

Revolution and Empire: Reconstructing the Church, 1789–1815

2.1 THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CHURCH

Religion had always permeated daily life. In the eighteenth century the dominating physical presence of the great medieval cathedrals, parish churches, monasteries and convents, of seminaries and episcopal palaces, the wayside crucifixes, the sonorous impact of the church bells measuring time and calling the faithful to worship, a numerous clergy conducting religious services, hearing confessions, and hurrying about its parish duties, offering spiritual succour and distributing charity, were only the most obvious manifestations of religion's vital presence. Virtually unanimous attendance at religious services, especially in the countryside, signified membership of the local community as well as allegiance to the Universal Church. Only the perverse, perverted or heretical would absent themselves. Above all, perhaps the rites of passage—baptism, marriage and burial—of such central importance in the lives of individuals, their families and their communities manifested the close association of the clergy and believers and the overwhelming dominance of a Christian culture. Membership of confraternities and other religious associations were additional signs of commitment, ostentatiously displayed in the processions which marked the Church's feast days—public manifestations of faith involving both the civil and religious authorities.

The Church of France, part of a universal body, but enjoying substantial autonomy in the form of Gallican liberties had, in response to the challenge of the Protestant Reformation, been strengthened and purified

by the centuries of reform and educational and missionary activity inaugurated by the Council of Trent (1545–1563) convened to reaffirm its role as the essential mediator between God and Man. Its dominance must have appeared beyond challenge. Indeed, safeguarding the interests of the Church was, until the end of the *Ancien Régime*, conceived of as central to the mission of the *Roi Très Chrétien*. Louis XVI, an exceptionally devout monarch, had sworn to uphold the faith. During his coronation, his reign was consecrated by means of crowning and anointing with holy oil. Religion legitimised both monarchy and social hierarchy. To criticise the one represented a blasphemous assault on the Lord's anointed; to challenge the other contested the social order blessed by God. As well as offering protection, successive kings had also been determined to exercise control over the hierarchy and enormous wealth of the Church. By means of a Concordat imposed by François I in 1516, the monarchy had asserted its right to nominate bishops for canonical investiture by the Pope. Together with a ban on the publication of Papal bulls in France without royal permission, this made it easier for the state to control and make effective use of the clergy as a quasi-bureaucracy, a means of transmitting its own instructions and self-glorifying propaganda and of affirming the subject's duty of obedience. Widespread illiteracy and the limited number of royal officials magnified the importance of these practices. Appointment to high office within the Church depended on social status and patronage. Of 16 archbishops and 114 bishops in 1789, all but two were nobles. They administered sees which varied enormously in terms of geographical scale, population and income.¹ Most were well educated, well connected, frequently able as well as pious and determined to defend the historic liberties of the Gallican Church as well as their own privileges against both King and Pope. They took their pastoral duties seriously; some played important political roles; a small minority were guilty of scandalous conduct.

The lower clergy nevertheless grumbled frequently about their own relative impoverishment and subordination in comparison with the wealth, power and privileges of this aristocratic episcopate. Able commoners, feeling frustrated in their career ambitions appear to have been increasingly resentful, particularly when the incomes enjoyed by bishops

¹See also N. Aston, *Christianity and revolutionary Europe, 1750–1830*, Cambridge, 2003, p. 15.

or cathedral chapters were supplemented by the practice of holding abbeys *in absentia* or through the impropriation of the income from tithes. Pluralism and nepotism appeared all too common. Criticism of the established religious order by priests attracted by long-standing Jansenist demands for a more austere and morally rigorous faith, together with proposals for more conciliar forms of internal church government also aroused considerable ill feeling on both sides of the debate. Together with a desire to secure Papal protection against government interference, this sense of grievance explains a turn towards ultramontanism which would be reinforced massively by the Revolution.²

In 1789 the First Order of clergy was made up of some 170,000 individuals, around 0.6% of the population. It included 50,000 parish priests, better educated than ever before, and arguably more committed to living up to the popular image of the *bon curé*, and 25,000 monks, together with 50,000 nuns. Although, in some urban centres, there were already signs of a decline in the attractiveness of religious vocations, the sons of many middle class and well-off peasant families still found the role of the parish priest an attractive means of satisfying their religious and social aspirations.³ An increase in non-attendance at religious services, particularly amongst the nobility and the 'middling sort', including artisans, and amongst men rather than women, however, reflected a decline in the intensity of conformist pressures within increasingly mobile populations and additionally the growing hostility towards the clergy found in the published works of the *philosophes* and their popularisers.⁴ Intellectual scepticism encouraged support for religious and secular alternatives and for toleration of dissent.⁵ The 'rich' and 'idle' bishops and the cathedral

² See J. McManners, *Church and society in 18th century France* vol. I. *The clerical establishment and its social ramifications*, Oxford, 1999, *passim*.

³ See also T. Tackett, 'L'histoire sociale du clergé diocésain dans la France du 18^e siècle', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 1979, p. 29.

⁴ G. Cholvy, 'Débats et combats autour de notre histoire religieuse contemporaine', in J. Delumeau, (ed) *L'historien et la foi*, 1996, pp. 57–61; D. Garrioch, *The making of revolutionary Paris*, 2002, pp. 303–305.

⁵ K. von Greyerz, *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Oxford, 2008, pp. 200–203.

clergy were especially popular targets. So too were the contemplative religious orders accused of ‘fanaticism’ and ‘superstition’.⁶

These corrosive trends engendered some pessimism amongst priests, many of whom would be scandalised by a royal edict in 1787, which by allowing private acts of worship relaxed the penal legislation directed against non-Catholic belief. The King had clearly reneged on his coronation oath to extirpate heresy. The mere suggestion that there might be alternative routes to salvation was entirely unacceptable to the vast majority of Catholic priests. However, this palpable sense of anxiety should not lead us to accept the over-emphatic claims made by some leading historians, that a process of ‘dechristianisation’ was under way.⁷ In spite of the publication of cheap and accessible editions of books and pamphlets, the vast majority of the population remained unaware of Enlightenment criticism of the practices of both Church and state. Theological issues remained important subjects of intellectual debate.⁸ Moreover, even such notorious critics of established religion as Voltaire and Rousseau were determined to recognise the crucial importance of belief in a *Dieu rémunérateur et vengeur* as a means of preserving social order.⁹ Although by the 1780s there were some signs of an emerging religious crisis, a more appropriate emphasis would be on the diversity of religious contexts, the gradually changing forms of spirituality, and the overwhelmingly Christian and Catholic character of public and private culture. The evident decline of the contemplative and mendicant orders was more than compensated for by the growing dynamism of the female teaching congregations and of those devoting themselves to care of the sick and poor.¹⁰

⁶F. Lebrun, *Etre chrétien en France sous l'Ancien régime, 1516-1790*, 1996, p. 177 and also *Les hommes et la mort en Anjou aux 17^e et 18^e siècles*, 1971, pp. 413–415.

⁷See especially M. Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au 18^e siècle: les attitudes devant la mort d'après les clauses de testaments*, 1973; P. Chaunu, *La mort à Paris, 16^e, 17^e 18^e siècles*, 1978, pp. 432–456.

⁸S. Grote, ‘Religion and Enlightenment’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2014, p. 156.

⁹Aston, *Christianity and revolutionary Europe*, p. 112. See also C. Dousset, ‘Entre tolérance et violence: la Révolution française et la question religieuse’ in M. Bertrand, P. Cabanel, (eds) *Religions, pouvoir et violence*, Toulouse, 2004, pp. 137–138.

¹⁰C. Langlois, T. Tackett, M. Vovelle, S. Bonin, M. Bonin, *Atlas de la Révolution française*, vol. 9, *Religion*, 1996, pp. 52–56; J-O. Boudon, *Religion et politique en France depuis 1789*, 2007, pp. 19–20.

The clergy continued to provide religious instruction, spiritual guidance, help and advice to populations convinced of Divine intervention in their affairs and of the consequent need for both faith and good works to obtain forgiveness for sin. The threat of exclusion from the sacraments and eternal punishment remained potent means of assuring both spiritual and social authority. The considerable efforts made by the clergy as part of the ongoing counter-reformation had borne fruit. 'Pagan' and 'superstitious' practices were being eliminated as the control exercised by the clergy over the faithful was reinforced. At the same time, there were signs of a greater willingness, on their part, to compromise with the popular desire for more emotional and expressive forms of religious practice and for a God of love accessible through intercession by the saints and particularly the Virgin Mary, and by means of pilgrimages and the cults of the Rosary and Sacred Heart.¹¹ On the eve of the 1789 Revolution the Church remained at the heart of French society.

2.2 THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS, 1789–1815

In hope of solving the monarchy's financial difficulties, an Estates General representing the three estates of the nation (Clergy, nobles and commoners) was convened at Versailles on 5 May 1789. This fundamentally transformed the political situation. Instead of gradual reform, it led to a massive and entirely unexpected rupture with the past—to violent revolution, destruction of the French governmental system, the emergence of a new political culture, and the execution of God's anointed King. For the Roman Catholic Church it inaugurated a prolonged and traumatic crisis during which popular sovereignty emerged to threaten the social hierarchy, the spiritual authority of the Pope and, indeed, the very existence of God's Church. In response to a proposal by the Abbé Sièyes on 17 June 1789, the 46 bishops and 205 other representatives of the clergy originally elected as delegates of an autonomous First Estate found themselves becoming part of the conservative minority within a National Assembly, the majority of whose members would rapidly commit themselves to the recasting of the political system and to the 'regeneration' of society. A series of decisions with momentous consequences

¹¹G. Tavard, *La Vierge Marie en France au 18^e et 19^e siècles*, 1990, pp. 20–29.

for the Church and religious life ensued. They would destroy the initial enthusiasm for the Revolution displayed by many priests.

Thus, on 4 August, as part of the general abolition of the feudal system, the Church was deprived of the tithes and *casuel* (fees) which were its main sources of income. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (26 August) stipulated that public authority and civic morality were derived from the Nation rather than from God and His anointed king.¹² Recognition of equality before the law and freedom of conscience furthermore represented an implicit challenge to the 'truth' of Catholicism, and supposed that it was no longer necessary to be Catholic to enjoy the full rights of citizenship.¹³ The decision (by 954 votes to 568) made on 2 November to place the property of the Church *à la disposition de la Nation* as a means of solving the state's financial problems aroused further consternation, in spite of the Assembly's commitment to pay the stipends of the clergy and protect the charitable and teaching work of the Church.¹⁴ On 13 February 1790 it was further determined that monasteries and convents would be dissolved and their inmates relieved of their religious vows. Relatively few monks or nuns chose to leave voluntarily, and whilst those orders engaged in 'useful' charitable and educational work were initially protected, the decrees of 4 and 18 August 1792 would suppress the congregations in general. The impact on those who had chosen to consecrate themselves to a religious life must have been overwhelming.¹⁵ On 12 July 1790 a Civil Constitution of the Clergy was approved, which it was hoped would satisfy the aspirations of the clergy by enhancing their civil and salaried status.¹⁶ In practice its introduction would considerably exacerbate the political and religious crisis and shatter what remained of

¹²J.-C. Boudon, 'Conclusion', in S. Hallade, (ed) *Morales en révolutions France, 1789–1940*, Rennes, 2015, p. 209.

¹³B. Benoit, 'L'inscription de la laïcité dans le processus révolutionnaire de 1789' in *La laïcité*, Lyon, 2005, pp. 3–4.

¹⁴J. Lalouette, *La séparation des églises et de l'Etat. Genèse et développement d'une idée 1789–1905*, 2005, p. 36.

¹⁵See e.g. G. Gabbois, '*Vous êtes presque la seule consolation de l'Eglise*. La foi des femmes face à la déchristianisation de 1789 à 1880' in J. Delumeau, (ed) *La religion de ma mère. Les femmes et la transmission de la foi*, 1992, p. 302.

¹⁶See especially T. Tackett, *La Révolution, l'Eglise, la France. Le serment de 1791*, 1986, pp. 28–29.

the revolutionary consensus. Prepared by the National Assembly's Committee for Ecclesiastical Affairs, a body dominated by priests and laymen with Jansenist and Gallican preconceptions, the constitution proposed, as a matter of administrative convenience, to substantially reduce the number of dioceses by ensuring that their boundaries corresponded with those of the newly established departments. In order to extend the principle of election to every civil office, suitably qualified bishops and parish priests were to be elected by all taxpayers, regardless of their faith, and bishops were no longer to be subject to confirmation by the Pope. Furthermore, and reflecting their new status as public officials, the clergy would be required to take an oath *d'être fidèle à la Nation, à la loi et au roi, et de maintenir, de tout leur pouvoir, la constitution*, or accept loss of office.¹⁷ Significantly too, the Assembly rejected episcopal proposals that Catholicism be recognised as *la religion de l'Etat*.¹⁸ The speed with which the First Estate had been marginalized politically and then destroyed as a constitutional entity and privileged corporation was breathtaking. On 24 August 1790 Louis XVI approved the legislation very much against the dictates of his conscience. The clergy, divided on whether or not to take the oath, looked to the Pope for support and leadership.

Following lengthy hesitation, Pius VI condemned the Civil Constitution in the brief *Quod aliquantum* on 10 March 1791. His Holiness declared that 'Our intention is not to attack the new civil legislation to which the king has given his approval...it is not our objective... to secure the re-establishment of the Ancien Régime in France; ...our sole objective is...to preserve the sacred rights of the Church and of the Papacy'.¹⁹ The Civil Constitution was nevertheless denounced as both heretical—resulting from an infusion of the temporal into the spiritual and schismatic.²⁰ The Declaration of the Rights of Man was also condemned as contrary to both reason and the will of God. According to the Holy Father,

The inevitable effect...would be the destruction of the Catholic religion, and with it of

¹⁷AN AE II 1185.

¹⁸Lalouette, *Séparation* p. 38.

¹⁹Quoted by Y-M. Hilaire, *Histoire de la papauté*, 2003, p. 371.

²⁰G. Pelletier, *Rome et la Révolution française (1789–99)*, Rome, 2004, pp. 516–518.

the obedience due to kings. It is with this intention, that absolute liberty has been established as a human right, not only ensuring the right to freely hold diverse religious beliefs, but absolute license to think, speak, and write, and even print with impunity, views on religion suggested by even the most unbalanced imagination: a monstrous right....²¹

'Error' had been given the same rights as 'truth'.²² A schism developed within the Church in France, between an oath-taking clergy belonging to the Constitutional Church recognised by the state, and refractories obedient to the Papal instruction to refuse the oath and drawn inexorably towards a counter-revolutionary position.

From 27 January 1791 those priests who refused to take the oath were to be deprived of their livings. Undoubtedly members of the clergy agonised over their decision. They were being forced to decide whether their primary loyalty was to the Pope or the Nation. Only four bishops were prepared to take the oath; most joined their aristocratic families in emigration. Around 55% of parish priests initially took the oath, although subsequently many of these would retract.²³ Many oath takers would become members of the Constitutional Church. They included the young and ambitious who, just like those army officers who rejected emigration, were attracted by greatly improved career prospects, as well as former monks otherwise threatened with destitution. Idealists, of whom the best known was undoubtedly the Abbé Grégoire who became Bishop of Blois, hoped to renew religious life by returning to what was perceived to be the primitive simplicity of the early church. Whilst welcoming the end of interference from Rome, they largely retained the familiar doctrines and liturgy of the Catholic Church and sought to reconcile religion with revolution. The constitutional clergy were denounced, however, by non-jurors, who by means of circular letters and word of mouth communicated the Papal brief warning that the ministrations of oath-taking priests would do nothing to sanctify marriages or absolve sinners.

²¹Quoted C. Dousset, 'Entre tolérance et violence: la Révolution française et la question religieuse' in M. Bertrand, P. Cabanel, (eds) *Religions, pouvoir et violence*, p. 140.

²²P. Boutry, 'Pie VII et le rétablissement du catholicisme en France' in J-O. Boudon, (ed) *Le Concordat et le retour de la paix religieuse*, 2008, pp. 41–43.

²³Langlois et al., *Atlas*, pp. 32–33.

As the crisis caused by war and internal strife became more intense, the Legislative Assembly, which convened on 1 October 1791, decreed (on 27 May 1792) that refractory priests, identified with counter-revolution, should be deported. The penalties were to become increasingly punitive. More than 30,000 priests are estimated to have emigrated—many of them seeking Papal protection.²⁴ In September 1792, when Parisian mobs slaughtered the supposed enemies of the revolution incarcerated in the city's prisons, some 230 priests died. The Pope called on the Austrian Emperor Francis II to avenge these martyrs and to employ armed force to re-establish '*la justice, l'humanité, l'honnêteté, le pouvoir royal, la religion*'.²⁵ By 1793 those priests who remained in France were being hunted down, subjected to summary trial and executed or else simply murdered. Estimates vary but probably 2–3000 met an untimely death.²⁶ On 10 August 1792 the monarchy was abolished, Louis XVI having entirely discredited himself, as well as the institution of constitutional monarchy, by obstructing reform and finally attempting to escape from his kingdom and call for foreign assistance. On 21 January 1793 he would be guillotined. Reports of his dignified death having conferred upon him the status of martyr, would promote an idealisation of monarchy and its eventual restoration. The response of Pius VI, in a speech to a secret consistory on 17 June, was to ask 'who can ever doubt that this monarch was a victim of hatred of the faith and of a spirit of rage against Catholic teaching?' His Holiness was convinced that God would punish France.²⁷

During 1793/94, the assault on non-jurors and the Roman Catholic Church turned into an attack on Christianity. The revolutionary calendar abolished Sunday, the day of worship, as well as numerous Christian festivals. Efforts were made to smash the religious heritage through widespread vandalism involving the destruction of statuary and the sacred objects and art which had played a key miraculous and intercessory role in Catholic worship; the contemptuous disposal of holy relics; the

²⁴Ibid. p. 36.

²⁵Quoted Pelletier, *op. cit.* p. 392.

²⁶Aston, *Religion and revolution in France*, p. 188. P. Boutry, 'Le mouvement vers Rome et le renouveau missionnaire' in Joutard, (ed) *Histoire de la France religieuse*, 3, 1991, pp. 403–405.

²⁷H. Becquet, B. Frederking, *La dignité de roi*, pp. 8–10.

melting down of vessels containing precious metals; and of church bells to provide the raw material for canons.²⁸ In Paris all churches and chapels were closed from 24 November 1793. The sale of religious buildings allowed for alternative uses or else the pillaging of their stonework and destructive stripping of lead from their roofs. Enthusiastic revolutionary militants condemning ‘superstition’ frequently acted out blasphemous parodies of religious rituals.²⁹ This largely destroyed the credibility of the Constitutional Church. In September 1793, state payment of stipends ceased. Some 14–15,000 of the constitutional clergy resigned and adopted a secular career.³⁰ Many priests—some 6000, or 10% of the secular clergy between 1791 and 1816—took wives, welcoming the opportunity to escape from celibacy.³¹ A political terror lasting around six months between the winter of 1793 and the following spring was accompanied by a further campaign of de-Christianization, which was especially virulent around Paris, in Normandy, in central France from the Morvan to Berry, and in the southeast, areas in which much of the population was already somewhat detached from the Church. The movement was also propagated along the main lines of communication and particularly the axis Paris–Lyon–Marseille.³² Everywhere, the vast majority of churches and monastic buildings were closed. As a public act, Christian worship had largely ceased, although some communities

²⁸R. Clay, *Iconoclasm in Revolutionary Paris: the transformation of signs*, Oxford, 2012, p. 225; ‘Iconoclisme et violence. La transformation des signes dans le Paris révolutionnaire, 1789–94’ in E. Fureix, (ed) *Iconoclisme et révolutions de 1789 à nos jours*, 2014, pp. 78–79; S. Baciocchi, D. Julia, ‘Reliques et Révolution française (1789–1804)’ in P. Boutry, P. Fabre, D. Julia, (eds) *Reliques modernes, cultes et usages chrétiens des corps saints des Réformes aux révolutions*, I, 2009, vol. 2 *passim*.

²⁹See e.g. D. Hermont, ‘Destructions et vandalisme pendant la Révolution française’, *Annales E.S.C.*, 1978, pp. 703–719; C. Langlois, ‘Le vandalisme révolutionnaire’, *L’Histoire*, April 1987, pp. 8–14; G. Couray-Bapsolle, *Patrimoine religieux en Languedoc-Roussillon (1789–1914)*, 2005, pp. 27–45.

³⁰Langlois et al., *Atlas*, p. 39.

³¹Estimated by X. Maréchaux, *Noces révolutionnaires. Le mariage des prêtres en France, 1789–1815*, 2017 p. 10; see also A. Walch, *La spiritualité conjugale dans le catholicisme français*, 2002, pp. 353–354.

³²Langlois et al., *Atlas* p. 38.

sought to safeguard their religious heritage.³³ Perhaps 20,000 priests left holy orders and a further 30/40,000 emigrated.³⁴

These measures were supported with enthusiasm by revolutionary militants, accepted passively by much of the population, or else provoked massive resentment and even a sense of betrayal amongst those who had been deprived of the right of collective worship.³⁵ It remains difficult to appreciate fully and explain the intensity of this display of hostility towards the Church or to comprehend the sense of despair amongst those believers who found themselves deprived of priests and all hope of Salvation. This encouraged illicit religious activity, sometimes with the participation of clandestine priests, often involving women desperate to transmit the faith to their children. By its nature, the scale of such activity is impossible to measure.³⁶ Mass insurrection was another possibility, most notably in the Rhône valley between Lyon and Arles—influenced by confessional rivalries between Catholics and Protestants, and in the west, in the Vendée in 1793–1794, when peasants, further alienated by the revolutionary land settlement and the introduction of military conscription, gathered in a Royal and Catholic army. Blessed by its priests and led by noble officers, the insurgents, singing hymns, carrying crucifixes and under the banner of the Sacred Heart, attacked the Godless republican forces. This was an ideological war, a struggle between opposing forms of ‘truth’, which justified the brutal atrocities committed on both sides.³⁷ In most communities the main characteristic of the public response to the revolutionary Terror was probably passivity, reflecting indifference or else a determination to ride out the storm and await a return to ‘normality’. A renewal of religious activity could thus be expected as soon as repression eased.

³³Langlois et al., *Atlas*, p. 42; R. Gibson, *A social history of French catholicism, 1789–1914*, 1989, p. 44.

M-H. Froeschlé-Chopard, *Espace et sacré en Provence, 16^e–20^e siècles*, 1994, pp. 305–317.

³⁴T. Tackett, C. Langlois, ‘Ecclesiastical structures and clerical geography on the eve of the French Revolution’, *French historical studies*, 1980, p. 357.

³⁵Clay, *Iconoclasm*, p. 215.

³⁶Gabbois, ‘*Vous êtes presque la seule consolation*’ pp. 304–311; G. Cholvy, ‘L’émergence d’un laïcat catholique: le premier 19^e siècle’, *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique*, 2000, pp. 276–277.

³⁷See e.g. J-C. Martin, *La Vendée et la France*, 1987, *passim*.

The fall of Robespierre and the establishment of the Thermidorian regime (9 Thermidor An II/27 July 1794), which brought the Terror to an end, and the establishment of the Directory to succeed it, inaugurated regimes which were far more pragmatic, in spite of a continued hostility towards the Catholic Church. Whilst finally ending official links with the Constitutional Church in September 1794, and in effect imposing the separation of Church and State, the Convention (initially elected in September 1792) determined in September 1795 to tolerate private worship. Some imprisoned priests were freed. Parishioners were gradually permitted to return to those parish churches which had not been sold or destroyed. Previously hidden relics and statues reappeared. In rural areas the sound of church bells might be heard once again. Refractory priests began to emerge from hiding. By 1797 some 20,000 priests had returned to France.³⁸ The situation remained dangerously uncertain however. Monarchist successes in the April 1797 elections were followed by the more rigorous enforcement of anti-religious legislation and widespread arrests of priests.³⁹

Outside France the young General Bonaparte's military successes in Italy placed the Papacy under intense pressure. In February 1797, the Pope was forced to accept territorial losses and pay massive indemnities in bullion and works of art. A year later the army, by now commanded by Bertier, was instructed by the Directory to occupy what remained of the Papal States. French troops entered Rome on 10 February 1798. Pius VI was imprisoned and a Roman Republic established. The Pope would die in captivity, at Valence, on 29 August 1799—his status considerably enhanced by his 'martyrdom'. Although intense mutual suspicion survived, by the late 1790s there was also a widespread desire for some sort of a compromise between state and Church. The Church would nevertheless struggle to survive until the 1801 Concordat re-established freedom of worship and institutional unity amongst Catholics.

³⁸Boudon, *Religion et politique*, p. 17.

³⁹P. Boutry, 'Les mutations des croyance' in Joutard, (ed) *Histoire de la France religieuse*, 3, pp. 458–459.

2.3 THE FOUNDATIONS OF A NEW RELIGIOUS ORDER: CONSULATE AND EMPIRE

The coup d'état on 18th Brumaire An VIII (November 1799) which established Napoleon Bonaparte as First Consul was thus of considerable importance. Bonaparte was convinced of the urgent need for reconciliation. His seizure of power was followed rapidly by edicts (28–30 December 1799), which officially restored unsold churches to worshippers, allowed Sunday services and introduced an oath of loyalty to the constitution couched in more moderate terms. Attendance at services rapidly grew, the rites of passage were (often retrospectively) sanctified, and places of pilgrimage once again attracted crowds of fervent believers. The scale of this revival certainly made it clear that many of those who had not actively resisted the revolution were nonetheless opposed to its anti-religious practices.⁴⁰

In March 1800, in Venice, the College of Cardinals elected Cardinal Chiaramonti, the former Bishop of Imola, as Pope. In tribute to his predecessor he would adopt the title Pius VII.⁴¹ He was nevertheless prepared to compromise. In June unofficial discussions began between representatives of the French government and the Papacy. In spite of his lack of personal belief, Bonaparte clearly supposed that agreement with the Papacy represented the best hope of detaching the clergy from the royalist and counter-revolutionary cause and of rallying Catholics to his regime. He furthermore perceived religious socialisation to be the essential means of imposing order on the masses, and as a vital instrument in the process of government.⁴² For the Pope the primary objectives were to restore the unity of the Church under Papal leadership, and to secure the return of the Papacy's temporal domains.⁴³

Long and difficult negotiations would lead to a Concordat concluded on 15 July 1801 and ratified by a Papal bull *Ecclesia Christi* on 15 August, a compromise which survived until 1905. The main protagonists

⁴⁰See e.g. 'Introduction' to J-O. Boudon, (ed) *Le Concordat et le retour de la paix religieuse*, 2008, pp. 7–10.

⁴¹F. Jankowiak, *La curie romaine de Pie IX à Pie X: le gouvernement central de l'église et la fin des états pontificaux, 1846–1914*, Rome, 2007, pp. 55–56.

⁴²See especially J-O. Boudon, *Napoléon et les cultes*, 2002, *passim*.

⁴³P. Boutry, 'Pie VII et le rétablissement du catholicisme en France: logiques romaines du Concordat' in Boudon, *Le concordat*, pp. 48–49.

had to tread carefully in order to avoid alienating their supporters. Within the French government such eminences as Talleyrand and Fouché, respectively ministers of foreign affairs and police, both former priests, expressed the widespread anticlericalism still found in republican and military circles. Amongst the clergy, and particularly the bishops in exile, there was hostility towards discussions which might well culminate in an agreement contrary to their oaths of loyalty to Louis XVIII, the brother and legitimate successor to the martyred king. However, the situation of the Church remained desperate with Bonaparte well placed to impose pressure employing both the latent threat of military power and the existence of the Constitutional Church as an alternative. There appeared to be little choice but to accept a settlement very similar to that proposed by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1790.

Catholicism would be recognised for what it was, ‘the religion of the majority of the French’—a phrase deftly suggested by Talleyrand.⁴⁴ The French negotiators would also insist that legal recognition should be accorded to Protestants and Jews, in the hope that toleration would ensure that the divisive forces associated by Bonaparte with religion would never again be unleashed. In future, the clergy would be paid by the state to which, it was agreed, they owed an oath of loyalty and for which they would be required to offer a prayer at the end of every mass. They were to enjoy the protection of the state but at the same time be subjected to close supervision. Within a hierarchical structure, well-rewarded bishops, nominated by the state, would—in recognition of Papal authority—be required to seek canonical institution by the Pope (as provided for in the 1516 Concordat).⁴⁵ Each ‘*préfet violet*’ would assume responsibility for nominating priests to parishes, for imposing discipline on the lower clergy, for ensuring religious orthodoxy, and securing respect for the government.

Many of the Concordat’s provisions, including recognition of the validity of the holy orders of the ‘schismatic’ constitutional clergy, together with the religious freedom enshrined in the Declaration of Rights, and acceptance of the loss of former Church property, were resented bitterly by the Pope and only accepted out of necessity. The

⁴⁴Boudon, *Napoléon*, p. 60.

⁴⁵J.-P. Moisset, *Les biens de ce monde. Les finances de l’Eglise catholique au 19^e siècle dans le diocèse de Paris (1802–1905)*, Bordeaux, 2004, pp. 115–116.

situation was moreover soon to become worse. The seventy-seven Organic Articles, drafted by Jean-Etienne-Marie Portalis, the conseiller d'état who would as head of an Administration des cultes assume responsibility for implementation of the Concordat, provided detailed administrative and judicial regulations. They were imposed unilaterally by Bonaparte, as a means of reinforcing state authority and without prior consultation, just before the Concordat was promulgated in April 1802, and would never be recognised by the Papacy. According to Portalis, the objectives of this *police des cultes* were essentially secular—'To protect a cult, does not mean attempting to ensure its dominance.., it requires supervision of its doctrine and administration, because the state should control such important institutions in the greater public interest'.⁴⁶ The Articles required state consent for the publication of Papal Bulls in France, more closely defined the responsibilities of bishops and, in particular, reinforced their authority over the lower clergy. Diocesan boundaries were to be redrawn largely to coincide with those of administrative departments. Furthermore, the articles provided for the establishment of one tenured curé, in each canton, and some 3000 in all, responsible for 27,000 *desservants* in the various communes. It was also affirmed that the principles of Gallicanism, as enshrined in the four articles of 1682, were to be taught in the seminaries which were to be established in each diocese.⁴⁷ In case of dispute the Conseil d'Etat would be expected to interpret the organic articles according to these principles.⁴⁸ The foundation of the imperial *Université* in 1806 heralded the imposition of state control over education, a matter of profound concern to the clergy. In these circumstances, in recognition of the limited resources available, and interested primarily in the secondary and higher education which trained potential servants of the state, Napoleon was prepared to allow the re-establishment of the teaching orders in primary instruction

⁴⁶Quoted Lalouette, *Séparation*, p. 12. See also B. Plongeron, *Des résistances religieuses à Napoléon (1799–1813)*, 2006, pp. 202–203; O. Poncet, *La nonciature de France (1819–1904) et ses archives*, Vatican City, 2006, p. 5.

⁴⁷Published as an annex to T. Blott, *Reconstruire l'Eglise après la Révolution: le diocèse de Bayeux sous l'épiscopat de Mgr Charles Bruault (1802–23)*, 1997, pp. 398–404. See also S. Blenner-Michel, 'L'autorité épiscopale dans la France du 19^e siècle', *Histoire et politique*, 18, 2013 en ligne, *passim*.

⁴⁸B. Basdevant-Gaudemet, *Le jeu concordataire dans la France du 19^e siècle. Le clergé devant le Conseil d'Etat*, 1988, pp. 1–2, 21–22.

as well as supervision of lay teachers by parish priests. Daily prayer and religious instruction had already been re-established in 1803. The clergy would nevertheless consistently express dissatisfaction with anything less than complete control over the instruction of the young, and demand the removal of state control over secondary and higher education.

If the Concordat had greatly facilitated the reconstruction of the Church, and stimulated widespread religious enthusiasm, it could not however promote a return to the almost universal levels of religious practice common during the Ancien Régime. In challenging the spiritual and temporal authority of the Church the Revolution had a massive ‘de-stabilising’ impact.⁴⁹ In many communities the habit of churchgoing and of regular confession had been broken. Catechising had ceased. People had lived without priests and the heavens had not fallen in. In all probability the Revolution had accelerated a weakening of the faith already evident in some regions. In numerous communities throughout the Paris basin and central France, regions in which the clergy had tended to accept the Civil Constitution, respect for the obligations imposed by the Church and particularly Easter confession and communion had massively declined, especially amongst men.⁵⁰ There was also considerable concern about the religious ignorance of those generations which had missed the normal processes of religious instruction as a result of the revolutionary upheaval, and an appreciation of the urgent need to resume catechism classes in church and school.⁵¹

In spite of the collapse of formal religious instruction during the Revolution belief had nevertheless been sustained in the countless homes in which women continued to tell the Bible stories and to display religious images. According to Olwen Hufton, ‘What the women wanted was a reversion to normality as they had known it and to the familiar rhythms of parish life. The Revolution had not shaken the bedrock of rural women’s faith nor altered their perception of the intrinsic priorities of life, the family, the raising of children, the search for sufficiency,

⁴⁹ P. Boutry, ‘Vertus d’Etat et clergé intellectuel: la crise du modèle *sulpicien* dans la formation des prêtres français au 19^e siècle’ in Ecole française de Rome, *Problèmes d’histoire de l’éducation*, 1988, p. 222.

⁵⁰ F. Boulard, Y.-M. Hilaire, *Matériaux pour l’histoire religieuse du peuple français*, 1987, pp. 407–408; Langlois et al., *Atlas* p. 75.

⁵¹ G. Cholvy, *Etre chrétien en France au 19^e siècle*, 1997, pp. 73–74.

ways of doing'.⁵² Moreover, and in contrast with those areas in which religious practice and the influence of the Church appeared to have been weakened, religious fervour, in much of eastern France, in the north and west, and in parts of the Massif Central, had been strengthened by the revolutionary trauma.

Institutional reconstruction would however take time. The bishops appointed to the newly created dioceses were selected from amongst the social and intellectual elite of the *Ancien Régime* clergy in a process which favoured those who had remained in France or returned relatively early from exile, and who were essentially political moderates.⁵³ They faced enormous difficulties. Between 1790 and 1802 ordinations had virtually been suspended. Priests needed to be recruited to fill the gaps left by the Revolution and replenish the ranks of the aging and often exhausted survivors. Seminaries had to be re-established, teachers appointed, buildings found to house them and libraries created. Students had to be attracted and trained.⁵⁴ Following the post-tridentine pastoral model, the objective was to ensure, and as rapidly as possible, that each parish, each community of faith, was served by a priest who, wherever possible, and particularly in the towns, should enjoy the support of members of the religious orders dedicated to good works, as well as of itinerant missionaries.

The Napoleonic state offered assistance. In 1807 it announced that seminary students were to be the recipients of 1360 financial awards, each worth 400f. The following year they were granted exemption from conscription. In this moment of crisis it also made sense for the Church to relax its requirements. In numerous presbyteries and an increasing number of small ecclesiastical secondary schools (*petits séminaires*), barely acknowledged by the *Université*, boys were encouraged to consider becoming priests. The period of seminary instruction was reduced from five to three years, during which the students received a rudimentary training equipping them to say mass, administer the sacraments, and providing a fairly limited knowledge of religion and the teachings of the Church. Gradually, the number of ordinands rose, from 213 in 1803 to an exceptional 1504 by 1813. Even then, the number of priests ordained

⁵² *The prospect before her: a history of women in Western Europe*, 1996, p. 485.

⁵³ Boudon, *Napoléon*, pp. 78–82.

⁵⁴ See e.g. M. Launay, *Les séminaires français aux 19^e et 20^e siècles*, 2002, pp. 40–41.

between 1801 and 1814 (6688) remained slightly lower than the number who died. There were still only 36,000 secular priests compared with the 50,000 active in 1789. Furthermore, by 1815 46% of these priests were over 60 years of age.⁵⁵ There were also substantial regional variations in levels of recruitment reflecting, to a large degree, the intensity of clericalisation in the centuries following the Council of Trent, as well as the impact of the Revolution.⁵⁶

In comparison with the Ancien Régime, the social origins of seminarists were becoming very different. From the point of view of the upper and middle classes, the social status of a now relatively impoverished clergy had declined; from that of the better-off peasants and lower middle classes, a career as a priest remained attractive both as a means of enhancing individual and family reputation and of satisfying a religious vocation. Thus, of 2600 seminary students in 1808–1809, 60.4% appear to have been drawn from well-off peasant families, 21% from the world of artisans and small traders, and 18.5% were the sons of merchants or officials.⁵⁷ Their seminary instruction was closely based on the organic articles. Thus according to article two of the rules established for the Nantes seminary, ‘The professors of dogmatic theology will teach the doctrines included in the [Gallican] declaration of the French clergy in 1682; the professors of moral theology will base themselves on the dispositions of the Napoleonic code’. Article three required that ‘seminary directors, entirely devoted to the august personage of His Majesty the Emperor...will work unceasingly to secure the same sentiments in the hearts of their pupils, and to ensure that they are prepared to usefully serve the Church and the State, the interests of which are inseparable’.⁵⁸

No provision had been made in the Concordat for the re-establishment of the religious orders. From 1800 however the Filles de la Charité de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul were authorised to train sisters to work in the hospitals, which, since the dissolution of the religious orders, had been

⁵⁵P. Boutry, ‘Paroisses et clergé paroissial en France’, in B. Pellistrandi, (ed) *L’histoire religieuse en France et en Espagne*, Madrid, 2004, p. 183.

⁵⁶C. Langlois, ‘Une France duelle? L’espace religieux contemporain’, in Joutard, (ed) *Histoire de la France religieuse*, pp. 274–279.

⁵⁷Langlois et al., *Atlas*, p. 71.

⁵⁸Quoted M. Launay, ‘Restauration du clergé et formation sacerdotale au 19^e siècle: le grand séminaire de Nantes, 1807–1914’ in *Bulletin de la Société archéologique et historique de Nantes et de la Loire Atlantique*, pp. 211–212.

reduced to a scandalous condition. From 1804, following registration and approval by the Conseil d'Etat, a succession of charitable, nursing and teaching orders were recognised. In 1792 around 26,000 men and 50,000 women had belonged to religious orders. By 1808 there were again 12,300 sisters, half of whom had originally been enrolled before the Revolution, although only 30% were now members of enclosed orders. Recruited mainly in the towns in which they performed their good works, these congregations would increasingly attract young women from peasant families as part of a process subsequently described by historians as involving the 'feminisation' of the Church—although under constant male supervision.⁵⁹ In the case of the male orders it was similarly the 'useful' orders, and particularly the teaching congregations, the popularly denominated *frères ignorantins*, and most notably the Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes, whose expansion would be encouraged.⁶⁰ The officially approved statutes of the Frères stressed that 'they will possess an ardent zeal to instruct the children, preserve them in their innocence, and in the fear of God, and ensure that they remain distant from and in horror of Sin'.⁶¹ In providing a Christian education the fathers were also required to employ the Imperial catechism with its emphasis on introducing pupils to the 'duties of citizens towards the Head of State'.⁶²

The Organic Articles would remain a bone of contention, the target of repeated protests by the clergy. In the Papal bull *Quum memoranda illa die* of 10 June 1809 it was affirmed that 'according to the terms of these articles, the free exercise of the Catholic religion is denied...'. The French government was accused of having committed '*une fraude patente et injurieuse*'.⁶³ To many priests, the Church appeared to have paid a high price for a Concordat which resulted in a substantial secularisation and de-sacralisation of the state whilst, paradoxically, reinforcing its

⁵⁹Boudon, *Religion et politique*, p. 25.

⁶⁰'Initiation à l'histoire de l'Institut des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes', *Rivista lasalliana*, 2003, pp. 48–50.

⁶¹Université impériale. Statuts des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes, 3 Oct. 1809, AN F19/6286.

⁶²'Initiation à l'histoire de l'Institut des Frères', p. 65.

⁶³Quoted Mgr L-J. Tauran, 'Le Concordat de 1801: valeur et continuité' in Mgr J. Doré, Mgr P. Raffin, (eds) *Le bicentaire du Concordat*, Strasbourg, 2002, p. 32.

powers of intervention in religious affairs.⁶⁴ Although the vehemence of attacks on the articles would vary with the circumstances, this set the tone for the century to come. Nevertheless, the legal and financial conditions necessary for a return to a 'normal' religious life had been established. Hierarchy within the Church had been recognised, and a major step taken towards the restoration of the unity of the Universal Church. Although a small minority of priests rejected the Concordat and established an ephemeral *Petite Eglise*, the vast majority welcomed the settlement imposed by Bonaparte, lauded as the *restaurateur des cultes*, and supported his efforts to impose order internally, as well as his military campaigns. Persecution had finally ended. The agreement released an immense pent-up popular religiosity. On Easter Sunday 1802 the Concordat was celebrated by a solemn mass in the cathedral of Notre Dame, attended by the First Consul and his closest collaborators.⁶⁵ The sermon was delivered by Cardinal Boisgelin who had preached at Louis XVI's coronation in 1775.

The coronation of the Emperor Napoleon which followed on 2 December 1804, at which Napoleon I was blessed—but not crowned—by the Pope, was a key stage in the sacramentalisation of the regime. The Emperor appears to have been determined to adopt the pose of a Christian monarch, a fact signified by the representation of the civil and military authorities at religious ceremonies. In return, it was intended that the Church, through its ritual and spiritual influence and commitment to 'moral order', would substantially reinforce the legitimacy of the state and of the existing hierarchical social system. In future the clergy would be required to chant the prayer for the monarch at each mass, with the *Domine salvum fac imperatorem* replacing the *Domine salvam fac Rem Publicam*. They were to remind their congregations that the Emperor owed his authority to the Divine Will, to pray for the success of French arms and celebrate the regime's military and civil triumphs. Mgr. Belloy, Archbishop of Paris, in his introduction to the imperial catechism adopted by decree on 4 April 1806, presented '*notre Empereur*' as 'the one God created in difficult circumstances in order to re-establish public

⁶⁴J.-M. Leniaud, *L'Administration des cultes pendant la période concordataire*, 1988, p. 17.

⁶⁵T. Lentz, 'La proclamation du Concordat à Notre-Dame le 18 avril 1802' in Boudon, *Le Concordat*, *passim*.

worship and the holy religion of our father, and in order to become its protector'. It followed that to 'To honour and to serve our Emperor...is to honour and to serve God himself'. It was also to obey Jesus who had 'given instructions to render unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar'. In addition to '*prières fervantes*' Catholics owed him 'love, respect, obedience, fidelity, military service'. To do otherwise was to 'reject the order established by God and to render oneself liable to eternal damnation'.⁶⁶

A complex imagery was also designed to exalt the heroism and canonisation of the newly discovered/invented Roman centurion and martyr Saint Napoleon. According to the Emperor's uncle, Cardinal Fesch, the coincidence between his birth date (15 August) and the Feast of the Assumption revealed the willingness of the Virgin Mary to share the glory of her accession to Heaven with the triumph of the Emperor as 'the exterminating angel of anarchy and impiety'.⁶⁷ This shared triumph was to be celebrated (from 1802) with religious solemnity (sanctioned by the Papal Curia) followed by popular festivities.⁶⁸ In January 1806 Portalis would triumphantly—and over optimistically—report to the Emperor that complaints about the non-performance of these obligations involved 'no more than 100' of 'over 40,000 priests'.⁶⁹

Although considerably enthused by the reception he had received from crowds en route to Paris for the imperial coronation, Pius VII would otherwise gain very little. The Emperor's unacceptable insistence that the Pope should fully support French imperialism led to an accelerating deterioration in relationships, culminating in the occupation of Rome by French troops in February 1808. This provoked a public condemnation of the Organic Articles by the Pope, and French annexation of the Papal States in May 1809.⁷⁰ Napoleon intended that this would be followed by the transfer of the Papacy to Paris. Dissent was something the Emperor clearly

⁶⁶A. Latreille, *Le Catechisme impérial de 1806*, 1935, pp. 80–81; See also V. Petit, 'Théologie et politique. Prier pour le souverain en France au 19^e siècle', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 2011, p. 190; J-O. Boudon, 'Les fondements religieux du pouvoir impérial' in N. Petiteau, (ed) *Voies nouvelles pour l'histoire du Premier Empire*, 2003, pp. 204f.

⁶⁷V. Petit, 'Saint Napoléon, un saint pour la Nation. Contribution à l'imaginaire politique français', *Napoléonica. La revue*, 2015, 89.

⁶⁸F. Boespflug, 'Napoléon et Dieu. Iconographie comparée', *ibid.*, 2015, pp. 53–54.

⁶⁹quoted Boudon, *Napoléon*, p. 141.

⁷⁰M. Broers, *The politics of religion in Napoleonic Italy. The war against God, 1801–04*, 2007, pp. 146–149.

found increasingly difficult to tolerate. The Pope's response was to excommunicate those involved, including the Emperor, and to refuse canonical investiture to episcopal candidates newly nominated by Napoleon. The Emperor responded by ordering the arrest of His Holiness. A handpicked episcopal commission, chaired by Cardinal Fesch, would conclude that an excommunication motivated by a political dispute was invalid.⁷¹

Criticism of the regime was, however, sustained, culminating in 1811 in a collective protest by the bishops. Parish priests frequently 'forgot' to pray for the Emperor, although dissidents were likely to be forbidden to preach, faced the possibility of arrest or, in the case of bishops, enforced resignation from their posts. Most parish priests would nevertheless remain loyal to Napoleon, sharing the widespread pride in the achievement of French arms and convincing themselves that Napoleonic glory was God's Will. Thus, in his sermon for the first Sunday of December 1810, the parish priest at Villefranche-de-Conflent celebrated the anniversary of the imperial coronation together with the great victory at Austerlitz. He reminded his congregation that every citizen should recognise that the God of Israel had granted Napoleon to his people to bring an end to anarchy, to restore order and to protect religion, and that each of them must be prepared '*de sacrifier sa vie à son prince et à son patrie*'.⁷²

Another attempt was made in January 1813 to intimidate the Pope, by then accommodated in the palace of Fontainebleau, and to persuade him to accept a new Concordat which would have reinforced the subordination of the Church of France to the state. On this occasion, however, the rapidly deteriorating situation of the French army relieved the pressure on the Pope. On 4 April 1814 Napoleon was forced by his generals to abdicate and, at the behest of the allies, was replaced by Louis XVI's brother as the legitimate heir to the throne. On 24 May, with his prestige considerably enhanced by his successful resistance to the Emperor's demands, Pius VII triumphantly re-entered the Eternal city. At the moment of the Church's greatest weakness the Pope had done much to re-establish the prestige of the Papacy and to encourage Catholics to look *ultra montes*—across the mountains—for leadership.

⁷¹Boudon, *Napoléon*, p. 264.

⁷²Sermon prêché à Villefranche de Conflent in 1810 en présence de la garnison sous les armes par l'Abbé Marlat, alors curé de la ville, et fidèlement copié sur le manuscrit par Victor Junquet, sergent au 3^e Régiment du génie, AN F19/5845.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Almost inevitably, the nightmarish experience of revolution and the threat to the unity of Man and God had inclined many Catholics towards counter-revolutionary precepts and policies.⁷³ Many priests and devout young laymen, determined to assert the primacy of the spiritual realm and the imperative need to protect the interests of God's Church, looked to Rome for inspiration. Only through the Church was Salvation possible. Only through the Church could further devastating revolutions be prevented.⁷⁴ François-René de Chateaubriand, the pre-eminent figure amongst the emerging generation of 'romantics', was convinced that 'A new dawn awaits the sovereign pontiffs. The degenerate world calls for a renewed preaching of the Gospels'—of the revealed Word of God.⁷⁵ In the *Génie du christianisme*, published in 1802, he proclaimed, in the words of the book's subtitle, *les beautés de la religion chrétienne*, so evident in the splendour of its buildings, ceremonies, in the everyday lives of humble believers, and in the charity inspired by Christian faith.

Efforts to explain why God had permitted a devastating Revolution were also underway. A traditionalist, Manichean ideology was employed. The Revolution—a rebellion against God—was presented as the latest stage in the eternal battle between Good and Evil, the last step towards the Apocalypse. It was, according to the widely circulated (and translated) works of Edmund Burke and Augustin Barruel, the product of human wickedness and pride, and of conspiracies engendered by the enemies of God and Truth.⁷⁶ These perverted and wicked servants of the Satanic Spirit, excluded from Salvation by their beliefs, included *philosophes*, freemasons, Protestants and Jews, as well as those 'savants', egotists and atheists—many of them scientists and doctors—who constantly appealed to human 'reason' and 'progress' to contradict the

⁷³See e.g. L. Pérouas, P. d'Hollander, *La Révolution française: une rupture dans le christianisme? Le cas du Limousin (1775–1822)*, Treignac, 1988, pp. 390–392; G. Gengembre, 'Culture contre-révolutionnaire' in J.-C. Martin, (ed) *Dictionnaire de la contre-révolution*, 2011, p. 215.

⁷⁴P. Boutry, J.-M. Cinquin, *Deux pèlerinages au 19^e siècle. Ars et Paray-le-Monial*, 1980, p. 25.

⁷⁵Quoted Hilaire, *Papauté*, p. 100.

⁷⁶B. van der Hertten, 'La Révolution française; prelude à la fin des temps', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 1994, pp. 30–38.

revealed Word of God.⁷⁷ Not since the deicide committed by the Jews, according to the Abbé Felicité de Lamennais, had such a vile crime been committed.⁷⁸

In Augustinian terms the Revolution—like every human catastrophe—was a divine manifestation, a means of warning sinners and of punishing France for the past sins of its people, for the growth of individualism and materialism.⁷⁹ It followed that God must be propitiated. Salvation and national regeneration were possible by means of a return to traditional religious values and a moral outlook defined by the Roman Catholic Church and supported by a Christian monarch.⁸⁰ Members of the secret society the *Chevaliers de la Foi*, were amongst those drawn towards support for the reinstallation of the legitimate kings.⁸¹ With the final collapse of the First Empire in 1814/15—a further manifestation of Divine Providence—the era of catastrophe would be succeeded by triumphalist restorations—of Louis XVIII brother of the king executed in 1793, and of Pope Pius VII in Rome—victories for Jesus Christ over Evil.⁸² Political restoration would promote a creative period of counter-revolutionary dynamism and religious revival and further encourage confidence in the ultimate victory of God.⁸³

⁷⁷J.-L. Chappey, 'Catholiques et sciences au début du 19^e siècle' *Cahiers d'histoire*, 2002, on line at <http://ehrhc.revues.org/index1653.html>, pp. 4–5; D. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment. The French counter-Enlightenment and the making of modernity*, Oxford, 2002, pp. 58–104.

⁷⁸*Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, 1817, p. 336.

⁷⁹P. Airiau, *L'Eglise et l'Apocalypse*, 2000, pp. 36–40.

⁸⁰See especially G. Cubitt, 'God, Man and Satan: strands in counter-revolutionary thought amongst 19th century French Catholics' in F. Tallett, N. Atkin, (eds) *Catholicism in Britain and France since 1789*, 1996, pp. 135–150; G. Gengembre, *La contre-révolution, ou l'histoire désespérante: histoire des idées politiques*, 1989, *passim*.

⁸¹Boudon, *Religion et politique*, pp. 36–37, 303–304.

⁸²See also J. Marx, *Le péché de la France. Surnaturel et politique au 19^e siècle*, Brussels 2005, pp. 119–120.

⁸³See also P. Airiau, *L'Eglise et l'Apocalypse, du 19^e siècle à nos jours*, 2000, pp. 7–8, 57–58.

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