The English Jesuit Mission: At the Edge of Europe;
At the Crossroads of Worldwide Mission

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"Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."[1] When Jesus spoke these words in the first century CE, the "world" largely meant the Mediterranean world and contiguous lands in Asia, Africa, and Europe. In sharp contrast, by the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Europeans had come to realize that the "world" encompassed not only the far vaster reaches of Africa and Asia than previous generations had known but also the expansive "New World" of the Americas. Because the early stages of this age of exploration were dominated by the emergent Iberian seafaring powers of Portugal and Spain, imbued with a crusading and evangelizing mentality fostered by centuries of the Reconquista, Catholic missions spread throughout the increasingly global Portuguese and Spanish empires.[2] In conjunction with the contemporary Renaissance and its promotion of both classical and Christian humanism,[3] evangelization often proceeded in line with what was purported to be a "civilizing mission," in effect promoting both a missionary and a cultural program: Christianization and Europeanization.[4] Along with the Iberian powers, by the seventeenth century, France on the Catholic side, and England and the Netherlands on the Protestant side, also engaged in global expansion and various degrees of evangelization.[5]

On a parallel and often intersecting track, the Reformation(s) generated great religious fervor but also, sadly and increasingly by the mid- to late sixteenth century, long-term religious divisions and enmity between Protestantism, which came to dominate Northern Europe, and Catholicism, which engaged in extensive religious reform and

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1. Mark 16:15.

2. See, for example, Aliocha Maldavsky, "Jesuits in Ibero-America: Missions and Colonial Societies," in *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Thomas Banchoff and José Casanova (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016), 92–110.

3. See Alison Brown, *The Renaissance*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2021).

4. As an example of these overlapping strategies, see Sabine MacCormack, "Grammar and Virtue: The Formulation of a Cultural and Missionary Program by the Jesuits in Early Colonial Peru," in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley, S.J. et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 576–601.

5. Regarding French missionary activity, see Bronwen McShea, *Apostles of Empire: The Jesuits and New France* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2019); Dominique Deslandres, "*Exemplo aeque ut verbo*: The French Jesuits' Missionary World," in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley, S.J. et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 258–73. For expansive comparative studies of major Protestant and Catholic powers and practices, see Robert L. Gallagher and Edward L. Smither, eds., *Sixteenth-Century Mission: Explorations in Protestant and Roman Catholic Theology and Practice* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021); J. H. [John Huxtable] Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), especially "America as Sacred Space," 184–218.

renewal in Southern and much of Central Europe.[6] These dominating motifs of Renaissance, Reformation, and overseas expansion opened new vistas of evangelization, especially for the Catholic Church, and ushered in a genuinely worldwide mission, with Catholicism becoming, during this "first globalization" of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the first truly global religion. Moreover, within the Catholic Church, the Jesuits—whose Society was founded in 1540 with apostolic and missionary aims during a time when Europe and much of the rest of the world were undergoing extensive transformations—"both thought globally and acted globally, constituting perhaps the first self-conscious global network."[7]

At the same time, Catholicism's face and its quotidian practices were by no means uniform, as becomes obvious should we try to compare them, for example, in Europe and Africa, or in Asia and the Americas.[8] In fact, in countries and regions across the world, Catholic practices and degrees of accommodation and inculturation could, and at times did, vary considerably, depending in part on what was possible or practicable, given the degree of governmental support or opposition, as well as other factors.[9] Another aspect to consider is the geography and periphery of missions. As Alison Forrestal and Seán Alexander Smith point out in *The Frontiers of Mission* (2016), in new and/or peripheral regions, "the agents of the faith came to test traditional boundaries and construct many new ones. In essence, [...] spiritual globalization did not just transfer the faith and the church across the world, but gave rise to entirely new Catholic landscapes."[10] This was especially true overseas, but, even in Europe, traditionally Catholic landscapes could and sometimes did alter considerably in the wake of the Reformation,

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6. See Carlos M. N. Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

7. Banchoff and Casanova, *Jesuits and Globalization,* 4, 12; see also Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, "Jesuit Foreign Missions: A Historiographical Essay," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 47–65. Regarding Catholic missions undertaken by a range of religious orders, see Hsia, ed., *A Companion to Early Modern Catholic Global Missions* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Antje Fluchter and Rouven Wirbser, eds., *Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures: The Expansion of Catholicism in the Early Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

8. As examples and comparisons, see Ana Carolina Hosne, *The Jesuit Missions to China and Peru, 1570–1610: Expectations and Appraisals of Expansionism* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Mark Christensen, "Missionizing Mexico: Ecclesiastics, Natives, and the Spread of Christianity," in Hsia, *Catholic Global Missions,* 17–40; M. Antoni J. Ucerler, S.J., "The Jesuits in East Asia in the Early Modern Age: A New 'Areopagus' and the 'Re-invention' of Christianity," in Banchoff and Casanova, *Jesuits and Globalization,* 27–48.

9. See Andres I. Prieto, "The Perils of Accommodation: Jesuit Missionary Strategies in the Early Modern World," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 3 (2017): 395–414. See also Alan Strathern, "Catholic Missions and Local Rulers in Sub-Saharan Africa," in Hsia, *Catholic Global Missions,* 151–78; Daniel A. Madigan, S.J., "Global Vision in Contestation: Jesuits and Muslims in the Age of Empires," in Banchoff and Casanova, *Jesuits and Globalization,* 69–91.

10. Alison Forrestal and Seán Alexander Smith, "Re-thinking Missionary Catholicism for the Early Modern Era," in *The Frontiers of Mission: Perspectives on Early Modern Missionary Catholicism,* ed. Alison Forrestal and Seán Alexander Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1–21, here 2.

as was certainly the case, for example, in England, including the complicating factors of mobility and exile.[11]

In fact, in predominantly Christian Europe during the "long" Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the practice—or prohibition—of the Catholic (as well as the Protestant) faith varied widely, depending to a considerable extent on the degree of support (connected to the concepts of "confessionalization" and state-building) or opposition (including at times outright persecution) from the state. To avoid a historically problematic and disproportionate focus on uniformity, even in the aftermath of the centralizing Council of Trent (1545–63), the concept of de-centering can be very helpful.[12] As important as centers of power in the Catholic Mediterranean heartland were in the sixteenth century—especially Rome, but also Madrid and Lisbon—a number of peripheral areas became increasingly significant and experimental (sometimes necessarily so) by the seventeenth century. Among the areas Tadhg Ó hAnnrachain explores in his study of Catholic peripheries are what he calls "the Western Margins" of Britain, Ireland, and the Netherlands. In these "peripheral societies of Catholic Europe"—as well as in many overseas missions—contingency and adaptation were often both a reality and a necessity.[13] This essay seeks to study several of these Catholic "peripheries" by comparing and contrasting certain developments in England with those of some instructive overseas missions, especially Japan and China. As we will see, there were a range of significant similarities as well as differences between Catholic challenges in England and those experienced in East Asia.

England presents an intriguing case study in the age of global missions because, on the one hand, it had long been an important part of Catholic Europe, and it remained an important part of Christian Europe. On the other hand, by the later sixteenth century, England was de jure a Protestant country, and increasingly that was the case de facto as well, though the extent and pace of Protestantization was a matter of dispute among contemporaries, if less so among most current historians, who largely agree that the

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11. See, for example, Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., "New Situations; New Structures? Claudio Acquaviva and the Jesuit Mission to England," in *The Acquaviva Project: Claudio Acquaviva's Generalate (1581–1615) and the Emergence of Modern Catholicism*, ed. Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Flavio Rurale (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2017), 149–68; Liesbeth Corens, *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Frederick E. Smith, *Transnational Catholicism in Tudor England: Mobility, Exile, and Counter-Reformation, 1530–1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

12. On this influential church council, see John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013); on the reception of the council in Europe and overseas, see Michela Catto and Adriano Prosperi, eds., *Trent and Beyond: The Council, Other Powers, Other Cultures* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

13. Tadhg Ó hAnnrachain, *Catholic Europe, 1592–1648: Centre and Peripheries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7; for his fuller discussion, see 29–74. See also Benjamin Kaplan et al., eds., *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands, c.1570–1720* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), especially Willem Frijhoff, "Shifting Identities in Hostile Settings: Towards a Comparison of the Catholic Communities in Early Modern Britain and the Northern Netherlands," 1–17; Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 2–3.

country became predominantly Protestant only later in the Elizabethan era.[14] In part, this may have been due to England's unusual see-saw Reformation, which under Henry VIII (r.1509–47) witnessed a hybrid Henrician (i.e., anti-papal) Catholicism, followed by a brief Protestant Reformation under Edward VI (r.1547–53), an equally brief Catholic revival under Mary (r.1553–58), and then, with time and pressure on her side, an increasingly Protestant regime over the course of Elizabeth's long reign (r.1558–1603).[15] These myriad religious changes, however, did not alter the faith of the formidable Jane Dormer, duchess of Feria (1538–1612), who recalled:

> I was born in such a time when holy mass was in great reverence, and brought up in the same faith. In King Edward's time this reverence was neglected and reproved by such as governed. In Queen Mary's time, it was restored with much applause; and now in this time [of Queen Elizabeth] it pleaseth the state to question them, as now they would do me, who continue in this Catholic profession. The state would have these several changes, which I have seen with mine eyes, good and laudable. [...] I hold me still to that wherein I was born and bred; and find nothing taught in it but great virtue and sanctity; and so by the grace of God I will live and die in it.[16]

In terms of the long game and strategic vision, a decade into Queen Elizabeth's reign, Fr. (later Cardinal) William Allen (1532–94) saw the direction in which the country was heading, and realizing the need for priestly ministries and the near impossibility of setting up seminaries in what had become a hostile English environment, established Douai in the Spanish Netherlands in 1568. This was the first of several English seminaries, in addition to numerous colleges, established in continental Europe, one of many indications that England was, or was fast becoming, mission territory.[17] According to a number of English priests:

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14. For the standard view of an "early" Reformation, see A. G. [Arthur Geoffrey] Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989). Among the more influential revisionist and post-revisionist accounts, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400–c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Peter Marshall, *Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

15. See, respectively, Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (New York: Palgrave, 1999); Eamon Duffy and David Loades, eds. *The Church of Mary Tudor* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion, 1558–1603* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

16. Henry Clifford, *The Life of Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria*, ed. E. E. [Edgar Edmund] Estcourt and Joseph Stevenson (London: Burns & Oates, 1887), 38–39.

17. As Ó hAnnrachain astutely notes: "Part of the double bind of English Catholicism was the manner in which it could only be sustained through a wide range of contacts with continental Europe"; *Catholic Europe*, 35. See, for example, Liam Chambers and Thomas O'Connor, *College Communities Abroad: Education, Migration and Catholicism in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), which discusses the more than fifty colleges that English, Irish, and Scottish Catholics founded in continental Europe.

> In the year 1568 [...] began the Seminary of Doway by Doctor Allen afterwards Cardinal, and divers other grave men joined with him, who seeing the ruin of Catholic religion to grow daily in England, went over the sea, placed themselves in divers universities, wrote books in confutation of English heretics, and some others attending to the setting forward of this Seminary, for maintaining and restoring both of religion and a Catholic new clergy in England.[18]

This was a major issue and mindset in the Elizabethan era that divided some of the English Catholic clergy: a mission mentality versus a restorationist mentality. Among the secular clergy, many of the priests were from the time of Queen Mary, whose reign restored England to its Catholic heritage, with the two decades of ostensible schism and heresy under Henry and Edward, from roughly 1533 to 1553, seen as aberrations. Many hoped that the Elizabethan Protestant Settlement (1559) was likewise an aberration that would in time give way to a long-term Catholic restoration. Others among the seculars and the Jesuits, in contrast, viewed England in a new light, as increasingly mission territory.[19] The above-quoted sentiments perhaps capture that complex mix, namely the goal of "maintaining and restoring both of religion and a Catholic new clergy in England."

Another significant factor, especially among many of the older religious orders, was the loss of their patrimony in the dissolution of the monasteries (1536–40).[20] Although the Marian regime had conceded the loss of most monastic properties to their new owners, a few of the monasteries were briefly restored, but with regard to the hundreds of other monasteries and religious houses that were not restored, centuries of ownership were surely not easily forgotten, or perhaps forgiven.[21] A major advantage for the newer religious orders was that they did not have the physical baggage of lost properties nor the mental baggage of the very different—and in some significant ways lost—world that was pre-Reformation Catholic England. As a prime example, the Jesuits were founded in 1540, the same year in which the last of the monasteries were dissolved. They were also imbued with the more activist spirituality that characterized not only the Society of Jesus but a number of the other new and reformed religious orders—such as the Capuchins and Ursulines—that were founded in the era of the

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18. Epistle of the English priests to Clement VIII, July 20, 1601, in *The Other Face: Catholic Life under Elizabeth I*, ed. Philip Caraman (London: Longmans, 1960), 95.

19. The viewpoint of England as a mission land became even more of a reality after 1570, when Pope Pius V (r.1566–72) formally excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, which made the practice of Catholicism in England an increasingly fraught intersection of religion and politics. See Pius V, *Regnans in excelsis*, in *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources*, ed. Robert S. Miola (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 486–88; see also Aislinn Muller, *The Excommunication of Elizabeth I: Faith, Politics, and Resistance in Post-Reformation England, 1570–1603* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

20. See James G. Clark, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021); Harriet Lyon, *Memory and the Dissolution of the Monasteries in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022). See also, more broadly, Alexandra Walsham et al., eds., *Memory and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

21. Among the few exceptions, see C. [Charles] S. Knighton, "Westminster Abbey Restored," in Duffy and Loades, *Church of Mary Tudor*, 77–123.

Catholic/Counter Reformation and manifested both its inner devotional stance and its outward apostolic and missionary impulse.[22]

In his autobiography, in which he describes his time on the English Jesuit mission, John Gerard (1564–1637) provides an example of the tensions and conflicting visons that existed, on the one hand, between the Jesuits and a good number of the newer seminary priests, and, as a counterpoint, some of the other and often older secular clergy. Around 1590, Gerard was staying at Braddocks Hall, a Catholic estate in Essex, and he (later) wrote about "the quarrels that have broken out between us [the Jesuits] and a section of the secular clergy (first in the seminaries and then in England) which makes the government anxious to crush the more uncompromising party [i.e., those clergy who encouraged recusancy] first by imposing fearful penalties on the people who house and protect us," as at Braddocks Hall. Although the house had a chaplain, the owner "decided to take in two more priests, and insisted that one of them must be a Jesuit, who would have the direction of him and his household." This plan, understandably, did not sit well with the chaplain, a secular priest, whom Gerard described as "one of those old priests who were always at odds with the young men, especially the Jesuits whom they looked on as meddlesome innovators."[23] We see here a concern, genuine if largely unfounded, that the Jesuits and some of the other religious and seminary priests were undermining traditional Catholicism through their supposed innovations. At its heart, this view reflected "a fundamental difference about Catholic strategy [that] drove a wedge between [some of] the secular clergy and the Jesuits." Segments of the seculars longed for a restoration of the medieval church, whereas the Jesuits essentially saw England as "a mission land. And at the core of their vocation was the mission call."[24]

One issue that created a considerable divide was that of ecclesiastical leadership. Traditional leadership at the local level had centered on bishops, and in fact the Council of Trent had further empowered bishops as leaders and pastors in the work of church reform and renewal.[25] The question, however, was whether bishops were best suited to serve in that role on the difficult and potentially very dangerous English mission. If a bishop, for example, was captured and, perhaps under torture, abjured the faith, the effects could be devastating. Therefore, the Jesuits and some seculars argued for the establishment of an archpriest, who would act as a superior of the secular clergy but

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22. For a survey of the more important and influential new and reformed orders of early modern Catholicism, see Richard L. DeMolen, ed., *Religious Orders of the Catholic Reformation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1994). And see a classic account of the spiritual vitality of the age: H. Outram Evennett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation*, ed. John Bossy (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).

23. John Gerard, *The Autobiography of a Hunted Priest*, trans. Philip Caraman (Chicago: Thomas More Press, 1952), 45–47. For more on Braddocks and its Catholic and Jesuit connections, see Henry Foley, S.J., *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (London: Manresa Press, 1875), 2:574–81.

24. William V. Bangert, S.J., *A History of the Society of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1986), 145.

25. See Jennifer Mara DeSilva, ed., *Episcopal Reform and Politics in Early Modern Europe* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2012); see in particular in this volume, William V. Hudon, "The Local Nature of Episcopal Reform in the Age of the Council of Trent," ix–xiv.

would not have the status or authority of a bishop.[26] According to the contemporary Jesuit historian Henry More (1586–1661): "No more potent remedy was [at] hand for the situation than to give the clergy a head from whom peace and calm might flow. This would bring union among the priests, and from them spread to the rest." Therefore, in 1598, George Blackwell (*c*.1545–1613) "was inaugurated as superior of the English clergy. He had the power and title of Archpriest of England, and was given 12 assistants to advise him."[27] Yet, all was not bliss, or even close to it. As More went on to say:

> What was conceived as a measure to establish peace and quiet, however, only served to infuriate the minds of many, and bring about dissension. Some [...] wanted two men to have authority, and to be bishops into the bargain, rather than that all power should go to one man. They claimed that the title and office of archpriest was something new; and for so great a number of priests as there were in England, unusual. Some claimed that the notion and very title of a regime of this sort had come from the Jesuits, because they aimed to rule the rest of the clergy through men leaning towards themselves.[28]

In refutation of this manifestation of anti-Jesuitism, More wrote: "As for authority [allegedly] usurped by the Society over the rest of the clergy, or sought through those elevated to high office, this was far from its intention. Jesuits regarded themselves not as prelates but as helpmates for all the clergy, sent like themselves to the English mission."[29] More went on to cite the archpriest himself, Blackwell, in support of the idea that the Jesuits were companions and not taskmasters on the mission:

> So far are those Fathers from any lust for power that they have provided us everywhere with an outstanding example of self-forgetfulness, urbanity, patience, religious spirit and brotherly love. [...] They have been most sturdy fighters and our principal helpers in the cause of rescuing our country and Church at a time when she has been buffeted by tempests very diverse among ourselves.[30]

Even allowing for Blackwell's overly generous response, the Jesuits had many supporters—and detractors—among the secular clergy as well as among the wider population, whether in England or elsewhere.[31]

In fact, concerning this issue and controversy over church leadership, the English mission was something of a crossroads between Europe—where the office of bishop

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26. On the context and consequences of the "Archpriest Controversy," see Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest: Confessional Conflict, Toleration, and the Politics of Publicity in Post-Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). For a discussion on conflicts in Jesuit governance during this period, related in some ways to the long generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (in office 1581–1615), who was a generous supporter of the Jesuit mission to England, see Silvia Mostaccio, *Early Modern Jesuits between Obedience and Conscience during the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014).
27. Francis Edwards, S.J., ed. and trans., *The Elizabethan Jesuits:* Historia Missionis Anglicanae Societatis Jesu *(1660) of Henry More* (London: Phillimore, 1981), 189.
28. More, *Elizabethan Jesuits*, 189–90.
29. More, *Elizabethan Jesuits*, 193.
30. More, *Elizabethan Jesuits*, 195.
31. See Sabina Pavone, "The History of Anti-Jesuitism: National and Global Dimensions," in Banchoff and Casanova, *Jesuits and Globalization*, 111–30.

became, in most jurisdictions, even more central in ecclesiastical governance in the long era of the Tridentine church—and overseas, where, depending in part on the degree of European versus indigenous control, ecclesiastical leadership could and often did vary widely. On the other hand, compared to England, where the secular clergy constituted the bulk of the mission's manpower, on many overseas missions, especially early on, there were few if any secular clergy present. Rather, it was the religious orders that launched these missions: the mendicants in the first phase of overseas evangelization in parts of the Americas and Asia, followed by the Jesuits, who were the principal agents of Christianization in the launching of certain missions, especially in East Asia, and the expansion of others.[32]

A comparable situation and divergence existed with regard to persecution and martyrdom. Across Reformation Europe, many religious minorities faced various degrees of persecution.[33] England was somewhat unusual in that the persecutors and the persecuted switched places so often, especially in the mid-Tudor period.[34] By the mid- to late Elizabethan era, persecution again became widespread, and although more Protestants died during Mary's brief reign than during Elizabethan's much longer reign, evidently more people were subjected to judicial torture and suffered the brutal death of being hanged, drawn, and quartered under Elizabeth I than at any other time in English history, not to mention the large numbers of Catholics and others who were fined, imprisoned, exiled, or otherwise suffered for their faith.[35] As the superior of the Jesuit mission, Robert Persons (1546–1610), wrote from England in 1580:

> The violence of the persecution which is now inflicted on the Catholics throughout the whole kingdom, is most intense and it is of a kind that has not been heard of since the conversion of England. Everywhere there are being dragged to prison, noblemen and those of humble birth, men, women and even children; they are bound in chains of iron; robbed of their possessions, deprived of light, and in proclamations as well as in discourses and sermons they are made infamous in the eyes of the people under the name of traitors and rebels.[36]

Persecution increased throughout the 1580s, especially from 1585 onward with the outbreak of war with Spain (the Spanish Habsburg Empire), the leading Catholic power of the sixteenth century and the first truly global power, a reality that impacted and

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32. Christoph Nebgen, "Missionaries: Who Were They," in Hsia, *Catholic Global Missions*, 401–23, especially 401–2. See also Andrew C. Ross, "Alessandro Valignano: The Jesuits and Culture in the East," in O'Malley et al., *Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts*, 336–51.

33. For a transnational study, see Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). With regard to English Catholics, see Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).

34. For a revisionist account of the reign of "Bloody Mary," especially regarding the role and impact of the burnings, see Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

35. See Robert E. Scully, S.J., *Into the Lion's Den: The Jesuit Mission in Elizabethan England and Wales, 1580–1603* (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2011), especially "The Shadow of Death: Persecution, Prison Life, Exile, and Execution," 341–87.

36. London, November 17, 1580, in *Miscellanea III* (London: Catholic Record Society, 1906), 46–62, here 56.

in various ways benefited many Catholic missions across the world, though generally not in England.[37] In that early modern era, when religion and politics were so often intertwined, the fate of English Catholics—as with Catholics in other parts of Europe as well as on many oversees missions—often depended, for better or worse, on international developments. The Jesuit missioner William Weston (1550–1615) wrote of the "immeasurable suffering" that descended upon the English Catholic community from the mid-1580s, with the onset of the Anglo-Spanish War (1585–1604):

> The days that followed the Parliament [of 1584–85] were bitter days for Catholics and filled with immeasurable suffering. Earlier, indeed, there had been great cruelty. Many had been broken. But now the fury of the persecution burst upon them more savagely still. [...] Catholics now saw their own country, the country of their birth, turned into a ruthless and unloving land. All [people] fastened their hatred on them. They lay in ambush for them, betrayed them, attacked them with violence, and without warning. They plundered them at night, confiscated their possessions, drove away their flocks, stole their cattle. Every prison, no matter how foul or dark, was made glorious by the noble and great-hearted protestations of saintly confessors, and even martyrs.[38]

Even allowing for hyperbole, the tragic irony, as Weston indicated, was that this persecution was occurring in a traditionally Catholic land, in a country that had been predominantly Catholic for upwards of a thousand years,[39] as opposed to parallel persecutions that broke out in countries and locales across the world that had never been Catholic or Christian. A poignant contemporary example of the latter, on the other side of the world, and a persecution even far more gruesome than in England, especially in terms of the scale of the slaughter, was the suffering of the church in Japan.[40] From the arrival of Francis Xavier (1506–52) in Japan in 1549, the Catholic faith spread at a considerable pace over the next several decades before the Tokugawa shogunate reacted against the perceived and, at least in their minds, related threats of foreign mercantile and military contacts with Japan, on one hand, and, on the other, foreign missionaries,

37. See, for example, Hugh Thomas, *World without End: Spain, Philip II, and the First Global Empire* (New York: Random House, 2014); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Holding the World in Balance: The Connected Histories of the Iberian Overseas Empires, 1500–1640," *American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (2007): 1359–85.
38. William Weston, *The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, trans. Philip Caraman (London: Longmans, Green, 1955), 31. On a wider scale concerning religious mentalities during the Anglo-Spanish War, see, for example, Robert E. Scully, S.J., "'In the confident hope of a miracle': The Spanish Armada and Religious Mentalities in the Late Sixteenth Century," *Catholic Historical Review* 89, no. 4 (2003): 643–70.
39. With regard to religious animosity and conflict, as well as attempts to move toward various degrees of toleration, see Adam Morton, "Anti-Catholicism: Catholics, Protestants, and the 'Popery' Problem," in *A Companion to Catholicism and Recusancy in Britain and Ireland: From Reformation to Emancipation*, ed. Robert E. Scully, S.J. (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 410–48; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).
40. For an overview of the Japanese mission, see M. Antoni J. Ucerler, S.J., "The Christian Missions in Japan in the Early Modern Period," in Hsia, *Catholic Global Missions*, 303–43, especially 326–39. See also Fernanda Alfieri and Takashi Jinno, eds., *Christianity and Violence in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: Perspectives from Europe and Japan* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021); Liam Matthew Brockey, "Books of Martyrs: Example and Imitation in Europe and Japan, 1597–1650," *Catholic Historical Review* 103, no. 2 (2017): 207–23.

whom many Japanese believed to be the vanguard of Western infiltration and subjugation. Even Xavier, who developed a great affection for Japan and its people, realized that the Catholic mission there would face great hardships—physical, spiritual, and societal:

> The difficulties which those who go to Japan will encounter are very great because of the severe colds and the little protection there is from them. [...] They will be greatly persecuted by the pagan priests and all the people until they become known; there will be numerous occasions of sin; and they will be condemned by all. [...] If those who come from Europe to go to Japan do not have an abundance of virtues to put up with such great evils and difficulties, I fear that they will be lost.[41]

Partly in response to the success of the Catholic mission, the Tokugawa shogunate issued the "Edict of 1635 Ordering the Closing of Japan," which was a clear manifestation of the regime's determination to seal Japan off from foreign "contamination," religious or otherwise, and it specifically targeted the "padres," the Christian missionaries, as well as their native coreligionists:

> If there is any place where the teachings of padres (Christianity) is practiced [there was to be] a thorough investigation.
>
> Any informer revealing the whereabouts of the followers of padres (Christians) must be rewarded accordingly. If anyone reveals the whereabouts of a high ranking padre, he must be given one hundred pieces of silver.[42]

Since the Portuguese were the first of the Westerners to arrive in Japan, in search of both trade and converts, a subsequent edict in 1639 was directed against the Christian/Catholic religion and the Portuguese trade and other links that were, in significant ways, its lifeline:

1. The matter relating to the proscription of Christianity is known [to the Portuguese], however, heretofore they have secretly transported those who are going to propagate that religion.
2. If those who believe in that religion band together in an attempt to do evil things, they must be subjected to punishment.
3. While those who believe in the preaching of the padres are in hiding, there are incidents in which that country (Portugal) has sent gifts to them for their sustenance.

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41. Xavier to Father Simão Rodrigues (Lisbon), from Goa, India, April 7, 1552, in *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J. (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 372–77, here 374–75. Among instructive documents on the Japanese mission, see "Baptism and Preparation for Death in a Japanese Kirishitan Catechism (1593)," and "Protesting the Prohibition of Christianity in Japan (1614)," in *Global Reformations Sourcebook: Convergence, Conversion, and Conflict in Early Modern Religious Encounters*, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (New York: Routledge, 2021), 37–43 and 226–27 respectively.
42. David J. Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 221.

> In view of the above, hereafter entry by the Portuguese *galeota* is forbidden. If they insist on coming [to Japan], the ships must be destroyed and anyone aboard those ships must be beheaded.[43]

Japanese Christians were forced to reject their faith by stepping on an image of Christ or some other religious image, as well as being forced to publicly renounce their belief in Christianity.[44] For a host of reasons, not the least being fear of dreadful torture and death, including beheading, burning, or other extended forms of execution, many people apostatized. At the same time, there were thousands of examples of almost unimaginable courage and the embrace of martyrdom. According to one estimate: "More than thirteen percent of the Catholic population of 300,000 gave their lives for the faith, a record probably without equal in the annals of the Church." Of those martyrs, eighty-seven were Jesuits, fully half of whom (forty-four) were Japanese.[45] Besides brutal persecution, other factors in the near extinction of Japanese—as opposed to English—Catholicism in the seventeenth century were the great distance, physically and culturally, from Catholic Europe, and the fact that Catholicism was a very recent implant in what turned out to be the less-than-fertile spiritual soil of Japan, as compared to its long historical foundations and immersion in English (and European) life. These cultures were, in so many ways, worlds apart.[46]

Yet, in heart-rending but powerful ways, persecution and martyrdom were ties that bound together the suffering church in Europe with the suffering church across much of the world. Catholics in England were united with Catholics in Japan and elsewhere, who saw themselves as forming part of the mystical Body of Christ, sharing in the cross so as to share in the resurrection, and thereby fostering a strong sense of religious identity, both national and international in nature, and often dependent on the important if not indispensable role of women.[47] A crucial difference, however, was that the religious persecution in Japan was so devastating that it virtually wiped out Catholicism from the land of the rising sun, even after so propitious a beginning through the

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43. "Completion of the Exclusion, 1639," in Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History*, 222.

44. See "Renouncing the Kirishitan [Christian] Faith, 1645," in Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History*, 224–25.

45. Bangert, *History of the Society of Jesus*, 241; see also 33–36, 84–89, 154–57. By another estimate, "Japanese Christians numbered as many as 400,000 by 1600"; Ucerler, "Christian Missions in Japan," 339.

46. For a case study of how Jesuits conceived of global space, see Markus Friedrich, "'Government in India and Japan is different from government in Europe': Asian Jesuits on Infrastructure, Administrative Space, and the Possibilities for a Global Management of Power," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 1 (2017): 1–27.

47. On the role of Catholic women, see, for example, regarding England, James E. Kelly, "Creating an English Catholic Identity: Relics, Martyrs, and English Women Religious in Counter-Reformation Europe," in *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation*, ed. James E. Kelly and Susan Royal (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 41–59; Colleen M. Seguin, "Catholic Laywomen: Activist Piety, Agency, and Strategic Resistance," in Scully, *Catholicism and Recusancy*, 155–77; Marie B. Rowlands, "Harbourers and Housekeepers: Catholic Women in England, 1570–1720," in Kaplan et al., *Catholic Communities in Protestant States*, 200–15. With regard to Japan, see Haruko Nawata Ward, "Jesuits, Too: Jesuits, Women Catechists, and Jezebels in Christian-Century Japan," in O'Malley et al., *Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts*, 638–57.

heroic efforts of Xavier and others.[48] In England, by contrast, though it became "the locus of martyrdom" in Europe,[49] the persecution there, severe as it was from time to time, resulted in a minority and, especially in the early modern era, largely underground church, but one that had sufficient vitality and resilience to weather recurrent storms over many generations and finally emerge from the shadows, increasingly confident, in the light of "Catholic Emancipation" in the nineteenth century.[50]

Another instructive comparison with regard to new or adaptive Catholic landscapes would be England and China. On the English mission, the Jesuits could not engage in the range of public ministries that were proving so successful in much of Catholic Europe and some overseas territories, namely institutions such as schools and parishes, as well as the evangelizing opportunities that these educational and spiritual centers provided for outreach to wider audiences. In contrast, in England, the Jesuits (and other missioners) had to engage in more surreptitious ministries; yet, under those constraints, they still achieved a modest measure of success through their preaching, spiritual direction, administration of the sacraments, catechizing, and ministry of the written word, including through such influential figures as Edmund Campion (1540–81) and Robert Southwell (1561–95).[51]

Analogously, in the far different setting of China, if, as Liam Brockey has argued, Catholic evangelization was to achieve any significant measure of success, it had to adapt European models to Chinese culture and structures.[52] The devoted and creative approach of the Italian Jesuit sage Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and others such as the Portuguese Jesuit "visitor" André Palmeiro (1569–1635) led to the establishment of

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48. For a discussion of the ways in which Xavier was transformed from a regional to a global missionary and saint in service to a globalizing church, see Rachel Miller, "From 'Apostle of Japan' to 'Apostle of All the Christian World': The Iconography of St. Francis Xavier and the Global Catholic Church," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 9, no. 3 (2022): 415–37.

49. Ó hAnnrachain, *Catholic Europe*, 30. The author goes to say: "Early Modern Catholicism was relatively short of martyrs in Europe, although this deficiency was to a certain extent remedied by stories of the heroism of missionaries in areas like Japan."

50. On the significance of underground networks and practices, see Earle Havens and Elizabeth Patton, "Underground Networks, Prisons, and the Circulation of Counter-Reformation Books in Elizabethan England," in Kelly and Royal, *Early Modern English Catholicism*, 165–88; Lisa McClain, "Underground Devotions: The Day-to-Day Challenges of Practicing an Illegal Faith," in Scully, *Catholicism and Recusancy*, 588–607. With regard to a unique "underground church," see Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Between Conflict and Coexistence: The Catholic Community in Ireland as a 'Visible Underground Church' in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," in Kaplan et al., *Catholic Communities in Protestant States*, 168–82. For a discussion of the struggles and events that finally led to "Catholic Emancipation" in the United Kingdom in 1829, see Antonia Fraser, *The King and the Catholics: England, Ireland, and the Fight for Religious Freedom, 1780–1829* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 2018).

51. On their lives and important roles on the English mission, see Gerard Kilroy, *Edmund Campion: A Scholarly Life* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015); Scott Pilarz, S.J., *Robert Southwell and the Mission of Literature, 1561–1595: Writing Reconciliation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

52. Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007); see also Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, "Imperial China and the Christian Mission," in Hsia, *Catholic Global Missions*, 344–64; Nicholas Standaert, S.J., "Jesuit Corporate Culture as Shaped by the Chinese," in O'Malley et al., *Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts*, 352–63.

incipient Catholic communities in China and across other parts of Asia.[53] Especially in an ancient and highly developed civilization such as China, the Jesuit practice of accommodation and inculturation was vital if Catholic evangelization was to have any hope of success. Confucianism was deeply imbedded in Chinese culture, as was great respect for Confucius himself. But was Confucianism essentially a religious rite, or, as most Jesuits contended, was its status more in the nature of a civic ritual? Also, was the traditional and culturally important practice of honoring one's ancestors (ancestor worship) a religious rite or, again as Jesuits believed, part of the social fabric of Chinese society and analogous to the Catholic practice of the veneration of Mary and the saints? These disputes gave rise to the long-drawn-out and divisive Chinese rites controversy of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In 1742, the Holy See issued its final decision rejecting the Chinese rites, which in its aftermath undoubtedly constricted the spread of Christianity in China, with significant and unfortunate consequences well into the future.[54]

Despite the obvious differences, the controversy over church papistry in England was in some ways analogous to that of the Chinese rites. Catholics were generally forbidden from attending the religious services of the Protestant Church of England, even though such attendance was mandated by law, the violation of which could result in steep fines or worse. Some Catholics, generally the male head of the household, would attend the established church intermittently, such as once a month, in order to avoid the penal fines, and would also attend a Catholic Mass surreptitiously if one was available. Thus, they were called—by both Protestant and Catholic detractors—church papists, that is, those who made a show of occasional attendance at the established church but who were papists (Catholics) at heart. The official position of the Catholic Church was that such attendance was sinful and, therefore, Catholics should refuse to go to a Protestant church (recusancy), despite the penalties that could be ruinous over time. As with those in China who argued for the legitimacy of, or at least leniency regarding, the Chinese rites, others in England maintained that infrequent Protestant church attendance (occasional conformity) was more of a civic obligation and should be

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53. See Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552–1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Liam Matthew Brockey, *The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014). For an instructive study of evangelization in Naples, an officially Catholic region that many Jesuits and others referred to as the "Indies Down Here," and indicative that Naples, no less than various overseas missions, "was a pivotal site in the Jesuits' global effort," see Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2004), especially 3–4.

54. See Nicolas Standaert, *Chinese Voices in the Rites Controversy: Travelling Books, Community Networks, Intercultural Arguments* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2012); Ines G. Županov and Pierre-Antoine Fabre, eds., *The Rites Controversies in the Early Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Bangert, *History of the Society of Jesus*, 279–84. For a discussion of Jesuit practices of accommodation in India, see Margherita Trento, "The Theater of Accommodation: Strategies for Legitimizing the Christian Message in Madurai (*c.*1610)," in Fabre and Rurale, *Acquaviva Project*, 109–27.

allowed in order to safeguard the well-being, if not continued existence, of the English Catholic community.[55]

As a telling example of officially upholding recusancy, while at the same time fostering pastoral sensitivity and understanding, Cardinal Allen instructed English priests as follows:

> I would have you use great compassion and mercifulness toward such of the laity especially as for mere fear or saving their family, wife and children from ruin are so far only fallen as to come sometimes to their [Protestant] churches or be present at the time of their service. For though it be not lawful to do so much, not in it self any ways excusable, yet such necessity in that kind of men maketh the offence less and more compassionable, yea and more easily by you to be absolved.[56]

Just as some English Catholics continued to engage in occasional conformity, some Chinese Catholics likely continued to practice ancestral rites covertly, with the practitioners in each case, under difficult circumstances, trying to balance loyalties to their country, their family, and their faith.

It seems clear that, for Catholicism, which was in the process of becoming the first truly global religion from the sixteenth century onward, both unity and diversity were characteristic of—and in myriad ways essential to—its evangelistic outreach. One assessment of Luke Clossey's insightful work *Salvation and Globalization* (2008) states that Clossey "premises his examination of the global Jesuit enterprise on the close interaction of European continental and extra-European missions, arguing for an essential unity of mission,"[57] while not denying its rich diversity. It is important to add to this, however, the Jesuit English mission, which combined and adopted aspects of both "European continental and extra-European missions." Thus, diversity of approach was essential to the long-term vitality of international Catholicism and its global outreach, including an openness to accommodation to a wide range of non-Catholic and non-Christian societies, whether the increasingly dominant Protestant culture of late Tudor and Stuart England or the historically dominant Confucian culture of China. When accommodation was rejected or overly restricted, as in the Chinese rites controversy or in the debates surrounding the issues of church papistry and recusancy in England, Catholic prospects often diminished. Still, Jesuit and other Catholic missions—and the church they served—perdured to varying degrees and in some cases ultimately prospered, whether in England, China, or many other locales, all contributing to the rich tapestry that was early modern Catholicism.

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55. See Ginevra Crosignani, Thomas M. McCoog, and Michael Questier, eds., *Recusancy and Conformity in Early Modern England: Manuscript and Printed Sources in Translation* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2010); Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1993); Robert E. Scully, S.J., "Domestic Disorder: Debating Recusancy within the Catholic Community," in Scully, *Catholicism and Recusancy,* 371–409.
56. Rome, December 12, 1592, in Crosignani et al., *Recusancy and Conformity,* 260–62, here 261.
57. Forrestal and Smith, *Frontiers of Mission,* 6.