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*New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism
in the Progressive Era* (review)

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establishment of schools and hospitals was a boon for the city. Avella describes how Catholics participated in urban renewal through the construction of a meeting hall that served both church and city functions. He writes, "The [Catholic] response mirrored more powerfully than ever the close cooperation between Church and city" (p. 148). During the Great Depression, Catholics cooperated with city officials to assist those in need. During the rise of suburbia after World War II, new churches, which served as centers for community activities, were built in these burgeoning communities. In his final two chapters, Avella shows how the Church and the city partnered in meeting the needs of an expanding Latino community and fighting the growing problem of homelessness. Aptly and accurately he concludes, "The Catholic Church has played an important role in Sacramento's evolution" (p. 277).

Avella's narrative tells an interesting and engaging story that clearly draws connections between the civic and Catholic aspects of the city's history from 1850 to the present. Only in chapter 4, where he discusses ethnic minorities, does the author fall somewhat short in clearly demonstrating the connection between Church and city and their mutual influences. Still, the essential message and purpose of the monograph is not only manifest but also clearly communicated to the reader.

As with his many earlier contributions to the historical record, Avella's latest effort demonstrates a high level of scholarship that can be enjoyed by many different constituencies. The book is exhaustively researched through numerous archival repositories and essential secondary sources. This volume, while useful to scholars of religion or urban history, can also be of great benefit and enjoyed by any engaged reader. Californians and residents of Sacramento would find a special affinity for this book.

Avella has woven a story that both engages and informs his readers. Clearly his rather unique approach to the combination of Church and urban history has worked well. Most probably, using this monograph as a model, other scholars will follow suit.

Stonehill College

RICHARD GRIBBLE, C.S.C.

New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era. By Kathleen Sprows Cummings. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2009. Pp. xviii, 278. \$45.00. ISBN 978-0-807-83249-3.)

Historians of American women's history in the Progressive Era have documented the extensive and multifaceted contributions of Protestant and secular women who used gender ideology as a way to expand their educational, social, and political influences. For many, the quintessential "New Woman" per-

sonified the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century woman who represented and championed these changing ideas and attitudes about gender in America. Kathleen Sprows Cummings, assistant professor of American studies at the University of Notre Dame, adds her voice to this scholarship in important and significant ways. Challenging past assumptions that Catholic women were absent or, at best, invisible pawns in these events, she widens the parameters of discussion with a finely nuanced interpretation of the activities of four Catholic women, two laywomen and two women religious.

New Women of the Old Faith "challenges the widespread assumption that women who were faithful members of a patriarchal church were largely incapable of genuine work on behalf of women" (p. 4). Seeing themselves as far more marginalized as Catholics than as women, they negotiated the tensions between gender and religious identity, walking a tightrope as they participated in national debates concerning gender ideology, higher education, professionalism, and suffrage. Cummings bases her interpretations on the work and lives of four exceptional women. Margaret Buchanan Sullivan (1847–1903) was a Chicago-based writer who turned her pen toward defending "True Womanhood" from the challenge presented by the "New Woman." Publishing in both Catholic and secular presses, she was a rarity as a woman journalist who had readers both inside and outside the Church. Sister Julia (Susan) McGroarty, S.D.N.de N. (1827–1901), was the provincial director of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and founder of Trinity College for women. Caught amid the Americanist controversies while trying to build Trinity College, she negotiated her way between American bishops who advocated higher education for Catholic women and those who viewed it as the downfall of the traditional Catholic family—a sure sign of the lurking influence of the New Woman. Sister Assisium (Catherine) McEvoy, S.S.J. (1843–1939), was a Philadelphia educator who pushed for greater professionalism and quality for Catholic education, locally and nationally. Finally, Katherine Eleanor Conway (1852–1927), the youngest of the quartet, was a journalist, editor, and public speaker whose words and ideas became representative of the antisuffrage movement of the early-twentieth century. All of these women treasured their Catholicity and saw it as an integral part of their core identity. They worked tirelessly not only to defend the Church from outside assaults but also to challenge gently, and at times strongly, gender parameters within it. Chafing at times from their own social and professional limitations, they negotiated the contradictions and tensions in their own lives as women of the Old Faith who at times functioned in a world of New Women.

Cummings makes important choices by utilizing the life and work of these four women as a way to interpret and integrate the narrative of how religion, specifically Catholicism, informed and influenced women's thinking about some of the most important debates of the Progressive Era. This well-written and finely nuanced book makes an important contribution to scholarship in Catholic history and American women's history. Her epilogue in the last chap-

ter provides a fascinating jumping-off point, tantalizing the reader to connect these women and their activities to the post-Vatican II world. For these Progressive Era women, the Church provided a sense of purpose and meaning and the best venue for social, spiritual, and intellectual opportunities. In contrast, by the 1960s, "transformations for women in American society had far outpaced changes for women in the church," and Cummings argues that "the seeds of gender discontent . . . would be watered by Vatican II, massive social change, and major demographic transformations" (p. 195). But that is a different story that also needs to be told.

Avila University

CAROL K. COBURN

Católicos: Resistance and Affirmation in Chicano Catholic History. By Mario T. García. (Austin: University of Texas Press. 2008. Pp. xii, 366. \$60.00. ISBN 978-0-292-71840-1.)

The role of religion has not received due attention in most histories of U.S. Latinos or Hispanics, the people living in the United States whose roots derive from the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America. Most histories of American religion are still centered on Euroamerican traditions.

Mario T. García, a professor of Chicano studies and history at the University of California-Santa Barbara, aims to correct this deficiency by studying Catholicism within a subset of Latinos called Chicanos. The term *Chicanos* became very popular in the 1960s and 1970s for Mexican Americans who were self-conscious of their history and identity, and used that self-consciousness as part of a liberation movement from racist oppression.

The book consists of eight chapters, and the first focuses on Fray Angélico Chávez (1910–96), whose work García uses to "introduce the concept of oppositional historical narrative" (p. 29), which denotes a narrative opposed to a dominant sociohistorical narrative. Chavez, a prominent Catholic figure from New Mexico, sought to affirm the place of Hispanics in New Mexico in American religious history.

Chapter 2 links Catholic social doctrine and Mexican American political thought. In particular, García studies the influence of Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), encyclicals that sought to alleviate the plight of workers. The ideas expressed in these encyclicals influenced Alonso Perales and Cleofas Calleros, two key figures in Mexican American civil rights between the 1930s and the 1950s.

A significant original contribution of the book is in chapter 3, where García examines archival materials from the Federal Writers' Project, which was part of a massive employment program established in the Great Depression. The records establish the presence of vibrant Catholic traditions (especially pertaining to music, healing, and local festivals) that often differed