



STUDIES

IN
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

The Suppression of the Society of Jesus

*A Perfect Storm in the Age of the
"Enlightenment"*

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the first word . . .

Athanasius Kircher and I go back a long way together. No, he was not in theology when I was in philosophy—although many of my youth-afflicted students would surely find that speculation quite plausible. He lived from 1602 to 1680, spending most of his adult life in Rome, where he wrote and taught about everything a pre-Suppression Jesuit could think of, and some other things most of his contemporaries could not even imagine in their most fever-fired hallucinations brought on by tertian ague during the annual mid-summer miasma.

Our relationship has taken several unpredictable turns. Father Kircher first came into my world in graduate school. The film-history books of the time were few in number and questionable in accuracy. Almost all the pre-history chapters in these early textbooks credited this learned seventeenth-century Jesuit as the inventor of a primitive “Magic Lantern,” a complicated contraption built of mirrors and sliding lenses that captured sunlight to project painted images on a wall in a darkened room. Thus, reasoned the film historians of the day, he could reasonably be considered an early inventor of the motion picture. The accounts could be quite detailed. Perhaps based on the oddity of having a priest involved in such an enterprise, they concluded that he used the projected images to liven up his sermons and catechism lessons. “And, so little children, if you’re naughty, the devil will come and . . .” Poof!, and there’s an image of Old Nick, horns, hooves, tail, and all, right there in the room with his terrified pupils. “But if you’re good . . .” Change the slide. Poof!, and a benevolent angel would appear. Nice speculation, but it seems quite a stretch from documented fact. Actually, such a scenario well might have landed him before the Inquisition on charges of conjuring. He did, however, tinker with projection, but several other scientists in Europe, especially in the Netherlands, were also experimenting with lenses and the projection of images. In an age before patents and copyrights, Kircher rose to the head of the class of Spielberg progenitors because of his book *Ars magna lucis et umbrae* (The great art of light and shadow), a lavishly illustrated tome published in Rome in 1645. Others may have done the work, but he had the good sense to publicize it.

By way of a possibly amusing digression: history repeats itself. In many of these older texts, Thomas Alva Edison receives credit for inventing the mod-

Yes, of course, he made spectacular blunders and drew ludicrous conclusions on the basis of flawed evidence, several admit, but what about his work as a whole? He was indeed a polymath of astounding energy and breadth of interests. He tried to absorb the cascade of information flowing into Rome from Jesuit missions around the world and from the chain of Jesuit universities that attracted the best minds of Europe. He became a one-man clearinghouse of seventeenth-century scholarship. He gathered his findings in the museum of the Roman College, which then seemed, from the descriptions I could find, a cross between the Museum of Natural History in New York and Disneyworld. A specialist in none, he seemed fascinated by every branch of knowledge. Today, when academic specialization has reached such a point that doctoral dissertations seem to set young scholars on a trajectory to learn more and more about less and less, we would call Kircher's an "interdisciplinary approach." And anyone using it would not get tenure. And some of these scholars admit that amid his many misfires, he did on occasion hit the mark quite effectively. His observations with his own microscope led him to believe that certain microorganisms, what we would call germs, were responsible for disease. Although his studies of China and Egypt were questionable, he did publish the first works in Sanskrit for European scholars.

The Amazon entry on Paula Findlen's collection included links to a surprising number of book-length studies published in the last decade or so. According to its descriptive blurb, Joscelyn Godwin's *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World: The Life and Work of the Last Man to Search for Universal Knowledge* (2009) incorporates his religious motivation. The "theatre of the world" is a notion that modern Jesuits would be familiar with as "seeing God in all things." If the write-up is any indication, the author appreciates that Kircher's driven quest to investigate every imaginable field of study may well be rooted in his theological convictions. Daniel Stolzenberg, in his *Egyptian Oedipus: Athanasius Kircher and the Secrets of Antiquity* (2013) addresses the notorious hieroglyph fiasco head-on. The descriptive summary indicates that Professor Stolzenberg tries to provide a wider context for his work. He offers a description of the state of intercultural exchange between Islam and Christianity at the time, the quality of the religious and historical texts that were available in Europe, and concludes that for all its faults, Kircher's work on Egypt popularized the realization that understanding Egyptian culture demands a knowledge of its language and formative texts.

Since my own field of historical research spans the era from Lillian Gish to Meryl Streep, I doubt that I'll ever have the time and energy to follow up on this modest foray into the history of science in the early-modern era. It is refreshing, however, to realize that others, far more qualified than I, have been revisiting my old friend Athanasius Kircher. Think of one of our traditional Irish wakes. The mourners trade stories about Uncle Danny: he had his faults, to be sure, but as the conversation continues and more stories emerge, it seems he had his virtues as well. He drank and told tall tales, he could be irrespons-

ble with money, and indeed he held a lifelong grudge against Aunt Agnes. But amid these failings, he did some wonderful, generous things that we were not aware of at the time, and others that we simply did not appreciate. Let's hope that as scholars continue to retell the old stories, we can say the same of Athanasius Kircher.

Father Kircher had passed from the scene long before the first rumblings of the suppression started echoing through Europe. He doesn't really have much of a connection to the excellent summary of those historical events that Bob Scully outlines so clearly in this volume of *STUDIES*. Admittedly, this particular column may be an even greater manifestation of the editor's self-indulgence than many other similarly far-fetched "introductions" to essays in this collection. Still Kircher's story does fit in to a certain extent. His life and works give modern readers an insight into the lives of pre-Suppression Jesuits. His inexhaustible enthusiasm provides some indication of the great exuberance that they must have experienced during those early days. Colleges were opening faster than they could staff them; vocations abounded; missionaries traveled across the entire world; letters poured into Rome to document their exploits and discoveries; Jesuit theologians were among the most respected in the Church. It was an exciting time to be a Jesuit.

Within a few decades of Kircher's death, the bubble burst. Such a calamity would probably have been inconceivable to any of his contemporaries. Somehow despite, or perhaps because of all its extraordinary success, several of the crowned heads of Europe began to view the Society of Jesus as an actual threat to their sovereignty. For reasons that Bob relates in his essay, the Jesuits drew a level of royal animosity that surpassed that directed to other religious orders, even though they were all similarly caught in lethal jousting between scepter and crosier. Why this particular wrath? Had the Society become too big, too powerful, too wealthy, and perhaps too proud of its achievements to recognize its flaws, just as Father Kircher let himself be mesmerized by his enthusiasm for learning to such an extent that he missed his obvious shortcomings?

Bob Scully's final reflection gives Jesuits today a great deal to think about and pray about as we try to understand our history and our future. If the life of Athanasius Kircher offers some interesting parallels to the rise and fall of his Society, then his story may provide yet another avenue for this meditation.

Richard A. Blake, S.J.

Editor



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THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

A Perfect Storm in the "Age of Enlightenment"

As European kings consolidated their power in the eighteenth century, several of them saw the Church as an obstacle to their political objectives. Thus, with their stated allegiance to the Papacy, the Jesuits became perceived as enemies of the state in some quarters. The local confrontations gradually coalesced into a movement to suppress the Society of Jesus in its entirety.

I. Introduction

The suppression of the Society of Jesus will make memorable for all time the seventy-third year of this [eighteenth] century and the pontificate of Ganganelli, who was called by the name Clement XIV. Surely in the memory of man nothing more momentous was ever done in the Church, nothing more clamorous, nothing less expected." With this dramatic opening, Giulio Cesare Cordara—who had been a Jesuit for fifty-five years leading up to the suppression—began his heartfelt but reasonably objective account of how and why his beloved Society, so seemingly stable and vast in its size, influence, and embeddedness in the life of the Church, came to so spectacular and

tragic a downfall.¹ Cordara (1704–85) had studied at the Jesuits' Roman College as a boy, obtained special permission to enter the Jesuit novitiate at the age of only fourteen, and went on to become a teacher and the historiographer of the Society. Through his responsibilities at the generalate and as a close friend of Lorenzo Ricci, who served as superior general during the momentous years 1758 to 1773, Cordara was an eyewitness and close observer of many of the events surrounding the Society's step-by-step suppression. Due to his unique vantage point, he will serve as an invaluable guide in this study of the Jesuit suppression. While he certainly had his biases and blind spots, and therefore needs to be supplemented by a range of other primary and secondary sources, his account is fairly thorough and often remarkably honest in its assessment of the Society's enemies, both outside and inside the Church, as well as the Society's own "sins," perhaps especially that of pride, which allowed the seemingly unthinkable to happen.²

From our vantage point we know that the papal suppression of the Society, finally wrested from a reluctant pope in 1773, was to last about forty years, followed by another pope's restoration of the Jesuits in 1814. Thus, 2014, the two-hundredth anniversary of the Society's restoration, will witness various commemorations. It is likely that a range of conferences and publications will examine various aspects—including historical, philosophical, and theological insights—as to how and why this resurrection from the dead somehow occurred. However, in order to understand the restoration and situate it in its proper context, an awareness of the major issues and reasons that led to the suppression in the first place is indispensable.

While space constraints do not allow us to examine in depth all the individuals, interests, and ideologies that fanned the flames which eventually engulfed the Jesuit order as a whole, we can focus our historical and spiritual lenses on several recurring and often interrelated themes. In particular, a major focus of this study will be on the general or papal suppression of the Society, in order to answer the troubling yet fascinating question: Why did "the Holy Father disown his

¹Giulio Cesare Cordara, S.J., *On the Suppression of the Society of Jesus: A Contemporary Account*, trans. John P. Murphy, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1999), 3 [hereafter Cordara].

²*Ibid.*, xv-xix.

children?"³ At the same time, the general suppression would never have occurred had it not been for the unfolding and cumulative pressure of the national suppressions and expulsions in Portugal, France, Spain, and various Italian states. Therefore, it will be vital to a fuller understanding of the papal suppression to highlight the major figures and issues involved in these various expulsions, while also relating them to the larger picture. As we will see, within the context of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, while the *philosophes* and various ideologies certainly played a role, the long-running conflict of church and state, and related ecclesiological and political tensions, were often paramount. The growing influence of a regalist political stance and the spread of anti-papal and anti-ultramontanist views,⁴ both without and within the Church, had a debilitating effect on the papacy and an even more devastating impact on the Society of Jesus, which, sad to say, had arguably allowed its impressive history and spirituality to be tarnished by the stain of pride, as we will see in Cordara's final assessment of this dramatic fall from grace.

II. Portugal: Tremors amid the Enlightenment

Although a small country, Portugal developed a large seaborne empire in Africa, Asia, and Brazil in the early-modern era, becoming for a time a major world power.⁵ Since much of the Portuguese "golden age" coincided with the period of initial growth and expansion of the Society of Jesus, it is not surprising that the Portuguese Assistancy became one of the largest and most influential in the early Society, from the missionary ventures of Francis Xavier onward.⁶ By the mid-eighteenth century, there were approximately 1,760

³See Manfred Barthel, *The Jesuits: History & Legend of the Society of Jesus*, trans. and ed. Mark Howson (New York: Morrow, 1984), 211–34.

⁴Ultramontanism (literally "beyond the mountains," i.e., the Alps), refers to an exaltation of papal power, looking to Rome and the Papacy as a source of strength, if not the heart of international Catholicism.

⁵See A. R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire: From Beginnings to 1807*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009); C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (New York: Knopf, 1969).

⁶For the history of the early Portuguese Society, see Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stan-

Jesuits in the Portuguese Assistancy, more than half of whom were serving in overseas missions.⁷ Few could have suspected that so long and rather remarkable a history would come to such a sudden and traumatic end.

The event that was the catalyst for this and so many other changes in Portuguese society was the massive Lisbon earthquake of 1755. In a rapid series of disasters that included quakes, floods, and fires, much of that great international city was destroyed. In fact, it was the unfortunate combination of an earthquake and a tsunami that produced such devastation, resulting in the deaths of roughly 10 per-

At the same time, [Pombal] was determined to crush any and all opposition, whether his enemies were real or imagined.

cent of the city's 250,000 inhabitants.⁸ As we have been sadly reminded by recent natural disasters, events of this magnitude can bring to a head many questions and debates about contemporary developments and con-

troversies. Thus, just as the Indian Ocean quake and tsunami in 2004 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012 impacted discussions relating to climate change and global warming, the Lisbon earthquake catalyzed discussions and disagreements about the roles of Divine Providence and the laws of nature in the unfolding of human history and geological developments.

The timing of the earthquake was also quite significant, occurring not only in the midst of the Enlightenment, but also in the 1750s, during the shift toward the High Enlightenment.⁹ While the literature on this eighteenth-century movement is vast, here we can only briefly highlight its relevance to our topic. In a classic account, Pe-

ford: Stanford University Press, 1996). Alden's companion volume, *The Suppression of an Enterprise: The Destruction of the Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1750–1777*, is forthcoming.

⁷ Alden, *Making of an Enterprise*, 674–76.

⁸ Nicholas Shrady, *The Last Day: Wrath, Ruin, and Reason in the Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755* (New York: Viking, 2008), 51–52. The estimate is that the quake may have measured as high as 9.0 on the Richter scale.

⁹ For a historical overview, see T. C. W. Blanning, ed., *The Eighteenth Century: Europe, 1688–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

ter Gay argued that the Enlightenment was the source of modern liberal humanism, including growing secularization, if not the "Rise of Modern Paganism."¹⁰ Recent scholarship, however, has made a compelling case, at variance with the long-reigning secular master narrative, that this was not a unitary but, rather, a multifaceted and in some ways paradoxical, if not contradictory, cultural movement.¹¹ Depending on time, place, and participants, the Enlightenment—or Enlightenment—gave voice to religious as well as secular sentiments, conservative as well as liberal if not radical ideas.¹² In fact, as the latter became more pronounced, an anti- or counter-Enlightenment also developed.¹³ On the religious side, there was an expansive Catholic Enlightenment, along with Protestant and Jewish counterparts, which, depending on the particular issues, operated in conjunction with or opposition to the more secular Enlightenment.¹⁴

In this context, many competing voices weighed in on the reasons for the catastrophic, if not apocalyptic, Lisbon earthquake, making the case for Providence/punishment, Nature/chance, or some combination of factors. Voltaire trumpeted his views in his biting satire *Candide* (1759), which parodied a providentialist outlook in favor

¹⁰Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols. (New York: Norton, 1966–69).

¹¹On similarities and differences of the Enlightenment in various countries, see Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, eds., *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981) [hereafter Porter and Teich].

¹²For a good historiographical overview, see Roy Porter, *The Enlightenment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2001). See also Margaret C. Jacob, *The Enlightenment: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001); Philipp Blom, *A Wicked Company: The Forgotten Radicalism of the European Enlightenment* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

¹³See, for example, Darrin M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁴See David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Ulrich L. Lehner & Michael Printy, eds., *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) [hereafter Lehner & Printy]. See also William J. Callahan and David Higgs, eds., *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For a range of recent essays on this expansive topic, see "AHR Forum: New Perspectives on the Enlightenment," *American Historical Review* 115 (2010): 1340–1435.

of a more deistic one. Other voices, however, argued that human sinfulness had provoked divine punishment or had at the least restrained the normally merciful hand of God, allowing natural forces to take their course. One such voice was Fr. Gabriel Malagrida, an Italian Jesuit in Portugal who was widely admired as a mystic and missionary. He, like many others, preached that a sinful people had breached the limits of divine mercy and patience.¹⁵ However sincere and even well-intentioned such sentiments were, they were not well received in some quarters, because if the Portuguese were so sinful a people, what did that say about the government?

The Age of Pombal

Enter one of the great “demons” of Jesuit history: Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699–1782), known in history by his title, the Marquês de Pombal (1770). While it is particularly difficult for Jesuits to be objective about Pombal, he was a complex figure, as the title of a leading biography suggests: *Pombal: Paradox of the Enlightenment*.¹⁶ Not only did Pombal become the chief minister of King Joseph I (1750–1777); while the weak King reigned, his minister, in effect, ruled during the “Age of Pombal.”¹⁷ Pombal promoted Enlightenment and reformist ideas in Portugal, especially after the 1755 earthquake. Truth be told, he deserves a considerable amount of credit for his handling of the disaster and, in its wake, the impressive rebuilding of Lisbon, along with his promotion of a host of other reforms. At the same time, he was determined to crush any and all opposition, whether his enemies were real or imagined. In particular, in addition to the nobility, the Church—and the Jesuits most of all—suffered greatly from the ferocity with which he pursued *raison d'état*;¹⁸ and, in the case of the Jesuits, his animosity arguably went well beyond what was reasonably justifiable, their opposition to him being largely a response to his determination to destroy them. We thus see in the Por-

¹⁵Shrady, *Last Day*, 113–46; Cordara, 14–17.

¹⁶Kenneth Maxwell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See also idem, “Pombal: The Paradox of Enlightenment and Despotism,” in *Enlightened Absolutism: Reform and Reformers in Later Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed. H. M. Scott (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 75–118.

¹⁷Disney, *History of Portugal*, 1:280–310.

¹⁸Maxwell, *Pombal*, 17–20.

tuguese "Enlightenment," as in other parts of southern, central, and eastern Europe, the sometimes discordant blending of reformist and authoritarian traditions.

The suppression of the Jesuits in Portugal in many ways set the pattern for much that was to follow. That was probably the reason why Cordara, in his account of the destruction of the Society, devoted the first three of eight books to the unfolding of events in Portugal.¹⁹ He also left no doubt about whom he believed to be the principal antagonist, writing that Pombal was "the first author and architect of the suppression. For when he expelled the Jesuits from Portuguese territory, he gave an example which other ministers, men with almost equal power but with a little less treachery than he, took up for imitation [elsewhere]."²⁰

To summarize the reasons that Cordara detailed as contributing to the enmity of Pombal, the Paraguay Reductions seemed to provide the initial irritant. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Jesuits had established reductions for the native Indian peoples, especially the Guarani, in parts of the Spanish Empire in order to assist (some said "civilize") and evangelize them, and also to protect them from the voracious slave traders.²¹ Due to the Boundary Treaty of 1750 between Spain and Portugal, a number of the reductions were transferred to the domain of Portuguese Brazil, where they were suppressed and the native people scheduled to be removed. The refusal of many of the Guarani to abandon their homes and life's work led to the War of the Seven Reductions. Though the European powers triumphed, rumors spread, large-

In the mind of Pombal and his supporters, this only fed their suspicions that the Jesuits were at heart treasonous, being fundamentally loyal to the international Church, the pope, and their order, as opposed to king and country.

¹⁹Cordara, 11–74. On the Portuguese suppression, see also Sydney F. Smith, S.J., *The Suppression of the Society of Jesus*, ed. Joseph A. Munitiz, S.J. (Leominster, UK: Gracewing, 2004), 1–17 [hereafter Smith]; Shradly, *Last Day*, 171–83.

²⁰Cordara, 11.

²¹See C. J. McNaspy, *Lost Cities of Paraguay: Art and Architecture of the Jesuit Reductions, 1607–1767* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982).

ly false, that the Jesuit missionaries had instigated and supported the rebellion. In the mind of Pombal and his supporters, this only fed their suspicions that the Jesuits were at heart treasonous, being fundamentally loyal to the international Church, the pope, and their order, as opposed to king and country.²²

A Whiff of Regicide

Those charges, together with the issues surrounding the Lisbon earthquake and other developments, gave Pombal the ammunition he was looking for in order to move against the Jesuits. In 1757 he managed to have the King's Jesuit confessor and then all Jesuits banned from the royal court. In September of the following year, an attempt was made on the life of the King. Members of the powerful de Tavora family were arrested and several of them suffered brutal executions. It was alleged, despite any real evidence, that some Jesuits were also part of this conspiracy.²³ At that point Pombal dredged up a recurring charge against the Jesuits: that they were supporters of tyrannicide and regicide. This was based on Juan Mariana's *On a King and the Education of a King* (1599), in which this Jesuit tutor to the future Philip III of Spain discussed the duties of a king to rule wisely and justly. Mariana also suggested that in extreme cases it might be justifiable for the people to overthrow and even kill a tyrannical king. In some political circles this caused a furor and Father General Claudio Aquaviva (whose thirty-four-year generalate from 1581 to 1615 was the longest in Jesuit history) strongly condemned even entertaining this proposition.²⁴ But the damage had been done, and down through the centuries the Society's enemies, like Pombal, found this explosive charge of regicide to be an invaluable weapon to use against it.

In these circumstances, the King agreed to the arrest of some Jesuits, the placing of the others under house arrest, and the confiscation of all Jesuit properties. In the midst of this growing crisis, Cordara, back in Rome, suggested an intriguing if radical "solution" to the problem. As he stated,

²² *Ibid.*, 12–13; William V. Bangert, S.J., *A History of the Society of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1986), 351–54, 367 [hereafter Bangert].

²³ Cordara, 40–45; Bangert, 366–68.

²⁴ John Patrick Donnelly, S.J., *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period, 1540–1640* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 208–16; Cordara, 45–47; Bangert, 117, 126.

I tried to persuade Ricci to separate the provinces of Portugal from the body of the Society and to leave them to the governance of the [papal] visitor Saldanha as if they belonged elsewhere. He should ask the Pontiff for the authority to do this if it were necessary. Otherwise the rest of the body cannot be saved, unless that member were [to be] amputated.

Other Jesuits, however, opposed the idea, "taking it for certain that such a catastrophe would not ensue."²⁵ We will see how some proponents made similar suggestions in other countries, such as France, though these too were not acted upon. It is, of course, open to question whether or how much of a difference such proposals might have made in the long run.

As it was, on April 20, 1759, Joseph I ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal and its dominions. Pombal showed little concern for mercy or justice in this whole process, including the expulsion itself. He had the Jesuits put "on ships like cattle and deported them all the way to Italy."²⁶ Yet the deportees were in a sense the lucky ones. Many Jesuit superiors in Portugal as well as large numbers of Jesuits from the overseas missions were imprisoned in notorious underground dungeons, where they languished and where many died under the appalling conditions. Worst of all was the fate of Malagrida, the Jesuit who had interpreted the earthquake as divine punishment and of whom Pombal seemed determined to make an example. At his execution his body was broken and burned, and his ashes thrown into the Tagus River. Yet, although Pombal wreaked such vengeance on an innocent man, the wheels of justice eventually turned. The surviving Jesuits were released from prison in 1777 upon the death of Joseph I and the subsequent dismissal and disgrace of Pombal.²⁷

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four colegios throughout Portugal,
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20,000 students.*

²⁵ Cordara, 41.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50–52.

²⁷ Cordara, 53–74; Bangert, 368–72.

Among the long-term consequences of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal—and to varying degrees from elsewhere—those pertaining to education and related issues of the Catholic Enlightenment were perhaps most pronounced. At the time of its demise there, the Society was operating thirty-four *colegios* throughout Portugal, with a total of about twenty thousand students. These accounted for from 80 to 90 percent of Portuguese secondary schooling, and although Pombal attempted to redress this drastic loss, he had dug a hole out of which it was going to be very difficult to emerge. Moreover, at the level of higher education, with the closing of the Jesuit University of Évora, only the University of Coimbra remained.²⁸

In this and other ways the Pombaline regime continued to weaken the Church, especially papal power, within the Portuguese domains, all the while strengthening the power of the Crown over both church and state. These “regalist ecclesiological tendencies” to some degree flowed from and reinforced both anti-Jesuitism and other (Portuguese) Catholic Enlightenment principles, especially anti-ultramontanism. These proved to be prime leitmotifs of the mounting call, in selective circles, for the suppression of the Jesuits.²⁹

III. France: An Alliance of Strange Bedfellows

In the eighteenth century, France was the leading Catholic country in the world, and within its bosom the Society of Jesus seemed to be prospering, with five provinces across the country and some three thousand members engaged in a range of ministries.³⁰ Yet the Society faced a paradox in France perhaps greater than anywhere else. On the one hand, there were several powerful interests and ideologies

²⁸ Disney, *History of Portugal*, 1:305–10; *ibid.*, 2:259–62. See also Maxwell, *Pombal*, 12–14; Evergton Sales Souza, “The Catholic Enlightenment in Portugal,” in Lehner & Printy, 359–402.

²⁹ Souza, “Catholic Enlightenment,” in Lehner & Printy, esp. 369–72, 396–98.

³⁰ With regard to eighteenth-century France, see Daniel Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France: The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); J. H. Shannon, *France before the Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1995); Norman Hampson, “The Enlightenment in France,” in Porter and Teich, 41–53.

that were opposed to the Jesuits, in some cases implacably so. On the other hand, the popularity and influence of the Society were probably greater there than in any other country. Still, while those opposed to the Jesuits may not have been great in number, they exerted considerable influence, especially when acting in concert. These “frenemies,” opposed to each other on some fronts but generally united in their opposition to the Society, included many of the *parlementaires*, Gallicans, Jansenists, and *philosophes*.³¹

It is a truism (contrary to what some of their detractors and conspiracy theorists have alleged) that the Jesuits have not always been the most astute financial managers. That was certainly the case with Antoine Lavalette, who, through a series of increasingly risky and disastrous financial transactions, incurred a huge debt in the Jesuit mission in Martinique. When this caused a wave of bankruptcies back in France, the aggrieved parties commenced legal actions against the Society, arguing in essence that the debt of one member was the debt of all. Upon losing at the trial level, the Jesuits appealed to the Parlement of Paris (one of a dozen courts of law in France, but by far the most powerful with a jurisdiction covering about one-third of the country). In retrospect this was a disastrous move because the parlements in general and the Paris one in particular were hotbeds of Gallican and Jansenist sentiments.³² Gallicanism stood for the principle of loyalty to the papacy with regard to doctrine, but support for an autonomous French Catholic Church on most other matters. In contrast to the Gallicans, the Jesuits were viewed as ultra-papalist or ultramontane. Due to their unique fourth vow of obedience to the pope with regard to missions and ministries, the Jesuits were generally among the stronger supporters of the papacy, although the Society was by no means monolithic in this regard, probably most of all in France.

As for the Jansenists, on the theological level they were rigorist Augustinians, holding that human nature had been so damaged by the Fall that individuals were incapable of good works without complete reliance on divine grace, which also linked them (unfairly some argued) to predestinationist theology. In this regard, the Jesuits and other opponents accused them of being “crypto-Calvinists,” while they accused the Jesuits of being lax due to their theology of

³¹Cordara, 75; Smith, 18–19; Bangert, 379.

³²Cordara, 75–78; Smith, 19–23; Bangert, 372–74.

“probabilism” and of dispensing “cheap” grace in the confessional.³³ In the eighteenth century, Jansenism merged with other movements, including Gallicanism, and became a potent political and ecclesiastical, as well as theological, force. One of the important threads tying these somewhat disparate movements together was an antipathy to the Jesuits.³⁴

With regard to the actions of the Paris Parlement, Cordara summed it up by saying, “One thing was being aimed at: Expulsion of the Society from France as it had recently been expelled from Portugal.” It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the parlement was determined to find or, if need be, to manufacture trouble for the Society, one way or another. In examining the Society’s *Constitutions*, the *parlementaires* charged that the Jesuits were forced to give “blind obedience” to their superiors. Concerning the Society’s governance structure, they maintained that it “did not fit French ways . . . due to the fact that the supreme power belongs to the General of the order, who resides in Rome.” With regard to the Jesuits’ moral teaching, they condemned both probabilism and their alleged support of tyrannicide. As a result, the parlement condemned the Jesuit Institute and moved toward its proscription.³⁵

An Elusive Compromise

At that point King Louis XV (1715–74) intervened.³⁶ He was a kind man and monarch, but lacking sufficient self-confidence, par-

³³To clarify two potentially confusing theological terms, “Probabilism maintained that, when confronted with hesitation as to whether an action was licit or not, as long as its licitness remained probable . . . then it remained practically licit.” An alternative view was Probabiliorism, “a doctrine according to which one could only choose to act according to the more probable opinion, although certainty was not required to act morally” (Jean-Pascal Gay, *Jesuit Civil Wars: Theology, Politics and Government under Tirso Gonzalez, 1687–1705* [Burlington: Ashgate, 2012], 2–3).

³⁴Dale Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits from France, 1757–1765* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); William Doyle, *Jansenism: Catholic Resistance to Authority from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999).

³⁵Cordara, 78–80.

³⁶See Olivier Bernier, *Louis the Beloved: The Life of Louis XV* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), esp. 212–14, 221–22. This is an intriguing, though perhaps overly positive, revisionist study of Louis XV.

ticularly for a king, he was too often influenced by various ministers and mistresses, especially the longest-running official mistress, Madame de Pompadour, who was not in general a supporter of the Jesuits.³⁷ This was undoubtedly related to the fact that the King's confessor was a Jesuit, as had been the case for all French kings for almost two centuries.³⁸ On his part, Louis was a moderate supporter of the Society and, in addition to believing that they deserved a just hearing, was not willing to submit too readily to the parlements, part of a long-running battle between kings and *parlementaires*. The King, therefore, sought other opinions, including that of the French bishops, who were largely supportive of the Jesuits. Due to strong continuing opposition, however, Louis proposed what he believed to be a reasonable compromise. The Society would

There developed in Catholic Europe, and in France in particular, a plurality of intersecting, sometimes divergent, and sometimes discordant, movements that, however sincere in their zeal for reform, in some ways ended up damaging the Church.

continue to exist in France, but, through the establishment of a new office of vicar-general, the French Jesuits would become a largely autonomous branch of the international Order. Even if this might have been acceptable to some of the Society's detractors in Paris, it was certainly not acceptable to Rome. Both Father General Ricci and Pope Clement XIII thought that this would be a dangerous and untenable precedent. The Pope is said to have famously concluded, "Let them be as they are, or let them not be."³⁹

The road to the Society's ruin in France now lay open, and the Paris Parlement wasted no time in securing the route. The tribunal be-

³⁷ See J. J. Mangan, *The King's Favour: Three Eighteenth-Century Monarchs and the Favourites Who Ruled Them* (New York: St. Martin's, 1991), 69–218.

³⁸ Regarding the complex relationship between the Society and the French monarchy, see Eric Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy: Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590–1615)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Thomas Worcester, "Jesuit Dependence on the French Monarchy," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 104–19.

³⁹ Cordara, 80–85. See also Smith, 57–67; Bangert, 374–77.

gan by closing all the Jesuit schools within its extensive jurisdiction in April 1762. Four months later the *parlementaires* announced that the Society was barred from France, although they had no authority beyond their own jurisdictional limits. Still, they held considerable sway over the provincial parlements, many of which began to move in a similar direction, though with differing degrees of severity. In addition to Paris, three other parlements banished the Jesuits from France; five suppressed the Society but allowed its members to remain; three others took no action at that time. In the midst of this chaotic situation, it remained for Louis XV to take decisive action, both to establish a national norm and to reassert his authority vis-à-vis the parlements.⁴⁰

It is important to note that most of the direct action against the Jesuits in France came from voices within the Church, disparate though they often were and largely, but by no means exclusively, lay as opposed to clerical, especially with regard to the intersecting interests of many *parlementaires*, Gallicans, and Jansenists. This does not mean, however, that the *philosophes* were silent. It is particularly ironic

Thus, despite the reluctance of its "Most Christian King," various forces in France, long known as the eldest daughter of the Church, had conspired to bring about the demise of the French Society as an institution.

strengthening (their version of) the Church, the more anti-clerical and anti-Roman, and in some cases anti-Christian and anti-religious, *philosophes* viewed this as the opening round in the "domestication" if not destruction of the Church. In a very instructive letter, d'Alembert wrote the following to his comrade Voltaire in 1762, on the eve of the destruction of the Society:

The Parlemtaires are not doing their work drowsily. They imagine they are serving religion, but without thinking it they are serving Reason; they are executioners of high justice in the

that many of the proponents of the secular—including the more radical—Enlightenment were de facto allies of groups such as the *parlementaires* and Jansenists in their collective determination to bring down the Jesuits. While the Jansenists saw this as a way of purifying and

⁴⁰Bangert, 377–78; Cordara, 85–88.

employ of Philosophy, from whom without knowing it they receive their orders. . . . [Let] the *Infame* [Church] go down of itself, for it is doing so more quickly than you think. . . . I see the Jansenists dying a quiet death next year, after having put the Jesuits to a violent death this year; and after that toleration [will be] established . . . and fanaticism destroyed before anyone has become aware of the fact.⁴¹

Of course, “toleration” can mean very different things to different people, and it was one of the tragic ironies of the Enlightenment, the purported age of reason and tolerance, that although toleration was genuinely advanced on a number of fronts, many of its adherents seemed incapable or unwilling to see their own blind spots. This was certainly true of many of the secular *philosophes* in their across-the-board attacks on Catholicism, Christianity, and religion in general. But it was also true among many of the advocates of the religious Enlightenment. More specifically, with regard to the Catholic Enlightenment or “Reform Catholicism,” there developed in Catholic Europe, and in France in particular, a plurality of intersecting, sometimes divergent, and sometimes discordant, movements that, however sincere in their zeal for reform, in some ways ended up damaging the Church. As Jeffrey Burson insightfully argues with regard to this unfortunate parting of ways in France, “the long 1750s, which began with the publication of the first volume of the *Encyclopedie* (1751) and ended with the expulsion of the Jesuits, led to the polarization of Catholic Enlightenments, followed by the undermining of [a] Jesuit-inspired Catholic Enlightenment and of the epistemological syntheses of Locke, Descartes and Newton.”⁴²

The King Acts

In the midst of this maelstrom, the irresolute Louis XV finally took action. He issued a royal edict in November 1764 that set forth a

⁴¹Quoted in Smith, 26. With regard to the attitude of many of the *philosophes* toward the Jesuits, one gets the sense that the former viewed the latter as just “enlightened” enough to be dangerous.

⁴²Jeffrey D. Burson, “The Catholic Enlightenment in France from the *Fin de Siecle* Crisis of Consciousness to the Revolution, 1650–1789,” in Lehner & Printy, 63–125, esp. 65. See also Catherine M. Northeast, *The Parisian Jesuits and the Enlightenment, 1700–1762* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1991).

uniform policy for the entire country. He said that he was reluctantly proscribing the Society; however (unlike in Portugal), the former Jesuits could remain in France so long as they lived as “good and faithful subjects” and submitted to the spiritual authority of the bishops. In addition to providing them with a modest pension, the King abrogated a parlement-sponsored oath that many had found offensive. Louis’s very mixed feelings are apparent in what he wrote:

I have no overwhelming love for the Jesuits, but every heresy has made them an object of contempt. This is to their honor. I shall say no more. If for the peace of my kingdom I unwillingly dismissed them, I wish at least that it not be believed that I concurred in all that the parlements did and said against them.⁴³

Thus, despite the reluctance of its “Most Christian King,” various forces in France, long known as the eldest daughter of the Church, had conspired to bring about the demise of the French Society as an institution, which, by the 1760s, was operating ninety colleges throughout the country. Its roughly three thousand former members attempted as best they could to make a new life for themselves. Although many remained in their homeland, their previously animating esprit de corps was gone.⁴⁴ It is hard to say whether or not many of them felt better off than their Portuguese brothers, who had been expelled from their land of birth but who remained largely united as a body. In any event, the spotlight now shifted to the land of the Society’s founder.

IV. Spain: The Triumph of Regalism

The history and relationship between Spain and the Society of Jesus was a long and complex one, and this was true in terms of how both Spaniards and non-Spaniards viewed this connection. For many of the latter, the Society had been founded by a Span-

⁴³Bangert, 378–79.

⁴⁴Smith, 70–73; Cordara, 88–91; Bangert, 379–83; Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, 510.

iard, Ignatius of Loyola, its first three fathers general and a number of later ones were Spaniards,⁴⁵ and the Spanish Assistancy, encompassing Spain and its vast worldwide empire, made up a large segment of the manpower and resources of the international Society. Therefore, many outside of Spain viewed the Jesuits as a “Spanish” order.⁴⁶ Conversely, since the headquarters and the powerful fathers general were based in Rome, and because of the Jesuits’ special vow of obedience to an Italian pope, some Spaniards and many Spanish regimes, somewhat ironically, viewed the Society as not Spanish enough. That was undoubtedly part of the reason why several of the “Most Catholic Kings” of Spain had lukewarm relations with this powerful Catholic order.

By the eighteenth century the long-reigning Spanish Habsburg dynasty had given way to that of the Bourbons. This was to prove very significant because the Bourbon family had ruled in France from 1589 and, with the establishment of a branch of the family in Spain, the long history of conflict between the two leading Catholic powers was transformed into a more cordial though still complex relationship. As they commenced their rule in Spain in 1700, the Bourbons brought with them many French traditions, including ecclesiastical and religious policies, and these were to have a significant impact on the Church in general and the Jesuits in particular.⁴⁷

Especially relevant to our discussion is the reign of Charles III.⁴⁸ Due to long-term Spanish hegemony in parts of Italy, Charles

⁴⁵In addition to the first three—Ignatius, Diego Laínez, and Francis Borgia—there have been four other Spanish fathers general: Tirso González, Luís Martín, Pedro Arrupe, and the current one, Adolfo Nicolás. For a recent study of the rather troubled generalate of González, see Gay, *Jesuit Civil Wars: Theology, Politics and Government under Tirso Gonzalez (1687–1705)*.

⁴⁶In fact, in the eighteenth century, a number of other religious orders in Spain outnumbered the Jesuits, including the Franciscans (the largest with about fifteen thousand members), Dominicans, Carmelites, and Capuchins. In comparison, the Jesuits totaled about three thousand in the country at the time of the expulsion (William J. Callahan, “The Spanish Church,” in Callahan and Higgs, *Church and Society in Catholic Europe*, 34–50, esp. 42–44).

⁴⁷On the French Bourbons, see J. H. Sherman, *The Bourbons: The History of a Dynasty* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007); on the Spanish Bourbons, see John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain: 1700–1808* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

⁴⁸See Stanley J. Stein and Barbara H. Stein, *Apogee of Empire: Spain and New Spain in the Age of Charles III, 1759–1789* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press,

ruled as the King of Naples and Sicily (the Two Sicilies) from 1734 until 1759. When Charles ascended the throne of Spain (1759–88), his son Ferdinand reigned in Naples and Sicily. The Bourbon link between France and Spain, and through the latter with much of Italy, was reinforced by a series of “Family Compacts” in 1733, 1743, and 1761. This “irrevocable family pact of union and friendship” eventually had a debilitating and ultimately fatal impact on the Society.⁴⁹ Moreover, with regard to church-state relations, a concordat between Spain and the Papacy in 1753 gave the Spanish Crown sweeping jurisdictional control over the

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Church in its domains.⁵⁰ This was but one example of the triumph of regalism in the Age of Enlightenment.

This era is also often associated with “Enlightened Absolutism” (or “Enlightened Despotism”), which in many ways reinforced the right of kings to

rule, but with the added understanding that they were to rule for the good of their people according to principles of justice and with an eye toward reform and progress.⁵¹ In addition to the “Greats,” Frederick of Prussia and Catherine of Russia, as well as Maria Theresa and Joseph II of Austria, Charles III is considered to be an example of such an enlightened ruler. He was certainly the best and most accomplished of the Spanish Bourbons. Though of probably average intelligence, he was dutiful, dedicated, and earnest in his desire to reform and revive the greatness of Spain. At the same time, unlike a number of contemporary monarchs, he was genuinely devout and sought not only the

2003); Charles C. Noel, “Charles III of Spain,” in Scott, *Enlightened Absolutism*, 119–43.

⁴⁹ For the texts of these pacts, see W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Spain under the Bourbons, 1700–1833: A Collection of Documents* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 97–98, 106–9, 126–31, esp. 109.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, “The Concordat between Spain and Benedict XIV,” 113–21.

⁵¹ See A. Lentin, *Enlightened Absolutism (1760–1790): A Documentary Sourcebook* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Averro, 1985); Scott, *Enlightened Absolutism*.

economic and political well-being of his people, but also their spiritual welfare. Yet therein lay the paradox. Even a well-meaning and pious monarch, convinced of the broad sweep of his powers and of his duty to reform—and therefore control—all institutions in his realm, could potentially run roughshod over the Church. Charles did much to improve eighteenth-century Spain, but some of his actions relating to the Church, and especially the Society, were arguably serious flaws in a generally impressive legacy.⁵²

Based on his family background, there was little reason to believe that Charles would develop an antipathy to the Jesuits. Upon his accession to the Spanish throne in 1759—the year of the Society's expulsion from Portugal—Father General Ricci traveled to Naples to pay his respects and implicitly shore up support for the Society. According to Cordara, "The king received Ricci kindly and with royal and Spanish dignity."⁵³ As things developed, much of Charles's later animus toward the Jesuits came from his ministers and their insinuations. Although Charles—unlike Joseph I in Portugal and, to a certain degree, Louis XV in France—ruled as well as reigned in his kingdom, he was in some ways too trusting of certain ministers and allowed them more influence than he should have. One in particular, Bernardo Tanucci from Naples, exercised considerable sway over both Charles and the latter's son Ferdinand. Tanucci was hostile to the Roman Curia, especially Cardinal Torrigiani, who was a power broker at the Vatican. In Cordara's assessment, although Tanucci had some regard for the Jesuits, "if the interests of the kingdom demanded it, if harm was to be inflicted upon the pope or Torrigiani, he would not hesitate to harry and destroy whatever Jesuit interests were in the way."⁵⁴ It was *raison d'état* above all else, quite in sync with the mind-set of a Pombal.

A Friendship Sours

As to what caused Charles to begin to turn against the Society, it was related to calls for the beatification of Venerable Juan de Palafox, who had been the bishop of Puebla in Mexico, and who was associat-

⁵²See Anthony H. Hull, *Charles III and the Revival of Spain* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980); Lynch, "Charles III: The Limits of Absolutism," in *Bourbon Spain*, 247–90.

⁵³Cordara, 92.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 93–94.

ed with Jansenist and anti-Jesuit sentiments. Among those who believed that the bishop should be raised up as a model of a holy life were some influential people around the King as well as the King himself. Others, however, including a majority on the papal commission and many Jesuits, did not support Palafox's cause and it was not advanced. Accurately or not, some charged that the Jesuits were the real culprits in blocking Palafox's beatification. Cordara believed that "this was the first and chief reason why King Charles was alienated from the Jesuits."⁵⁵ This may have been the first reason but was probably not the chief one, as we will see.

As an "enlightened" monarch, Charles introduced a series of political, economic, and cultural reforms to his kingdom. Some were much better received than others. In 1766 a royal decree banned the wearing of long capes and wide hats, especially at court, in part as a safely measure to prevent the use of disguises. But many Spaniards viewed this as yet another attempt to change traditional ways and customs, part of a process of "Europeanizing" Spain. A series of "Hat and Cloak Riots" broke out, first in Madrid and then elsewhere, often in connection with economic and other grievances. The King fled to a palace in the countryside and bowed to popular pressure on some issues, though he was taken aback by this rejection of the royal will.⁵⁶ Some of Charles's ministers, especially the Condé de Campomanes, convinced him that this was part of a Jesuit plot to overthrow him—supposedly based on their opposition to his regalist philosophy and their ties to the aristocracy, as opposed to the King's reliance on a number of middle-class ministers. The alleged plot, the death of Charles's pro-Jesuit mother (Isabella Farnese) that summer, and additional charges changed the situation dramatically.⁵⁷

In that highly charged atmosphere, the King was particularly vulnerable to certain rumors. One rumor raised doubts about his legitimacy, and another alleged that his enemies were seeking not only to depose but also to kill him. The Jesuits' enemies tried to link them to these plots, the old charge of regicide once again roiling the waters. According to historian Anthony Hull, "We shall never know who

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 95–96; Hull, *Charles III*, 130–133, 140–142, 193.

⁵⁶ Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Spain: Documents*, 134–38; Smith, 85–89.

⁵⁷ Bangert, 383–86; Hull, *Charles III*, 130–134.

precisely planted the false idea that the Jesuits had incriminating evidence against the King or that they were planning to kill him."⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the poison was insinuating itself into the body politic. Charles began to move against the Society, though quite surreptitiously.

An "Irrevocable" Decree

He constituted an Extraordinary Tribunal to investigate these matters and the Jesuits' purported role in them. This was then converted into an Extraordinary Council, shifting it from a judicial to an administrative forum. In the latter, things could be done even more secretly and there would be no need to adhere to legal principles, including informing the defendants of the charges against them and allowing them to present any exculpatory evidence. As it was, on January 29, 1767, the Council recommended that the King expel all the Jesuits from his dominions.⁵⁹ A month later, on February 27, a frightened King signed a secret decree to that effect. For the next several weeks, the King's officials made extensive—and still secret—preparations for the mass deportation of several thousand Jesuits. Between March 31 and April 3, beginning in Madrid and extending throughout the country, midnight knocks at the door awakened Spanish Jesuits to the shocking and heartbreaking news that they were to leave their residences immediately, with minimal possessions, head for the coasts, and from there be sent into exile.⁶⁰

On April 2 Charles issued a "Pragmatic Sanction" explaining what he had done; but the question as to why remained largely a mystery. In the most general terms he stated that "just and momentous reasons, which Our Royal Person has recognized, have forced Us to take these necessary measures against Our will." To emphasize the limited nature of the decree, the King stressed "Our faith in all the other religious orders, and Our satisfaction with them and with the way they earn Our appreciation by their humility and unimpeachable doctrine." By implication, such an assessment was not true of the Jesuits. The king also wished to emphasize that his decision was irrevocable: "We hereby do declare that it shall be law and general practice never

⁵⁸ Hull, *Charles III*, 135–37.

⁵⁹ Smith, 89 f.

⁶⁰ Cordara, 100–102; Bangert, 386–87.

to permit any individual of the Society nor any body or community of that Order to darken our shores again." Moreover, "We hereby do outlaw all writings, speeches, and incitements either for or against these provisions but rather impose absolute silence in this matter on all Our subjects, and do hereby order that all those who break this rule shall be punished as guilty of 'lèse majesté.'"⁶¹

It is quite instructive that Charles insisted on keeping the real reasons for so momentous a decision "preserved in the Royal breast,"

In November 1767, some seven months after the Spanish expulsion, Ferdinand reluctantly expelled the Jesuits from Naples and Sicily. As it turned out, far higher percentages of Jesuits in those areas left the Society than had been the case elsewhere.

and that he forbade any discussion of the matter. On the former point, it seems that the reasons can be summed up as regicide and regalism. Despite the lack of credible evidence, Charles apparently became convinced that the Jesuits were bent on taking his life. In addition, the King and his ministers seemed to believe that the Jesuits' power

and sway regarding education, the missions, and ties to Rome were incompatible with their regalist/absolutist theory of governance.⁶²

What effects did all of this have on Spain and the Spanish Empire? Cordara and Bangert estimate that a total of about five thousand or more Jesuits were expelled from Spanish domains worldwide, whereas Hull puts the figure much higher, at about ten thousand. Although the latter figure is almost certainly too high, there is no doubt that the Spanish Assistancy had been by far the largest in the Society and that its demise was a devastating loss. Concerning education, 188 colleges and 31 seminaries worldwide were gravely impacted.⁶³ Part of the Enlightenment critique of Jesuit education was that it was too mired in the past and not sufficiently open to new currents of thought

⁶¹ Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Spain: Documents*, 138–44.

⁶² Smith, 96–132, esp. 101–3, 126–29; Cordara, 102–4.

⁶³ Cordara, 102–6; Bangert, 386–92; Hull, 139. On the expulsions in the Americas, see *Decrue's Account of the Expulsion of the Jesuits from Lower California (1767–1769)*, ed. Ernest J. Burrus, S.J. (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1967); Magnus Morner, ed., *The Expulsion of the Jesuits from Latin America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965).

and experimentation. Though not without some legitimacy, this criticism ignored the fact that in the world of Catholic education, “the Jesuits showed the most acceptance of math and accommodation for modern science both in their individual studies and as [a teaching] order. . . . Thus, in many aspects they led the way of Catholic Enlightenment in these new areas of research.”⁶⁴ For many years after 1767 in Spain, and increasingly elsewhere, the Catholic Enlightenment would have to make do without the Jesuits.

The Family: Naples, Malta, and Parma

The dissolution of the Society in the Italian lands of the Bourbons was in many ways an appendage to what had happened in Spain and so can be dealt with briefly, but it is still a vital part of the story.⁶⁵ As noted earlier, Charles III had been the King of Naples and Sicily before he ascended the Spanish throne in 1759. At that point his young son Ferdinand replaced his father as the monarch in southern Italy. After the downfall of the Society in Portugal and then in the Bourbon lands of France and Spain, the focus shifted to Naples, which was linked to the latter two countries by the Bourbon Family Compact.⁶⁶ Yet, as Cordara reported, young King Ferdinand was very reluctant to exile the Jesuits, stating: “What have these religious done to deserve such a serious penalty? They have taught me the rudiments of reading and religion. In many ways they serve well and generously the nobility, the common people, every rank of citizen. I have heard nothing reproachful about them, as I have about so many others.”⁶⁷ If he had not heard such negative talk previously, that must have changed as ministers like the aforementioned Tanucci and the King’s confessor, Bishop Latilla, pressured him. The latter intimated that he owed obedience to his father, King Charles, who strongly favored the suppression. There-

⁶⁴ Andrea J. Smidt, “*Luces por la Fe: The Cause of Catholic Enlightenment in 18th-Century Spain*,” in Lehner & Printy, 403–52, esp. 419. See also Hull, *Charles III*, 144–45.

⁶⁵ For the larger Italian context, see John A. Marino, ed., *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1796* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Gregory Hanlon, *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1800: Three Seasons in European History* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ For an insightful study of the Jesuits’ impact in Naples, see Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits’ Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Aldershot: Ashgate/Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2004).

⁶⁷ Cordara, 109.

fore, in November 1767, some seven months after the Spanish expulsion, Ferdinand reluctantly expelled the Jesuits from Naples and Sicily. As it turned out, far higher percentages of Jesuits in those areas left the Society than had been the case elsewhere.⁶⁸ In Malta, which was jurisdictionally linked to Sicily, the Jesuits were expelled in April 1768.⁶⁹

In addition to Charles III's son Ferdinand, who reigned as King of Naples, his *nephew* Ferdinand was the Duke of Parma—and thus part of the Bourbon Family Compact. The Jesuits' situation in Parma was affected not only by the compact, but also by a quarrel over ecclesiastical jurisdiction between the duchy and the Holy See. The Bourbons elsewhere saw this as yet another opportunity to exert the power of the state over the church, in part by threatening the papal possessions of Avignon and Venaissin (France), and Benevento and Pontecorvo (Naples). In connection with these strong-arm tactics, the Jesuits were expelled from Parma in February 1768. At the center of this ever-widening storm, sad to say, was Charles III. Cordara lamented: "Who would not think that this last expulsion would completely satisfy the King of Spain? Who would not say that his anger with the Jesuits was spent? Yet it was not. He wanted the entire Society eliminated all over the world."⁷⁰ The long and often troublesome history of kings and emperors versus popes was now entering another, more dramatic phase, and the life or death of the Society hung precariously in the balance.

V. Onslaught: The Papacy and the General Suppression

As we have seen, the Enlightenment was a multifaceted movement which, in its various manifestations, could be neutral, supportive of, or downright hostile to religion in general and, more specifically (and in some cases more vehemently), to Christianity and the Catholic Church. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Church and the Papacy had a range of reactions and ways of dealing

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 107–10; Bangert, 392–93.

⁶⁹ Frans Ciappara, "The Maltese Catholic Enlightenment," in Lehner & Printy, 251–95, esp. 279–81; Smith, 136.

⁷⁰ Cordara, 113–19, esp. 117; Smith, 133–36.

with a whole host of reformist and sometimes revolutionary political, cultural, philosophical, and theological ideas that various proponents of the Enlightenment supported. Of particular significance—and increasingly a source of potential or actual conflict—church-state relations often came to the fore in this Age of Enlightened Absolutism (or Enlightened Despotism), when a majority of religiously indifferent as well as genuinely devout monarchs sought greater control over the established Church in their countries.⁷¹

In 1740 three individuals came to power who were all, in their differing ways, impacted by and made a significant impact on the Age of Enlightenment. Both the pious Maria Theresa of Austria (1740–1780) and the freethinking Frederick the Great of Prussia (1740–86) instituted a range of reforms that significantly affected the Church—and the Jesuits. For Pope Benedict XIV (1740–1758), both tradition and reform were powerful impulses. While safeguarding fundamental Church and papal prerogatives, he also realized that compromise was essential, especially in the Church's dealings with increasingly powerful and potentially harmful monarchical states, often jealous of what they deemed to be their national prerogatives. In such an environment, international entities like the Church and the Society faced a series of ongoing challenges. Benedict usually handled them well.⁷² In fact, Eamon Duffy has accurately described him as the “most genial, able and attractive practitioner of eighteenth-century papal statecraft.”⁷³ While he by no means bought into all aspects of the Enlightenment agenda(s), even as committed a *philosophe* as Montesquieu called him the “scholars’ Pope.”⁷⁴ From the perspective of Jesuit history, Benedict’s combi-

⁷¹ See Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Eamon Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), esp. 181–94; Sheridan Gilley, “The Emergence of the Modern Papacy, 1721–1878,” in *The Papacy*, by Paul Johnson and ed. Michael Walsh (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1997), 166–87.

⁷² For the history of his pontificate, see Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages* (St. Louis: Herder, 1950), vols. 35 and 36 [hereafter Pastor]. See also Richard P. McBrien, *Lives of the Popes: The Pontiffs from St. Peter to John Paul II* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 321–23.

⁷³ Duffy, *Saints & Sinners*, 191–93.

⁷⁴ Pastor, 35:225. With regard to the Italian Enlightenment, see Mario Rosa, “The Catholic *Aufklärung* in Italy,” in Lehner & Printy, 215–50; Owen Chadwick, “The Italian Enlightenment,” in Porter and Teich, 90–105.

nation of diplomatic tact and religious steadfastness might have made a difference in their upcoming struggle for survival. Unfortunately, the enlightened Pope died in 1758, just as the Society's enemies were starting to circle their prey.

The Pontificate of Clement XIII

Benedict's successor, Clement XIII (1758–69), was both a man of undoubted religious commitment and a man of learning; he had also been a student of the Jesuits in his early years.⁷⁵ Unlike his predecessor, however, he was far less diplomatic in the way that he tried to safeguard the Church's spiritual and jurisdictional patrimony. At the center of much of his pontificate was the controversy surrounding the Society of Jesus and its continuing viability. The year after he ascended the Chair of St. Peter, Portugal began the first of what turned out to be a series of national or empire-wide expulsions. Clement tried to cauterize the wound and made the papal policy in this matter clear in a letter to the nuncio in Spain. With regard to the attacks and charges against the Jesuits, he considered these to be "utterly foreign to the spirit of the Catholic Church and that it is His [Clement's] mind to countenance no attack nor any persecution of a body of religious so utterly dedicated (by their very Statutes) to the greater glory of God, to the Christian education of the young, to a Godly way of life and to the spiritual well-being of the faithful."⁷⁶ Unfortunately for the Society, its suppression in France several years later made it clear that the Portuguese expulsion was not an aberration.

To manifest his continuing opposition to the dismemberment of the Society, in 1765 Clement issued a papal bull, *Apostolicum pasceudi*, in which he reviewed the Church's high esteem for the Order and criticized the growing conspiracy against its members. He then affirmed his full approbation of the Society, which served to confirm the approval of so many of his predecessors.⁷⁷ That, however, was not enough, and the Jesuits were expelled in turn from the Spanish Empire, the Kingdom of Naples, and the Duchy of Parma in 1767 and

⁷⁵ Regarding his pontificate, see Pastor, vols. 36 and 37. See also McBrien, *Lives of the Popes*, 323–25.

⁷⁶ Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Spain: Documents*, 121.

⁷⁷ See Claudia Carlen, IHM, *Papal Pronouncements: A Guide: 1740–1978* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian Press, 1990), 1:12; Pastor, 36:496–504.

1768. Increasingly, the Society's most implacable foes set their sights on its wholesale suppression and placed ever greater pressure on the Church and especially on Clement XIII.⁷⁸

As an indication of what a high-stakes gambit this struggle had become, as well as how weak the Papacy was at that point in both relative and absolute terms, the political powers threatened actions that included the following possibilities: the invasion of papal territories; assaults on the Church's spiritual liberties (temporal ones having already been largely subjugated); schism from the Roman Church; and the convening of a general council, perhaps up to and including a call for Pope Clement's deposition.⁷⁹ How serious these various threats were in actuality is open to debate, but the Pope stood his ground, even against the King who had become the Jesuits' most implacable foe—Charles III of Spain. Sydney Smith compared what he considered to be Clement's widely acknowledged "saintly character" with Charles's "bull-dog tenacity." The King and his officials kept pressing for the complete suppression of the Society, but the Pope refused to give way, at least to an execution without a trial. While it seems certain that Clement would never have condemned the Society without clear proof of wrongdoing, there is some speculation that, in his last days, he may have been brought to the point where allowing the suppression of the Society for the general good of the Church was, under some circumstances, becoming a possibility.⁸⁰

Clement's personal predilections, however, remained clear. Cardinal Calini reported that in his last days the Pope had said that "he would rather have his hands cut off than sign the Brief of suppres-

Clement's personal predilections, however, remained clear. Cardinal Calini reported that in his last days the Pope had said that "he would rather have his hands cut off than sign the Brief of suppression."

⁷⁸ Smith, 133f.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 137–48.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 151–57. For correspondence between Charles III and Clement XIII regarding the Jesuits, and for Charles's further views on religious issues, see Lentin, *Enlightened Absolutism*, 156–60, esp. 157.

sion." Still, on so crucial a question, he had convoked a consistory to meet in February to discuss the status of the Society. But, perhaps driven by all of this to his grave, he suffered a fatal heart attack on the night of February 2, 1769.⁸¹ Cordara wrote, "I grieved the loss of a pontiff who was marvelously kind to me." His understandably fulsome epitaph for Clement XIII was that he "was clearly an outstanding pope, comparable with the best if he had lived in better times."⁸²

The Conclave of 1769

All eyes now turned to the conclave that would elect the next pope and, thereby, likely decide the fate of the Society.⁸³ While all but the most hopelessly naïve realize that politics has almost always played a role in this profoundly important selection of a spiritual leader for the Catholic Church, this conclave was truly one for the books, especially with regard to the extraordinary pressure that was brought to bear from the outside by some Catholic monarchs and their various officials. From within, the College of Cardinals was divided into three camps. One group contained the *Zelanti*, "those who were zealous for the spiritual independence and sacred traditions of the Papacy." A second group consisted of the *Crown Cardinals*, "whose chief solicitude was to advance the interests of the secular sovereigns." A third set of cardinals were the *Indifferents*, "an intermediate class who held or were thought to hold less decided views."⁸⁴

The machinations both within and far beyond the conclave were such that it went on for some three and a half months. There were various lists of candidates, ranging from those who were deemed by one side or another to be very good possibilities (*papabiles*), to those who were to be excluded at all cost. The secular courts, especially the Bourbons, kept close tabs on the proceedings and were determined to steer them in their direction. Yet even the Crown Cardinals had sufficient scruples to reject blatantly simoniacal proposals that would stain both the election and their own consciences. In the end, Cardinal Lorenzo Ganganelli emerged as a candidate whom almost all could live with, and he was elected virtually unanimously. While some consid-

⁸¹ Pastor, 37:356–57.

⁸² Cordara, 119.

⁸³ For the details of this conclave, see Pastor, 38:1–82 (1952).

⁸⁴ Smith, 160–161.

ered him to be anti-Jesuit, others disagreed or considered him to be something of a mystery, perhaps seeing in him what they wanted to see.⁸⁵ On his part, Cordara was convinced (even after the suppression) that "Ganganelli was hostile to the Society only in appearance, and not in fact."⁸⁶ In any event, that ambiguity was enough to get him elected.

The Pontificate of Clement XIV

Cardinal Ganganelli, who ascended the papal throne in May of 1769, interestingly took the name of his predecessor and so became Clement XIV (1769–74).⁸⁷ In his youth he had studied with the Jesuits, but he went on to become a Franciscan. Smith correctly summed up the paradox that was the man: generally upright and intelligent, but also weak and something of an opportunist. There is a debate as to whether and to what degree Ganganelli had indicated that he was willing to suppress the Jesuits once he became pope, but as his pontificate unfolded he sent mixed messages. While snubbing the Jesuits in a number of ways, he also became a master of procrastination on the question of the Society's continued existence.⁸⁸ In fact, more than four years were to elapse from the time of his accession until his final, fateful pronouncement concerning the Jesuits.

This delay and the growing frustration and demand for action on the part of the royal courts, especially some of the Bourbons, led to what has aptly been called the "Bullying of Clement XIV."⁸⁹ The pressure that the Spanish Court applied was particularly acute, especially after Don Joseph Monino arrived as the new Spanish ambassador to the Vatican. He relentlessly badgered the Pope, and when other devices failed to do the trick, he did not hesitate to resort to threats. He wanted the Pope to believe that "no middle ground [was] left." It was "either the suppression of the Society or everlasting discord with the Bourbons."⁹⁰ This probably went to the heart of Clement's dilemma. On the one hand, if he were to suppress the Jesuits, he would be go-

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 162–99.

⁸⁶ Cordara, 121–24.

⁸⁷ Regarding his pontificate, see Pastor, 38:83–553. See also McBrien, *Lives of the Popes*, 325–28.

⁸⁸ Smith, 200–213; Cordara, 125–42.

⁸⁹ Smith, 200f.

⁹⁰ Cordara, 142–43. See also Smith, 235 f.

ing against more than two centuries of Church and papal precedent, including numerous popes who had lauded and supported the Society, like his immediate predecessor. On the other hand, if he refused to move against the Jesuits, might various Catholic kings and countries move against him, even to the point of severing ties to the Roman Church?⁹¹

Yet he may still have thought that, on this crucial question, his salvation—and that of the Society—might in fact lie with the royal courts, at least with those who had thus far not gone along with their fellow sovereigns and expelled the Jesuits from their domains. Particularly important was the stance of the Habsburg Monarchy, which ruled not only the crown lands in much of central Europe, including

Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia, but also held the title of Holy Roman Emperor and thereby had sway throughout much of Germany.⁹² At that time, the Habsburg ruler was Empress Maria Theresa—with her son Joseph serving as co-regent from 1765 and as emperor in the years

In the case of the Jesuits, it is certainly true that the venerable Ratio studiorum of 1599 had not been revised and that tradition did not leave sufficient room for innovation.

1780 to 1790. She and her ministers had launched a series of reforms in her empire, in line with the Enlightened Absolutist and regalist political philosophy of the age.⁹³ This included greater control over the Church, especially on jurisdictional matters. At the same time, Maria Theresa was unquestionably devout and desired the spiritual as well as the material good of her people.⁹⁴

⁹¹Smith, 218–19.

⁹²See Derek Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Tauris, 2005); Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy, c. 1765–1918: From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (New York: St. Martin's, 2001). On the Jesuits in Bohemia, see Paul Shore, *The Eagle and the Cross: Jesuits in Late Baroque Prague* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2002).

⁹³See William J. McGill, *Maria Theresa* (New York: Twayne, 1972); H. M. Scott, "Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1740–90," in *Enlightened Absolutism*, by H. M. Scott, 145–87, esp. 160–177.

⁹⁴See Harm Klueting, "The Catholic Enlightenment in Austria or the Habsburg Lands," in Lehner & Printy, 127–64; Michael Printy, "Catholic Enlightenment and Re-

With regard to the Jesuits, it seems that she respected them and held them in high personal regard, but was she willing to support them in the face of determined royal opposition from other quarters? In particular, in a context in which the sons, and especially the daughters, of monarchs were often pawns in the game of royal diplomatic marriages, would an Empress who had given birth to sixteen children submit to pressure from other courts to let the Society die in order that her children might marry well? Cordara, perhaps somewhat exaggerating the Empress's views, said that Clement hoped that Maria Theresa,

that woman of remarkable piety, would not at all consent to such a thing. For she had almost a hereditary benevolence toward the Jesuits from her ancestors. She had entrusted her sons and daughters to the Jesuits for formation in holiness and good character. Finally, she seemed to favor very much the Jesuits of her nation.⁹⁵

However, relying on the advice of Wenzel Anton Kaunitz (state chancellor of the Habsburg monarchy from 1753 to 1792) and interested in pursuing extensive educational reforms, the Habsburgs decided not to stand in the way of the Bourbons or the Pontiff—that is, if he chose to suppress the Society. This decision indicates that Kaunitz, through his influential role as foreign minister, ensured that foreign policy held primacy of place in much of Habsburg decision making, including many issues concerning church and state.⁹⁶

The other large and significant Catholic country that had not weighed in on the Jesuit question was Poland (or the Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania). Although there is a danger with regard to Poland

form Catholicism in the Holy Roman Empire," in Lehner & Printy, 165–213; Ernst Wangermann, "Reform Catholicism and Political Radicalism in the Austrian Enlightenment," in Porter and Teich, 127–40.

⁹⁵Cordara, 143.

⁹⁶Frank A. J. Szabo, *Kaunitz and Enlightened Absolutism, 1753–1780* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 209–57; Ernst Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement, 1700–1800* (London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973), esp. 74–88; Smith, 230, 249–52; Pastor, 38:255–62. See also Paul Shore, *Narratives of Adversity: Jesuits in the Eastern Periphery of the Habsburg Realms (1640–1773)* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012); idem, *Jesuits and the Politics of Religious Pluralism in Eighteenth-Century Transylvania: Culture, Politics and Religion, 1693–1773* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

(and other locales as well) of overstating the role of the Jesuits in the Catholic renewal and resurgence in the early-modern era, there is no doubt that the Society played a very significant role, both in numbers and influence. Whereas in the eighteenth century the European average concerning the proportion of Jesuits to other members of religious orders was 1/18, in Poland it was 1/8. Moreover, the Society sponsored sixty-six colleges in the country, while the next closest teaching order was the Piarists with twenty-seven. On the complex question of the quality of Catholic and Jesuit education in Poland, which may have been roughly similar to that found elsewhere, there is some consensus that "by the mid-seventeenth century, the Jesuit colleges, like other Catholic institutions, had fallen into a rut, unwilling to move beyond rhetorical Latin and scholastic philosophy." In the case of the Jesuits, it is certainly true that the venerable *Ratio studiorum* of 1599 had not been revised and that tradition did not leave sufficient room for innovation.⁹⁷ Still, by the mid-eighteenth century, the Jesuits were undergoing something of an "intellectual renewal" in at least some areas, especially in the natural sciences.⁹⁸ Alas, this renewal turned out to be too little and certainly too late for both Poland and the Society, because

⁹⁷ With regard to the Sixteenth through the Nineteenth General Congregations (from 1730 until 1758), it could be argued that the decrees provide evidence of a certain inertia and an overly introspective stance, at a time when a more vigorous and reformist mind set was needed. See John W. Padberg, S.J., Martin D. O'Keefe, S.J., and John L. McCarthy, S.J., *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations: A Brief History and a Translation of the Decrees* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 377–406.

⁹⁸ Richard Butterwick, "Catholicism and Enlightenment in Poland-Lithuania," in Lehner & Printy, 297–358, esp. 301–3, 311–15. In France, for example, in 1761, eighty-five out of ninety of the Jesuit colleges offered courses in physics (Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, 510). With regard to science in the early Society, see Rivka Feldhay, "The Cultural Field of Jesuit Science," 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), 107–30; Marcus Hellyer, "Jesuit Physics in Eighteenth-Century Germany: Some Important Continuities," in *ibid.*, 538–54; Louis Caruana, "The Jesuits and the Quiet Side of the Scientific Revolution," in Worcester, *Companion to the Jesuits*, 243–60. See also the collection of articles on Jesuit science and mathematics in John W. O'Malley, S.J., et al., eds., *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), part 3, "Scientific Knowledge, the Order of Nature, and Natural Theology," 287–450.

the First Partition of Poland came in 1772, followed by the suppression of the Society only a year later.⁹⁹

With regard to the state of the Society on the eve of the suppression, in 1750 there were about 22,500 Jesuits worldwide. In the contemporary context, the total number of religious in Europe was approximately 350,000 (or about 1 in 300 of the total population). Also, and rather ironically, whereas vocations to the religious life went into sharp decline for many orders in the eighteenth century, the few orders that saw an increase were the Carthusians, the Observant Franciscans, and the Jesuits.¹⁰⁰ At the head of the Society during its years of greatest trial was Lorenzo Ricci (1758–73). He was a man who combined impressive intellectual and spiritual gifts, but was he the right person for that office at so crucial a juncture? Bangert points out that, although he had a “wide academic back-

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ground, he brought to his new responsibility no practical administrative experience.”¹⁰¹ Owen Chadwick, in his impressive history of the period, described Ricci as “quiet, simple, sincere, peaceable, straightforward, as far as possible from double-dealing.” Presumably based on Ricci’s non-confrontational manner and his devotion to duty, Chadwick concluded, “At this crisis in their fortunes, the Jesuits were fortunate in their general.”¹⁰² However, perhaps the most accurate—and balanced—assessment of Ricci comes from his fellow Jesuit Giulio Cordara, who knew him well and “had a special love” for him, but

⁹⁹With regard to the Polish Society and the Polish Partition(s), see Norman Davies, *God’s Playground: A History of Poland*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), esp. 1:167–70, 511–46. See also Stanislaw Obirek, “Jesuits in Poland and Eastern Europe,” in Worcester, *Companion to the Jesuits*, 136–50.

¹⁰⁰Elizabeth Rapley, *The Lord as Their Portion: The Story of the Religious Orders and How They Shaped Our World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 220; Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–2, 147; Bangert, 364.

¹⁰¹Bangert, 363.

¹⁰²Chadwick, *Popes and European Revolution*, 371.

considered him to be a lamb cast among wolves. Concerning Ricci's election, Cordara wrote thus:

I wanted nothing less than that such a burden be placed upon such a man at such a time. I grieved that this innocent soul was tossed into a sea of such boundless turbulence and I sensed he would be easily overwhelmed by the force of the storm. I think he would have been most suitable for ruling the Society if the sea were peaceful and calm. But I thought him less apt, because of his native placidity and calm, to be at the helm amidst such stormy conditions. For I thought that unusual means had to be taken in those unusual circumstances, as those times were. Something extraordinary had to be ventured upon, something outside the usual.¹⁰³

As events unfolded, it seems fair to conclude that Cordara was prescient as well as poignant in his judgment. In fact, it is difficult to say whether Ricci or Clement XIV was more "overwhelmed by the force of the storm." For the Pope, it seems that the mounting pressure finally became too much to bear, especially the fear of schism, as had happened with Henry VIII during the English Reformation. As Cordara said, obviously frustrated by the contemporary scene, "many today are wont to frighten the popes away from stoutly resisting with priestly firmness the princes who undertake every sort of injustice. They think that all the Catholic princes are so many Henrys, prepared like the English king to rush into every crime and to split off from the Church's faith."¹⁰⁴ While Cordara was probably correct in assuming that these threats were more bluster than reality, the Pope apparently took them seriously.

The Papal Brief and the Suppression

Whatever his final rationale was, by the summer of 1773 Clement had agreed to suppress the Society. The instrument of suppression, dated July 21, 1773, was a papal brief as opposed to a bull. As Smith points out, "The binding force of each is the same, but a Brief is a less solemn Papal utterance than a Bull. . . . It was against all precedent to use this form for an object so serious as the suppression of a great

¹⁰³ Cordara, 24–26. See also Smith, 254–55; Pastor, 36:299 f.

¹⁰⁴ Cordara, 33.

Religious Order, which involved the abrogation of more than twenty previous Bulls." Smith speculated that Clement may have used this less solemn format because, having been reluctantly forced to make this decision, he might thereby allow for an easier possible restoration of the Society under better circumstances. Yet another, probably more prominent motive, was that, for a brief, fewer individuals and signatures were required for its promulgation, thereby helping to ensure the greater secrecy that the Pope desired.¹⁰⁵

The Clementine brief, *Dominus ac Redemptor*, is a fairly long document, but it only speaks in generalities on its supposedly central point.¹⁰⁶ At the outset it lauds the great value of religious orders for the Church, but also states that if they are no longer producing their desired fruits, it may be necessary "to completely uproot and disperse them."¹⁰⁷ There follows a short history of papal actions limiting the formation of new orders, or modifying or suppressing existing ones. Of particular note, in 1312 Pope Clement V "suppressed and totally extinguished the military order of the Templars because of their universal bad name."¹⁰⁸ In fact, the demise of the Templars (the Order of the Knights Templar) was a much more complex and controversial process than the brief suggests.¹⁰⁹ In any event, it goes on to catalogue the suppression or transformation of a number of generally small orders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, relying on the plenary power "bestowed on the popes as the Vicars of Christ and heads of the Christian state."¹¹⁰

Then the document moves into a discussion of the founding of the Society of Jesus and its relations with the Papacy and the wider Church. It does acknowledge that at least a dozen popes had either

¹⁰⁵Smith, 257–58.

¹⁰⁶The full text of the brief, both the Latin original and an English translation, can be found in Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., ed., *"Promising Hope": Essays on the Suppression and Restoration of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2003), 281–312.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 297.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 298–99.

¹⁰⁹See Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, *The Templars: Selected Sources* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), esp. part 6; Barbara Frale, *The Templars: The Secret History Revealed*, trans. Gregory Conti (New York: Arcade, 2009), esp. 159–201.

¹¹⁰*Dominus ac Redemptor*, in McCoog, "Promising Hope," 299–301.

confirmed or increased the privileges of the Society, thereby confirming its Institute. Even so, "seeds of dissension and rivalry grew . . . [and] there was no lack of very grave accusations against members that caused no little disturbance to the peace and tranquility of the Christian commonwealth." Both political leaders and several popes called into question "the immoderate privileges of the Society," and some took steps to modify them, especially any intermixing in political affairs.¹¹¹ In the recent reign of Clement XIII, "far more difficult and troublesome times befell the See of Peter."

Cordara also placed some blame for the Jesuits' demise on the attacks of the Jansenists, though he added, correctly, that their influence could be exaggerated. In the long run, it was their interactions and alliances with the Gallicans and the parlementaires that made the real difference.

"who had [supposedly] inherited devotion and generosity toward the Society from their predecessors . . . were forced to send away and expel members of the Society from their realms."¹¹²

Clement then announces, based on these various considerations, and because "the Society is no longer able to produce the very rich fruits and usefulness for which it was founded," that "we abolish and suppress" it. The rest of the document details how this is to be done, lays out the various options for former Jesuits, including entering another religious order or joining the secular clergy, and mandates that silence is to be observed concerning the "causes and motives" of the suppression.¹¹³

Bangert is correct in stating that "*Dominus ac Redemptor* suppressed the Society but without condemning it."¹¹⁴ In fact, it is remarkable that in so lengthy a document the Society is only criticized in the most general of terms, with virtually no specific evidence cited against it. A not unreasonable conclusion would be that there was little specific

¹¹¹ Ibid., 301–5.

¹¹² Ibid., 305.

¹¹³ Ibid., 306–12.

¹¹⁴ Bangert, 399.

evidence to cite. It is also notable that, especially as was the case with the Spanish suppression, so too with the papal one, there was a virtual obsession with silence, both in the processes leading up to the suppressions and in the aftermaths. It is not amiss to speculate that both the King and the Pope may have feared that their motives and rationales were insufficient for so drastic a step, or they may have been concerned, if not embarrassed, about their true motivations coming to the fore. Moreover, although some other orders had been suppressed at troubled times in the history of the Church, never before, including the case of the Templars, had so large and influential an order, operating hundreds of schools, churches, and other vital institutions, been so quickly and thoroughly destroyed.¹¹⁵ Duffy's conclusion is quite telling: "It was the papacy's most shameful hour."¹¹⁶ In all, it had been a "perfect" storm.¹¹⁷

Charles III allowed his obsession with the Jesuits to push him to the point of ordering the destruction of a collective institution that for more than two centuries had played a vital role in the life of both the country and the Church to which he claimed to be devoted.

VI. Assessments and Conclusions

In his final analysis of the various reasons for the suppression of the Jesuits, Cordara considered factors both external and internal to the Society. A paramount factor for him was the "contrivance of royal ministers," though he did not believe that they were involved

¹¹⁵For their views on the brief and its aftermath, see Cordara, 145–65; Smith, 289–306; Pastor, 38:286 f.

¹¹⁶Duffy, *Saints & Sinners*, 194. Particularly tragic, and in many ways unconscionable, was the treatment of Father General Ricci, who died, still a prisoner, at the Castel Sant' Angelo on November 24, 1775. See Cordara, 162–63; Smith, 286–88.

¹¹⁷For a collection of articles on the various suppressions as well as on the Society's survival in several unlikely settings, see O'Malley et al., *The Jesuits II*, part 6, "Expulsions, Suppressions, and the Surviving Remnant," 679–784.

in a conspiracy as such.¹¹⁸ In that regard, however, while Cordara was not too harsh in his assessment of the ministers, he was too easy with regard to the monarchs. While most of the royal ministers served the cause of Enlightened Absolutism, a number of individual monarchs pushed regalism to the extreme, or at least permitted this to happen. In particular, Charles III allowed his obsession with the Jesuits to push him to the point of ordering the destruction of a collective institution that for more than two centuries had played a vital role in the life of both the country and the Church to which he claimed to be devoted. As Hull reasonably concluded, "At the bar of history, the portentous events surrounding the decrees against the Jesuits in 1767 and 1773 must rank in the long run as a defeat for an [otherwise] enlightened king."¹¹⁹ Another undoubtedly devout ruler, Maria Theresa, allowed royal-marriage diplomacy and other political considerations to cloud her judgment. Whereas Charles used his regal power to destroy the Jesuits—and Joseph I in Portugal and Louis XV in France allowed themselves to be goaded into doing so—Maria Theresa's decision *not* to use hers had the same drastic result.

Cordara also placed some blame for the Jesuits' demise on the attacks of the Jansenists, though he added, correctly, that their influence could be exaggerated.¹²⁰ In the long run, it was their interactions and alliances with the Gallicans and the *parlementaires* that made the real difference. Collectively, it was their anti-ultramontanist stance that fueled their anti-Jesuit animus. Variations of this French model, such as Febronianism in Germany and Josephinism in Austria, worked to similarly negative effect against the Jesuits in other parts of Catholic Europe.¹²¹

In Cordara's account, his assessment of the alleged "sins" of the Society is particularly interesting—and instructive. Concerning the charge of Jesuit avarice, he argued that it was unfounded and that, to the contrary, in the wake of the suppression, "many miss [the Jesuits'] generosity and complain that they do without many sources of relief for their need." Regarding the Jesuits' supposed laxity in moral teach-

¹¹⁸ Cordara, 166–67.

¹¹⁹ Hull, *Charles III*, 146.

¹²⁰ Cordara, 167–68.

¹²¹ See Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform*, esp. chap. 8.

ing and excessive accommodationism, he argued that those allegations were largely untrue (though he did believe that the Society had erred at least somewhat in the direction of excessive accommodation to local customs in the Chinese Rites controversy). Moreover, he said that the Society as a whole had been “above reproach” in living out the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and that it “matched or even surpassed the probity of other orders.”¹²²

If it seems that Cordara was perhaps being too easy on the Order that he undoubtedly loved, his discussion of the accusation concerning the “Jesuits’ pride” is remarkably honest and, at a collective level, self-accusatory:

The discussion has finally been brought to the point where I touch upon the hidden sore spot for the Society and I uncover the fault for which God especially willed the Society to be punished with extinction. My former Jesuit companions will have to pardon me. Unless they wish to be falsely complacent, they have to admit along with me that there was much pride among us. The masters of novices quietly instilled it in us. They kept preaching that a vocation to the Society was God’s greatest gift. They presented no models to imitate except our own Jesuit ones. They spoke of the Society’s ways and procedures in such a way that it seemed nothing could be superior or even imagined to be. Once they had imbued our minds with such a high esteem for the Society, in vain were they trying to instill humility and deference.¹²³

“[My fellow Jesuits] have to admit along with me that there was much pride among us. The masters of novices quietly instilled it in us. They kept preaching that a vocation to the Society was God’s greatest gift.”

Cordara goes on to describe some of the ways that this pride manifested itself, whether among scholastics, lay brothers, or priests, and makes clear that he believed that this was the Jesuits’ deadly sin.

¹²²Cordara, 172–76.

¹²³Cordara, 178.

In fact, so strong was this conviction that, undoubtedly in line with his own view of Divine Providence, he believed that "the suppression was not simply permitted, but decreed and prepared for by a definite plan of God."¹²⁴ While we may have a very different view concerning the relationship between human free will and the will of God, and between what God decrees as opposed to what God allows to happen, Cordara's assessment is a powerful one and, especially for Jesuits, quite challenging. Individually and collectively, it stands as a warning against the sin of pride and calls us to emulate much more faithfully the One whose life and teachings show us how to be genuinely "meek and humble of heart."¹²⁵

Just as Cordara was convinced that the hand of God was at work in the Society's demise, he was equally confident that the Lord would bring it back to life. Perhaps he was hopeful in that a remnant of the Society had hung on, if only by a thread, especially and rather ironically, in Frederick's Protestant Prussia and Catherine's Orthodox Russia, largely due to canonical technicalities.¹²⁶ On his part, Frederick the Great "admired the Jesuits' work, particularly in the sphere of education," and would not be dictated to by Rome.¹²⁷ Through his conquests in Silesia and Poland, he had absorbed thirteen Jesuit colleges into his kingdom and was determined to have their valuable efforts continue, though these schools were eventually controlled and transformed by a Catholic School Board.¹²⁸ On her part, Catherine the Great, realizing the need for expanded educational opportunities in her realms, was

¹²⁴Ibid., 178–85, esp. 184–85.

¹²⁵Matt. 11:29.

¹²⁶According to Stanislaw Obirek, "This paradox was expressed wittily by Frederick the Great of Prussia: [D]espite the exertions of his Most Catholic Majesty of Spain, his Most Apostolic Majesty of Portugal, his Most Christian Majesty of France, and the Holy Roman Emperor, the Jesuits had been saved by his Most Heretical Majesty and her Most Schismatical Majesty." Idem, "Jesuits in Poland and Eastern Europe," in Worcester, *Companion to the Jesuits*, 146.

¹²⁷David Fraser, *Frederick the Great: King of Prussia* (New York: Fromm International, 2001), 563, 241. See also T. C. W. Blanning, "Frederick the Great and Enlightened Absolutism," in Scott, *Enlightened Absolutism*, 265–88. With regard to Frederick's ambivalent attitudes toward the Jesuits and religious issues, see some of his correspondence and papers in Lentin, *Enlightened Absolutism*, 134–40, esp. 138–40.

¹²⁸Bangert, 405–6; Pastor, 38:417–38.

also determined that the Jesuit schools should continue to operate.¹²⁹ In fact, through a series of political and ecclesiastical twists and turns, the Society continued to exist in White Russia until 1820.¹³⁰

As events transpired, Cordara lived for a dozen years beyond the general suppression of his beloved Society, dying in 1785. Although he could not know for certain if and when the Society might be restored, his faith, hope, and love were made manifest as he concluded his insightful and heartfelt account.

[The] Society will rise up from the ashes in its good time. Restored by the divine will, it will remain till the end of time. . . . I hold for certain that the Jesuits who will follow us will be more cautious. Schooled by the calamities that befell us, they will avoid the hatred of men, especially of religious. They will never extol themselves above others with a sense of self-importance. They will always keep themselves within the bounds of modesty.¹³¹

What a hope!

The Society of Jesus was in fact restored by Pope Pius VII on August 7, 1814, four decades after many contemporaries—and certainly most of its enemies—thought that it was effectively dead and buried.¹³² Like its namesake, however, it rose from the dead!

From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, Ignatius's "least" Society can be properly proud of many aspects of its almost five-hundred-year history, but it must also acknowledge parts of its past and present with a great deal of humility, even as it faces a challenging but wide-open future. In terms of numbers, the modern Soci-

¹²⁹See Robert K. Massie, *Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman* (New York: Random House, 2011); Isabel de Madariaga, "Catherine the Great," in Scott, *Enlightened Absolutism*, 289–311. Regarding Catherine's views on religion and the Jesuits, see various correspondences in Lentin, *Enlightened Absolutism*, 140–145, esp. 144–45.

¹³⁰Bangert, 413–19.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 185–87, esp. 187.

¹³²On the worldwide aftereffects of the suppression and the process leading up to the restoration, see Bangert, 400–430. For the papal brief of restoration, see *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*, in McCoog, "Promising Hope," 323–30. For an overview, see Jonathan Wright, "The Suppression and Restoration," in Worcester, *Companion to the Jesuits*, 263–77.

ety reached a peak of just over 36,000 in 1965; today Jesuits worldwide total slightly half that at somewhat under 18,000.¹³³ Yet dramatically declining numbers in many parts of the West and the northern hemisphere are being offset, at least in part, by more men entering the Society in parts of the developing world and the southern hemisphere. Moreover, while it is too early to know the full significance of the recent papal election, we are almost certainly at a turning point in the history of the Church in having the first non-European pope in about twelve hundred years, the first one ever from the Americas and specifically from Latin America, and the first Jesuit pope. In adopting his papal name, Pope Francis appears to be reaching out to the Church and to the world, and embracing the spirit of poverty and the zeal for reform that so animated the life of St. Francis of Assisi.

At this crossroads in the life of the Church and the Society, we cannot but ask: what does God have in store for us? Concerning “the members of that Society which Saint Ignatius wished to be known by the name of Jesus,”¹³⁴ as we look forward to the bicentennial of the Society’s restoration, we should be filled with gratitude, a great deal of hope, and—as Cordara’s account of the suppression powerfully reminds us—a sizable dose of humility.

¹³³Patrick Howell, S.J., “The ‘New’ Jesuits: The Response of the Society of Jesus to Vatican II, 1962–2012: Some Alacrity, Some Resistance,” *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education* 42 (2012): 7–11, at 11.

¹³⁴Bangert, *History of the Society of Jesus*, Dedication.

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