and then presented “”Equal in the Eyes of the Law: Educational Demands and the Changing Face of Late Victorian Catholic Identity” to the Midwest Conference on British Studies in Cleveland, Ohio, in October 2010. Finally, in June 2011, I submitted the book for the John Gilmary Shea Prize given by the American Catholic Historical Association for best monograph on the history of the Catholic Church broadly considered.

Funds from the grant were used to support my travel and accommodations requirements during my two week stay in Great Britain during March 2009.