

**The Universal Church in the Segregated City:
Doing Catholic Interracialism in Chicago, 1915-1963**

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THESIS
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To Eric – It is finished!

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SUMMARY

During the Great Migration, as black migrants moved north in search of warmer suns, they encountered, mostly for the first time, large Catholic populations tightly bound within their parish boundaries and a Catholic Church deeply mired in figuring out what it meant to be the universal church in a harshly segregated city. In response to this theological, moral, and social collision, a small contingent of black Catholics, along with a handful of white priests and eventually white lay people, debated and developed theological arguments for racial integration and for racial justice. Their sometimes radical ideas and their often radical actions proved deeply influential, affecting the lives of priests and bishops, laity and nuns, Protestants and Jews, and politicians and civil rights leaders. By the 1960s, various iterations of their beliefs had become standard within American Catholicism and within the nationwide civil rights movement as well.

This manuscript tells the story of what I have labeled “Catholic interracialism” as it developed in Chicago in the minds of turn-of-the-century black Catholics like Dr. Arthur Falls, as it was broadened and tamed by white and black lay women working in Catholic settlement homes like the Southside’s Friendship House, and as it matured chastened if still vibrant in the work of the Chicago Catholic Interracial Council, which was given impetus by laity like Peggy Roach and Mathew “Mat” Ahmann. As an idea to live up to, Catholic interracialism was never monolithic; it meant something different to African American middle-class Catholics, white priests, white Catholic radicals, and white Catholic liberals, and it changed from the Depression to the civil rights movement. My manuscript follows these twists and turns, telling untold stories and revealing hidden sources of courage, while showing that, for these Catholics, black and white, the core of their struggle was the foundational belief that all people were members of the Body of Christ and that all Christians should therefore work for justice. This manuscript,

SUMMARY (continued)

therefore, is a social history of an idea, showing how a simple idea like Catholic interracialism forged connections between race and religion throughout the twentieth century, unearthing the importance of religion in the long civil rights movement. And, for the vast majority of the story, in ways with nationwide significance, Chicago was the vital laboratory.

I. INTRODUCTION

In July of 1963, thirty-six year old Peggy Roach left her small studio apartment in Washington D.C. to join the crowd gathering for the March on Washington. She was a small but sturdy woman with a knack for organizing. On her way to the Lincoln Memorial she met up with old friends from St. Dorothy's parish in Chicago. Roach fit the mold of a stereotypical mid-twentieth century Catholic: she was an observant laywoman who traced her family lineage to Ireland and grew up in the confines of the immigrant church. But beyond that, Roach was far from ordinary. Indeed, the friends she was meeting from St. Dorothy's were black, middle-class residents of Chicago's Chatham neighborhood, which had, only recently, flipped from being a predominantly white to a predominantly black neighborhood. Together, Roach and her friends would march hand-in-hand, black Catholic and white Catholic, in front of the nation's capitol to demand equality. As American Catholics, they voiced their concerns that the nation not only live up to its twin national promises of freedom and equality, but also that America embody a vision of Christian brotherhood, where all were one in the eyes of God.

Roach's participation in the March on Washington was just one moment of Roman Catholic involvement in marches across the country for civil rights. Two years later, Roach's friend and episcopal heavyweight, Father Jack Egan, along with scores of other priests, nuns, and Catholic laity from Chicago, marched arm-in-arm with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma, Alabama. Nuns who had only recently cast off their habits in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, donned them once again to call attention to Catholic participation and to demonstrate the deep moral issues at stake in the civil rights struggle. The photographs of habited nuns and collared priests marching for black freedom has become one of the iconic images of the 1960s.

Another view of American Catholics offers a competing iconography of the 1960s. White Catholics were seen protesting the civil rights marches of the 1960s. In 1966, for instance, many Chicago Catholics threw bottles and rocks at Martin Luther King, Jr.. After being hit by a rock as he marched in Marquette Park, a neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side, King said, "I have seen many demonstrations in the South, but I have never seen anything so hostile and so hateful as I've seen here today."¹

Two marches, two possibilities, and Catholicism shaped the reactions of both.

The story of Catholic participation in anti-civil rights efforts has been told before. That it was Catholics leading the violence in Chicago in 1966 was no coincidence. As John McGreevy has shown, the Catholic laity's reactions to the civil rights demands of Northern African Americans reflected their defensive response. They were residents in parishes that were defined by physical and mental boundaries. Priests preached a parish mentality that argued that each local church was responsible for a certain neighborhood. Parishioners committed themselves to their parish by buying houses, pouring their lives' savings into brick and mortar. They tithed to support new buildings, schools, and programs for their children. In the process, they created urban Catholic ghettos. Black newcomers, therefore, jeopardized the communities white Catholics had bled to create. When a black family moved into the neighborhood, many white Catholics began to fear that plummeting property values would destroy their families financially. Furthermore, since new black neighbors were unlikely to be Catholic, the parish priests did not expect them to support church programs, and saw the parish boundaries they had

¹ *Chicago Tribune*, August 5, 1966.

created threatened.² The Catholic parish system, therefore, obstructed integration and black civil rights in many urban outposts.

There is another story to tell about American Catholics in the urban North. It was also no coincidence that Peggy Roach joined her black friends in the March on Washington, which a friend and fellow Catholic, Mathew Ahmann, had helped organize. Roach marched because she was a Catholic interracialist. And just as a parish-based understanding of Catholicism influenced the white Catholics of Marquette Park, Gage Park, and other Chicago neighborhoods, Catholicism's beliefs, practices, and institutions also shaped interracialists like Peggy Roach. While Marquette Park's Catholics tried to reinforce parish boundaries, Catholic interracialists crossed those boundaries physically, theologically, and socially.

Put simply, a Catholic interracialist was a person who supported social equality between black and white people based on Catholic theological convictions. The expressions and priorities of Catholic interracialists changed over time and in different contexts. But between the 1920s and 1960s, Catholic interracialists' main battle was to change the hearts and minds of white people in the Catholic Church and in American society as well. For them, the battle was religious and moral.

This dissertation narrates the history of the idea of Catholic interracialism from its genesis in the 1920s to its rhetorical triumph in the 1960s. It is the story of how Catholics – black and white, religious and lay, women and men – struggled together to bring black and white people

² John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). For a monograph on one white Catholic parish, St. Sabina's, which describes the incredible community cohesion of a Catholic parish, see Eileen M. McMahon, *What Parish Are You From? A Chicago Irish Community and Race Relations* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1995). In 1940, for example, only 8 percent of marriages in the parish were outside the faith.

into meaningful relationships with one another, to end discrimination and segregation in the Church, and to enable black people to enjoy the fruits of American prosperity. Catholic interracialists had a two-fold struggle: an external battle against ideas, institutions, and people that opposed them; and an internal argument with one another as they wrestled to practice what Martin Luther King, Jr. would later call the “beloved community.”

Catholic interracialists were never large in number, but their impact on the American Catholic Church, northern cities, and the lives of individual men and women was great. In 1963, at Catholic interracialism’s high point of influence, one interracialist estimated that only about 25,000 out of 40 million American Catholics were actively engaged in the movement through the Catholic Interracial Councils, one of its organizing strongholds.³ Nonetheless, their impact echoed far beyond their numbers as they succeeded in shifting the tenor of American Catholicism from upholding parish boundaries to acknowledging and embracing, if only in word, Catholic interracialist ideals.

Chicago’s Catholic interracialist story is significant for a number of reasons. It was, of course, not the only place where American Catholics wrestled to overcome racial hierarchies and for many years, New York’s Catholic interracialists, led by Jesuit John LaFarge and layman George Hunton, were among the most prominent figures Catholic interracialism. But over LaFarge’s and Hunton’s reluctance, Chicago’s interracialists led the way in forming a national movement of Catholic interracialists. By the late 1950s, Chicago’s Catholic interracialists provided Americans with the powerful images of nuns and priests marching for civil rights that are so often remembered today. Paying close attention to Chicago’s story, therefore, is necessary for an understanding of the origins of Catholic involvement in the modern civil rights movement.

³ Dennis Clark, “The Price of Protest,” November 16, 1963, Box 4, Folder 10, Roach Papers, WLA (Chicago).

In addition, it allows a deep exploration of how Catholic interracialists related with one another in their relationships across racial, hierarchical, gender, and class lines.

A. Catholic Interracialism and Its Significance

Catholic interracialism grew in influence between the 1920s and the 1960s alongside a growing tolerance for minority groups in American intellectual culture more broadly.⁴ It was bookended by two moments of black autonomy, emerging among urban black Catholics by the end of the 1920s, and ending with the resurgence of black power in the late 1960s. By the early 1930s, Chicago's black Catholics had begun to successfully recruit white Catholic youth to their cause. The 1940s saw Catholic interracialism's first on-the-ground, practical expression and by the 1950s respectable black and white men praised its virtues in halls of power. By the late 1950s, Chicago became the center of the American Catholic interracialist movement and Catholic interracialism became the new orthodoxy for the American Catholic Church.

Catholic interracialism was never, of course, a monolithic idea. It became one thing in the hands of the black Catholic intelligentsia, another when practiced by white women living in voluntary poverty, and another when shaped by white and black businessmen and labor leaders. In the 1930s and 1940s, black Catholics expressed repeated concerns with black respectability, while white Catholics often merged the ideas of poverty and blackness in their depictions of and actions toward African Americans, a fact that frequently troubled their black counterparts. The 1940s female Catholic interracialist leaders adopted a radical approach to American equality,

⁴ Philip Gleason, "Americans All: World War II and the Shaping of American Identity," *The Review of Politics* 43, no. 4 (October, 1981); Deborah Dash Moore, *Gi Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2004). For a focus on growing efforts for religious tolerance, see Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford, 2011). For a discussion of anti-Catholicism in the 1928-1960 era that framed the emerging tolerance, see John T. McGreevy, "Thinking on One's Own: Catholicism in the American Intellectual Imagination, 1928-1960," *Journal of American History* 84, no. 1 (1998).

questioning capitalism's economic structures and living in a devotional Catholic world where the Holy Ghost and the dead often intervened. The men who took the reins of Catholic interracialism in the 1950s, on the other hand, prioritized integration among the middle- and upper-classes. But despite the diversity of Catholic interracialism's expressions, several key traits gave the idea coherence.

Catholic interracialism was primarily a northern, urban phenomenon. It was a direct response to the migration of African Americans to northern cities with large Catholic populations. In the 1930s, New York emerged as the font of the Catholic interracial movement largely because of the prominence and leadership of Jesuit John LaFarge, and for the ensuing decades, Chicago and New York influenced one another.⁵ By the late 1950s, however, the movement's center shifted to Chicago, a city with a uniquely thriving, activist laity, and American Catholic interracialism began to take on more of Chicago's traits, becoming more activist and interreligious in nature.⁶

From its inception, American Catholic interracialism required and promoted partnership between priests and the laity, and it was primarily a lay-led movement. It began among black laypeople who had, at best, only a handful of black priests to turn to for leadership. Because of the void in black clerical leadership, black laypeople recruited white priests to their cause. That the laity often led the way in bringing the message of Catholic interracialism to non-interracialist

⁵ David W. Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1996). Catholic interracialists were also active in some southern cities, especially New Orleans. See R. Bentley Anderson, *Black, White and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005).

⁶ Steven M. Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992); Ellen Skerrett, Edward R. Kantowicz, and Steven M. Avella, *Catholicism, Chicago Style* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1993).

priests counters the narrative that ministers were often “ahead” of their flock on civil rights issues.⁷

A variety of people, some famous like Sargent Shriver, President John F. Kennedy’s brother-in-law and founder of the Peace Corps, and others more obscure, like Peggy Roach, practiced Catholic interracialism. Both types of people mattered, although the ones in front often received the most attention. I have tried to incorporate the people who worked behind the scenes into the narrative, those who volunteered to stuff envelopes and sell newspapers. Roach, for instance, might rarely be found in a historical study. She was never a nun, although two of her sisters were; nor did she lead a major organization. Instead, Roach worked as a secretary and brought her tremendous gifts of organizing and plain thinking to bear on the problems of her day. Stories like Roach’s reveal something of the persistent detail-work Catholic interracialism required as well as the ways in which ordinary people invested their time, energy, and money in a cause they came to believe in deeply. Scores of regular people, schooled in Catholic interracialism and balancing their commitment to interracial justice with other parts of their lives, donated money that paid the salaries or provided the meals and clothing for those leaders that newspapers featured.

In particular, women played an important role in shaping Catholic interracialism, as they did in Catholic lay movements more generally. Many leaders and participants in the Catholic interracialist movement were women, whether they were black women organizing in segregated parishes, white nuns educating the 1930s generation of young people about new doctrines that

⁷ See the excellent literature on white Protestants in the civil rights movement, including James F. Findlay, Jr., *Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement, 1950-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Michael B. Friedland, *Lift up Your Voice Like a Trumpet: White Clergy and the Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements, 1954-1973* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Mark Newman, *Getting Right with God : Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945-1995* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2001).

demanded justice for African Americans, Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker and her compatriots advocating for black and white workers, white and black laywomen living together in Chicago's Black Belt, or Peggy Roach, volunteering and doing the grunt work for lay-led interracialist organizations. Notably, many of the most active women in the Catholic interracialist movement were unmarried. In reflecting on their involvement in Catholic interracialist causes, many of the women commented that their participation gave them a sense of Catholic womanhood that did not require them to marry or be cloistered nuns. In addition, Catholic interracialist women helped to redefine the meaning and practices of Catholicism.⁸

The social structures of the Catholic Church made Catholic interracialism different from Protestant and Jewish interracial efforts. The structure of the Catholic hierarchy and the institutions of the Catholic Church set the limits the Catholic interracialist project pushed up against. For instance, when the archbishop was amenable to lay activity and at least ambivalent on issues of racial justice, Catholic interracialism burned brightly. But if the archbishop thought otherwise, he quenched its fire. In addition, the divide between the Church's hierarchy and laity shaped the practice of Catholic interracialism. Often, lay interracialists acted independently from the hierarchy, at times working against those who had religious authority over them. But they always turned to the hierarchy for rhetorical authority as they quoted encyclicals and other statements to give their counter-cultural movement legitimacy. Catholic interracialists also spread their message using the Church's institutions, such as inter-parish youth organizations sponsored by the hierarchy. Unlike their more fragmented Protestant counterparts, the relative

⁸ For more on lay women's impact on Catholicism, see Janet Kalven, *Women Breaking Boundaries: A Grail Journey, 1940-1995* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999). Amy L. Koehlinger, *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Suellen M. Hoy, *Good Hearts : Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Debra Campbell, "Reformers and Activists," in *American Catholic Women: A Historical Exploration*, ed. Karen Kennelly (New York: MacMillan, 1989); W. D. Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography* (HarperCollins Publishers, 1982); Jim Forest, *Love Is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994).

organizational unity of the Catholic Church could serve to strengthen the Catholic interracialist ideal.

In addition, Catholic interracialism was particularly Catholic because it was shaped by Catholic theology and Catholic social thought. As more white Catholics adopted interracialist ideals, they made connections between Catholic interracialism, Catholic social thought, and liturgical changes that increased the role of the laity. Often, to support their positions, they cited pronouncements of the hierarchy. Many also viewed Catholic interracialism as a spiritual project, first and foremost, and pointed to prayer and participation in the Mass as key ways to achieve racial justice. For those in the 1940s who conceptualized their interracialist efforts as sacrifices, akin to joining Christ on the altar during Mass, Catholic interracialism meant bringing a sacred narrative of suffering as a form of redemption to bear on the problems of racial justice.⁹

As Catholic interracialism developed, the notion of what “Catholic” meant came under fire. Catholic interracialists, particularly the young ones, practiced Catholic Action, which meant that they embodied their religion in new ways. No more could they be content practicing their faith as their parents did, by saying rosaries, attending Mass, and perhaps participating in street fairs. In addition to those practices, Catholic interracialists came to believe that they needed to work to bring their whole world under what they called “the dominion of Christ.” To do this, they followed a three-step model of Catholic Action: seeing a situation, judging what was to be done, and acting upon their judgment.¹⁰

⁹ Robert Orsi, “U.S. Catholics between Memory and Modernity: How Catholics Are American,” in *Catholics in the American Century: Recasting Narratives of U.S. History*, ed. Scott Appleby and Kathleen Sparrows Cummings (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

¹⁰ John McGreevy shows how Catholic involvement in the civil rights marches of the 1960s was a new way to be Catholic. John T McGreevy, “Racial Justice and the People of God: The Second Vatican Council, the Civil Rights Movement, and American Catholics,” *Religion and American Culture* 4, no. 2 (1994).

At the broadest level, this dissertation demonstrates that appreciating how race and Catholicism were intertwined in northern cities like Chicago is fundamental to understanding the history of race, Catholicism, and indeed religion in the United States more generally. It offers a window that shows us how race and religion have shaped one another. I argue that Catholic practices and theologies both reinforced *and* broke down racial hierarchies, and that Catholics, both black and white, used their experiences of the segregated city to transform the practice and theology of what it meant to be Catholic. In doing so, my dissertation helps to bring religion into the broader narrative of post-Civil War United States history, as well as the history of race in America.¹¹

More specifically, the dissertation makes an intervention in the historiography of the civil rights movement. First, it builds on the studies of civil rights in the North by focusing on Chicago in the years prior to Martin Luther King, Jr. coming to the city. In doing so, it highlights the history of religious actors in the long civil rights movement. My work, however, builds on that of John McGreevy, Thomas Sugrue, and others who argue for the importance of religious actors and I show that there were white actors in the long civil rights movement who were not Communists or affiliated with the party, contrary to what many historians implicitly

¹¹ Many histories of race do not account for the role of religion in tearing down or building up racial hierarchies. See, for instance, Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1998); Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010). I join scholars of religion and race who seek to combine the two in their analysis. See Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Louisiana State Univ Pr, 2005); Edward J. Blum, *W.E.B. Du Bois: American Prophet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Eddie S. Glaude, *Exodus! Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth-Century Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*; McGreevy, "Racial Justice and the People of God: The Second Vatican Council, the Civil Rights Movement, and American Catholics."

suggest.¹² The significance of this story lies not just in its uncovering of the Catholics who were active in the long civil rights movement, but in how the Catholic interracialists conceived of their efforts. They did so in Catholic terms, drawing on the resources of the Church to reform itself and change America's practice of interracial justice. Their tale offers us a more complete picture of the northern protest movement, which often occurred in heavily Catholic cities like Chicago where people's lives were structured by their parish boundaries, centered on offering their bodies as co-sacrifices with Christ in the Mass, shaped by the liturgical calendar, and inspired by the Holy Ghost, who could provide everything from a juke-box to a meal for a family.¹³

Next, the dissertation adds to the growing body of literature on black Catholics. By expanding the cast of characters in African American history, it shows that black Catholics, not just black Protestants, constructed the spiritual geographies of both the Black Metropolis, as well as the larger city.¹⁴ I join Cyprian Davis in arguing that black Catholics and the concerns they

¹² James Ralph, *Northern Protest : Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (Random House, 2008); Alan B. Anderson and George W. Pickering, *Confronting the Color Line : The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986). Otherwise excellent, many histories of the long civil rights movement do not account for religion. See Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie : The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008). Biondi mentions a white Friendship House worker (from one of the key groups in my narrative) advocating black social equality, but she does not address the significance of religion (84). Exceptions include Alex Lichtenstein's introduction to the reprinting of Howard Kester's pamphlet *Revolt Among the Masses* (Howard Kester, *Revolt among the Masses*, ed. Alex Lichtenstein (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997 (reprint of 1993)) and Tracy Elaine K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*: University of Virginia Press, 2000.

¹³ For more case studies on how considering Catholicism shifts American history narratives, see the essays in R. Scott Appleby and Kathleen Sprows Cummings, ed. *Catholics in the American Century: Recasting Narratives of U.S. History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ For a history of black Protestant migrant constructions of sacred space, see Wallace D. Best, *Passionately Human, No Less Divine : Religion and Culture in Black Chicago, 1915-1952* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). For other work on black Catholics, see Diana L. Hayes and Cyprian Davis, ed. *Taking Down Our Harps: Black Catholics in the United States* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998); Gary Wray McDonough, *Black and Catholic in Savannah, Georgia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993); McMahon, *What Parish Are You From? A Chicago Irish Community and Race Relations*; Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York: Crossroad, 1990); Morris J. MacGregor, *The Emergence of a Black Catholic Community: St. Augustine's in Washington* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1999); V.S.C. Dorothy Ann Blatnica, *"At the Altar of Their God": African American Catholics in Cleveland, 1922-1961* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995); Timothy B. Neary, "Crossing Parochial Boundaries: African Americans and Interracial Catholic Social

raised are central to the history of Catholicism.¹⁵ Even when black Catholics were not present in Catholic parishes, the absence of their bodies shaped the experiences of their white counterparts.

Finally, the dissertation builds on the work of John McGreevy's *Parish Boundaries* to offer a more complete understanding of Catholics and race. McGreevy's foundational paradigm of "parish boundaries" rightly structures how we think about white Catholics' encounter with race in the urban North. McGreevy locates northern racial tension in a particular place: the parish. He argues that "American Catholics frequently defined their surroundings in religious terms," and through the early sixties, many Catholics lived and died in worlds geographically, socially, and religiously bounded by their parishes.¹⁶ Within the parish, parishioners and priests created an insular world which tried to protect members and kept out the racial and religious "others," including African Americans who were migrating to northern centers like Chicago. This dissertation focuses not on Catholic racism, but on Catholic attempts to overcome various manifestations of racism. It suggests that Catholics active in civil rights moved beyond their parish boundaries. As they tried to bring together disparate groups of people – black and white Catholics, priests and laity – they had to cross their parish boundaries physically, socially, religiously and theologically to recruit advocates and build coalitions to effect change. Once they had gained momentum and strength from one another, they took their strategies back into their parishes to try to effect change.

Action in Chicago, 1914-1954" (Ph.D. Diss, Loyola University, 2004); James M. O'Toole, *Passing for White: Race, Religion, and the Healy Family, 1820-1920* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Richard M. Tristano, "Holy Family Parish: The Genesis of an African-American Catholic Community in Natchez, Mississippi," *Journal of Negro History* 83, no. 4 (Autumn, 1998).

¹⁵ Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*. According to Davis, "Too often black Catholics have been ignored in conventional assessments of American Catholicism. In the light of history, they cannot be ignored. They add another essential perspective to the meaning of the word 'Catholic' and to the understanding of the American Catholic Church" (Davis, 259).

¹⁶ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*, 4.

B. Catholic Social Thought and Race

Catholicism has been intertwined with race throughout American history. After slavery ended, the Church no longer had to deal with the moral question of slavery in the American context, but it faced the challenge of articulating its support of black Catholics and black people in the body politic. For the most part, however, Church leadership remained silent and contributed to the maintenance of a racial apartheid in America.

During the 1800s, American Catholic leadership had little concern with social doctrine generally. In part, this was due to the Church's preoccupation with individual sin, which meant it taught, as one historian put it, a "militantly negative view of the outside world and fostered a strong anti-Protestantism."¹⁷ When Catholics or Catholic historians did talk about racism in the United States, they distorted history and blamed it on Protestants.¹⁸

The American leadership of the Catholic Church largely supported America's racial segregation and discrimination, and did not support black people's vocations to the priesthood. There were, however, a handful of black priests. The American Church's first three black priests, brothers James Augustine Healy, Patrick Francis Healy, and Alexander Sherwood Healy, were born slaves. James Healy became the first black bishop in 1875 in the diocese of Boston. But in the period of Jim Crow's development, James Healy never addressed racial inequality nor accepted invitations by leaders of the developing black laity to speak at their conferences.¹⁹

Black priests, though, were few and far between because American seminaries would not accept them. Seminary leaders feared that if they accepted black men, bishops would not send their white men for the seminaries for priestly formation. The Josephite order, the only Catholic

¹⁷ Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*, 51.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁹ Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, 150; O'Toole, *Passing for White: Race, Religion, and the Healy Family, 1820-1920*.

order with a calling specifically to African Americans, admitted three black men to its seminary between 1891 and 1907, but the decision caused such scandal that after 1907, it closed its seminary and college to black men. By contrast, in Africa by 1919, where the Church's bishops had responded positively to a papal encyclical urging the establishment of native priests in missionary lands, there were forty-two native priests. In the United States there were only five.²⁰ By 1933, that number had dropped to two, but it had increased to 21 in 1945.²¹ The number of black priests increased in part because the Society of the Divine Word, a missionary order that also evangelized African Americans, opened a segregated seminary in Mississippi. In 1934, they ordained their first four black priests.²²

In addition to suppressing black priestly vocations, the American hierarchy did not actively condemn racial violence or racism. For instance, in 1919 America experienced one of the bloodiest summers of white-on-black racial violence. Pope Benedict XV, concerned about the rioting and killing, asked the American bishops to condemn the violence at their upcoming meeting. Cardinal Gasparri, Benedict's secretary of state, sent a cablegram to Monsignor Aluigi Cossio, secretary at the apostolic delegation requesting him to urge members of the hierarchy that ". . . in the imminent meeting of the episcopate there be treated the problems of the black population and that there be deplored the recent killings."²³ Cossio wrote to Chicago's Cardinal Mundelein, asking Mundelein to personally find a way to introduce the racial problem before the bishops.

²⁰ Marilyn W. Nickels, "Thomas Wyatt Turner and the Federated Colored Catholics," *US Catholic Historian* 7, no. 2 (1988): 227.

²¹ Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*, 72.

²² Stephen Ochs, *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871-1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993).

²³ Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, 216.

But the American bishops refused to act and took only a weak stance against the violence. Their 1919 pastoral letter did allude to racial conflict twice, saying, “we deprecate most earnestly all attempts at stirring up racial hatred which hinders the progress of all people, especially negroes temporally, and makes it harder for them to convert.” The letter also noted that “at no period in our history, not even at the outbreak of the war, has the need for unity been more imperative. There should be neither time nor place for sectional division, for racial hatred, for strife among classes, for pure partisan conflict imperilling [*sic*] the country's welfare.” But the situation called for more than a veiled allusion. According to Cyprian Davis, the pioneering historian of black Catholic history, “as we view this letter today, it can be said that the failure to speak plainly, emphatically, and in detail about the racial strife of 1919 was a serious omission. Even worse was the patronizing and gratuitous reference to blacks’ learning from ‘their teachers the lesson of Christian virtue’”²⁴

Despite the practice of segregation and discrimination, the Church held within it powerful ideas and theologies about social equality that black lay Catholics advocated. In addition, the Roman Curia repeatedly expressed concern for black Catholics. But it fell to black lay people to activate these ideas.

Black Catholics, who wanted to hold the Church accountable to its universal theology, began to express their concerns through a series of national conferences in the late 1800s. Daniel Rudd, the founder and editor of the *American Catholic Tribune* organized the first national congress in 1889. When about one hundred black Catholic men met in Washington, D.C. that year, it was the first time black Catholics had come together as a body, “consciously aware of themselves as a group.”²⁵ Rudd was convinced that hope for black Americans lay in the Catholic

²⁴ Ibid., 217.

²⁵ Ibid., 163.

Church's universal message, but knew that black Catholics needed to help the Church live up to its calling. According to Rudd, "the Catholic Church alone can break the color line. Our people should help her do it."²⁶ Rudd decided to call the conference to help the nation's African Americans "realize the Church's extent among them," and to help black Catholics see that they were not alone.²⁷ Rudd believed the conference would forge bonds of community that would lead to increased race pride. The American hierarchy offered the meeting very limited support because it feared lay activity, whether it was white or black.²⁸ The conference, however, set the tone for the Catholic interracialist movement, which would be lay-led.

The lay congress movement among black Catholics helped the Catholics develop a theology of activism and increased the strength of lay leadership, which has been a key component of black Catholicism. Between 1889 and 1893, black lay Catholics held five conferences which led to what Cyprian Davis has called a "black Catholic theological consciousness."²⁹ They held the last conference in Chicago, in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition and the second Lay Catholic Congress in the United States.

In 1891, the black Catholic laity gained another piece of ammunition for their war on the segregated Church. That year, Pope Leo XIII published the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in which he defined "the relative rights and mutual duties of the rich and of the poor, of capital and of labor."³⁰ The encyclical marked a shift in Catholic thought toward a concern with the social implications of the Catholic Church's theology and practice. In it Leo proscribed the ways Catholics should respond to the increasing inequality and dehumanization of the new industrial

²⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, 166.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 171. Many black Catholics felt what Albert Rabateau has called the sense of double otherness, isolated from American society because they were black, and from black society because they were Catholic.

²⁸ Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*, 75.

²⁹ Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, 175.

³⁰ Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html. Accessed 26 January 2013.

order. He emphasized the dignity of each person, the commitment individuals must have to the common good, the charity, or concern for others, people must demonstrate, and the rightness of labor unions and other interest groups if they promoted love and worked for the good of society.

Black Catholics brought this developing Catholic social thought to bear on race. Rudd, for instance, knew *Rerum Novarum* could help achieve equality for African Americans. Reflecting on the encyclical, he commented, “in its treatment of the rich and poor it has not been equaled by any writer upon this subject, besides it comes with the authority of the teaching Church. . . . in this day of strikes and the oppression that causes them, of the injustice of man to man, of prejudice, of murder and of violence, this great paper . . . is as refreshing as a summer shower and as strong as everlasting truth.”³¹

This earlier work created a conceptual framework for the larger movement that would soon emerge. In particular, twentieth-century black and white Catholics drew on the patterns of national congresses, lay activism, theological arguments, and Catholic social thought in their efforts to bring Catholicism’s universal theology to bear on the segregated city.

C. Chapter Summaries

The story of Catholic interracialism developed alongside a broader story of changing racial hierarchies and geographies in northern cities like Chicago. Since the World War I, more and more black Americans moved to Chicago for work and a new life. But cities like Chicago failed to be the “promised land” many black migrants had hoped they would be, and instead migrants met with intimidation and violence when they tried to move into white neighborhoods. As chapter one demonstrates, these migrants met a power structure dominated by a Catholic Church

³¹ Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, 166.

that was promoting black segregation, while simultaneously advocating the Americanization of the various European ethnic groups.

Chapters two and three address black Catholics' responses to this new development. Many expressed dissatisfaction with a Church that claimed universality, but practiced and reinforced segregation. They banded together to form units of the Federated Colored Catholics (FCC). In Chicago, the FCC promoted black advancement within the Catholic Church by arguing that black people should be able to participate in any parish they desired, and, in particular, advocating for the integration of Catholic schools. Their arguments and practices placed them squarely within the racial uplift milieu that emphasized that Negroes' advancement would open the doors to access the fruits of American capitalism. They also negotiated the power dynamics inherent in a church with white, male leadership and a black laity. The Church hierarchy responded in conflicting ways, acknowledging the Church's universality while practicing segregation.

In 1932, Chicago's black Catholics faced a dilemma when their national organization split over leadership in the FCC. Should they support white priestly leadership or black lay leadership? They chose interracialism, partnering with white priests serving in New York City and St. Louis as a strategic move to garner power in a white institution. But the decision led to a decline of the laity's agitation for equality and the FCC's decline. At the same time, they shifted their political approach from one that publically honored the Church to one that, in line with the development of the new, more militant "New Negro," publically pointed out instances of racial prejudice.

While black Catholics were building tenuous alliances with a handful of white priests, white Catholic young adults across the city were gaining a new sense of what it meant to be Catholic

through an inter-parish organization called Chicago Inter-Student Catholic Action (CISCA), the Archdiocese's new seminary under the leadership of a priest committed to Catholic Action, and Chicago's Catholic Worker. Chapters four and five consider developments in mostly-white institutions that helped recruit young white people, some who remained members of the laity and others who joined the priesthood, to the cause of interracialism. It shows how CISCA's adult leaders began to incorporate interracial justice into a new curriculum based on the Mystical Body of Christ, a doctrine with radical implications that argued that all people should be treated as though they were Jesus. Ciscans, as participants called themselves, started to take part in activities at Chicago's Catholic Worker House, which one of Chicago's leading black Catholic interracialists had founded. Black Catholics gained a voice in the Archdiocese's seminary, and a generation of young priests, many of them CISCA alumni, became aware of the cause of Catholic interracialism.

Tensions between white and black interracialists began to emerge. Black Catholics advocated middle-class respectability and upward mobility, while the white Catholics, coming from a social movement aligned with the white working class, imbibed an interracialism focused on black poverty. The Catholic Worker failed to attract many black Catholics, and white Catholics' experience of interracialism was mostly in theory. As Peggy Roach, who participated in CISCA and supported the Catholic Worker commented, "it was through CISCA that I first became aware of the 'race problem' . . . Because we were all growing up in a segregated society at the time, we were learning about the race issue, but had little or no contact with counterpart Black students. They were not enrolled in our high schools."³²

The city needed a bridge between black and white Catholics, an interracial space where people could come together. Friendship House, the Chicago branch of a women-led, interracial

³² Roach, "Reflections on a Journey," 7, Roach Papers.

settlement house established in New York, served that purpose. Chapters six and seven explore the development and significance of Friendship House, which came to Chicago in the early months of World War II. Friendship House provided a place where white and black people could get to know one another as friends, and these experiences compelled many white people into the Catholic interracialist movement. Black and white members of Friendship House conflicted over what their Catholic interracialism should constitute: white members wanted to focus on crossing racial and class lines while black members encouraged a focus on African Americans' respectability. Until the mid-1950s, the white version of Catholic interracialism prevailed at Friendship House. As World War II drew to a close and urban Catholics relocated to the suburbs, Catholic interracialism took another turn.

Chapters eight and nine show how Catholic interracialists shifted their focus to the suburbs and began to emphasize black respectability, rather than black poverty. As African Americans began to try to move to suburbs along with their middle-class white counterparts, they encountered resistance. A male-dominated organization called the Catholic Interracial Council (CIC), which formed in 1947, emerged to take on a leading role in Catholic interracialism. Many of its members were also connected with the city's political and business elite and they emphasized that Catholic interracialism was a rational response to the racial violence centered on housing that was plaguing the Archdiocese. The CIC advocated interracial living along class lines as a strategy to open up the housing market and to convince white people that black people were respectable. By the end of the decade, as the civil rights movement picked up momentum nationally, Chicago's CIC began to advocate for a new national organization to unite Catholic interracialists.

Chapters ten and eleven cover Catholic interracialism's rhetorical triumph and the new forms of expression it took with the hierarchy's support and the developing national civil rights movement. In 1958, Chicago's Catholic interracialists led the way in forming a national organization to coordinate their activities called the National Catholic Conference on Interracial Justice (NCCIJ). Through the NCCIJ, Chicago's Catholics shaped the national movement and influenced it to be ecumenical and increasingly militant. Chicago's Catholic interracialists' success was dependent, in large measure, on the support of Chicago's hierarchy, and the American hierarchy more generally. But despite their great victory, Catholic interracialists still faced a challenging task: implementing their ideals on a broad scale. The dissertation ends with the triumph of Catholic interracialism, and considers briefly its limits in practice after 1963.

II. THE NOOSE TIGHTENS: BLACK CHICAGO, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND THE CHANGING FACE OF RACE

On Sunday, July 27, 1919, a black seventeen-year-old man drowned after he was attacked by a group of white bathers because he floated across the unspoken line of segregation at a Chicago beach. Arthur Falls, an eighteen-year-old black man, had spent the day trying to cool off in the 96 degree weather at another beach with his family. Although tempers simmered and riots broke out across the city, on Monday morning, Arthur and his father, William, had an uneventful trip to and from the post office downtown at Dearborn and Jackson where they worked. Arthur had graduated with honors from the mostly-white Englewood High School that spring and was working to pay for college and then medical school. He planned to begin at Crane Junior College on the West Side of the city at Damen and Van Buren in September, and then to go on to Northwestern University's Medical School two years later.¹ William's pay at the post office was just enough to support his family, but not enough to pay for college for his children. Arthur was happy, therefore, to be able to work.

That night, however, their neighborhood was a war zone. They lived in West Englewood, a predominantly white neighborhood with pockets of black residents south west of downtown. The census eleven years later would indicate that only 3 percent of the population was Negro and the rest was white. The Falls family had good relationships with their neighbors and thought their community would be free from the riots breaking out in the Stockyards, where some of the Falls's neighbors had been injured while at work on the killing floors, and by St.

¹ Crane Junior College is now Malcolm X Community College and a part of the City Colleges system.

Monica's parish in the Black Belt.² But peace did not reign. Ragen's Colts, an Irish athletic club, had instigated a mob a few blocks from the Falls's house at 1311 W. 61st Street and had, according to Arthur's recollection of the night, "roaming bands of youths looking for Negroes to beat up and kill."³ Arthur and his family could see glimpses of the mob forming by looking east and west from their house. Around eight that night, the Falls family learned an angry white mob surrounded their neighborhood on 59th and 63rd Streets to the north and south, and on Loomis to the west, and Racine to the east. Loomis was just two blocks west of their house.

The Chicago police, predominantly Irish, would be of no help, and the black families knew they would have to defend themselves against the mob. The Fallses and the other black families did not trust the police because most of them were Irish Catholics, and, according to Falls, "for most colored people, the term Irish Catholic was synonymous with the word enemy." Being Catholic would not help the Falls family that night with the police or with the Catholic Ragen's Colts. Rumors the Fallses heard the following day made the decision the black families

² Following Isabel Wilkerson's lead, I have chosen to use the word "Negro" in addition to "African American" and "black" to describe those who identified as African Americans. I use it because that is how they referred to themselves.

³ Arthur Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," in *Arthur G. Falls Papers* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Archive, Undated), 81. A large portion of my source base for materials on Catholic interracialism in the 1930s is the memoir Arthur Falls dictated and edited between the 1940s and the 1960s. I suspect he first created it in the 1940s and was editing it in the 1960s given the content of the manuscript. About 850 typed pages of the manuscript are available for research and the story stops abruptly in 1942. Given the extensive explanations of black life and how he emphasizes the diversity of his family, it is likely that his intended audience was white. In the memoir, Falls wrote about race and what he called the "crazy social situation" with irony, reflecting his belief that all people's dignity should be honored and, in a class-conscious way, that a person should be judged by his or her accomplishments, not by the supposed type of blood – Negro or white – that flowed in their veins. These beliefs both reflected and shaped Catholic interracialism in the city. The majority of it is housed at Marquette University and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture has some pages (less edited than Marquette's) that Marquette does not have. The page numbers I give in the following footnotes reflect the way in which I have used the source. I was able to photograph the individual pages of the manuscript and combine them into a pdf file. The page numbers, therefore, are somewhat artificial. They are helpful to me, but would not be entirely helpful to someone using the source at the archive. At the time I used the source at Marquette some of the pages were numbered according to the disc and side of whatever recording device Falls used to dictate his memoir, and others are simply unnumbered, but the entire manuscript was in a few folders. Since then, the archive has provided more order to the manuscript. For more on Arthur Falls, see Lincoln Rice, "Toward a Renewed Theological Framework of Catholic Racial Justice: A Vision Inspired by the Life and Writings of Dr. Arthur Grand Pré Falls" (Dissertation, Marquette University, 2013).

were about to make seem justified; police had blackened their faces and “charged through the near south side area shooting up the districts.”⁴

The small band of African Americans in Falls’s immediate neighborhood took matters into their own hands. Many had recently returned from service in World War I and drew on their military training. They organized themselves into patrols to man the alleys and made it harder for would-be-attackers to find them by knocking out the street lights on Ada, Throop, 61st and 62nd Streets. In the darkness, the patrols waited for the impending attack. When the mob invaded, the lookouts would whistle to alert the folks inside their homes. Arthur and William waited in their house, watching for the mob and listening for the whistle that might signal their deaths. The family’s vulnerability was palpable. They only had broomsticks and a fire poker for defense should the mob attack, and Arthur vowed never to be so unprepared again. In future years, he would carry a gun when race tensions seemed high and always to the beach, where the riot had begun.

Early Tuesday morning, around two a.m., the signal was blown, and the Falls family, broomsticks and fire poker in hand, prepared for an attack. But thankfully, the mob never came down their street. Perhaps it was because of the black neighbors’ militancy and the fact that the one policeman they trusted in the neighborhood informed the mob, “If you go down there, you’ll be going to Hell’s Valley.”⁵ Two hours later, the shouting died down and by daylight everything seemed to be quiet. Arthur and his dad prepared for work, thinking that all was well, at least until darkness fell again.

Unfortunately, they were wrong. The two men took the Rock Island train into the Loop, Chicago’s downtown business district, and Arthur became wary when he realized they were the

⁴ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 81.

⁵ Ibid., 81-82.

only two men of color on the train. They got off the train at Polk and began their five block walk to the post office on the busy streets of the Loop. About a block and a half into the walk, Arthur looked across the street and saw “some really vicious looking hoodlums, mostly young, unkempt, and distinctly different from the mass of people who were walking to work.”⁶

Concerned, Arthur glanced at the reflection of the window on his side of the street and noticed a dangerous-looking group of white men following and pointing at the pair. Arthur alerted his father to the gathering mob, and the two broke out into a run to make it to the safety of the U.S. Post Office.

They did not make it. At Van Buren and Jackson, the white mob caught up with them and began to attack them, shouting names and hurling insults. After two blows, Arthur saw an opening in the circle of men and sprinted out of the group. Most of the mob took off after him, but the adrenaline pulsing through his body made him faster than normal and he was able to outpace his pursuers. But when he stopped running, Arthur realized his father was nowhere in sight. When Arthur arrived at the post office, he heard that earlier that morning, a white mob had killed a black man at the same corner where he and his father had been attacked. Arthur spent the next hour with his face pressed against the post office window, looking for his dad. “I could not help but feel some sense of dread that I might not see my father alive again; I recognized what it would mean to the family,” Arthur later recalled. But most of all, Arthur “had a sense of wonder and disbelief that human beings could act as such savages as they were during this situation . . . I thought of the hate on the faces of these hoodlums who were running to attack us, and I thought that they looked exactly like a pack of wild animals out for a kill.”⁷ Finally William arrived at work, beaten but able to walk. Six white men had come to William’s rescue

⁶ Ibid., 84.

⁷ Ibid., 87.

and had saved his life. After being driven home in government trucks with armed guards, Arthur and William decided to not go to work until the rioting across the city had stopped. At night, the two men stayed up, lying in wait for the mob to attack, but during the day, all was peaceful in their neighborhood. They slept and Arthur also passed the time doing what he loved most: gardening. These events were a part of Chicago's Race Riot of 1919.⁸

The riot was not an abnormality in Chicago's history, but rather a particularly violent manifestation of a pattern of exclusion and violence that Chicago's European immigrants and their children began to practice as black Southern migrants moved to the city for work, especially after the start of World War I. Chicago at the turn of the century was a city of ethnic groups, which often had deep enmity for one another, but by the 1910s, the immigrant groups began to unite against African Americans, who were increasingly moving to the city.

Starting around 1900, Chicago's black population began to increase as migrants came from the South. Between 1910 and 1920, Chicago's black population increased by 148 percent, going from a population of 44,103 to 109,458. Ten years later, the black population had again more than doubled, reaching by 1930, 233,903.⁹ As the rate of black migration increased, two interrelated things happened. First, middle- and upper-class black families like the Fallses began to look for homes on blocks where they had previously not lived, and the white ethnic residents of those blocks became upset. The movement of African Americans combined with the developing anti-black racism shaped Chicago's racial dynamics in a sharper, new way.

When Falls was a boy, he was aware of the tension between ethnic groups because he saw it on the baseball field. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons during the warm months, Falls

⁸ For context, see Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago,: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 201-22.

⁹ Harry C. Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago* (Chicago: The Archdiocese of Chicago, 1980), 357. See also Roger Biles, *Richard J. Daley: Politics, Race, and the Governing of Chicago* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), 85.

would often walk the two blocks to the local baseball field at 61st and Racine to watch the athletic clubs play ball through a hole in the fence. When he was nine, Falls obtained a job selling peanuts, crackerjacks, and popcorn inside the park. On those hot summer days, Falls could be certain of one thing: seeing a “rousing fight at the end of the game” between the ethnically-based athletic clubs, which sponsored baseball teams, as well as political debates and other activities geared toward young men.¹⁰ These clubs represented the conflict between Chicago’s immigrant groups, and an Irish person was not welcome among Italians and vice versa.

But the city of cities was changing, and the athletic clubs Falls watched every Saturday and Sunday during the summer played an important role. One of the most “pugnacious” athletic clubs to play in the local ball park was the Irish Ragen’s Colts, who would threaten the black families in the Fallses neighborhood during the riot of 1919. The club’s headquarters was on Halsted Street, a mile north of the ball park. “When the Regan Colts [*sic*] played a game,” Falls recalled, “whether it be baseball or football, one counted on a fight.”¹¹ These were the groups that fanned the flames of the 1919 riot. After the riot, the Illinois Commission on Human Relations concluded “it is doubtful if the riot would have gone beyond the first clash” without the participation of the white athletic clubs.¹²

Ragen’s Colts were one of the main instigators of the riot and their actions tried to unite Chicago’s ethnic groups against African Americans. Members of the group dressed in blackface

¹⁰ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹² Quoted in Biles, *Richard J. Daley: Politics, Race, and the Governing of Chicago*, 22. According to Biles, Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley was an active member of the Hamburg Club and served as its president for fifteen years beginning in 1924. At the time of the riot, Daley was seventeen and had to have been aware of the riots, in which members of the Hamburg Club had fought on the front lines. “In later years, he never responded directly to reporters’ questions about the events of that summer. Neither eye-witness accounts nor arrest reports confirm his involvement; no evidence at all survives to substantiate his critics’ claim that such a prominent club member surely must have been involved.”

and set fire to Polish and Lithuanian communities in the Back of the Yards neighborhood in order to provoke retaliation against African Americans. These acts were not just the actions of youth playing, but were part of the creation of whiteness among immigrants by excluding African Americans.¹³ Ragen's Colts' blackface tricks during the riot were just one example of how white Chicagoans began to think of themselves less as Irish, Polish, and Italian, and more as white people facing a black menace.¹⁴

Catholicism was foundational in both creating and destabilizing this new racial order. Both the Falls family and the members of Ragen's Colts who threatened their home were Catholic, members of the same church claiming universality in its acceptance of its children. But in the United States in the early twentieth century, standard Catholic practice and theology was powerless to unite people across racial lines and it did more to keep them apart. Racism was embedded in the institutions of Chicago and its Catholic Church and manifested in the actions of white Catholics. That racism was neither unchanging nor inevitable, but it had devastating consequences for the city and the church.

Arthur Falls grew up as a black Catholic in Chicago at a unique moment in the city's racial and religious history. As black migrants moved to the Chicago, white city dwellers, many of them Catholic, united against their new neighbors. Before Falls was twenty, Catholic practice and theology had helped shape a binary racial system, and racism had changed the way Catholicism was practiced by many black Catholics. That system, however, was never stable, and it required maintenance and particular assumptions about the nature of black people. In turn,

¹³ David Roediger, "Racism, Ethnicity, White Identity."

¹⁴ Allan Spear argues that prior to the Great Migration, there was a relatively fluid pattern of race relations in Chicago, but by 1890 or so, a separate black Chicago began to develop. As the black population increased during the Great Migration, white Chicagoans forcibly contained black Chicagoans in a physical ghetto and black Chicagoans responded by creating their own institutional ghetto. The Great Migration ultimately reinforced patterns already in place. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*.

black Chicagoans' responses to these developments varied. Falls's experiences in this changing racial and religious landscape, and the subsequent conclusions he drew, informed the course of Catholic interracialism for the next half-century.

A. Falls's Heritage: A Window into Later Catholic Interracialist Themes

On Christmas Day, 1901 Angelica Grand Pré Falls gave birth to a son who she and her husband, William Falls, named Arthur. Arthur was born in the small front bedroom in the front apartment of the second floor of a frame building at 3601 S. Dearborn Street. A bevy of aunts and uncles had descended on the residence to greet the first-born child. Reflecting the family's middle-class status, Angelica introduced her baby to the family as "Dr. Falls." Angelica proved an honest prophet; Arthur became a doctor, but he would not only heal people's bodies, he would also seek to heal a wound in the Church that was centuries old. Falls became one of the key driving forces behind Catholic interracialism in Chicago in the 1930s and key elements of his upbringing later became tenets of black Catholic interracialism. His memoir, meant for a white audience, laid out his life in terms of his interracialist work and reflected tenets of Arthur Falls's Catholic interracialism.

In his memoir, Falls argued against the notion that the meaning of "Negro" was a fixed category. He pointed to the diversity of Negro experiences and ancestries and suggested the instability of the terms "Negro" and "white." White Catholics and non-Catholics used the fear of interracial marriage to argue against black civil rights, but Falls's description of his ancestry reminded his readers that "miscegenation" had occurred for centuries.

Falls also used his family lineage to debunk illusions that many white Catholics and non-Catholics had about the purity of races. His father, William Arthur Falls, was born in Havana, Cuba, to Julian Falls, "a colored man who had migrated from Mississippi" and a Spanish woman,

whose name William probably did not know. Falls did not know the details of his grandfather's life, but surmised that Julian was not a slave "since he was able to go to Cuba and live for a while." But Julian's marriage did not last. The reasons for this are unclear, but, as Falls recalled, "At one time I heard discussed that one of the reasons might have been the fact that my father turned out to be rather dark in complexion." Julian then returned to Mississippi with his son and married Mattie Oarland, who Falls described, tongue-in-cheek, as "a full-blooded Choctaw Indian, at least as full-blooded as anyone might be," with whom he had six more children. Even in his mention his step-grandmother, Chocktaw Mattie Oarland, Falls troubles the notion of a pure race. On his father's side, Falls highlights the often-unacknowledged fact of miscegenation by concluding "I have no knowledge of a single full name of an European ancestor, none of whom married their mates, and I imagine the absence of these names may be due to reaction [*sic*] of the family to this situation."¹⁵

In 1887, at the age of 14, William, Falls's father, left Mississippi for Chicago.¹⁶ Falls was unclear on the chronology and timing, but indicated that two things had left a "very bitter taste" in his father's mouth, which both had to do with rejection because of white people's racism. Nevertheless, Falls includes two stories about his father's experiences with discrimination. The first was William's trip to Oklahoma Territory to find land. William – or perhaps his family – apparently expected to be given preference in gaining land of their Indian descent. But William discovered that "many persons of Indian descent were denied access to land, where many white persons of no Indian descent were given large tracts of land."¹⁷ William

¹⁵ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 1, 2.

¹⁶ I have calculated William's age based on the 1910 census. He was born in 1873. Angelica was born in 1880. It is surprising to me that William could have done the following alone at such a young age, so I suspect that, especially given how hazy Falls admits to being on this subject the chronology is off. 1910 United States Census, s.v. "Arthur Falls," Chicago, Tract C7, Cook County, Illinois.

¹⁷ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 2.

also learned that his birth mother was living in Boston and had married a wealthy man there, and he went to visit her but “she denied that she was his mother.” The effect on William, Falls commented, “can be well imagined.” Falls drove home the significant consequences of looking black in such a discriminatory society, no matter one’s heritage. When, in Falls’s lifetime, attorneys from Boston came looking for a William Arthur Falls, and saw his father, “they said, ‘there must be some mistake.’” This expression, Falls commented, was “very familiar to colored Americans, for colored Americans often find themselves deprived of inheritance, of jobs, or of other opportunities when the representative of the power group learns of his complexion.”¹⁸

In describing the mixed heritage of his mother, Santalia Angelica Grand Pré, Falls continued to destabilize the biological meaning of Negro. Angelica was born in New Orleans to Henri Théophile de Grand Pré and Marie Octavia Dominique. Angelica’s mother, Marie, had a diverse heritage. She was the daughter of an African woman named Elizabeth and a man from a French family with the surname Dominique. Henri was the son of an Indian woman named Charlotte and “one of the Grand Prés, a rather well-known family who had emigrated from France.” Henri had been born into slavery and had suffered the pain of seeing his family broken up and sold around the country. Although Falls does not comment on how long Henri was enslaved, it is possible he was a free man in Louisiana later in life. “Apparently my grandfather,” Falls stated, “was a very independent individual and did not fit into a pattern of servility, which incurred such hostility of local whites [*sic*] that he had to flee Louisiana, first spiriting his family out and then himself.” Henri fled Louisiana for Topeka, Kansas, when his daughter Angelica was only a week old, and she grew up in Topeka. Out of all his grandparents, Arthur only knew his grandfather, Henri. And because Henri only spoke French, William and Angelica’s children had to learn a little French to converse with him.

¹⁸ Ibid., 3.

Second, Falls reminded white readers that black people had just as much of a claim on Chicago as white people and that their history, furthermore, should be a source of pride for respectable black and white people. Catholic interracialism occurred in the context of the continued expansion of Chicago's black population. But many black people had lived peaceably with white people prior to the Great Migration. Falls's parents, for instance, had moved to Chicago prior to 1900 and were members of the Old Settler class. Many of the Old Settlers, the Falls family included, also embraced middle class markers of respectability, particularly with the "outward appearance and behavior of economic thrift, bodily restraint, and functional modesty in personal and community presentation."¹⁹ At times, Falls seems to have wanted to make more connections between families like his and middle- and upper-class white families, than between his family and new migrants to Chicago.

Yet despite their generational claim on Chicago and respectability, they were limited in achieving their dreams by tools of racial oppression. One of young Arthur's first memories was of his mother taking him and his younger sister Regina for walks down Michigan Boulevard on Sunday afternoon, broadly expanding her children's horizons.²⁰ As Falls recalled, when the threesome went east across State Street, out of the Black Belt, it was like entering a "new world." Horses pranced by, pulling carriages, and elegant houses rose up from large lawns that money from the packing industry leaders maintained. Falls appreciated the lawns the most because of the space the neighborhood's children had to play. Images from these walks contrast with Falls's

¹⁹ Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes : Modernity, the Great Migration, & Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 28. Baldwin emphasizes that after World War I, the meaning of Old Settler came to refer not to when someone moved to Chicago, but their understanding of how one should act. They "wanted to present a unified and positive image of the race to counteract the cultural assumptions of white supremacy. At the same time, they believed that a leadership class could help better the conditions of working class migrants" (29). Baldwin emphasizes Old Settlers' relationship to industrial labor, in particular, which became very important for Arthur Falls in the 1930s. For a discussion of Old and New Settler mentalities, see also Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*.

²⁰ Michigan Boulevard becomes Michigan Avenue on Chicago's South Side.

memories of his birth home in what would become the Black Belt. There, well-kept two-story buildings framed the streets. But the black children, unlike the white children across Michigan Boulevard, had no lawns on which they could play. Their apartment, too, was cramped. Falls quickly learned, as he recalled in his memoir, that “being colored constituted a certain handicap.”²¹ He would, therefore, target a system that oppressed black people.

Angelica’s and William’s emphasis on respectability shaped their son, which would contribute to a later pattern of respectability among black Catholic interracialists. In his memoir, Falls described his parents as upwardly mobile, devotedly Catholic and civically engaged. Families like his were models of respectability. Angelica and William modeled civic engagement and hard work to their son. Falls described his father as respected at work and church. He rarely called in sick to work and only took time off for his vacations. William was an introvert, not very outgoing, and portrayed a gruff exterior. As Falls recalled, “He was always of rather serious, or rather, solemn mien, seldom smiling.” But William had a very “orderly mind” and was “very careful and conscientious in his recording.” William never learned to dance, but enjoyed watching baseball and on Saturday nights loved to play cards with his friends. William worked at the post office, which was relatively unique for an African American man; in 1920, only one percent of black workers did “clean” work, as opposed to manual labor or service positions.²² Before World War I, most black men would have worked as porters, servants, janitors, and waiters, and after the war, more than 40 percent of black men were employed in factories.²³ Often after a shift at the post office, he would meet his wife and children at Washington or Jackson Park for a picnic. Overall, Falls pronounced his father as a “highly

²¹ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 4-6.

²² St Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis : A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, Rev. and enl. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 225.

²³ Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal : Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 35.

respected person because of his trustworthiness, his integrity, and his carefulness; he was also noted for his sense of responsibility to his fellows in the order of Catholic Foresters.”²⁴

Arthur blamed his father’s devotion to the Catholic Foresters for William’s early death in 1929. William’s sense of responsibility “caused him to overextend himself in working for the group, and ultimately contributed to his death.”²⁵ As the secretary of the Catholic Order of Foresters, St. Monica’s Court, which Falls referred to as the “colored court of the organization,” William poured his life into others.²⁶ The Catholic Order of Foresters was a men’s sodality, or lay group within the Church, that focused on spiritual development and serving others. The group offered members secret passwords, grips, and signs, along with a sense of order and prestige. Their 1933 handbook instructed the High Chief Ranger that the initiation ceremonies should be performed “intelligently and impressively - so that its full beauty and meaning should be brought out,” which would, in turn, attract others to the order.²⁷ Falls watched his father serve other people through the organization, visiting the sick and helping members out in court. As he recalled, “Frequently I would sit up late at night with him during the weekends writing letters and notices and I remember that my attitude during this time was that although I was willing to help him, never would I engage in activity for people who didn’t seem to appreciate it.”²⁸ But the lessons learned from working with his father stuck, and Arthur would spend much of his life helping others, no matter if they appreciated it.

From his father, Falls also learned a third principle he used in his Catholic interracialist efforts: to fight for deeply held principles. Once Falls joined the youth order of the Catholic

²⁴ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 55-56.

²⁵ Ibid., 56.

²⁶ Ibid., 43.

²⁷ Catholic Order of Foresters, “Ceremonial of the Catholic Order of Foresters,” 1933, Cardinal George Mundelein Papers, AAC.

²⁸ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 43.

Order of Foresters, he had a chance to watch his dad in action. One night in particular stood out to Falls as an adult. He remembered “no other time when I was more proud of my father because he was right and he was fighting on principle” than a dispute William was having with the other Foresters. That night, William stood up for something on principle against hundreds of other men, and won. While Falls does not say what the battle was about, that night, he learned “a very excellent lesson that in fighting for principle one could win.”²⁹

Angelica also taught her son to be engaged in the community. She, Falls recalled, “seemed to always have a fear of settling into a rut,” and would counter that with reading, studying, and community organizing. Falls makes no suggestion that she worked outside the home, which would have made her unlike most black women of her time.³⁰ Either way, she modeled to her son that a woman should not work, because as a young man, Falls later expected that the woman he would marry would not work once they had children. In addition to raising eleven children, Angelica made her husband proud through her volunteer work. Angelica’s commitment to others sometimes upset her children. Falls recalls that some of his siblings felt “that the community was competing too much with them.”³¹ As a member of the League of Women Voters, she frequently spoke for the organization, and she was active on the school board at Copernicus, the public school her children attended.

²⁹ Ibid., 44.

³⁰ Although the Falls family was a black middle class family, it is important to remember that the black middle class was restricted by racial hierarchies in ways that benefitted the white middle class. As Kevin Gaines argues about black people in the South, it is useful to “discard our generally color-blind notion of middle-class status, whose effect is to mask race and class inequalities through a reified category of the black middle class. . . . Although marital status, the possession of a home or education, or the wish to acquire these, are considered markers of middle-class status, the material condition of many blacks with these aspirations was often indistinguishable from that of impoverished people of any color.” The Falls family was successful, however, in acquiring property and education, but even as a doctor, Arthur Falls did not receive the same income a white doctor would have received. Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 16.

³¹ Arthur Falls, “Unpublished Autobiography,” (New York: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Undated), S2/1.

Falls's family life, lived in the context of Chicago's changing racial dynamics, suggests three important elements that he brought to Catholic interracialism as an adult. First, he argued that race was unstable and, like many other black Catholic interracialists tried to show white people, that there was diversity among black Americans. They were not all the same and should be evaluated as individuals. Second, Falls and other black Catholics pointed to black Catholic respectability and contribution to a better city. White people and racist structures, however, limited black advancement. Finally, to change the situation required fighting a long, hard battle for deeply held principles.

B. When Race Meant Ethnicity: Growing Up Black and Catholic in the Changing Racial Order

The Falls family was different than many other black Chicagoans in that they were Catholic, a minority within a minority.³² In 1890, there were less than 50,000 African Americans living in Chicago. After the Great Fire of 1871, the group became more concentrated, but still lived in residually mixed neighborhoods. By the 1910s, there were only about 600 black Catholic families who worshipped at the city's main black parish.³³ Socially and culturally, most black Catholics in Chicago were upwardly mobile and enjoyed the more formal, European-style liturgy of the Catholic Church. Many black converts to the faith joined the Church because it offered them access to an alternative educational system and the promise

³² For the phrase "minority within a minority," see Albert Raboteau's excellent work on black Catholics in chapter six of *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

³³ In his dissertation, Timothy Neary estimates 600, citing James W. Sanders, *The Education of an Urban Minority: Catholics in Chicago, 1833-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 31. In his 1917 letter, Archbishop Mundelein cites 300 or 400 families (Mundelein to Burgmer, Letter in Favor of the Negro Parish of St. Monica, Chicago, 26 October 1917," in *Two Crowded Years*, 291-300 (Chicago: Chicago Extension Press, 1918). After Father John Eckert began serving at St. Monica's in 1921, the number of black Catholics in Chicago greatly increased. Many adults became Catholic because they sent their children to Catholic school.

of universality.³⁴ Black Catholics' position in society shaped their expressions of Catholic interracialism. In particular, because they often came from middle- and upper- class black families, they wanted access to the fruits of American prosperity. Unlike a later expression of white Catholic interracialism, they did not question the American dream.

Chicago's black Catholics had a long history, but were hardly honored outside black Catholic circles. In 1889, Father John Augustine Tolton, the United States' first black priest who did not pass for white, founded St. Monica's, Chicago's first black parish.³⁵ Born in 1854 to Roman Catholic slaves in Bush Creek, Missouri, Tolton was raised by his mother as a black, free Catholic in Quincy, Illinois. With the support of his mother and a German-American priest, Tolton decided to pursue the priesthood. But white racism reared its ugly head, and no seminary in the United States would educate a black man. Tolton went abroad for his seminary education, and in 1886 the Sacred College of the Propaganda in Rome ordained him to the priesthood. He came to Chicago in 1889 and Archbishop Feehan appointed him to serve Chicago's black Catholics as their national pastor.³⁶

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Chicago's parishes followed a national model, which seemed justified given the city's incredible growth in the second half of the nineteenth century, much of it due to immigrants from the "Old World" coming to Chicago. According to John McGreevy, the preeminent historian of race and Catholicism in the urban North, "African-American Catholics, like Poles, Italians, and other Euro-American groups, were

³⁴ Neary, "Crossing Parochial Boundaries: African Americans and Interracial Catholic Social Action in Chicago, 1914-1954". Harris also discusses different worship styles according to class and status as New/Old settlers in a Protestant context. See Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

³⁵ Alexander Sherwood Healy, James Augustine Healy, and Patrick Francis Healy were all African American men serving in the Church, but passing for white. See James M. O'Toole, *Passing for White: Race, Religion, and the Healy Family, 1820-1920* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

³⁶ Neary, "Crossing Parochial Boundaries: African Americans and Interracial Catholic Social Action in Chicago, 1914-1954," 28-31; Davis, *The History of Black Catholics*, " 159-160.

expected to worship in their own parishes, receive the ministrations of religious-order priests specially trained for work in their community, and learn from nuns who were devoted to working in their parochial schools.”³⁷ Since the city had so many immigrants, its bishops supported churches that catered to specific ethnic groups, particularly by holding services in a group’s native language. The leaders of the Church believed that the best way to minister to Catholics was by grouping them by ethnicity.

The national parish model matched up with the racial dynamics of the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the turn of the century, Americans viewed the Irish, the Polish, etc., as racial groups.³⁸ “White” did not have the same meaning it developed after the 1924 immigration act. Each parish, therefore, was a racial/ethnic enclave, and as late as 1910, Italian immigrants were more segregated than black Chicagoans.³⁹ Yet although Chicago was a city divided among ethnic lines at the turn of the century, African Americans were treated by people who were not black as a group apart, and that pattern would only increase.

When Tolton founded St. Monica’s with his parishioners, they were participating in this proud Catholic tradition, but soon the tide would turn. Tolton’s parishioners had previously been meeting in the basement of St. Mary’s, but they finally had their own church and charismatic leader and black Catholics from all over the city came to worship at St. Monica’s. Tolton’s leadership was cut short when, on a hot summer day in 1897, at only forty three years of age, Tolton died from heat stroke, having spent himself on behalf of his parishioners, and likely because of the pressures of being a black priest in a white church. Chicago would not have another black priest until 1940.

³⁷ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*, 29.

³⁸ Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*.

³⁹ Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*, 15.

During Falls's childhood, Chicago's parish model began to slowly shift away from an ethnic parish model, and the racial order of the city slowly became a black/white binary, although the process was by no means uniform, unidirectional, or universal. As a child, Falls only saw glimpses of what was to come. In ebbs and flows, black Chicagoans began to experience more discrimination that was unique to their being seen as Negroes. By 1915, most of Chicago's black population lived in a narrow strip of land on the South Side of the city, which became known as the Black Belt. It extended from the rail road yards on the west to Cottage Grove Avenue on the east, and from the central business district into the Woodlawn and Englewood neighborhoods.⁴⁰

White Catholic practice and theology upheld the growing exclusion of African Americans. The movement of black families to white neighborhoods was particularly troubling to white Catholics because, as historian John McGreevy showed in his book *Parish Boundaries*, they merged their neighborhood and religious lives.⁴¹ The Catholic Church had a parish model, and all members of a particular geographic area were to be cared for by the local church. Local priests encouraged parishioners to commit themselves to their parish by buying a house, pouring their lives' savings into brick and mortar. Parishioners gave their tithe to the church to support new buildings, schools, and programs for their children and in the process created a nearly separate Catholic world. But the racism of white parishioners meant that when black families moved into the neighborhood, the white families feared falling property values. African American families, furthermore, were unlikely to be Catholic, so the priests could not expect support for church programs. White people's response was devastating for African Americans. They tightened a noose around black Chicago through improvement associations, community

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5-27.

⁴¹ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*, 13.

newspapers, boycotts, restrictive covenants and racial violence in an attempt to contain all black Chicagoans within strict geographic boundaries.⁴²

When Falls was only six, his family transgressed Chicago's national parish lines, and their situation was likely complicated by the fact that they were African Americans. When Falls was born, his parents lived in St. Monica's parish. But in 1907, William and Angelica decided to move out of St. Monica's to Holy Angels parish so they could raise their family in a larger house with a yard for a garden. They rented a flat from a black woman who had just purchased the two story building at 3600 Vernon Avenue. The street was one block east of Grand Boulevard (now Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) and had beautiful, large homes. Falls "found new life" in their new home as he learned to grow "tall pink cosmos, the blue forget-me-nots, the varied-colored hollyhocks, and many other flowers," along with the carrots, beets, Swiss chard, and corn they planted in the vegetable garden.⁴³ The Falls children – of which there were now three – had room to play and run in the yard. But all was not as beautiful as the yard. The white folks did not like these two new black families living on the block, and the Falls children often heard the maids who worked on Grand Boulevard comment about the black families. Falls did not recall being upset by their comments, but he was troubled by what he experienced at church.

In Holy Angels Parish, theological ideals and racist practice collided. According to Catholic theology, the local church was responsible for all the people living within a certain geographic radius. That area was their parish, and Catholics were obliged to go to church in their parish. In Chicago's national parishes, this model usually worked because Chicagoans

⁴² Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*. This pattern made black ghettos very lucrative for many white entrepreneurs. See Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (Metropolitan Books, 2009).

⁴³ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 12.

lived in neighborhoods with members of the same ethnic groups. But when the Falls family moved out of their predominantly black neighborhood, they moved out of the black parish, St. Monica's. Following Catholic mandates, once in Holy Angels parish, the Falls family began to attend their local church. Since the parish was predominantly Irish, language was not a barrier.

Catholic racism trumped Catholic universalism, and the Falls family's experience in Holy Angels parish foreshadowed future race tensions as white people increasingly limited where black people could live. Holy Angels parish was located at 605 E. Oakwood Blvd. on land that the church had purchased secretly, through third parties, because of anti-Catholic sentiment in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁴ The congregation had not learned any lessons of inclusion. At Holy Angels, Falls recalled, he experienced a tremendous amount of hostility from white Catholics. At this point in time, it would have been very likely that a young Italian boy living in this parish would have experienced the same enmity, but Falls attributed it to his being black and the Irish being white. In an early draft of his memoir, Falls said, "I well remember the hostility that was shown to us at this parish." When he went back to the manuscript to edit his description of Holy Angels, Falls expanded greatly on his experience. For Falls, thinking of Holy Angels parish made him recall

the look of sudden hate or resentment on the faces of some fellow parishioners when they saw us walk up the church steps or saw us kneeling in the pews. I remember also how carefully, and sometimes obviously, others would avoid filling the pew in which we had sat until the church was so full, no other seats were available.⁴⁵

But William and Angelica had prepared their children for "life in essentially a hostile environment, which was the lot of any child of color," by telling them that "we had only one

⁴⁴ Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 353-58.

⁴⁵ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 18.

person of whom we need be afraid and that was God.”⁴⁶ Young Falls took that lesson to heart and he used it later to challenge the Church.

Three years later, in 1910, Angelica and William moved far outside what became known as the Black Belt. They rented a home in Our Lady of Solace Parish, in the sparsely populated West Englewood neighborhood on the edge of the prairie. West Englewood had pockets of black families and had had a small African American population centered around 63rd St. and Loomis Boulevard since the second half of the nineteenth century, but it was a largely white neighborhood populated by Irish and German immigrants and their descendants. In 1930, 96.9 percent of the neighborhood’s population was white and the remaining 3.1 percent of the population was black. Of those white folks, two thirds were either immigrants or the sons and daughters of immigrants.⁴⁷ The Falls family rented from an African American landlord, but was the first black family to live on their block. Two years later, in 1912, Angelica and William purchased a house at 1311 W. 61st Street. They lived next door to a Jewish family, and, according to Falls, had few problems with their white neighbors, but Chicago was still a city of ethnic groups, or, as Falls put it, Chicago was “not so much a cosmopolitan city as rather a combination of cities.”⁴⁸

In West Englewood, Falls learned to love and admire Jewish people, which greatly shaped the Catholic interracial movement twenty years later. At the house on 61st Street, the Falls family became close friends with their Jewish neighbors, which would have been unique for a Catholic family. Catholics became known, in fact, for their anti-Semitism. Angelica and the mother of the Jewish family often cared for one another’s children, and they traded “little gifts and delicacies” during holidays. Falls fondly remembered looking forward to “some gift of

⁴⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁷ Franklin Forts, "West Englewood," Encyclopedia of Chicago.

⁴⁸ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 28.

matzos or cheesecake and some explanation of the importance of the [Jewish] religious ceremony. As a result, there developed a very warm relationship between these two families.”⁴⁹ Because of this friendship, Falls had some “terrific verbal battles against anti-Semitism” as a young boy. He would continue to fight those battles throughout his life and made them part of the fabric of Catholic interracialism. As an adult, Falls commented on the ridiculousness of anti-Semitism in some Catholic circles, saying, “Strangely enough, the God they worshipped, Jesus Christ, had come to earth as a Jew and as an Asian Jew, most of whom were not blond and blue-eyed. Secondly, his mother Mary, whom the Catholics adored, was also Jewish. But the Catholics of Chicago seemed conveniently to have forgotten this.”⁵⁰

Racial hierarchies in Chicago were changing. Since Falls had grown up as a black Catholic largely outside the developing black ghetto, he had been exposed to the changing dynamics. By the outbreak of World War I in 1915, an all-black ghetto on the South Side had taken shape, and white Catholic practice and theology was soon more fully in place to help discriminate against African Americans.

C. Catholicism and the Making of a Binary Racial Hierarchy

In 1916, Chicago’s Catholics celebrated the installation of George Mundelein as their new archbishop. Mundelein would help put Chicago’s archdiocese on the map internationally and would help the city’s Catholics develop a fully Catholic and fully American identity. As an iron-fisted leader, Mundelein tried to make the Church more Catholic, or universal, by pushing forward an Americanization campaign among his parishioners. He did this in three ways. First, he attempted to shift the city’s parishes from the national parish model, in which Poles would

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 278.

worship with other Poles, Italians with other Italians, etc., to a territorial parish model. Second, he standardized the school curricula. Third, he created a seminary for Chicago's priests so they could be trained uniformly and form their religious identity with each other. Overall, the thrust of Mundelein's work was toward universalizing Catholicism in Chicago, a move which many of his ethnic parishioners fought tooth and nail. But they agreed with Mundelein on the one important exception he made to his universalizing program.⁵¹

To be blunt, Mundelein sustained the segregated Catholic Church in Chicago and helped his all-white priesthood and white laity discriminate against black Catholics.⁵² During the war, Mundelein began to talk with J.A. Burgmer, SVD, the provincial of the Society of the Divine Word with North American headquarters north of Chicago in Techny, Illinois, about taking over the administration of St. Monica's parish. This move categorized African Americans as a missionary population by placing the responsibility for the care of African Americans in the hands of missionaries trained to serve in foreign lands. Defining African American Catholics as a missionary population ignored and demoted families like the Fallses who had been members of the Church for generations, and removed them from the concern of the Archdiocese's diocesan priests. Mundelein announced his intention to have the Society of the Divine Word take over the care of St. Monica's parish. He also declared the parish to be "reserved entirely for the Colored

⁵¹ For more on the significance of Mundelein's tenure in Chicago, see Edward R. Kantowicz, *Corporation Sole: Cardinal Mundelein and Chicago Catholicism*, Notre Dame Studies in American Catholicism (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983). Lizbeth Cohen emphasizes that although Mundelein tried to Americanize his parishioners, many of them resisted. She highlights Italian and Polish resistance. See Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*, 83-94.

⁵² Although Chicago was home to a black priest in the nineteenth century, under Mundelein, no black priests were appointed to positions in the city. Only in 1940, eleven years after Mundelein's death, was a black priest named Vincent Smith assigned to a parish. In keeping with Chicago's overwhelming pattern of segregation, Smith was assigned to St. Elizabeth's. At the time, he was only one of two black priests in the entire nation.

Catholics of Chicago and particularly of the South Side; all other Catholics of whatever race or color are to be requested not to intrude.”⁵³

Mundelein’s intentions seemed benign, and indeed, he believed his course of action would bring more black converts into the Catholic fold. “It is, of course, understood that I have no intention of excluding colored Catholics from any of the other churches in the diocese, and particularly if they live in another part of the city,” he explained. He was “simply excluding from St. Monica’s all but the colored Catholicism.” St. Monica’s had not been an all-black parish, and white Catholics had been attending services there. Perhaps the city’s white racism had been bleeding into St. Monica’s parish, and the priest had privileged white Catholics over black Catholics. About a year earlier, W.H. Carter, who identified himself as a “colored man and a Catholic” who was sixty-eight years old and a member of the third order of St. Francis, had written Mundelein a letter, complaining that Father Morris had “proved himself unworthy, and has done more to hurt religion than he has to buil[d] it up.” If Mundelein would grant Carter an audience, Carter promised to tell Mundelein “some things that will make you shudder.”⁵⁴ Unfortunately, no further record of this encounter survives. To support his decision, Mundelein argued first that the white Catholics who had been attending St. Monica’s would not be too inconvenienced because they could go to other white parishes nearby. Second, Mundelein suggested that the intrusion of people who were not black into a parish that had originally been founded as a Negro parish had caused crowding, disturbance, and embarrassment for the colored people at St. Monica’s. Finally, Mundelein wanted to give the parishioners at St. Monica’s an opportunity to prove to others that they could support their own school and church. Mundelein summed up his reasoning “in a word,” by saying

⁵³ Mundelein, “Letter in Favor of the Negro Parish of St. Monica, Chicago,” October 26, 1917.

⁵⁴ W.H. Carter to Mundelein, August 7, 1916, Madaj Collection, AAC.

Because of the circumstances that exist in this city I am convinced that our colored Catholics will feel themselves much more comfortable, far less inconvenienced and never at all embarrassed if, in a church that is credited to them, they have their own sodalities and societies, their own school and choir, in which they alone will constitute the membership, and for even stronger reasons the first places in the church should be theirs just as much as the seats in the rear benches are.⁵⁵

Mundelein's arguments about what Catholic theology did and did not speak to are very important. He did not suggest that the Catholic religion had anything to say about an increasingly oppressive racial order. Mundelein acknowledged that "a distinction of color" often shaped "the daily happenings of our city," but he refused to comment on that fact:

I am not going to argue as to the reasons for or against this line of distinction which causes so much bitterness, nor will I say anything as to the justice or injustice of it. It is sufficient to say that it does exist and that I am convinced that I am quite powerless to change it, for I believe the underlying reasons to be more economic than social. What I am concerned about is that my colored children shall not feel uncomfortable in the Catholic Church.⁵⁶

Mundelein admitted that Chicago's white Catholics treated their black brethren poorly, and was concerned that their racist practices would hinder the expansion of the Church among African Americans. But rather than addressing white Catholics' habits and beliefs, Mundelein created a separate church where black parishioners would not have to interact with white parishioners. He saw it as a refuge for black Catholics. Chicago's African Americans, Mundelein concluded, "are as dear to me as their white-skinned brethren, and that for them and for their children too, I must one day render an accounting before the Eternal Judge Who looks not at the color of our faces, but searches for the purity of our hearts and judges us by the fruits we have to show."⁵⁷ Catholic religion, Mundelein said, was color blind; God loved all people. But the manifestation of that love did not extend to material, or "economic" realities. In Mundelein's mind, Catholic faith had

⁵⁵ Mundelein, "Letter in Favor of the Negro Parish of St. Monica, Chicago."

⁵⁶ Mundelein, "Letter in Favor of the Negro Parish of St. Monica, Chicago." My emphasis added.

⁵⁷ Mundelein, "Letter in Favor of the Negro Parish of St. Monica, Chicago."

nothing to say to a racial social order. Many black Catholics challenged this understanding of Catholicism almost immediately, but it took the city's white Catholics years to reach the same conclusion.

Mundelein portrayed himself as doing a great service to the city's colored Catholics and observed that his letter was the first time a bishop has "directed an appeal to his colored children alone." Additionally, Mundelein included this letter in a series of letters, published in 1918, called *Two Crowded Years*, which chronicled his decisions in his first two years as the city's archbishop. He thought enough of his decision to have it published for posterity.

In making this decision about the fate of St. Monica's and Chicago's black parishes, Mundelein was drawing on Catholic precedent. In the late nineteenth century, the dioceses of Charleston, Savannah, Baltimore, and New Orleans had created separate churches especially for black populations. New Orleans, a predominantly Catholic city, was the latest to be segregated when, in 1895, Archbishop Francis A. Janssens declared St. Katherine's the colored parish. The reasoning Mundelein gave for his decision echoed Janssens's twenty eight years earlier: a separate parish would give the city's black Catholics a refuge from the increasing Jim Crow, but black Catholics could continue to attend any parish in the city they wanted. A group of Creoles of color protested Janssens's decision, saying it was out of line with Catholic theology and sanctioned discrimination. Janssens, however, dismissed them, calling the group "light mulattoes and politicians" who "aim at greater equality with the whites, politically and socially, and also in the churches, and they pretend that I wish to accentuate still more the separation between the churches."⁵⁸ Ironically, a similar situation played out in Chicago nearly three decades later.

⁵⁸ Anderson, *Black, White and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956*, 6.

African Americans' responses to Mundelein's letter show the diversity of opinions on how the city's shifting racism should be handled. Some, like the *Pullman Porters' Review* editor, praised Mundelein. Although he and his staff were Protestants, "never in my life time have we heard or read of such a beautiful tribute as you pay the colored race," the editor wrote.⁵⁹ On the other hand, one of the two black priests in the nation at that time, Rev. Stephen L. Theobald of Minnesota, disagreed with Mundelein's actions.

Theobald suggested that he did not disagree with creating a separate black church, per se, but was more concerned about how African Americans would view Mundelein's actions. In a carefully worded letter to Mundelein, Theobald warned that Mundelein's public proclamation, which Mundelein had released to the press, would probably hurt the Church's efforts to evangelize African Americans. In a reference to the difference between Catholic theology and perceptions of its practice, Theobald wrote that "[The Negro's] attention has been drawn to the City on the Hill. He has heard the beautiful story of its Temple wherein justice and charity reign, and has a vision of men dwelling together as brothers from a common Father, in a home where peace is to be found, without rancour [*sic*] and discrimination which breed so much discord and fan the flames of animosity."⁶⁰ But too often, the Catholic Church did not fully practice this theology and "he [the Negro] becomes distrustful of the truth of the story he heard. And this about describes the attitude of mind at the present time among intelligent negroes."⁶¹ Theobald concluded that

the Church's missionary effort among negroes, especially in the North, has received a shock, the effects of which only time will show. And, as to the effect in Chicago itself, I would not be surprised if in consequence of the ridicule to which the Protestants may subject them, the Catholics would commence to feel that they are just as much under a

⁵⁹ Pullman Porters Review Editor to Mundelein, 13 November 1917, Madaj Collection, AAC.

⁶⁰ Rev. Stephen Theobald to Mundelein, 9 February 1918, Madaj Collection, AAC.

⁶¹ Ibid.

cloud in a discriminating Catholic Church as in a Protestant one, and so become indifferent or fall away.⁶²

Theobald was correct in predicting the responses of some of Chicago's black Catholics.

A month before Theobald wrote his letter, Mundelein had already been peppered with protests about his decision from Chicago's black population. *The Chicago Defender's* front page proclaimed "St. Monica's Church Again the Scene of Discrimination," and commented that "the order has been sent out to 'Jim Crow' St. Monica," and that "no matter what claim is being made to the contrary, Jim Crowism is worming its way into Catholic circles in this city."⁶³ The *Defender* was not alone in this opinion; a group of black Catholics also protested their leader's decision.

A group of eighty one black Catholics from St. Monica's immediately asked Mundelein to reverse his action. They suggested that Mundelein had distinguished black Catholics from other Catholics and put them in an "anomalous position" by his "policy of segregation in relation to the affairs of St. Monica's." These parishioners did not want whites barred from St. Monica's because they knew it would be unlike other national churches. Mundelein's response was swift and unmoving. First, through his chancellor, Mundelein asserted his authority, telling the protesters that he had consulted ecclesiastics "who were engaged in zealous work among the colored people long before many of your signatories were born as well as of more than one active and even prominent colored Catholics here and elsewhere."⁶⁴ Then, he reminded the protesters that they could go to any church they wanted because he had "given to the colored Catholics of this city the entire liberty of attending and affiliating themselves with any other

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ "St. Monica's Church Again the Scene of Discrimination," *The Chicago Defender* 17 November 1917.

⁶⁴ Chancellor to Madden, 11 December 1917, Madaj Collection, AAC.

parishes,” and insisted that “nothing was further from [his] mind than to insist on or even suggest anything as segregation.”⁶⁵

But the white priests and laity thought otherwise. They used Mundelein’s dictum to justify second class citizenship in black parishes and African Americans could only participate fully in the black parish (which is why William Falls remained a member of St. Monica’s order of Foresters long after he had moved out of the parish). Although Mundelein had made it clear that black people could attend any church they wanted, during his tenure, he allowed white diocesan priests to deny the sacraments to black parishioners and force them to go to St. Monica’s. As an adult, Falls disdained the fact that African Americans were not considered “integral members of the church,” but were rather called a “missionary problem,” particularly since his family had been part of the Catholic fold for years. This status meant, according to Falls, that “diocesan priests felt little responsibility for the care of colored Catholics in Chicago but felt quite justified in turning them over to the missionaries.”⁶⁶

Priests and nuns would also frequently deny black children admission to the local parish school. Culturally and theologically this was a major problem for black Catholics. At the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884, the American bishops emphasized the importance of Catholic education, decreeing that “near every church a parish school, where one does not yet exist, is to be built and maintained *in perpetuum* within two years of the promulgation of this council.” “All parents,” the legislation continued, “are bound to send their children to the parish school.”⁶⁷ This decree became Church policy in the United States. But if a black Catholic child

⁶⁵ Ibid. According to the finding aid of the Madaj Collection, there should be a list of the eighty-one signees of the petition to Mundelein included with the letter, but unfortunately, that list seems to be missing. I am curious to see if William and Angelica Falls signed the letter since William was active in St. Monica’s Order of Foresters, even though they were attending a different parish.

⁶⁶ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 380.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Sanders, *The Education of an Urban Minority: Catholics in Chicago, 1833-1965*, 14-15.

applied for admission to his or her local parish and that parish was not a black parish, the nuns would deny admission.

The Falls family did not attend St. Monica's after Mundelein's decree. They used Mundelein's loop hole and went to the parish where they lived. This meant that in their local parish, they were unable to take advantage of all the parish had to offer. Arthur Falls and his younger siblings never went to Catholic school, for example. Instead, they went to Copernicus for elementary school and graduated from Englewood High School. Falls did not know if his parents had tried to send him to the parish school, but when he had a son, he was unable to send his son to their parish elementary school. Falls observed his son realize the discrimination they faced at Our Lady of Solace when the child was about three. When the child was six, Falls heard his son say "the Catholic school for white children and the public school for all children."⁶⁸ Despite the heart ache, William and Angelica, and then their son Arthur, made Our Lady of Solace their home parish, and their presence there was a quiet protest to the discrimination black Catholics faced in Chicago.

The discrimination in white parishes made some black Catholics question the level of the Church's concern for their souls. Falls commented that "when the priest got up in the pulpit and spoke about the obligation of Catholics to utilize the facilities that the Church had provided as a means of saving one's immortal soul, the establishment of the women's sodalities, the church schools, the other activities, he didn't mean colored Catholics, because they systematically were barred from all these." Falls concluded that a black Catholic could only come to one of two conclusions when he heard the priest say one thing and practice another: "either someone was

⁶⁸ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 49.

lying about the necessity of these aids, or else the priest and the mother superior were saying to colored Catholics ‘You can go to hell.’ And to me, even to this day, hell is a real place.”⁶⁹

By 1922, it was clear that St. Monica’s parish needed more space. Peter Janser, the new provincial of the Society of the Divine Word, asked Mundelein to allow the parish to merge with St. Elizabeth’s and use the latter’s facilities. St. Monica’s elementary school had turned away over 300 children because it had no room for the burgeoning population, and Janser was concerned about the “lack of high school facilities. Catholic high schools will not accept our colored children, and in the public institutions their faith is too frequently undermined.” Furthermore, Janser feared that middle class African Americans were not attending St. Monica’s because its facilities were so “so poor and small and unseemly, while the near-by Catholic churches are large and fine buildings.” Overall, Janser lamented that “the work is difficult and somewhat discouraging. The facilities on hand do not suffice for the Catholics, offer no attraction for non-Catholics, make it extremely hard to have societies. It is bitter to turn away our own children, painful to see the young men and young ladies drift away without a means to hold them.”⁷⁰ After much deliberation, Mundelein concluded that the “time is not yet ripe” for a transfer of St. Monica to St. Elizabeth. “There are still 300 families left in the parish,” he continued, “and they vigorously object to being parcelled [*sic*] out to other parishes, claiming the buildings they helped to build, and which they say they can still maintain.”⁷¹ Mundelein acquiesced to the white parishioners of St. Elizabeth’s for two more years, and in 1924 finally allowed the merger. But as the black belt expanded and other parishes became populated by African Americans, Mundelein refused to deem any other parish a Negro parish.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁰ Peter Janser to Mundelein, March 13, 1922, Madaj Collection, AAC.

⁷¹ Mundelein to Peter Janser, March 23, 1922, Madaj Collection, AAC.

By the early 1930s, Mundelein was forced to expand the number of black parishes, but continued the policy of segregation. In 1930, St. Elizabeth's was home to 7,000 black parishioners and its school was still the only one in the city that would admit black children. The parish could not handle all the black Catholics in the city. Two years later, Mundelein transferred St. Anselm's to the administration of the Society of the Divine Word and made it a Negro parish. In 1933, Corpus Christi became a black parish under the leadership of the Franciscans. The same year, black Catholics on the West Side received a home at Holy Family parish when the church converted an old branch school into a church/parish combination, "keeping the parish's main church and school for whites only."⁷² In 1935, St. Malachy's parish became a black parish, and on the north side, St. Dominic's church and school was opened to African Americans.

Mundelein may have made his decision with the genuine belief that he was helping the cause of the Church in Chicago's black community, but he also made it based on racist assumptions. When thanking another white ecclesiastic for his encouragement in the situation, Mundelein revealed a propensity to make racial assumptions, commenting that he had had to deal with some opposition from "some nearly-white colored folks, of whom there are always quite a number in a big city."⁷³ A few years later, when the Society of the Divine Word proposed that Chicago host a seminary for black priests, Mundelein refused their request.⁷⁴ He wanted black priests to be trained – and work – in the South. Only after Mundelein's death would a black priest serve again in Chicago. And in a 1933 letter concerning the development of a Negro priesthood, Mundelein commented that he disliked what he called "a new species of negro" that was moving to the North and stepping out of place. Arthur Falls was probably one of

⁷² Sanders, *The Education of an Urban Minority: Catholics in Chicago, 1833-1965*, 215.

⁷³ Mundelein to Rev. L. J. Welbers, 11 February 1918, Madaj Collection, AAC.

⁷⁴ Ochs, *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871-1960*, 326.

the people Mundelein was referring to when he complained about “a so-called ‘sassy nigger,’ who is constantly agitating for social equality with the whites.” Mundelein continued that he hoped “that the Catholic Church will never commit itself on this question of racial equality.”⁷⁵

Mundelein was not alone in his racial opinions. Other American bishops agreed with him. The minutes from the Bishops’ Conference in 1920 reveal that the Pope was “deeply distressed” about the lack of converts among African Americans and “desired that seminaries be founded for them by the Bishops and maybe also Bishops created for the colored people.” Mundelein and the other bishops were opposed to the idea of black bishops. Instead, revealing his paternalism, Mundelein suggested the American Church follow the pattern he and the members of the Society of the Divine Word were discussing: forming black brotherhoods and sisterhoods well under the watchful eye of “white superiors wherein teachers would be trained, especially teachers for technical schools in the South.” The other bishops accepted Mundelein’s suggestion in theory. The chair noted approvingly that “all the Bishops need do now was give the project their blessing without committing themselves to anything or without touching the financial issue.”⁷⁶

No matter Mundelein’s intentions, the key point is that he allowed discrimination to be practiced in the Catholic Church. Although Mundelein had made it clear that black people could attend any church they wanted, during his tenure, he allowed white diocesan priests to deny the sacraments to black parishioners and force them to go to St. Monica’s. In addition, Mundelein allowed the city’s white parishes to deny black children living in their parishes admission to the parish school.

⁷⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, 326.

⁷⁶ Minutes of the Second Annual Meeting of the American Hierarchy, September 1920, Madaj Collection, AAC.

This racial system, enforced by the Catholic hierarchy and laity, was the situation Falls and the other men and women who would become Catholic interracialists faced. The Chicago Catholic Church was something resembling the complete opposite of the Catholic interracial ideal. As an adult, Falls neither lived in a black parish, nor would he go there for church. Falls found Father Eckert, the parish priest so beloved by the black community who served at St. Monica's, St. Elizabeth's, and St. Anselm's, to be patronizing because he, "never thought of colored people as the equals of white people nor did he ever think that lay people should have anything to say about what the Catholic Church did."⁷⁷

Falls's decision to integrate his local parish was the first step in an effort to challenge a racist Catholic church in every way possible, and his presence in a mostly white church was a testimony to what could be the universality of the Catholic faith. From the late 1920s through the 1930s, Falls addressed many of the issues, including racism in Catholic schools, housing, and parish life, that would come to animate Catholic interracialism. These concerns had arisen because of the responses of Chicago's white Catholic laity and leadership to the migration of black people to the city. Most importantly, Falls would influence a generation of men and women who had greater access to the city's halls of power. Falls's efforts would not be in vain. By the late 1950s, Chicago would be the center of a vibrant Catholic interracial movement committed to civil rights, and Falls could rightly take credit for contributing to the development of the leaders of that movement and playing a key role in forming the broader civil rights movement in the city. But first, Falls had to find the right people and groups to join him in what

⁷⁷ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 384-85. Falls further commented that other black Catholics who didn't attend St. Elizabeth's agreed with his assessment of Eckert, who is usually praised for his work among African Americans. See, for example Neary, "Crossing Parochial Boundaries: African Americans and Interracial Catholic Social Action in Chicago, 1914-1954". Also, Eckert's parishioners laud him in various reports of his contributions in *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (which became the *Interracial Review*). See the "Chicago Chapter Reports," which are present in almost all editions of *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle*.

would become his quest for Catholic interracialism. He soon discovered a network of lay black leaders committed to black advancement in the Church.

III. THE FEDERATION ERA: BLACK CATHOLIC PROTEST AND THE POLITICS OF RESPECTABILITY

In August 1931, Father William Markoe telegraphed Falls asking him to speak on industrial and social problems at the national conference of a black protest organization called the Federated Colored Catholics (FCC) in St. Louis, Missouri, the following month. Falls, who by this point had finished medical school and was active in civic affairs, had worked on these issues as an officer of the Urban League. Markoe was a white Jesuit priest serving St. Elizabeth's parish in St. Louis who had, in the past few years, become affiliated with the FCC.

Falls agreed and attended the national meeting. For the first time, he encountered a Catholic organization committed to interracial justice. At midnight, in the early morning hours of September 5th, Falls drove the roughly three hundred miles south to St. Louis to the convention, which started later that morning. He must have been amazed and overjoyed at the seeming solidarity of black and white Catholics in the cause for racial justice.¹ "It was very obvious," Falls reflected, "that the cooperation that we would get in our activities would be from persons outside the city of Chicago, not inside Chicago."²

A significant portion of the conference was devoted to labor issues. Given the context of the Great Depression, this was a subject that mattered tremendously to African Americans. The first day of the conference revolved around "The Negro in Industry." Two hundred and fifty people participated in the interracial luncheon that day. Dr. Turner, the black layman who founded the organization, considered this "first attempt of our Catholic group to bring together those engaged

¹ For Falls's description of the conference, see Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 390-91.

² Ibid., 395.

in labor for the idea of having face to face discussions between white and Negro laborers over the attitudes of whites toward Negroes in labor” to be “quite auspicious.”³

Falls experienced another first at the St. Louis conference: seeing a black priest. Father Rev. Stephen L. Theobald, who thirteen years earlier had criticized Mundelein for publishing his reasons for setting aside St. Elizabeth’s parish for black Catholics, presided. Over five hundred people assembled at St. Elizabeth Church and marched to St. Francis Xavier Church for Mass. The pageantry was incredible: the boys’ band of St. Elizabeth’s led the parade. Behind the band marched uniformed Catholic Knights and Ladies of America, the Knights of Columbus Zouaves, White Friends of Colored Catholics, and members of other organizations, acolytes in their vestments, and people from all over the country, carrying flags and waving papal colors. It must have been a sight to see. As various immigrant groups regularly sacralized their cities through their prominent displays, so did the Federated Colored Catholics make a statement in St. Louis. According to *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle*, Markoe’s parish magazine that he donated to the FCC, “the church was filled even to standing room and hundreds of persons lined the street, unable to enter the church, and could only hear the beautiful singing of the Mass by the choir.”⁴ Rev. John T. Gilliard, a Jesuit from Baltimore preached the sermon which he called “The Catholic Church accepts the Negro’s Challenge.” Truly, all things seemed possible.

Falls delivered a powerful message when it was his turn to speak. He spoke at the last session of the conference which was devoted to Catholic Action. The main reason for increasing black unemployment, Falls argued, was white prejudice against African Americans. And the “two bugaboos” white people gave to justify their decisions to not hire black workers were “fear

³ Hazel McDaniel Teabeau, "Seventh Annual of the Federated Colored Catholics," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (October, 1931): 604.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 605.

of white opposition, and fear of intermarriage.”⁵ In keeping with Catholic Action’s emphasis on the clergy directing the laity, Falls emphasized the role the clergy played in Christian charity. He argued that they first must express charity, which would then lead to the end of the white laity’s prejudice.

Falls’s emphasis on the importance of the priests in changing lay Catholics’ prejudice reflected his perception of how authority within the Church worked. He believed that lay Catholics would submit to their priests, and he also thought that priests needed to be the main people who would change things within the Church. Falls surmised that, given the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, Chicago’s black Catholics would not really have a voice in the hierarchy until the city had black priests: “until we had colored men in the priesthood in Chicago, we had little opportunity for the kind of spokesmen we needed.”⁶ In 1931, that was an unlikely prospect; by 1933, there were only two black priests in the nation.⁷ Only in 1940, the year after Mundelein’s death, would Chicago’s black Catholics finally be ministered to by one of their own.⁸

Falls had stepped into the most important, and the only national, black Catholic organization in the country. Members of the organization were deeply concerned with presenting themselves to other Catholics as respectable, and presenting the Church to non-Catholics as a champion of racial justice. In addition, they operated in the context of the broader black community and their concerns, in particular, matched many of those the Chicago Urban League addressed. From the FCC emerged the first iteration of Catholic interracialism, which was initially an expression of black Catholics’ desire to be included fully and equally in the Catholic Church. Throughout its

⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, 606.

⁶ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 391.

⁷ Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*, 72.

⁸ Mundelein did support the development of a separate seminary for black priests but he never brought a black priest to his archdiocese.

tenure, however, the organization dealt with tension between the twin goals of black advancement and honoring an institution that held a universal theology but had – and continued to – practice discrimination and segregation. The line could be a hard one to walk.

A. The National Federated Colored Catholics

The FCC had a history of being a black protest organization concerned with the politics of respectability. Its name, the Federated Colored Catholics, reflected the organization's goal: to advance the cause of black Catholics within the Catholic Church. The primary goal was not interracialism; first must come a redistribution of power, then would come interracial harmony and unity. The national Federated Colored Catholics had developed from the efforts of a group of black Catholics headed by Howard University professor Thomas Wyatt Turner. They started the Committee Against the Extension of Race Prejudice in the Church in 1917 and for the next two years conducted a letter writing campaign to Catholic authorities in order to highlight discrimination in organizations, emphasize the "sin of segregation," ask for better school facilities for African Americans, and petition for more opportunities in higher education and in the priesthood. In 1931, the FCC appreciated, and needed, white priests' support; but its first concern was with black advancement in the Catholic Church and broader society. Nonetheless, the origins of Catholic interracialism lay within this black protest organization.⁹

Members of the FCC presented themselves and their organization as a respectable one. To promote their advancement and equality within the Church, they presented themselves as upright, cultured, and worthy of inclusion, and they honored white priests. In public, by the

⁹ Marilyn Nickels's work on the FCC is a key source of material for the group. David Southern also covers the FCC but with a focus on LaFarge. Marilyn Wenzke Nickels, *Black Catholic Protest and the Federated Colored Catholics, 1917-1933: Three Perspectives on Racial Justice* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988); Nickels, "Thomas Wyatt Turner and the Federated Colored Catholics;" Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*.

1930s, the FCC told a favorable tale of the Catholic Church's involvement in racial issues, a story that honored the white hierarchy. A 1931 article by H.M. Smith about the organization's history put the Catholic Church in a favorable light, saying that

In nearly every case the response was most favorable, showing that those high in authority were not in sympathy with any condition that deprived any Catholic from enjoying all that the Church had to offer as an aid to the spiritual life of her children. The Catholic press [was] liberal in giving space to articles sent for publication and with their editorials did much in creating favorable public sentiment toward this movement.¹⁰

But even if the authorities of the Catholic Church cared as much about the concerns Wyatt and embryonic organization were bringing forward, little change resulted.

Behind the scenes, Turner and his group worked hard to organize and petition the Catholic Church. By 1919, the group had twenty-five members and changed its name to the Committee for the Advancement of Colored Catholics. In 1925, they resumed the tradition of the earlier black congresses and held a national meeting at St. Augustine's Church in Washington, D.C., which was the flagship black church in the city. By then, the group had become the Federated Colored Catholics, and was aiming to be a national organization which could rise above the local prejudices of specific regions. According to Smith, the group saw a "vital need of a national organization to attract the attention of those in authority in order to correct the prevailing evils," because in many places in the United States, "these evils had existed for such a period that they were looked upon as being the law, and it was far beyond the power of a local group or

¹⁰H.M. Smith, "Federated Colored Catholics of the United States: A Historical Sketch," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (September 1931): 543. Given the actual realities on the ground in the Catholic Church during the first two and a half decades of the twentieth century, Smith's article was way too positive about the response of Catholic leaders to the issues black Catholics raised. One might go so far as to say it is delusional. But this article was published under the influence of Fathers Markoe and LaFarge, and LaFarge had what his biographer called a "blandly optimistic" sense that things in the Catholic Church would change for the better gradually and almost never talked about the Catholic Church as having anything to do with perpetuating injustice against African Americans. Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*, 141.

organization to effect change.”¹¹ Sometime before 1928, Jesuits John LaFarge of New York and William Markoe of St. Louis joined the organization. The priests’ support would soon greatly limit the scope of the organization. But initially the future looked bright.

In 1928, the Federated Colored Catholics gained a newspaper when Father William Markoe, a Jesuit serving at St. Elizabeth’s parish in St. Louis, offered his parish magazine to the organization. With control over the organization’s main mouthpiece, Markoe emphasized civil protest, which stood in tension with the militancy of Turner and some of the other black laypeople. Markoe became the editor and would greatly influence the direction of the group. Markoe told his readers that the new purpose of the *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* was to fill a great void in the conversation about the “so-called inter-racial problem.” Much ink had been spilled on the subject, but “seldom do we find a treatment of this important question emanating from a Catholic source, much less a solution framed in a background of Catholic philosophy or built on the solid foundation of Catholic principles of justice and Charity.” Markoe hoped *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* would remedy the problem and educate “woefully ignorant Catholics” about the inter-racial situation.¹² Markoe also wanted to counter secular philosophies of interracial justice which he deemed were based on utilitarian principles by presenting the deep truths of the Catholic Church. Only the Catholic Church, Markoe believed, had the power to really change society. Finally, Markoe thought the *Chronicle* would be helpful to African Americans because it would reveal the “more or less dormant” power of the “Catholic Church slowly to crush and smooth out uneven and unfair conditions arising from the close juxtaposition of two great races.” Good would prevail, Markoe believed, but it would take a particular – civil – path.

¹¹ Smith, "Federated Colored Catholics of the United States: A Historical Sketch," 544.

¹² William M. Markoe, S.J. , "The St. Elizabeth's Chronicle," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (March, 1928).

Herein lays the crux of the Catholic interracial ideal as sponsored by the priests associated with the Federated Colored Catholics. First, they predicted that the change to a more just society would be slow, but complete. As glaciers had shaped the landscape of the Midwest over centuries, so could the principles of the Catholic Church shape the racial situation in the United States, if properly applied. The white priests in the organization, especially John LaFarge and William Markoe, were well meaning, devoted, and sincere, and would spend much of their careers on behalf of black Catholics. They were not, however, the ones experiencing discrimination and segregation on a daily basis, and their position would lead to conflict with some of the black members of the organization.

Second, the question of power in the FCC with the addition of white priests was racialized, ambiguous, and attached to a theology of the Church that privileged priests and bishops. Most white priests argued that the true change had to come from the clerical leadership of the Catholic Church. The definition of Church authority mattered tremendously. The interracial movement – especially as it was enacted in Chicago – was part of a newly developing movement of Catholic Action. This meant that the laity would participate in the work of the hierarchy to restore all things to Christ. Arthur Falls would eventually realize that lay movements under the authority of priests were sorely limited in their power. This question of power was further complicated by the racial lines within the FCC, as most of the priests were white and the laity black. In the end, a key question would become who had more authority: the laity or the hierarchy?

Finally, the national FCC assumed that black parishes, not integrated parishes like Our Lady of Solace, would sponsor local chapters. In November, 1931, for example, the editors of *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* were facing a financial crisis. In order to keep the journal financially solvent, they proposed that each chapter listed on the pages of the *Chronicle* pay two dollars a

month to be listed, since a small chapter of the Federation would have, say, fifty members. Integration of parishes was clearly not on their minds.

B. The Politics of Civility: The FCC on the Brink of Change

While the FCC was, in 1931, still a black protest organization, it protested in the most civil of ways. Members often used what scholars have called a “politics of civility.” Politics of civility “set the limits for good behavior between citizens and determined what tactics would be condoned for expressing grievances or making requests. Because the goal was to maintain social and political consensus, no room was left for conflict, which could only destroy harmonious relations.”¹³ This was indicative of LaFarge’s leadership as well as the middle-class, social-uptift aspirations of the black Catholics present. LaFarge emphasized the essential goodness of people and was enduringly optimistic that with the right amount of education, white people would eventually treat black people with the dignity, respect, and equality they deserved. Many of the black Catholics believed that the restraint and civility they showed would demonstrate to white Catholics that – as Chicago’s FCC also desired to prove – they were just as cultured as white people and just as Catholic as their white brethren. The major conversations at the 1931 FCC national convention highlight this ethos of civility.

Hazel MacDaniel Teaubeau, who reported on the 1931 convention for the *St. Elizabeth Chronicle* and became a close friend of Arthur Falls, suggested how greatly the group appreciated restraint and civility on the part of African Americans.¹⁴ Teaubeau praised the convention because it gave white Catholics an opportunity to change their stereotypes about black people: “for white Catholics to know that Negroes can think, and can participate in the

¹³ I took this phrase from Beth Tompkins Bates. She draws on the work of William Chafe. See Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 12.

¹⁴ Her sister also was an employee of Lillian Proctor Falls’s when she worked at United Charities.

celebration of the Mass as other Catholics is of infinite value.”¹⁵ She emphasized that when Theobald spoke about Catholic universities’ closed door policies toward Negroes he did so with such “diplomacy and truthfulness, with such simple straightforward facing of the issue as to render his hearers spell-bound.” This must have been no easy task since St. Louis University, which was hosting the conference, refused to admit black students.¹⁶ Theobald, Teabeau reported, spoke in “cultured tones and refined language” of the “embarrassments, humiliations, [and] discriminations.” The silence in the auditorium was “dramatic” but had “no bombast, no bitterness.” “This meeting,” Teabeau argued, “must surely have made for a greater appreciation of the Negro Catholic.”¹⁷ Falls commented that Theobald “said plenty in a scholarly manner,” and also admired the restrained and refined nature of the convention, but he would ultimately try to adopt a more aggressive stance.¹⁸

Falls was likely in the audience that applauded the idea that black Catholics should demonstrate middle-class values. In the Saturday morning session chaired by Joseph Reiner of Chicago’s Loyola University, Reiner commented that Catholics needed to apply the principles of the encyclicals to everyday life. Frank L. Williams responded

It is all right to believe in those general principles, but we must try to practice them. At the same time, every colored man and woman should know that the working out of these general principles for their adjustment to groups, white or colored people, depends on the character of the colored people themselves. When a colored man has a decent home, lives a decent life among his neighbors, he gives testimony to the fact that he could be and is a human being as others. . . . When people know us and see the virtues of humanity in us as in others it solves problems for us. When we conceive these great principles as announced by the good Father, what we are in our own lives what we are able to accomplish and achieve in character and economics help to solve the problem.¹⁹

¹⁵ Teabeau, "Seventh Annual of the Federated Colored Catholics," 606.

¹⁶ The university became one of the first Catholic universities to admit black students when it changed its policy in 1944.

¹⁷ Teabeau, "Seventh Annual of the Federated Colored Catholics," 606.

¹⁸ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 391.

¹⁹ "Saturday, September 5, 1931; Morning Session: The Negro in Industry," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (October, 1931): 613.

Williams' statement and the audience's response reveal the emphasis on racial uplift within the FCC.²⁰

The FCC's concerns were not limited only to black advancement within the Church, they also extended to African Americans' situation in society. Thus although the FCC was committed to respectability and social uplift, they also were concerned about changing the way the economy worked to benefit African Americans equally, and their platform was, by no means, limited to specifically Catholic questions. The first two points of their platform related to employment for African Americans, who had been hit very hard by the Depression, and discrimination in public areas. They wished "to earn a decent livelihood; free from interference based upon merely racial attitudes," and "to extend to all legitimate forms of gainful employment and to include adequate means of self-improvement through credit, housing facilities, recreation, and all other public utilities."

The convention then turned to specifically Catholic issues. The group demanded an end to discrimination against African Americans in various Catholic institutions, including schools, "from the primary school to the university, according to one's ability," the priesthood, and the practice of the Mass, so they could attend without "suffering humiliating inconveniences." Next, the convention focused on establishing organizations geared to specifically benefit black Catholics, such as churches, schools, and welfare institutions, because "as a group, they experience special needs, due to depressed and disadvantageous conditions, location, poverty, vocational handicaps, and so on." Significantly, this pillar of their statement was not interracial, and was connected to the goal of black advancement within the Catholic Church. Catholics should, the convention argued, take a lead in addressing white Americans' attitudes towards

²⁰ For more on racial uplift, see Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*.

black Americans. In a nation that turned a blind eye to the Southern practice of lynching African Americans, “we wish Catholics to insist on the sacredness of human life.” The convention also wanted “Catholics to take the lead in helping our countrymen to rid themselves of the habit of giving contemptuous nicknames to any racial or national group.”

Finally, the convention addressed some broad assumptions white Americans held about African Americans. In a nod to black Americans’ wartime service, they wanted “to enjoy the rights of full citizenship in direct proportion to the duties and sacrifices expected of our group,” rather than the shoddy treatment they had received after the Great War. Next, they wanted other Americans to rejoice in black progress and realize that “ours is a common cause; and the good of one group is the good of all.” Finally, they concluded, “We do not wish to be treated as ‘a problem,’ but as a multitude of human beings, sharing a common destiny, and the common privilege of the Redemption with all mankind.”²¹ Falls left feeling inspired. But, he recalled, “I could not help but feel that if the vitality and spirit which pervaded this group was spread all over the whole of Catholic clergy and laity, what a difference there would be in the Catholic situation. This was a spirit, however, which I was not to see widely spread.”²²

Yet he had gained access to some important networks, of which Falls was quickly learning the importance. These networks would become vitally important to black Catholics – and non-Catholics – pushing an interracialist agenda. First, Falls would be able to tap into a national network of white clergy to fight for the inclusion of black people in all of Chicago’s parishes. These clergymen, who included not only LaFarge and Markoe, but also Daniel Lord of the sodality movement and Dom Virgil Michel, OSB of the liturgical movement, would expose him to Catholic doctrine that transcended what he was learning in his local parish. Falls also gained a

²¹ “Platform of the Federated Colored Catholics,” *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (September, 1931).

²² Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 392.

national platform for some of his ideas, when, after the convention, Markoe appointed Falls an associate editor of *The Chronicle*. Second, Falls connected with other black laypeople who were working for the inclusion of African Americans in society's institutions both in Chicago and across the country. When Falls returned home, he quickly began connecting with Chicago's black Catholics who had, for a few years by then, been building local chapters of the FCC.

C. Chicago's Black Catholics in the FCC

In Chicago, the FCC was concerned with educating white and black Catholics about interracial justice and expanding the network among black and white Catholics. Mrs. Maude Johnston, who lived in St. Anselm's parish but participated at St. Elizabeth's, had opened the first branches in Chicago in 1929. Working under the authority of white priests, they did this with great reverence for the hierarchy and, significantly, practiced a politics of civility. Black Chicagoans were concerned with presenting themselves as respectable, as upwardly mobile and connected with those in power. In the Catholic context, respectability meant publically honoring priests and promoting the Catholic Church.

Members of the Chicago branch of the Federation were very active within this politics of civility. In 1930, only a year after their incorporation, several members planned to go to the national convention in Detroit. Two women, Johnston and Margaret Cope, spoke to the convention in the Catholic Action sessions.²³ Cope addressed the convention on the subject of Catholic education for black children. She said that "we, as thinking colored Catholics," care about "our children, and their chance to enjoy the cherished opportunities offered [in] Catholic schools." Her solution to this problem was polite and hopeful. She concluded that "we shall

²³ Hazel McDaniel Teabeau, "The 1930 Convention of Federated Colored Catholics," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (November, 1930).

continue to work and pray, holding confidence in ourselves and in the friendly spiritual leaders who are stretching out hands of helpful, sympathetic understanding. In the face of hindrances, we are growing stronger, secure in the assurance that good will not withhold itself from those who merit it.”²⁴ By 1931, Chicago’s FCC had formed a credit union.

Two themes – inclusion and expansion – emerge in reading the Chicago Chapter News at the end of *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* in which members of local FCC branches would write in to update the national readership on their major events. First, members of Chicago’s FCC cared about displaying the prominence, prestige, and inclusion of black Catholics in Chicago’s Catholic Church. The early descriptions of news in Chicago are full of name dropping. For instance, Cardinal Mundelein “manifested his respect and interest” in a St. Elizabeth’s couple who was renewing their vows by sending them an autographed picture. Or, twenty women from St. Elizabeth parish, including Margaret Cope and Bertina Davis of the FCC, were some of the guests at the luncheon Bishop Bernard Sheil hosted for the Council of Catholic Women.²⁵

The group also gained prestige from Father Eckert, the pastor of St. Elizabeth parish who supported and contributed to the FCC. They publically praised him for his leadership in their community. When St. Elizabeth’s building went up in flames on January 3, 1930, the parishioners proclaimed that despite the half a million dollar loss, “with a pastor like ours a new and more beautiful St. Elizabeth’s will arise.”²⁶ They proudly announced in 1931 that during Eckert’s ten years in the pastorate at St. Elizabeth’s, he had received an astonishing 1572

²⁴ Margaret Cope, "Catholic Education for Our Youth," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (November, 1930).

²⁵ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (December, 1929); "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (April 1931).

²⁶ "St. Elizabeth's Church Destroyed by Fire," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (February, 1930). It is unknown if the fire was arson or an accident.

converts into the church, that the grammar school has nearly 1000 pupils, and the high school had 70 students. St. Elizabeth's was a parish that mattered.²⁷

This focus on the prestige of Chicago's black Catholic community worked toward two ends. First, it showed white Catholic readers that Chicago's black Catholics were very respectable and fully Catholic. They had access to Bishop Sheil and Cardinal Mundelein and they were expanding membership in the Church. Second, it demonstrated to other black Catholics the vibrancy of Chicago's black Catholic community.

Next, the Chicago chapters were trying to expand membership in the FCC. They were, to some extent, successful. Much of this expansion seems to have occurred within networks that women had developed between the churches. Black laymen were involved as well, but the drivers were laywomen who sold papers and networked through women's sodality groups. Within about two years of its founding in Chicago, there were 16 groups affiliated with the FCC.²⁸ With the leadership of Maude Johnston, who was a deputy field organizer for the Federation, Chicago's black Catholics opened new branches of the FCC. In theory, they needed ten people to open a branch.

During the summer of 1930, the FCC seemed to explode in Chicago. The Chicago FCC branches invited Mrs. Robert Abbott, wife of the editor of the *Chicago Defender* to speak to the units about how to expand membership, and they also worked hard to organize new members.²⁹ By the end of that summer, they reported that the FCC had taken root on the west side of the city in two parishes. The first was St. Malachy where Mrs. James O'Conner would be assisting Johnston in Federation work.³⁰ Clearly there was work to be done. Black parishioners were

²⁷ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (June, 1931).

²⁸ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (January, 1932).

²⁹ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (July, 1930).

³⁰ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (August, 1930).

moving into St. Malachy parish, and the Irish parishioners felt no qualms about speaking poorly of their new neighbors. That December, Irish parishioner Martha Gallergy publically praised St. Malachy for holding “her own” despite the fact that the “sturdy old Irish are being replaced by the shifting numbers of negroes.”³¹ Holy Family parish, which was also experiencing racial transition, hosted the second branch when Mr. and Mrs. Leon Cager offered their home to organize the “Inter-racial unit” of the parish.³² The Italian, Irish, and German members of Holy Family, however, were not amenable to their black fellow parishioners (and would close their parish school rather than let black children attend from 1931-1933).³³ Only by 1932 did the pastor of Holy Family allow the FCC to sell the *Chronicle* there.³⁴

Members of Chicago’s FCC were vitally concerned with selling the newspaper as a way to expand their support and further their goals. Maude Johnston was one of the most active distributors of the newspaper. In May 1930, reflecting the importance of the clergy for Catholic interracialism, she wrote that the paper was making friends for the FCC among the clergy.³⁵ But she did not neglect the laity either. At the national convention of the Married Ladies Sodality at the Palmer House in Chicago from July 4-6, Johnston distributed copies of the *Chronicle* to the visiting women.³⁶ The paper, Johnston believed, gave the members credibility among black Catholics who, though rightfully served by St. Elizabeth’s, did not attend.³⁷

The Chicago chapters also proudly reported the increasing support of the FCC among priests on the South side, which was crucial for their model of Catholic interracialism. They had received a subscription from Father Gilmartin of St. Anselm parish by July 1930. Gilmartin was

³¹ Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 553.

³² “Chicago Chapter News.” “Chicago Chapter News,” *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* (September, 1930).

³³ Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 367-82.

³⁴ “Chicago Chapter News,” *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* (March, 1932).

³⁵ “Chicago Chapter News,” *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* (May, 1930).

³⁶ “Chicago Chapter News.”

³⁷ “Monday, September 7, 1931, Morning Session: Report of Officers, Committees, and Delegates,” *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* (October, 1931).

the founding pastor of St. Anselm's which was built in 1909 on the south side of Washington Park for Irish Catholics. By the 1920s, the area was experiencing racial change and attendance at the church had dwindled to around 100 people at the end of the decade.³⁸ Two years later, Mundelein would remove Gilmartin to another parish and place the parish under the control of the Society of the Divine Word. The parish thrived under the leadership of Gilmartin's replacement, Father Eckert, who baptized more than 1500 converts in his eight years there.

Gilmartin offered at least some support to St. Anselm's FCC, which worked hard to spread the influence of the Federation. In 1929, the *Chronicle* pointedly described Gilmartin as "interested and mindful of all the Catholics in the parish" (not just the white ones), and announced that he had allowed some of his black parishioners to organize a Scholarship Unit of the FCC.³⁹ By the summer of 1931, St. Anselm's Scholarship chapter was holding socials to raise money to expand the Federation in "lower Illinois" and to support the chapter's seminarian.⁴⁰ Although Gilmartin did not attend the 1930 national convention in Detroit, he sent a telegram of well wishes which the *Chronicle* printed, saying "sorry I cannot be with you. Congratulations on the wonderful progress your race has made, not yet seventy years from the days of cruel slavery. May God bless your noble work in the interest of Christian civilization."⁴¹ By the fall of 1930, the Scholarship Unit of St. Anselm's parish reported that they were selling the *Chronicle* at Corpus Christi. The Scholarship chapter was also trying to sell the paper at all the parishes on the South Side, where the racial antagonism was at its height.⁴²

The summer of 1930 also saw a subscription from Father Hilary of Corpus Christi parish, which would offer great hope to black Chicagoans concerned about interracial brotherhood.

³⁸ Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 72-75.

³⁹ "Chicago Chapter News."

⁴⁰ "Chicago Chapter News."

⁴¹ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (November, 1930).

⁴² Ibid.

Corpus Christi parish was, at that point, a retreat center staffed by Franciscan priests because the Irish who originally built the parish had moved away. Within two years, Mundelein would allow the Franciscans to minister to their black neighbors and the church would become a flourishing parish once again.⁴³ In August 1933, C. J. Foster, the head of Corpus Christi's branch of the FCC, proudly reported that Bishop Sheil had baptized 235 white and black, adult and children converts. Here was evidence, Foster argued, that "in Corpus Christi parish, 'the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man' is not merely an idle thought but is actually practiced; because of the friendly and cooperative spirit that exists [*sic*]." Furthermore, Foster wrote, "the parishioners have every reason to believe that this Christian example will demonstrate that Catholics regardless of race and color can work amicably together for the glorification of God and the salvation of souls."⁴⁴

Father Arnold Garvy, a Jesuit English professor at Loyola University, also supported the FCC. He was the man Falls credited with introducing him to other Catholics who actually cared about interracial justice.⁴⁵ Prior to meeting Garvy on July 5, 1931, Falls likely had limited involvement with the FCC because he was not involved in black belt parishes. But women in

⁴³ Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*. For a history of St. Anselm, see pages 72-75; for Corpus Christi, see pages 216-219.

⁴⁴ "News from the Local Chapters," *Interracial Review* (August, 1933): 157.

⁴⁵ It is possible that Falls heard about Garvy through his younger sister, Regina. The Loyola Guild reported in January 1931 that "Miss Regina Falls" was appointed secretary of the organization. But the identity of "Miss Regina Falls" is in question. When the 1910 census was taken, Regina was listed as five years old. "U.S. Bureau of Census, 1910 Census of Population and Housing." In 1930, Falls's sister Regina would have been twenty five years old, and, given her family's educational merits, may have gone to Loyola University. Four years earlier, she had helped her brother start his medical practice by giving him a personal loan, and Falls reported that in 1927, she had the funds to purchase a lot at Sunset Hills Country Club, which was thirty three miles outside Chicago. Falls mentions that in June, 1928, Regina married Reginald Merritt, who at the time was working at the Wabash YMCA (he subsequently was released from that position). After her marriage in his narrative, Falls refers to her as Regina Merritt, not Regina Falls. In describing an "evening of friendship" in November, 1931, in which Falls and Lillian had friends over to spend time together and not discuss the race problem, Falls lists Regina as Regina Merritt (Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 268, 317, 97.) It is likely that Regina did graduate from Loyola, given her family's propensity for education as well as the money she had. It is possible, though, that the person who wrote up the report was unaware that Regina had gotten married and listed her incorrectly. (Falls, "Unpublished Autobiography," S1/26, S2/17-18.)

Our Lady of Solace, his home parish, likely including his mother, were making connections with the FCC. In the winter of 1929, Maude Johnston hosted a meeting of sodality heads at her house and the *Chronicle* reported that someone from Our Lady of Solace had been present. The July, 1931 issue of the *Chronicle* included Falls's family in its announcement of the confirmation of 170 children at our Lady of Solace. Two of Falls's siblings: John and William Falls, children of Mrs. W.A. Falls (his mother), were among the group confirmed. The other black child confirmed, presumably, was Genevieve Bertell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Salvadore Bertell.⁴⁶

Garvy was an active supporter of black Catholic advancement. At Loyola, Garvy worked closely with the school's handful of African American students. In November the previous year, he and Aloysius Morrison (who was lauded as a "ranking honor student" and the only African American in Loyola's business school), had invited the more than thirty black Loyola students and recent alums to a meeting.⁴⁷ They planned to build a network of support since few of the students, who were scattered across the departments, knew each other. Similar to the FCC, the group was devoted to promoting the "social, educational, and professional advantages of its members."⁴⁸ Father Joseph Reiner, one of Loyola's deans, supported the group.⁴⁹ Twenty-two people gathered at the Downtown College and decided to create a permanent society that they named the Loyola Guild.

Garvy, Morrison and the Loyola Guild also worked to expose Loyola's white students to black people so the white students might shed their stereotypes about African Americans. The group brought black poet James Weldon Johnson to speak at Loyola University's Student

⁴⁶ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (July, 1931).

⁴⁷ "Our Contributors," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (April, 1931).

⁴⁸ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (August, 1931). Quote from "Chicago Chapter News."

⁴⁹ "Our Contributors," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (August, 1931). Reiner is listed as praising Aloysius Morrison for his excellent grades. Reiner was also the moderator for a session at the October 1931 national conference of the FCC. See the October, 1931 issue of *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle*.

Association's convocation in the spring of 1931. Johnson's talk was the first time a black speaker had addressed the students at Loyola, and his lecture on "Negroes and Their Poetry," Morrison hopefully reported, had sown "the seeds, first of a knowledge [of poetry], and secondly of an appreciation of the Negro's contributions to American civilization."⁵⁰

Finally, the Guild reported that its activities were helping to improve black Americans' perspective on the Catholic Church. When the black musical group the Mundy Singers performed at Loyola, "Mr. Mundy expressed his grateful appreciation of the courtesy shown by the faculty and the welcome given by the mixed audience, 'For you know,' he said, 'that it is a general opinion among us that the Catholic Church is hostile to colored people.'"⁵¹ Garvy had also been in close contact with Father Eckert and the city's black parish, St. Elizabeth. In April, he had participated in the baptism of 117 converts at the parish.⁵²

In July, 1931, Falls set up a meeting with Garvy to discuss the question of Catholic intolerance and prejudice in three arenas. First, Falls was concerned with Catholic "suspicion and distrust" toward Protestants. Surprisingly, Falls argued that there was, "nothing in Catholic Theology which indicated that anyone outside the Catholic fold automatically was going to hell, but some of the clergy and a good many of the laity acted as if they were."⁵³ Falls's second concern was of Catholic intolerance toward Jewish people. Falls's final, and most pressing, concern was of Catholic bigotry toward the city's black people. Here lay "the most obvious evidence of hate and intolerance."⁵⁴ Falls was pleased with their meeting. Garvy, Falls claimed, was one of the first white priests he had met who was willing to honestly discuss racial injustice within the Catholic Church.

⁵⁰ Aloysius O. Morrison, "James Weldon Johnson at Loyola," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (April, 1931).

⁵¹ "Chicago Chapter News," 59.

⁵² "Chicago Chapter News."

⁵³ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 379.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 379.

But the two men did not see eye-to-eye. Like many white Catholic interracialists, Garvy was a gradual integrationist and believed that with education, white Catholics would change their views and, as Falls put it, “become Christians.”⁵⁵ Garvy also opposed “militant action,” which Falls was quickly coming to support. The priest feared that if black Catholics did anything more than try to educate white Catholics, their “activity might develop into anti-clericalism which had developed in the past in Europe.”⁵⁶

Falls’s assessment of the Catholic Church was different. He did not think that individuals would change simply because of education, nor did he think black Catholics should wait for white Catholics to slowly get the picture. Falls thought racial injustice was embedded in the structure of the Catholic Church and needed to be fixed immediately. And as a layperson, Falls felt very limited by a Church in a moment in which lay people were able to exercise very little power. Falls argued that “the very structure of the Catholic Church made the discrimination an almost built-in part of the structure and almost prevented any correction by the laity.”⁵⁷ The real issue was one of power – who held it and how it would be used, both between the laity and the clergy, and between black and white people, and this issue would plague Falls for the rest of the decade.

But despite their differences, Falls viewed Garvy as an ally. He commented that “colored Catholics felt that there was at least one priest in the whole Archdiocese of Chicago who sincerely was trying to follow the teachings of the church and who demonstrated an attitude of Brotherhood. And at this point, he was just about the only priest in the whole archdiocese who did.”⁵⁸ And Garvy introduced Falls to the FCC, which would change Falls’ perspective on what

⁵⁵ Ibid., 383.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 384.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 386.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 384.

was possible within and through the Catholic Church. Significantly, though, Falls learned about the FCC around the same time that he was connecting with another black uplift organization: the Chicago Urban League.

D. The Groundwork for Ecumenical Catholic Interracialism: The FCC and the Chicago Urban League Partner

Members of Chicago's FCC were integrated with a broader community of black Chicagoans concerned with uplift and respectability. Precisely because Chicago's Catholic Church was so racialized – because black Catholics were encouraged to go only to black parishes, and housing segregation kept most black people within the black belt – Catholic interracialism in the city would not be strictly a Catholic affair. Instead, it was deeply affected by shifts in the politics and attitudes of the city's broader black community. In addition, the movement was ecumenical and often in conversation with and concerned about non-Catholics. Eventually, as the movement spread to white Catholics, even the faith and practice of white participants in the interracial movement would contrast that of the more insular Catholicism. But within the middle-class background of many black Catholics were the seeds of conservatism within the movement which would limit the effectiveness of the idea of Catholic interracialism and would eventually give way to a more (ironically) radical white-led movement.

In particular, Chicago's black Catholics were connected with the Urban League, and the stances of the FCC were shaped by the concerns of the Urban League. The Urban League was a civic organization that worked in housing, community development, job placement, vocational guidance, and union organizing in order to help black workers.⁵⁹ When Falls joined the FCC, he

⁵⁹ Falls's mother had told him about the organization, and in 1928 he became the youngest member of the DuSable Club, which was a men's volunteer branch of the League. They met monthly at the Appomattox Club to discuss civic and social problems, brought in speakers such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Bishop John A Gregg of the African

facilitated institutional connections between the two organizations that set the pattern for later partnership between Catholic interracialists and other activists who were not Catholic. In many cases, Falls worked out his thoughts on how to promote interracial understanding simultaneously with the Urban League and the FCC. His positions would later influence a generation of white Catholics. Falls may never have joined the Urban League or have become so committed to interreligious partnerships had it not been for the racial dynamics of Chicago's Catholic Church.

Largely excluded from black Catholic circles because of his family's limited participation in the black parish, Falls moved outside Catholic circles for his education, social life, and eventually civic life. While in medical school, Falls met Lillian Proctor who was pursuing a degree in social work at the University of Chicago. Always aspiration, she had applied for, and won, a ninety-dollar-a-month fellowship from the Urban League. Over the course of several years, as Falls pursued Proctor, he began to read books on social issues of the sort Proctor cared about. Thus Falls gradually became civically engaged. As the daughter of a Congregationalist minister, Proctor would have been off limits for most Catholics because dating (and talking about marrying) a Protestant was taboo. But Falls was interested and in 1928, he married Proctor. Their marriage began a partnership that spurred each of them on toward improving the lives of others.

Falls's developing Catholic interracialism, and that of black Catholics more generally, reflected middle-class concerns. In particular, Falls's upbringing as a black Catholic affected the ways in which he pursued interracial justice. As a black *Catholic*, Falls held a middle class perspective and was committed to "uplifting the race."⁶⁰ In Chicago, there was a perception among African Americans that Catholicism – with its private schools, disciplined classrooms,

Methodist Episcopal Church, and Melville Herskovits of Northwestern University, and Dr. Antonio Luciana Paex of South America. They also raised money.

⁶⁰ See Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*.

connections with white people, conservative worship styles, and refined aesthetics - was a middle-class faith.⁶¹ Falls's writings in the early 1930s reflect that class position. He wanted to teach his white readers that there was no single, monolithic Negro culture. Even black doctors, he wrote, were not all on the "same cultural plane, for definite levels are found even within this small group." In addition, there was, Falls argued, a "wide gulf between the culture of the educated, intelligent, successful group of colored people and that of the illiterate, laboring group even in one locality."⁶² The battle Falls waged was to be distinguished according to his class and accomplishments, not his race. Nonetheless, he demanded equality for all black people regardless of their class or culture, and does not quite fit paradigms aimed at the talented tenth.⁶³

Historian Touré Reed has argued that the Chicago Urban League was a fundamentally conservative organization that was limited by its class outlook. Reed's observations about the Urban League offer insight into black Catholic interracialism. Despite its emphasis on industrial workers, many of the people the League helped were white-collar workers who conformed to their middle-class, racial uplift standards. The Urban League, Reed shows, was deeply influenced by the University of Chicago's School of Sociology, which gained tremendous prominence in the city by the 1920s. From its beginning in 1910 through World War II, Reed argues, the Urban League was "shaped by theories of assimilation pioneered by the famed Chicago School of Sociology."⁶⁴ This meant that, instead of looking at structural solutions for

⁶¹ Neary, "Crossing Parochial Boundaries: African Americans and Interracial Catholic Social Action in Chicago, 1914-1954", 96.

⁶² Arthur Falls, "Some Misconceptions on 'Negro Culture'," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (April, 1932): 70.

⁶³ Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*; Touré F. Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁶⁴ Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950*, 5. Reed's argument about the influence of the Chicago School of Sociology is his major contribution to the debate on the Urban League. As he explains the historiography, since the 1970s, there have been two schools of thought on the League. Nancy Weiss argues that the League's emphasis on self-help places it in the conservative tradition of Booker T. Washington. Jesse T. Moore, on the other hand, argues that the League's social work focused more on

discrimination, the League devoted “particular attention to the relationship between Afro-Americans' behavior and racial and economic inequality. In practice,” Reed continues, “this approached revealed sharply skewed class assumptions about migrants and poor Afro-Americans generally.”⁶⁵

The Urban League and the FCC shared common concerns and influenced one another. In 1928, the same year he married Proctor, Falls became involved in the Chicago Urban League. From the men and women of the Urban League, Falls learned a “framework for the activity with which I would be engaged in the future.”⁶⁶ He applied that framework to his work with the FCC, which suggests that, in 1930s Chicago, Catholic interracialism was deeply influenced by men and women who were outside Catholic circles. Because of the networks he developed, Falls was eventually able to bring white Catholics under the influence of black, non-Catholic civil rights leaders. Thus, from the start, what became the most important branch of Catholic interracialism in the city was ecumenical and shaped by interests that were not Catholic. In addition, the two organizations addressed many of the same issues.

Negro employment concerned both the FCC and the Urban League in the 1930s. Falls's first major entre into the Chicago Urban League was in conjunction with the League's vocational campaigns of 1930 and 1931. The campaign was a response to the devastating economic effects of the Depression in Chicago's black community. Members of the Urban League planned to use the 1931 campaign for five major purposes: to raise awareness about the problems of Negro unemployment across all of Chicago, to emphasize to African Americans that they needed

structural rather than behavior remedies, so their approach owed more to the militancy of W. E. B Du Bois's NAACP. Reed argues that Moore and Weiss obscure complex issues – including the long-debated strategies of Washington and DuBois – and thinks that trying to define the League as conservative or militant “lead each to sidestep proximate philosophical influences over the group and by extension some of the more important implications of its programs.”

⁶⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁶ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 259.

skilled training (most black workers were in unskilled trades because of discrimination by unions and employers), to connect with business and industrial leaders in the hopes of opening more doors for African Americans, to advance Negro opportunities in trade unions and craft organizations, and to suggest African Americans work in fields they might not have otherwise considered. These were many of the same issues the Federation laid out at Falls's first national convention, and his experience, no doubt, shaped his first talk at the FCC's convention in 1931.

A second common concern for both organizations was bringing harmony between different groups of people. Falls had an opportunity to invest in this task when, in early 1932, shortly after being elected to the Urban League's executive board, A.L. Foster, the League's executive director, asked Falls to create an Interracial Commission. The agency would coordinate different organizations working to better relationships between different racial and religious groups. As Falls recalled, since there was no "city, county, or state agency which could coordinate the work of organizations in the field of human relations," he was "asked to organize an interracial commission whose objectives would be first to serve Metropolitan Chicago as a clearing house for all interracial problems; secondly to constitute the official agency of Chicago's civic organizations which have interracial work or which are interested in proved race relations."⁶⁷ Through the networks he developed as chairman, Falls became a lynch pin in Chicago's interracial movement.

Falls quickly brought Catholics concerned about interracial justice into the Urban League's fold. As soon as Falls had created the Interracial Commission in 1932, he began to work to get all fourteen of the Chicago branches of the Catholic Interracial Federation to affiliate with the Commission.⁶⁸ No doubt to Falls's delight, and because of his efforts, three Catholic groups

⁶⁷ Ibid., 410.

⁶⁸ "1932 Chicago Urban League Report." In *Urban League Papers*. Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago.

were represented at the Commission's first meeting: the Federated Colored Catholics, Ciscora of St. Ignatius High School, and Loyola University. All the groups were influenced by Father Reiner of Loyola University who had founded Ciscora, an inter-parish youth organization, and supported the FCC. In 1933, the Chicago branches of the Federation held the first of what they hoped would be a bi-monthly meeting on the question on the progression, or regression, of Catholics on race relations. The meeting was held at the Urban League Community Center.⁶⁹

Falls used the Urban League's Interracial Commission to speak out against religious, as well as racial, intolerance. This emphasis stood in tension with threads of latent anti-semitism in the national FCC. The Interracial Commission, Falls wrote in 1935, stood "unequivocally for the equalization of opportunity for all citizens in all fields of life," and did not "confine its attention to injustice to colored Americans."⁷⁰ Its inclusion of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews reflected Falls's concerns for the human rights of all people, a concern that would influence Catholic interracialists. He would voice this opinion in FCC circles, as well as in other Catholic circles he had developed by the mid-1930s. Falls did not tolerate anti-semitism, which was on the rise in the United States and Europe, and present in the Catholic interracial movement.⁷¹

Falls's concern for religious and racial intolerance was moral and, above all, practical; he thought that intolerance toward one group would lead to intolerance toward others. Falls argued in 1933 that black Americans were facing "a graver menace" than ever before: "the spread of Fascism in the United States." He expected that the organizations that were developing which

⁶⁹ "News from the Local Chapters," (December, 1933).

⁷⁰ Arthur Falls, "Interracial Cooperation in Chicago," *Interracial Review* (May, 1935): 75.

⁷¹ See, for example, Gustave B. Aldrich, "A New Weapon in the Economic Struggle," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (May, 1931). In his discussion of the effectiveness of boycotts, Aldrich mentioned that ninety percent of the stores in Chicago's black community are "owned and operated by Jews and men of other races," but they refuse to employ black workers. Aldrich singled out Jews as store owners, signaling a latent anti-Semitism which would have been very common at the time among Catholics. Beryl Satter documents the anti-Semitism of many Catholics several decades later in Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*. See chapter eight.

preached “the same doctrine of racial and religious hatred as the fascists abroad” would direct their efforts “principally against Negroes, Jews and Catholics in the order named.” Falls declared, “Certainly one of the most effective bulwarks against the establishment of Fascism in this country is the unity of white and colored people, understanding that their problems are common.”⁷²

Falls and the other members of the Interracial Commission were breaking new ground; they were trying to figure out what worked best in bring people of different races and religions together. Falls figured out his stance on these questions with the Urban League and later would apply them in Catholic circles. One member, Miss Kathleen Allen who was the supervisor of Social Work at Provident Hospital where Falls practiced, took “violent exception to much of [the] activity” of the Commission. The Commission would publicize instances of discrimination, and Allen thought that it was “advertising the disabilities of the minority group.” According to Falls, “her feeling was that individuals and groups should work to correct disabilities without any public discussion.”⁷³ Falls disagreed, and to the chagrin not only of Allen, but also many Catholics (like Mundelein) who despised the airing of dirty laundry, consistently tried to make discussions about discrimination public.

While in many ways, because of its middle-class membership, the Commission was conservative, it also facilitated a broader, more inclusive politics than Reed’s arguments about the Urban League suggest.⁷⁴ For example, one of the first issues Falls became involved with as

⁷² Arthur Falls, “The Graver Menace,” *Interracial Review* (August, 1934): 103.

⁷³ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 479.

⁷⁴ “Middle class” does not mean the same thing for black and white families. The black middle class was much more vulnerable economically than the white middle class – and that remains so to this day. Kevin Gaines has argued in *Uplifting the Race* that, since the early twentieth century, black elites’ response to white supremacy was to perpetuate a self-help ideology. They believed that the improvement of black Americans’ moral and material condition would help alleviate white racism and claimed class distinctions, such as the existence of a “better class” of African Americans, as evidence of race progress. The black elite then tried to embody respectability through certain cultural markers and by serving the masses. Gaines shows that through racial uplift ideology, black elites

head of the Commission was a labor issue. The Associated Trades Council, which included black plumbers, steam fitters, and other workers, was trying to convince a white union to admit African Americans to the union. As Falls recalled, “a very spirited discussion ensued but the business agents of the white locals showed no disposition whatsoever to admit Negroes into the locals, which really controlled the work.”⁷⁵ This immediate failure was indicative of the long, hard road ahead of Falls and the Interracial Commission. Their second tactic was more indirect: they worked to educate Chicagoans about race relations in the city in order to influence them for racial justice, and tried to increase the black representation in government and civic organizations. But, as Falls assessed the Commission in 1933, although the Commission was very powerful, it had hardly scratched the surface of the issues Chicagoans faced due to its lack of money and limited staff. Having a volunteer staff severely limited its progress.

By 1933, the Interracial Commission’s goals had expanded beyond the first goal of coordinating groups. First, incredibly aware of the power of the press to shape how white people thought about black people and how both groups perceived the state of interracial relations, the Commission wanted to change how newspapers discussed African Americans and interracial relations. They worked to have white presses write about the “normal activities” of black people, and not just report on crimes and problems in the city’s black community. They also protested against white and Negro papers when articles were published that “militate against interracial harmony” by, for example, emphasizing the race of a black person when he or she

partnered with white political and business elites, and in doing so, adopted the white elites’ social vision of the possibilities of black Americans. Gaines argues that this perspective and practice was problematic and contradictory because by trying to rehabilitate the image of black people through class and gender distinctions, they used claims of racial hierarchy and ultimately made citizenship – and one’s worth as a human being – dependent not on one’s dignity as a person, but one’s ability to fit into particular cultural norms. While Falls clearly exhibited middle class cultural values – ideally his wife would not have had to work, and he loved going to the opera – he did not focus as much on the actions of black people as he did their inherent worth. That may be related to his status as a Catholic, and it may also reflect his participation in the New Negro movement.

⁷⁵ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 416.

broke the law, or implying the crime was related to his or her race. Finally, and reflective of Falls's larger project to remove racial markers in written public forums, they encouraged black and white papers to abolish inclusion of racial designations.

Second, recognizing the structural limitations to black employment, the Commission worked to increase the opportunities of black workers in the city. They pressured employers who refused to hire Negroes using tactics of the politics of civility, such as having private meetings with white employers. But Falls and the Commission also used more militant means. They helped organize boycotts and picket lines, and encouraged consumers to include requests for equal employment when they paid their bills. They worked to decrease the discrimination in labor unions, which included access to technical training. Unions controlled the training in Chicago's commercial and public schools, and discrimination was "ripe in this area," Falls commented. To Falls, when this discrimination occurred in public schools run by unions but paid for by all citizens, it was especially awful.⁷⁶ Finally, the Commission encouraged black people to patronize black businesses and professionals. According to the Commission, this last point was "not ideal from the standpoint of elimination of racial identities," but was a necessary temporary measure.⁷⁷ Officially, the Commission was not as in favor of developing a black metropolis.⁷⁸

Falls recognized the importance of religion in shaping attitudes toward race relations. In a city with very few integrated Protestant or Catholic churches and a religious culture that supported segregation, much work needed to be done on the interracial front. To that end, the Commission encouraged the formation of active interracial organizations within church

⁷⁶ Ibid., 519.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 492.

⁷⁸ For the development of this separate metropolis, see Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, & Black Urban Life*.

denominations, and counseled churches to connect with racially different churches, especially through the youth. The Commission also encouraged the churches to directly apply religious principles to race relations in Sunday school classes and other endeavors. The suggestion that religion – and in this case, Falls and the Commission were referring to the principles of Catholicism, Judaism, and Protestantism – supported an end to social and economic discrimination against African Americans and integration countered a long, white religious tradition favoring racial separation.⁷⁹ And, as the Falls family had done so often at Our Lady of Solace, the Commission encouraged black members of mixed congregations to take an active part in their churches. While it would likely require thick skin, Falls believed the presence of even one black person in a white setting would be a testimony to what he believed was the fundamental inclusiveness and universality of what was becoming known as the Judeo-Christian tradition. That debate about the fundamental nature of religion– as well as the goals and strategies Falls developed with the Interracial Commission – would play out in Catholic circles as well.

The connections between the FCC and Chicago's black metropolis shaped the history of the FCC and gave birth to Catholic interracialism. Significantly, Falls's became involved in the FCC at a moment of change within the organization and in the black Chicago. As black Chicagoans began to shift from a politics of civility to a politics of militancy, members of Chicago's FCC, led by Falls, began to shift their tactics as well. In addition, because of developments at the national level, Chicago's FCC members would be faced with the decision of remaining a black protest organization or becoming an interracial organization. Falls's and the

⁷⁹ Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000*. Rusty Hawkins, "Religion, Race, and Resistance: White Evangelicals and the Dilemma of Integration in South Carolina, 1950-1975" (Ph.D. Diss, Rice University, 2010).

Urban League's emphasis on interracial unity no doubt influenced the Chicago FCC units' decision. But in doing so, Chicago's black laity committed itself to an interracial course under the guidance of the white clergy. In the end, that proved to be fatal for their organization.

IV. THE FEDERATION'S DOWNFALL: FROM BLACK POWER TO INTERRACIALISM

Falls brought a growing militancy to Chicago's FCC. Shortly after the convention in St. Louis, Falls and some other members of his parish met with Bishop Bernard Sheil, who Mundelein had made an auxiliary bishop two years earlier. Earlier that month, Sheil had dedicated the new St. Elizabeth's church, which had been rebuilt after the fire the previous year.¹ They brought to Sheil a list of hindrances black Catholics had faced in practicing their faith, including being refused the sacraments at several parishes, and demanded that Sheil, as Mundelein's representative, make right these wrongs.

In doing so, the group no doubt upset a fragile and contentious balance that the FCC had struck with Father Eckert, the most powerful white priest in black Chicago. In 1930, when Chicago's FCC chapters had begun to explicitly address instances of local discrimination, Eckert protested to Turner, the head of the national organization. Turner assured Eckert that local chapters would not be involved in "local issues."² When Eckert demanded that Chicago's FCC chapters meet what they saw as absurd conditions, "such as making St. Elizabeth's head of the Illinois chapters, not allowing chapters in other churches and insisting that all colored people come to St. Elizabeth, and stop agitating him by writing articles concerning the things other priests do for us," Turner encouraged the local chapters to publically cooperate with Eckert and

¹ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (March, 1931).

² Quoted in Nickels, "Thomas Wyatt Turner and the Federated Colored Catholics," 11.

avoid controversy.³ But he reiterated that local pastors “will in no case dictate such policies as you mentioned.”⁴ Going over Eckert’s head to Sheil, however, did not help Falls. Sheil refused to take action.

In white Catholic circles in 1931, Sheil would have been considered a radical, but he utterly disappointed Falls and the other black members of the grievance committee. Sheil allowed white and black children to play sports together in the Catholic Youth Organization, which he had founded the previous July.⁵ Sheil was also paying the carfare for black students from Holy Family Parish to go to St. Elizabeth’s high school, the only Catholic high school African Americans could attend in the city. Clearly, Sheil cared about black children, but he was only willing to help on an individual basis. He, unlike Falls, refused to attack the structures of the Church that harmed black Catholics, and the politically savvy Sheil would not acknowledge that Mundelein’s Church discriminated against black people. Fighting the hierarchy under Mundelein, therefore, was like carving a marble statue with a butter knife: frustrating, arduous, and nearly impossible. Once again, reflecting the gradualist, things-will-change-in-time mentality of white people in favor of interracialism, to all their concerns about discrimination, Sheil counseled patience. But Sheil’s promise that things would get better, Falls reflected, was worthless without action.

Falls responded by making a significant departure from the FCC’s earlier politics of civility and began to publically attack the white hierarchy, signaling a new direction for the FCC. In a scathing article he wrote for the February, 1932 edition of *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle*, Falls

³ Maude Johnston to Thomas Wyatt Turner, 24 July 1931, Thomas Wyatt Tuner Papers, Mooreland Spingarn Research Center (Washington, D.C.).

⁴ Thomas Wyatt Turner to Maude Johnston, 4 August 1931, Turner Papers.

⁵ Timothy Neary argues that the CYO fostered interracial contact and create social spaces in which black and white children would be able to cross their parochial boundaries. Sheil would also later become known for his support of labor and the proliferation of interracial groups in the 1940s. See Neary, "Crossing Parochial Boundaries: African Americans and Interracial Catholic Social Action in Chicago, 1914-1954".

lambasted forced segregation and discrimination in the Catholic Church. First, in acknowledgment of Mundelein's policy of assigning missionary priests to ministry among Chicago's black population, Falls argued that it was not right for the majority of white Catholics – and many black Catholics as well – to think of black people only in connections with missions. He argued that “many of the Catholic clergy and laity in American never have considered the colored Catholic as capable of the same treatment of the whole body, but rather as a separate ‘problem’ of the Church, for whom special provisions must be made.”⁶

Racial change would not come, Falls argued, when all white people had it in their hearts to allow it. It had to come through legislation and organization. In the April 1932 edition of *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle*, Falls argued that legislation for justice was required for black people to make progress. With legislation as a foothold, then “[the Negro] can use other means of making progress,” convincing white people of their worth. Power, in other words, had to enforce action. Falls was not willing to wait for white Catholics – and white people – to embrace interracial justice before legislation would dictate integration in classrooms and fair treatment of black people in parishes. Falls argued, for instance, that black students should be admitted to all departments at DePaul University, as they were at Loyola. Then, white people's racial perspectives would change. Furthermore, as Falls was becoming convinced of himself, change required militant organization. As African Americans moved to better neighborhoods and faced the wrath of their white neighbors, they were becoming more and more aware of the barriers they faced, Falls argued. “Negroes are realizing that only through organized opposition can they counteract injustices which meet them on every hand,” Falls wrote.

Falls mixed a commitment to interracial partnership in with his militancy. To those white leaders who would say to black people: “Be patient; be a good Catholic; and all you ask will

⁶ Arthur Falls, “Colored Churches,” *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (February, 1932): 26.

come to you,” Falls felt “constrained to utter this note of warning. The large body of colored people are finally beginning to understand that nothing is going to ‘come to them.’ What they will accomplish will be the result of intelligent, co-operative efforts of colored and white friends.”⁷ Reconciliation and justice would not be cheap. Only when the truth came out, when each community brought together its white and black members and strove to “obtain *facts* and not emotional opinions . . . then truly the time will not be far hence when we can say: ‘Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.’”⁸

Falls’s protest to Sheil and subsequent attacks on the Church were examples of an increasing militancy among black Chicagoans in demanding equal rights. As a “New Negro,” Falls was a part of Chicago’s developing politics of protest. This shift, however, was complicated in the Catholic Church by religious hierarchies that placed priests, who were nearly always white, over black laypeople. At the same time, then, that Chicago’s FCC members were increasing their militancy, they also made a strategic decision, to give up lay black leadership in order to keep white priests in their organization. In a hierarchical church, having priests on one’s side made a difference in making one’s cause known. Thus, Falls and Chicago’s FCC shifted their strategy from one of nascent black power to one of interracialism as they negotiated the sticky racial and religious hierarchies.

A. A More Militant Catholic Action: Falls and the FCC

Falls and the group of people he took to see Sheil went as representatives of Chicago’s newest FCC chapter which initially seemed like it might be an interracial group. Falls’s parish priest, Father Martin Nealis, had agreed to sponsor an FCC chapter at Our Lady of Solace. Our

⁷ Falls, “Some Misconceptions on “Negro Culture”,” 71.

⁸ Ibid., 71.

Lady of Solace was an integrated parish and Nealis was a diocesan, not a missionary, priest since most of his parishioners were white. Falls's mother, Angelica, hosted the group's first meeting. His sister, Regina Merritt spoke on the social encyclicals and the Catholic Church.⁹ Falls's first report to the *Chronicle* of the local FCC chapter at Our Lady of Solace was glowing. He wrote that "already the presence of the Chapter has shown results in stimulating interracial co-operation in the parish." Nealis had given the chapter extended announcements and allowed the group to sell papers outside the church. Falls concluded, "The members of the Chapter feel that the hearty support of our parish will enable us to accomplish far more than would be the case otherwise."¹⁰

Despite Falls's upbeat remarks, the support of the white members of the parish likely did not extend beyond Father Nealis and, when push came to shove, Nealis's support would prove to be nominal. Indeed, finding white Chicago Catholics to join the FCC would be a problem that would plague Falls for the rest of his time working with the organization in Chicago. As Falls recalled in his memoir, no members of the majority-white congregation joined their parish FCC or even "evidenced interest."¹¹ The group elected Falls president, his mother vice president, Mrs. Lois G. Hill, secretary, and Mr. Harvey M. Roberson, treasurer, and chose a grievance committee which would document all the instances of discrimination black Catholics faced in Chicago.

The chapter's grievance committee represented a new, more militant, position for the FCC in Chicago. The committee took its job seriously and in many cases collected notarized statements

⁹ In his memoir, Falls wrote that Regina was going to be the head of the Domestic Science Department at the Cardinal Gibbons Institute in Ridge, Maryland. The family saw her off in the late summer of 1931. (Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 389-90.) John LaFarge had helped found the institute to be sort of a Catholic Tuskegee and had forged strong connections between the FCC and the Institute. Unfortunately, the Institute was closed suddenly – and poorly – in September, 1931, so Regina's stay there must have been short. (Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*, chapter 6.)

¹⁰ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (February, 1932).

¹¹ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 395.

of instances of discrimination black Catholics had faced in the church. In February of 1932, the grievance committee participated in its first of a series of meetings at Mundelein's chancery office, where they met with Sheil, who refused to decree interracial justice in the Church from on high.¹²

In October, 1932 the Our Lady of Solace chapter reported the first instance of discrimination they had experienced since the chapter had been formed 8 months previously. In a contrast to earlier Chicago FCC reports, Falls did not make any attempt to hide the "dirty laundry" of his parish. The parish priest and the Mother Superior denied two of Mr. and Mrs. George Cary's children admission to the school because they were not white. Despite Falls's "extensive interviews" with the Mother Superior, the pastor, and the superintendent of the School Board, the decision held. "Each disclaimed any advocacy [sic] of discrimination, but each refused to issue an order that these children be admitted," Falls reported. The chapter sent a written appeal to the bishop, but to no avail. Falls acknowledged that while some other parishes admitted black children, overall, the parochial system seemed to "favor segregation, with authority left in the hands of the parish priest."¹³ At this point, Falls and Proctor Falls had a three year old son. It looked like their child would not be able to attend their parish school, and they would have to explain to him the failures of the parish's spiritual leaders.

In subsequent public attacks on racial injustice in the Catholic Church, Falls pointed out that the cost of the Church's hierarchy supporting this continued injustice was high. Black Catholics were leaving the faith. As they realized that that the Catholic Church was, more and more, making an exception to its fundamental law, "that every Catholic is obliged to support the parish

¹² I have found no evidence of this meeting in the chancery documents at the Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Falls commented that although he would write letters to the chancery, they would not respond, which could be the reason why there are no letters from the chancery to Falls or the Our Lady of Solace FCC.

¹³ "Chicago Chapter News," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (October, 1932).

in which he lives and to receive administration of services from his parish,” except for black Catholics, they left the faith. Many that remained in the Church harbored “disillusionment and bitterness and – yes, even hatred,” in their hearts “toward the clergy and white laity.”

Reflecting the top-down authority model in the Catholic Church Falls continued to argue that the solution for the problem was for Catholic priests to stop being hypocrites. Either “they will have to deny their present teaching that all Catholics belong to and should the parish in which they live and receive the benefits therefrom; or else they will have to admit openly that they do not believe in this method of administration as far as colored people are concerned.” And to those who would argue that “existing local conditions” – such as the protests of white laypeople to the inclusion of black Catholics in all parish churches and neighborhoods – Falls had no sympathy or compassion. He wrote

Well, when colored Catholics think of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, who suffered His death upon the cross because He taught the will of His Father in opposition to the “existing local situation”; when they think of the twelve apostles, all of whom were martyred for the same reason; of the twenty-two martyrs of Uganda; and of the thousands of Catholics who were fed to the lions or otherwise slaughtered because they held to the teachings of the Church, no matter what the “existing local situation”, they wonder just what there is in American that should create such fear in so many hearts.¹⁴

Falls was done with excuses for the hierarchy’s refusal to stand up for black rights within the Church and as citizens. But the hierarchy continued to refuse to budge, refusing to listen to the demands for justice the black laity voiced.

Falls led the charge in working for black Chicagoans’ citizenship rights in the Holy Family Parish in December, 1931. The executive committee of Chicago’s FCC appointed him to address a situation in the parish. Many black families in the parish were facing eviction. With husbands out work, the families could only receive two dollars a week from the parish, which

¹⁴ Falls, “Colored Churches,” 26.

was not enough to cover their expenses. But the Catholic families did not want to appeal for money from outside their parish. Falls held a conference with the mothers of the parish on December 8, next met with the priests, and then held a meeting for all the parish members. He urged the families to look for other sources of relief, like United Charities where his wife, Lillian, worked.

At stake was the question of what it meant to be a Catholic. Most Catholics in Chicago believed they should help their own. When Mundelein established Catholic Charities in 1917 as part of his campaign to centralize and unify Chicago's Catholics, he refused to let it partner with United Charities and other non-Catholic organizations. Catholic leaders did not want to be accountable to non-Catholics for how they spent their money. Because of the Depression, Mundelein eventually took state money, and in 1932 he would finagle a deal so that the Central Charity Bureau of the Archdiocese was designated an official agent of the Illinois Employment Relief Commission, but he did not want to be under the state's control. As he relayed in a story in his first year in Chicago,

A young man called and asked me whether he might dedicate to me a book he had written dealing with modern social questions. . . . He explained to me that the theory he advocated was that gradually the State was to take over the care of the dependent, the unfortunate, the incompetent. . . . When he had made this clear to me, I said: "Son, I don't know how long I am going to live, but I hope I will not live long enough to see the condition you describe come into existence."¹⁵

The Holy Family parish priests were in agreement with Mundelein and were furious at Falls. As he recalled, they called him and his supporters "bad Catholics," and thought he was "trying to take people out of the Catholic Church."¹⁶

But Falls had a broader definition of the rights of Catholics. Religion, in this case, should not be a limiting factor regarding one's citizenship rights. In Falls's mind, "Negro Catholics like

¹⁵ Kantowicz, *Corporation Sole: Cardinal Mundelein and Chicago Catholicism*, 145-46.

¹⁶ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 399-400.

anyone else were entitled to whatever services the citizen, county, or private agencies were offering, but this had nothing to do with their adherence to the Catholic religion.”¹⁷ For Falls, citizenship trumped Mundelein’s version of religion, and he effectively privatized religion whereas Mundelein and the priests wanted to keep it public. He believed they were being “sustained in this position by the actual teachings of the church itself.” He argued that black Catholics were citizens of the United States and should benefit from their taxpayer dollars. Lillian, who was working with impoverished African Americans across the city through United Charities, no doubt influenced Falls’s perspective. In reflecting on the situation, Falls argued that he and the other Catholics were “truly becoming members of the Church militant and were expressing ourselves on the inadequacies of the church in relation to the people.”¹⁸ But this lay activity, Falls knew, made the clergy feel threatened.

B. The Chicago Urban League and the New Politics of Protest

The FCC’s latent but growing militancy reflected shifts in the thinking of African Americans more generally. When Falls joined the Urban League in 1928, black Americans were becoming more and more militant in their demands for citizenship rights. These demands were rooted in the development of the “New Negro,” a designation which described the new tone of militancy African Americans adopted after World War I. Black soldiers returned from fighting in the Great War and, after seeing their brothers die in battle, refused to quietly submit to the lynchings they met with in the South and the bombs that greeted them at if they tried to move out of Northern ghettos. Instead, they fought. The race riots of 1919 – in which Falls almost lost his life – was evidence of this new spirit. In twenty-six cities across the nation that summer,

¹⁷ Ibid., 400.

¹⁸ Ibid., 400.

African Americans fought back when white mobs attacked them. Claude McKay's poem "If We Must Die," which he wrote in the summer of 1919, depicted this new spirit well: "If we must die, let it not be like hogs . . . (but) like men we'll face the murderous cowardly pack, pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back."¹⁹ These New Negroes did not just exist in the ranks of Chicago's – and the nation's – black elites. In Chicago, black working-class consumers shaped their culture according to their own desires and pleasures. As Davarian Baldwin argued in *Chicago's New Negroes*, they used "the mass consumer marketplace to challenge the dehumanizing effects of capitalism and etch out a world of leisure that could cater to their labor demands."²⁰

Initially, this increased militancy found little *public* voice in Chicago's FCC.²¹ They – and the national group – were much more concerned with maintaining peace with the white leadership. That is, until Falls joined the Federation.

Much of the shift from a politics of civility to a politics of protest in Chicago more generally had to do with the creation of the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) and the selection of A. Philip Randolph as the president of the budding union in 1925. Randolph wanted to organize the porters – all of whom were black – who worked for Pullman Company in their luxury sleeping cars. Pullman was a Chicago-based company founded in 1862 that had long supported the city's black community financially, thus practicing a politics of paternalism. Provident Hospital, where Falls worked, was just one example of the company's largess.²² The BSCP fit into Randolph's larger goals to help free black Americans from their second class

¹⁹ McKay quoted in Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945*, 30. Bates was helpful for my understanding of the militancy of the New Negro.

²⁰ Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes : Modernity, the Great Migration, & Black Urban Life*, 7.

²¹ I did not see any mention of the discrimination black Catholics faced in Chicago, but some of the acts were documented before Falls came along. In the November, 1931 Field Agent report, Johnston said, "I will not go into the unpleasant details. They are well-known for I've specified them in every previous report." (William A. Prater, "Report of Field Agent of the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States, 1931," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (November, 1931): 666.)

²² These paragraphs on the BSCP and the rise of black protest politics rely on the arguments and evidence of Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945*.

citizenship status in the United States, and help them develop economic power without which, he believed, they would not be able to gain citizenship rights. The importance of black economic power was something Falls brought into as well, and would become a point of contention and struggle in the Catholic interracial movement by the mid-1930s.

Chicago's leading black citizens, however, were none too excited to support a union that would organize at a company that had been so good to them. They also saw it is futile. In 1894, Pullman Company workers staged a strike only to face the violent suppression of the company and the government. But if the leading black citizens – who controlled the press, the pulpit, and public opinion – would not support the BSCP in the city where the largest number of porters lived, the union would fail. Milton P. Webster, the Chicago division of the BSCP's general organizer, summed up the situation of the BSCP in 1925 by saying "Everything Negro was against us."²³

All seemed hopeless, until Webster was able to connect with Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the city's clubwomen. Falls's mother, Angelica Grand Pré Falls, was likely one of those women. She had been an active member of the women's suffrage movement through the League of Women Voters, and had often been a speaker for the organization. One of the most important groups supporting the BSCP was the Alpha Suffrage Club (ASC), which Wells-Barnett had formed with Bell Squire, a white woman who was also working in the women's suffrage movement. In 1928, three years after the BSCP came to Chicago, Grand Pré Falls and her daughter Regina were members of the Alpha Culture Club, which I suspect was an outgrowth of the Alpha Suffrage Club. Wells-Barnett and many women in her network supported the BSCP because they had a common goal of, as historian Beth Tompkins Bates puts it, "carrying forward the spirit of previous activities for social, political, and economic enfranchisement of all black

²³ Ibid., 65.

Americans.”²⁴ Thus, through the women’s suffrage movement and the larger clubwomen movement, the BSCP gained access to Chicago’s black middle class. Black Chicagoans, in turn, began to see the potential power of unions – and militant action and protest – for achieving black civil rights. Wells-Barnett was aware of the Federated Colored Catholics. Although not a Catholic, she had participated in St. Anselm’s homecoming in the summer of 1930, and after learning about the parish’s Scholarship Unit, had adopted a more favorable perspective on the Catholic Church.²⁵ By the 1941 March on Washington Movement, which Randolph led to protest discrimination against black people in defense and government jobs, and the military, many black Chicagoans were in favor of a politics of protest over a politics of civility.

C. Catholic Interracialism: A New Understanding of What “Catholic” Meant

Black Catholics and their white Catholic supporters had an additional weapon to use in the battle for black rights: the theology of the Catholic Church. Arguably the most important part of the Catholic interracialist agenda under the Federation was to redefine the meaning of Catholic and to call racial discrimination a sin. One could only be a Catholic if one supported interracial justice, they argued.

To discriminate was to not practice the true doctrines of Christianity, they argued. Cassius Foster, the president of the Corpus Christi FCC branch, argued in July, 1932 that “The God-fearing non-Catholic Negro of today is seeking a faith that can eliminate the curse of racial prejudice,” Foster argued. “It must be a religion based upon fundamental principles and true

²⁴ Ibid., 73.

²⁵ “Chicago Chapter News.”

doctrines of Christianity. It also must be a religion that is exemplified by its good deeds. A mere gesture of idle words will no longer suffice.”²⁶

Unfortunately, however, most black people thought the Church was failing to live up to its potential. Foster pointed out that when non-Catholics asked “why Negro Catholics are often barred from Catholic parochial schools, colleges, and other institutions, especially in Northern States where there are no conflicting state laws,” black Catholics were faced with an ugly situation. Foster wrote, “often he is forced through his love of God and the Faith, to cover up a sin which he knows to be contrary to the doctrine and laws of the Catholic Church.”²⁷ Falls concurred, writing “by far the larger number of colored people feel that the Christian Church has failed them; and only by a concrete demonstration of the true principles of our religion can the Catholic Church hope to change this feeling.”²⁸

Racial justice, furthermore, could never be a gradual, partial thing. Looking to Jesus, Falls argued that “the life of our Lord on earth has clearly demonstrated that there can be no such thing as ‘modified’ truth or justice.” To those who would argue that he was too stubborn, Falls, the great negotiator, reminded them that “this does not mean that in every situation, one immediately must adopt an ‘all or none’ policy; but it does mean that always should shine before one this standard of equal opportunity and equal sharing; and that each accomplishment in eliminating injustice be regarded as a stepping stone toward that goal.”²⁹

For the priests and laity who might argue that religion was a personal thing, Falls argued that there was no split between the spiritual and secular world. Two years earlier, he had, in a limited way, separated out the pursuit of racial justice from personal piety, suggesting that “it is

²⁶ Cassius Foster, “A Distinct Need for Catholic Action,” *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (July 1932): 138.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 135.

²⁸ Arthur Falls, “Better Race Relations from a Catholic Viewpoint,” *Interracial Review* (October, 1933).

²⁹ Arthur Falls, “Honesty in Race Relations,” *Interracial Review* (September, 1933): 158.

necessary to realize that hand in hand with the spiritual development of each individual must go his intensive thought and planning to open up educational, occupational, and cultural opportunities which, in turn, will make possible greater spiritual development.”³⁰ But now, Falls said that “the fallacy” of the belief that the “Catholic Church should confine herself to ‘spiritual matters’ and that the ordinary lives of individuals affected by prejudice are not her concern . . . lies in the conception of one’s spiritual self as a separate compartment, entirely divorced from all other phases of life.” That compartmentalization did not happen for people – and ought not to happen. Here, Falls cited the Pope’s support of Catholic Action and social justice, and expanded pietistic Catholics’ understanding of spiritual matters. He wrote, “‘spiritual matters’ comprise more than attending Mass on Sunday; they comprise all that enters into the *living* of our religion; and where is that better illustrated than race relations?”³¹

People fighting discrimination, Falls and others argued, were the true Church not “‘fighting the Church’ or ‘fighting the clergy.’” This suggestion challenged the legitimacy of many of the priests in the city – and indeed the nation. While “it is true that our clergy are the direct descendants of the apostles, and that they are the direct representatives of Holy Mother Church to give us the word of God,” they were only thus “*insofar as they give us the word of God!*”³² The office of priest mattered not to Falls. What mattered was if the priest was on the side of interracial justice. And priests knew this to be the case, Falls argued. “Not even the most rabidly prejudiced clergyman will claim that the Church gives him authority to discriminate against Catholics because of their color or race.” Then, to further justify his position, Falls cited scripture – which he believed was the word of God – in favor of his position. He wrote,

³⁰ Falls, “Some Misconceptions on ‘Negro Culture,’” 71.

³¹ Falls, “Honesty in Race Relations,” 159.

³² Ibid., 158. Italics are in original.

Our Lord has stated quite frankly the status of such individuals [priests who practiced prejudiced] in such passages as these:

“If I speak with the tongues of men and Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal.”

“And the second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets.”

“Every one who hateth his brother is a murderer. And ye know that no murderer hath life everlasting abiding in himself.”

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. If any man think himself religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his heart, this man’s religion is in vain.”

“Stand, therefore, having your loins girt in truth, and having on the breast plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

“Thus,” Falls concluded, “when one combats evidence of discrimination in our Catholic institutions, he . . . is combating the sinful abuse of the position which the clergyman occupies. It is the priest or Sister who causes this discrimination who is guilty of ‘fighting the church.’”³³

Falls, Foster, and other interracialists who used similar arguments were, by no means, on shaky theological grounds. Rather, they were on the cutting edge of the resurgence of an ancient doctrine: the Mystical Body of Christ, which would in the coming years become the heart and soul of the Catholic interracialist movement. As the doctrine began to take hold in Chicago, Arthur Falls was especially closely attuned to it. The doctrine proclaimed that Catholics were mystically part of a Body, united by the Holy Spirit. This meant that they were not autonomous individuals with their own rights, and not just part of an organization. Instead, just as a human body has millions of cells each living its own life, so the Church had millions of people, each living their own lives who were incorporated into the Body through baptism – or who might, at some future point, be baptized. Since God stood outside of time, one must view all people as

³³ Ibid., 158-59.

part of the Mystical Body, because no one could know who would be a part of it or not. As Fulton Sheen, who was a popular radio priest and became a famous television priest put it, “some there are who are without grace, yet will afterwards obtain it, and some have it already.”³⁴

The Mystical Body of Christ doctrine allowed Falls and the other interracialists to do two things. First, they used the language to remind white Catholics that all people, no matter their race or religion, were members of Christ’s body and deserved to be treated as equals and with honor, as one would treat Jesus himself. This included African Americans. Theologically, then, the interracialists were establishing themselves on the moral high ground. Second, they could use this doctrine to support lay efforts to change the church because it suggested that the laity, and not just the hierarchy, were the core of the church. The laity, in this new understanding, had as important a role to play in the ministering of God’s plan as the hierarchy did in administering the sacraments. Thus, they could use Catholic theology to justify their activism against a white hierarchy which was supposed to lead them spiritually.

In the early 1930s, the Mystical Body doctrine largely existed outside parish boundaries. Nationally, the doctrine was linked to the pioneering work of Virgil Michel, a Benedictine monk at St. John’s University in Collegeville, MN, who was at the forefront of the liturgical movement.³⁵ Falls could report by 1937 that he was gaining great “spiritual stimulation” through correspondence with people like Michel, reading publications like *Orate Fratres* (which Michel co-founded in 1926), studying the encyclicals, and learning things “we had not been acquainted

³⁴ Fulton Sheen, *The Mystical Body of Christ* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935), 80. In 1943, Pope Pius XII published *Mystici Corporis Christi*, an encyclical on the Mystical Body.

³⁵ Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1985), 388-417.

with in our ordinary parish activities.” Falls mused: “I often wondered whether the ordinary priest with whom I came in contact, ever read this material.”³⁶

D. The Name Change Debate: The Beginning of the End

Though they wielded theological arguments with increased militancy, Chicago’s black Catholic activists also realized that without the support of white priests, they would fail to make changes in a Church dominated by white people. The vast majority of the priests connected with the FCC were gradualist, believing that racial change should come slowly and with a minimal amount of conflict. Despite the priests’ involvement, the organization had remained under black lay control. In 1932, however, the tenuous relationship between the black lay leaders and the white priests came to a head and Chicago’s FCC members were forced to choose which group they would support.

The context for the drama was the name of the organization: would it remain the Federated Colored Catholics, which suggested the group was black, or would it be changed to the National Catholic Federation for the Promotion of Better Race Relations, which would emphasize its interracial focus? The group’s black lay founder, Thomas Wyatt Turner, was pitted against the white Jesuits John LaFarge and William Markoe.

The priests, while deeply committed to black advancement in the Catholic Church, believed that interracial justice must come gradually. Markoe, for instance, argued that interracial justice would be brought about through education. He wrote “As long as many of the American people, including many Catholics, are guided by un-catholic principles, there can be no hope for any real fundamental amelioration of inter-racial difficulties. Consequently, our essential objective is one of education and enlightenment, to restore, as our Holy Father Piu[s] X expressed it, all things in

³⁶ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 566-67.

Christ.” Against anyone who would accuse such a mild statement of militancy, Markoe responded that he was not being militant. He was simply stating facts, and “many Americans in certain interracial situations are guided by principles which are not only not ‘true,’ but in no sense of the word Catholic, though these same people often believe that they are acting in a practical Catholic way.”³⁷

LaFarge and Markoe cast the debate not in terms of strategy or control, but as one of if the group would remain a black organization or if it would be interracial. They argued, furthermore, that if the group refused to be interracial, it was being “un-Catholic.” *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle*, which Markoe controlled, reported that the debate was “racial versus interracial. . . . It was clearly a case of un-Catholic versus Catholic. Catholicity essentially means an all embracing union of the members of the human race; it essentially means interracial union. Un-Catholicity means disunion and chaos.”³⁸ Thus, the official version of the debate accused Turner and his defenders of being “un-Catholic” by wanting to keep the emphasis on black advancement. The debate was tense: “Lines were clearly drawn and it was made plain that if the old name were retained, it would mean that the body had definitely put itself on record as a racial group, whereas the adoption of a new name excluding the word ‘colored’ would put the organization’s final seal of approval upon itself as an interracial body.”³⁹ But historian David Southern has argued convincingly that for LaFarge and Markoe, the question was really one of who would run the organization, the clergy or the laity, and not as much about its racial makeup.⁴⁰

³⁷ William M. Markoe, S.J., “Our Jim Crow Federation,” *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* (July, 1930). Many of the other priests show evidence of gradualism. Dr. Francis Gilligan of St. Paul Seminary said at the 1931 conference that the FCC must build up doctrine in order to counter the ignorance of white people that they are doing anything wrong: “Build up a doctrine. It is only in that way that white people will be able to change their attitudes towards colored people” (“Saturday, September 5, 1931: Morning Session: The Negro in Industry,” 612).

³⁸ “Federation’s New Name Spells Progress,” *St. Elizabeth’s Chronicle* (December, 1932): 246.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁴⁰ Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*.

Chicago's FCC members overwhelmingly chose to support the white priests instead of Turner, a black lay leader like themselves, and they celebrated the name change. Falls's Our Lady of Solace chapter praised the new name, and members were "particularly pleased with the change of name and the enlargement of scope of the organization, as they have advocated these changes since the inception of the Chapter."⁴¹ The rest of the Chicago chapter members, in addition, appear to have unanimously (or at least publically) supported Fathers LaFarge and Markoe in the debate. Alleen Vernon wrote that "the Chicago chapters also wish to reaffirm the deep and sincere appreciation of the personal effort, time, ability and sacrifice of those two splendid characters, Father Wm. Markoe and Father LaFarge, who are valiantly fighting to bring to a realization that which is dear to the heart of the Holy Father – Catholic Action."⁴² In the months after the name change, Chicago's National Catholic Federation for the Promotion of Better Race Relations won a few victories, and in the process infuriated members of the hierarchy.

In October 1932, the group hosted a city-wide symposium on Catholics and racial prejudice. Falls' headline for the article about the event in *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* jubilantly proclaimed "Chicago Catholics Flay Prejudice." Falls reported that representatives from every Catholic group in the city assembled to attend talks by local men and women, and the guest speaker, Father William Markoe. The conference addressed two major themes. The first question was how to define true Catholicism? Falls was able to proclaim that "Chicago Catholics flay prejudice" because they did so ideologically. Garvy gave the first talk and "called upon the Catholic clergy and laity alike to put into practice the fundamental principles upon which the Catholic Church is established." Maude Johnston argued for a "true Catholic school system, in

⁴¹ "Chicago Chapter News."

⁴² "Chicago Chapter News," *Interracial Review* (May, 1933).

which a definite stand was taken against discrimination of any sort; in which pupils were taught respect for those of other races; and in which, through unbiased discussions of interracial problems especially in high school and college, colored and white pupils would be molded as a whole.” Falls spoke on the home as the locus of prejudice and ended with a “forceful plea that Catholics build homes whose keynote would be charity and which would serve as havens of true Catholic Action.” Markoe “denounced discrimination and segregation” and called white Catholics’ treatment of African Americans sinful, and “stated that the Church could handle this sin as it did others.”⁴³

The group believed itself to be on the edge of a movement that would change the city. Thomas H. Cannon, the Chief Officer of the Catholic Order of Foresters (of which Falls’s father had been a member) “emphasized the necessity of strong organization in combatting prejudice.” Markoe further argued for the importance of the press to acquaint “American citizenry of what was being done to improve race relations within Catholic Circles.” Notably, Markoe emphasized the positive, putting a good face on Catholicism and pointing out successes in furthering racial justice, not the obstacles that they had to overcome to get there. Falls concluded that “the National Catholic Federation undoubtedly holds promise of being a powerful organization in the stimulation of better understanding and closer cooperation between colored and white, not only in the Catholic Church, but in the United States as a whole.”⁴⁴

By spring 1933, Falls had been appointed the Chairman of the Committee on the Constitution for Chicago’s Federation and was doing what he did well – getting groups of people to work with one another. Their purpose was to figure out how to bind the chapters together as the Chicago branch of the Federation. They hoped to increase the influence of their branch within

⁴³ Arthur Falls, “Chicago Catholics Flay Prejudice,” *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (December, 1932).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

and outside of Catholic circles – reflecting the theme of partnership with non-Catholic organizations. Their program continued the major themes of the FCC in Chicago prior to Falls's participation of education, expansion, and inclusion. They wanted to expand the readership of the *Interracial Review*, develop an interracial radio hour, staff a Speakers' Bureau, and work for the greater inclusion of black Catholics in Catholic circles more generally. At the first regular meeting of all the members in the Chicago area, Margaret Cope commented on the strength of interracial activity outside Catholic circles, pointing to Falls's Interracial Commission of the Urban League, and expected that there could be similar developments inside Catholic circles as well.⁴⁵ By December, Angelica Falls, who was chairing the program committee, had sent letters to all the deans of Catholic and non-Catholic universities and sociology department heads around the Chicago area asking the extent to which books by and about African Americans and race relations were included in their courses and libraries, and if they would be willing to include particular books in their libraries and have trained speakers from the Federation speak to their classes.⁴⁶

Chicago's Federation also continued to hammer at discrimination in Catholic schools, but with little success. In Holy Family parish, members organized black mothers to protest the superintendent's plan to build separate schools for black children in newly integrated parishes.⁴⁷ Bishop Sheil had been paying the carfare for children from this parish to go to St. Elizabeth for school. From 1931 through 1933, the parish school closed to prevent black children from joining it. Instead, black Catholic children received their religious instruction on Mondays at 2:15 in the afternoon in the basement of the Holy Family Church.⁴⁸ The FCC's efforts were to no avail. On

⁴⁵ Arthur Falls, *Interracial Review*, April 1933.

⁴⁶ "News from the Local Chapters."

⁴⁷ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 500.

⁴⁸ See the March, 1931 issue of *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* for a picture of the children.

September 11, 1933, the old St. Joseph school was reopened under the leadership of the newly appointed Father Arnold J. Garvy, who Falls had declared was the only priest in Chicago who really supported the FCC.⁴⁹ Black Catholics in the parish also gathered separately for Mass under Garvy's care. Only in the late 1950s did the separate black mission become integrated with the larger parish body.

Some changes amenable to interracial justice, however, were occurring in Chicago's hierarchy. Cardinal Mundelein was showing increased concern for the care of black Catholics' souls, if not for their bodies. At the annual retreat Cardinal Mundelein held for his clergy at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein did not favor integration, but asked his priests to work more diligently in the care of black people. Mundelein said "the time is at hand for the Catholic Church in America to do something for the colored people." He wanted his priests to volunteer for work among the city's black population, observing that three parishes, four grammar schools, and one high school was not enough to serve the black population. But for Mundelein, who was conducting a vast assimilation program for the rest of his diocese, black Catholics were still a separate population, unique population, incapable of assimilation. He said, "Although the work will be difficult and perhaps devoid of human rewards and human comfort it will be filled with all the spiritual consolation that sustains the missionary in a foreign land."⁵⁰ No doubt, the editors of the *Interracial Review* (of which Falls was no longer), viewed this development in a positive light. But it still smacked of segregation.

In the short run, the Chicago FCC branches' decision to support LaFarge and Markoe instead of Turner in the debate over the name change seemed like the right decision. But the white priests' continued involvement in the organization limited the other nascent change in the

⁴⁹ Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 378.

⁵⁰ "Cardinal Mundelein and the Colored Missions," *Interracial Review* (August, 1935): 126.

Federation: its new strategy of militancy. Although Falls did not see it, the death knell of the organization was present in George Conrad's presidential address in the newly named *Interracial Review*, which replaced *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle*. Conrad, who supported the name change and shift toward interracial activity, had replaced Turner as president. Conrad commented that, at times, the old FCC had been "destructively militant in its activities and . . . Not in harmony with many of the clergy of our Church. This was largely because it put more emphasis on the racial rather than the Catholic idea."⁵¹ From this moment forward – and for the sake of interracial unity – the clergy would lead the charge.

E. The Decline of the Federation

Initially, the result of Falls's and other Federation members' efforts was a more united black Catholic protest movement in Chicago, ironically the very thing the ousted FCC president, Thomas Wyatt Turner, had worked for. But the budding militancy of these black Catholics was eventually undercut by gradualist clergy who, just as LaFarge and Markoe had desired, held a significant amount of power in the organization. According to Falls, when the black laity suggested programs the white clergy disagreed with, those programs were "abbreviated."⁵²

By 1936, Falls did not think the Catholic Church was making much progress on the question of interracial justice and he had largely given up on the work of the Federation. In a report on Chicago's interracial efforts in the *Interracial Review* (formerly the *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle*), he commented that "generally," the participation of Catholics in advancing interracial cooperation "has been nil." Catholics were no different from "church members as a whole," who had "deliberately shunned a practical application of their own tenets to the subject

⁵¹ George Conrad, "New President Defines Policy," *St. Elizabeth's Chronicle* (January 1933): 5.

⁵² Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 564-65.

of race-relations.”⁵³ Falls recounted that “with colored Catholics barred almost entirely from the parochial schools, high schools, academies, and some colleges; and with evidence of the worst type of discrimination existing widely in churches, there has been little opportunity for the development of a spirit of brotherhood among Catholics of different groups.”⁵⁴ Those groups included not only white and black Catholics, but different nationalities. The Federation, he reported, had garnered support from only a “handful” of white Catholics and had not been able to inspire the black Catholics, “most of whom have assumed an attitude of definite despair as far as the improvement in the situation locally is concerned.” Falls acknowledged the inclusion of black Catholic fraternal groups in wider societies, as well as the interracial athletic events of Bishop Sheil’s CYO, but argued that “none of these organizations have developed a truly fundamental unity of white and colored in its group nor have they concerned themselves with the serious problems which colored Catholics are faced in Catholic institutions.” In an argument consistent with his opinion of separate black Catholic churches, Falls suggested that the “lack of unity” was partially due to the fact that black Catholics did not fully participate in the geographical parishes in which they lived, and instead joined one of the now three black churches in the city. In a veiled reference to the limiting influence of the white parish priests involved in the Federation, Falls argued that hope for the city’s Catholics would be in a strong lay movement and in the youth.

Falls placed himself – as a Catholic and as a member of the Urban League – in the more militant section of activists in Chicago. He fully approved of what he called the “avowed change of policy of the Urban League to be a more militant mass movement,” and looked to the Urban League, as well as the International Labor Defense, the Federated Colored Women’s Clubs and

⁵³ Arthur Falls, “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* (June, 1936).

⁵⁴ Arthur Falls, “Interracial Cooperation in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* (August, 1935): 123.

the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, to be the vanguard of bringing about change because they were willing to take action. While he did not critique the Federation in the *Interracial Review*, he also did not praise it. It is fair to assume that Falls would have placed the Federation – with its white priest-dominated leadership – among the “so-called ‘conservative’ groups,” that would accomplish little because “the guiding principle of these groups seems always to be the matter of expediency and not of concrete justice. As a result, their actions seldom are thorough or complete, since sooner or later a firm stand for justice will cause conflicts within their own groups which they are unwilling to meet.”⁵⁵ These conservative groups provided education, which Falls appreciated, but he would not put his hope in them. Falls included most churches in this group, except for Corpus Christi whose influence Falls suggested did not extend outside its parish boundaries.

The *Interracial Review* seemed to confirm this. In a section entitled “what can I do?” the *Interracial Review* editors offered their presumably white audience suggestions that seem pitiful in comparison to Falls’s calls for action. It suggested readers could buy gift subscriptions of the *Interracial Review* for seminaries, ask their pastors to give one sermon a year to the moral issues involved in race prejudice, call on the pastor of the colored mission in their community to encourage the pastor and enlighten them, or ask their Holy Name or Catholic Action group to invite an “educated Negro to discuss interracial problems.” Admittedly, in the same edition, LaFarge encouraged readers to address specific issues like lynching, discrimination on the bus, and unequal schooling facilities. But the thrust of the paper was not toward the militancy Falls was demanding.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Arthur Falls, "Interracial Cooperation in Chicago," *Interracial Review* (September, 1935): 141.

⁵⁶ "What Can I Do?," *Interracial Review* (March, 1936); John La Farge, "Communism and the Negro," *Interracial Review* (March, 1936).

Nonetheless, through his work in the Interracial Commission and the Federation, Falls had helped develop a network of black and white people concerned, to varying extents, about the situation black people in American found themselves in. In part, because he brought different networks together and his own concerns extended far beyond Catholicism, Catholic interracialism would continue to broaden its concern beyond discrimination within Catholic institutions, and would become more ecumenical in its practice.

But after the name change, the Federation's power for interracial justice was limited. Black Catholics had begun to redefine the meaning of "Catholic," and attempted to line it up with racial justice. They had also chosen to associate "Catholic" not with efforts solely for black advancement within the Catholic Church, but with interracial organizing leading to equality. Although this idea of Catholic interracialism fit well with the goals of the budding civil rights movement in black Chicago, the Federation's means were fundamentally in conflict with some of the shifts occurring among the city's black population. In supporting the name change and white priest leadership of the FCC, Chicago's black Catholics had inadvertently helped limit the potential of the organization for effecting change in the city.

Nonetheless, Falls took encouragement from the priests who favored interracial justice, even if he disagreed with their gradualism. He recalled, "having the opportunity of meeting these very fine Catholic clergymen helped to fortify me. . . . meeting people like that, I realized what the church really stood for."⁵⁷ He could also understand their position. Falls knew that Father Garvy of Loyola, for instance, opposed "militant action" because he feared it would lead to anti-clericalism. Garvy, Falls said, "felt that by giving information to white Catholics about Negroes, he would change their attitude and then they would become Christian." But Falls could

⁵⁷ Arthur Falls, Oral History Interview with Rosalie Troester, 14-15, Marquette University Archive (Milwaukee, WI).

not be content just trying to educate white Catholics. He had to continue to act. In his mind, Garvy soon learned the limitations of gradualism: “it was not so many years later that Father Garvy, a sad and disillusioned man, finally admitted that his program was not going to be the program which would produce results.”⁵⁸

Catholic interracialism under the influence of the Federation eventually faded because the gradualist clergy had constrained the laity’s possibilities of action. By 1937, the Federation was largely defunct in Chicago.⁵⁹ Falls, however, was mining another vein and this time he struck gold.

⁵⁸ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 383-84.

⁵⁹ A group of black Catholics continued to organize themselves as members of the Federated Colored Catholics and they reappear on the historical record in the 1940s.

V. BACK TO THE LAITY: THE CATHOLIC WORKER AND CISCA DRAW WHITE CATHOLICS INTO THE FOLD

That gold was in the form of the Catholic Worker. In the summer of 1936, Falls facilitated the first Catholic Worker meeting in Chicago featuring Peter Maurin, one of its two founders. The meeting was held at St. Ignatius, the Jesuit-run high school on the west side of the city. Falls had a number of connections to the high school. Rev. Laurence M. Barry, S.J., who had spoken at the Corpus Christi chapter of the FCC in March, 1933, and Father Martin Carrabine of a youth organization called CISCA lived at the school. Carrabine, Falls would later recall, helped the Catholic Worker to “enlist more and more students in the activities of the group.”¹

Falls described the first meeting in glowing terms, suggesting in an article that he could not have been more delighted with how the meeting had gone. Chicago was “well-represented,” Falls reported, as people from different racial and national groups came from all over the city. Even non-Catholics, “who offered a distinct challenge to Catholic thought on social and economic problems,” had come to join the discussion. No doubt to Falls’s great joy, the group was made up of not only of lay people but also of priests, from the Jesuit, Dominican, Benedictine, and Society of the Divine Word orders, as well as secular clergy who ministered in the parishes.² He might finally be gaining a broader Catholic audience for his interracialist agenda.

¹ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 572.

² Arthur Falls, “The Chicago Letter,” *Catholic Worker* 4, no. 4 (August, 1936).

What Falls did not include in his report reveals the other half of the story. He neglected to mention the racial overtones of the meeting. After Maurin spoke, Falls stood up to facilitate the group's ensuing discussion, but a black man leading a discussion with white people was just too much for one of the participants. As Falls recalled years later, "a middle-aged woman got up right in the middle of the church and said just because she was a Catholic didn't mean she had to associate with niggers."³ Falls was upset, but not surprised. By this point in his career, and particularly through the Interracial Commission, he had worked with plenty of belligerent white people. Falls was more pleased that so many people stayed, and to him that was something to celebrate. Within a few months, Falls was paying the rent for a west side storefront which hosted Chicago's first Catholic Worker house, and more and more people were coming by to check the group out.⁴

Why did white people stay for discussions at the Catholic Worker? Outside of a handful of priests in Chicago, most white Catholics had previously turned a deaf ear to Falls's calls for interracial justice. The expansion of the interracialist project was due to a number of circumstances coming together to brew the perfect storm. In the context of the Great Depression, some of Chicago's white Catholics embraced the radical ideology of the Catholic Worker movement and were drawn into the movement by the leadership and charisma of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. Dorothy and Peter drew the crowds and their idealism kept them coming, and Falls capitalized on this pattern. Because it was Falls who led Chicago's first Catholic Worker group, these white folks received a stronger dose of interracialism in theory and, more importantly, in practice than they would have had under a different leader.

³ Arthur Falls, Oral History Interview with Rosalie Troester, 19.

⁴ Tim Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 133. Falls told Unsworth that he paid for the rent out of his own pocket. Unsworth's chapter on Falls, "Arthur Falls: Believing that 'Catholic' Means 'Universal,'" is based largely on an oral history interview he conducted with Falls. According to other contextual material, some of the chronology of Unsworth otherwise excellent chapter seems out of order.

But these white Catholics were also primed for the Catholic Worker and Falls's interracialism because of the influence of CISCA. CISCA, which stood for Chicago Inter-Student Catholic Action, was an inter-parish organization of Catholic high school and college students and it proved to be one of the most important sources of young people interested in the Catholic Worker. By 1936, it structured its curriculum around the newly developing doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, which Falls had encountered through his connections with the Federation. This doctrine, as well as reading the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, primed many of Chicago's high school and college students to be interested in the Catholic Worker, and the fact that a black man ran it did not deter them. Together, the Catholic Worker and CISCA laid the groundwork for building Catholic interracialism into Chicago's budding lay movement.

Because of these connections, Falls finally found a ready audience among white Catholics for the interracialist message. Through the Catholic Worker, Falls was able to reach a generation of young white laypeople and priests with his interracialist message and teach them about racial prejudice, discrimination, and what he believed to be the right Catholic response. For the first time, Falls was able to find white Catholics who would participate in his Catholic interracialist efforts. He helped educate these young people and opened their eyes the full extent of the discrimination against African Americans in the city's parishes and civic life. Truly, hope for the Catholic interracialist movement lay with the young laypeople. As a result of their education with CISCA, Arthur Falls, and the Catholic Worker, which occurred outside their parish boundaries, many of these young people would become lay- and priest-leaders in the city and the nation and express their Catholic interracialist ideals in a variety of inspiring, complicated, and sometimes conflicting ways.

A. Early Catholic Worker Connections

Falls pushed the Catholic Worker in New York and in Chicago to be more committed to interracial justice and it became a key site for Catholic interracialist education in Chicago. Significantly, Falls tried to make the Catholic Worker and its national newspaper presented interracial cooperation, friendship, and concern as normative. Instead of focusing on the conflict and injustices, as he had when operating in a black Catholic context, he glossed over conflict in order to make interracialism seem ordinary. But although Falls was able to use the Catholic Worker to recruit white lay Catholics to Catholic interracialism, he also required the support of some priests. No doubt, Dorothy Day's and Peter Maurin's reputations helped Falls gain white support for his latest project, but the religious and racial structure of the Archdiocese of Chicago shaped the Catholic Worker's success. As Falls used the Catholic Worker to promote his middle-class Catholic interracialist agenda, he also came into conflict with white people enamored with Day's and Maurin's idea of voluntary poverty and a vision of life that did not match what Falls valued.

From its start in New York City, the Catholic Worker supported interracial justice. In May 1933, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin published the first edition of a newspaper they called the *Catholic Worker* in New York City. Out of the paper grew a radical Catholic movement committed to following Jesus and standing with the poor.⁵ Falls probably read the paper a few months after it was first printed, and was particularly pleased and surprised to see that the paper did not discriminate against African Americans and reported their labor concerns equally with those of white workers. Falls appreciated the paper's unwavering commitment to interracial and

⁵ Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography*; Forest, *Love Is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day*; James Terence Fisher, *The Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933-1962* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

social justice and its “definite stand for action.”⁶ As Falls recalled, “the spirit of the editors was not the spirit which we found widely among the Catholic population in the country, so we were particularly pleased with this demonstration of strength.”⁷ On November 3, 1933, he wrote a letter to the editor, identifying himself with the Chicago Urban League’s Interracial Commission.

Falls’s letter would have a major impact. Falls wrote, “I must confess that when a friend showed me a copy of *The Catholic Worker* about a month ago, I was struck with wonder” at the notion of a Catholic labor paper in America. Falls, like many Catholics, did not associate Catholicism with support of laborers; he thought of the Church as more on the side of capitalists. “In addition,” Falls penned, although LaFarge and others had written about the problems of African Americans in *America* and *The Sign*, “most Catholic publications have been most silent on injustices suffered by colored people both within our Catholic institutions and without. Therefore, your recognition of the common problems of colored and white workers is a distinct step forward in focusing the consciousness of Catholics on the subject of race-relations.” Falls mentioned the Interracial Commission and said the group would write up the *Catholic Worker* in the next issue of its bulletin. He concluded with a comment that would have an impact far beyond the time it took to read or write: “It also would be interesting to see one of the workmen at the top of your front page shown to be a colored workman (ala *The Daily Worker*). Good luck!”⁸ Day had agreed and changed the masthead of the paper. The masthead change, Falls later reported, “created a very favorable sentiment not only in Chicago but in other cities, I am

⁶ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 514.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 514.

⁸ Arthur Falls, “Untitled Letter,” *Catholic Worker* 1, no. 7 (December 1933). For the original copy, see Arthur Falls to Day, 3 November 1933, the Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker New York Catholic Worker Records, General Correspondence, Incoming by Correspondant, MUA (Milwaukee, WI)

informed.”⁹ For the rest of Day’s life, the paper showed an interracial pair of workers on its masthead.

In the coming years, Falls increasingly built connections with the *Catholic Worker*. In his usual manner of bringing people together, Falls ordered subscriptions to the paper for his fellow black interracialists, Maude Johnston, Bertina Davis, and Margaret Cope, as well as three subscriptions for himself, presumably so he could give the paper away. He also likely connected Dorothy Day to the Federation because in January, 1934 Day wrote a letter to Father William Markoe, the editor of the *Interracial Review*, saying she was encouraged to find a monthly paper that “has long been blazing the trail for better interracial understanding and improved conditions through programs of Catholic Social Justice.” Day asked that the *Catholic Worker* and the *Interracial Review* exchange publications, and put out a call for African American artists to help them out with the *Catholic Worker* paper.¹⁰ Also in 1934, Maurin, came to Chicago for a week and stayed with the Falls family. Maurin inspired Falls. As Falls recalled, Maurin “spoke of a church I never knew before. He told me of a church that might be. It was the church I believed in and had waited for.”¹¹ By March 1935, the *Interracial Review* listed Day as a member of the Federation’s board. In December 1935 Falls began to write a regular column in the *Catholic Worker* paper documenting the interracial movement in Chicago. Over the summer, the Falls family traveled east to New York on vacation. Falls met with Day and Dorothy Weston, and they had what he described as a “long talk.”¹² This face-to-face meeting helped solidify the bonds between Falls, Day, and Weston because after this encounter, the tone of their letters

⁹ Arthur Falls to Day, 16 February 1934, DD-CW.

¹⁰ Dorothy Day, “Letter to the Editor (January 26, 1934),” *Interracial Review* (February 1934).

¹¹ Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 133.

¹² Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 551.

became much more chatty and familiar. Within these few years, Falls began to explore the possibility of a Catholic Worker house in Chicago.

The birth of that house required hard labor that, at times, seemed fruitless because of the lack of priestly support for the Catholic Worker in Chicago. Initially, Falls was limited by priest naysayers. Most priests in Chicago were not supportive of the Catholic Worker movement, Falls reported to Day: "I have talked with several priests concerning the development of a Catholic Worker's School and all 'felt that the Catholic people were too indifferent to go to anything except mass [*sic*]' . In some cases, they said 'too ignorant.' I am beginning to believe that some of the clergy have a distinct superiority complex as concerns the laity (I already knew they had as concerns racial groups.)"¹³

Falls, however, believed Chicago's laity capable of more, and he had evidence to the contrary. Chicago's young Catholics were in the midst of a Catholic revival and applying their faith to all aspects of their lives through CISCA. To circumvent Chicago's naysaying clergy, Falls followed Day's and Weston's suggestion of asking Father Daniel Lord, head of the budding national sodality movement, for a list of Chicago-area students who had attended CISCA's Summer School of Catholic Action. Since Lord was involved in teaching and coordinating the Summer Schools of Catholic Action in Chicago, he had access to the names of Chicago's young people who were doing a little bit more than just going to Mass.¹⁴ Even better, Falls already knew Lord through his work with the National Catholic Interracial Federation. Once again, Falls's networking through the Federation paid off.

¹³ Arthur to Editors," 16 June 1934, DD-CW.

¹⁴ Arthur to Day and Weston, 12 October 1934, DD-CW. Absent from CISCA's May 1933 description of the Catholic Action Summer School Father Lord led in Milwaukee (a year prior to Falls's letter from Weston and Day) is any mention of racial discrimination (Box 1, Folder 9, CISCA, LUA (Chicago)).

After the first Catholic Worker meeting at St. Ignatius high school in 1936, Falls kept the momentum going. He focused mainly on getting the word out about the Catholic Worker and its interracial- and social-justice mission. He and the group started a series of weekly meetings on Sundays at St. Patrick's Church which were "quite informal in tone," and the group worked to increase the *Catholic Worker* paper's circulation, which at that point included about 500 individual subscriptions and 1300 copies sent out in bundles.¹⁵

In November, Falls reported that Chicago's Catholic Workers greeted Thanksgiving with "a deeper sense of gratitude to God" than perhaps ever before.¹⁶ The group had finally secured a more permanent location in a storefront at 1541 W. Taylor St. "We truly started from the ground," Falls wrote, "for we began with two chairs and a stove belonging to our kindly landlords, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fournier, two crates, and some Catholic literature." Later that day, Father Hayes, their staunchest priest-supporter, brought them more chairs.

Falls also drew on his connections with the Calvert Club, the Catholic Club at the University of Chicago, for the Catholic Worker. Falls had joined the Calvert Club in 1934 with the full support of the group's president, professor of political science Jerome Kerwin. Falls's membership in the previously all-white club, however, had been a source of some conflict. "Great consternation did reign in the mind of [Kerwin's] Secretary" when Falls applied for membership, because the secretary feared an "influx" of black Catholics. Later, Falls reported that when he realized the secretary's racism jeopardized his membership, he contacted Kerwin who "expressed himself in no uncertain terms about his secretary's actions at once."¹⁷ Two years later, Falls's membership reaped rewards, as Marie Foote, the Calvert Club's librarian,

¹⁵ Arthur Falls, "The Chicago Letter" *Catholic Worker* (September, 1936).

¹⁶ Arthur Falls, "The Chicago Letter," *Catholic Worker* 4, no. 9 (January, 1937).

¹⁷ Falls to Day and Weston.

helped the fledgling Catholic Worker house develop its library in order to attract the “man on the street.”¹⁸

Local priests’ support was crucial for the Taylor Street house’s success, and the Catholic Worker’s location on Taylor Street was either providential or strategic, because the neighborhood priests at Holy Trinity parish supported the Catholic Worker.¹⁹ Holy Trinity had originally served German Catholics, but by the 1930s, parish did not discriminate against African Americans and allowed them equal access to its Catholic schools. Falls praised Holy Trinity pastors’ Michael Sesterhenn and George Ballweber leadership which was causing the “attitude of the neighborhood” to change. Three neighborhood women, Mrs. Eugenia Hudson, Mrs. C. Queens, Mrs. Christine Burgess, volunteered to sell the *Catholic Worker* paper. Many local people, however, remained suspicious of the Catholic Worker, which Falls attributed to the house’s limited hours and newness.²⁰ Other factors contributed to this situation as well, however.

The Catholic Worker storefront was located close to another parish experiencing racial conflict, which would ultimately limit black involvement in the Catholic Worker. When Falls publically relayed the developments of the Catholic Worker house in the 1930s, he moved quickly over this aspect of the story, likely because talking about these sorts of events did not help to normalize interracial cooperation. The storefront was near the Holy Family Church, which had a troubled racial past. German and Irish families had originally built the parish, but by the 1930s the neighborhood was experiencing ethnic and racial transition as Italians and African Americans moved in. Holy Family Parish largely accepted the Italians, but the new Italians members refused to include African Americans. The issue came to a head a few years

¹⁸ Falls, “The Chicago Letter.”

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Arthur Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *Catholic Worker* 4, no. 10 (February, 1937).

before the Catholic Worker house opened over the question of admitting black children to the parish school.

Rather than integrate the school, the parish closed it. For two years, from 1931 to 1933, the school's corridors remained dark. Finally, on September 11, 1933, the parish reopened the school as St. Joseph mission under the leadership of none other than Father Arnold Garvy, who had introduced Falls to the FCC.²¹ Black Catholics in the parish would not worship together with their white brethren until the 1950s. As Catholic Worker John Cogley recalled of the church in the 1930s, "the dark, old church was almost empty, even on Sundays . . . The Holy Family clergy still discouraged their black neighbors from attending the big half-empty church on Roosevelt Road."²²

The Church's actions left many African Americans, including Falls, upset. Publically, Falls did not name the parish. He only lamented a "nearby parish" that was known for its race hatred and causing many Negroes to leave the faith. He did point out that because Holy Family parish made Catholicism look bad to black Catholics and helped solidify white Catholics' wrong racial attitudes, "colored Catholics in the area find themselves caught between the antagonism of some of their white fellow Catholics and the criticism of their colored non-Catholic neighbors."²³ This "caught-in-the-middle" experience became very common for Falls. The Catholic Worker, therefore, had a tremendous amount of work to do in the neighborhood and the city.

Conflict over how to conduct this work soon emerged. Following Day's influence, the group tried to connect with their neighborhood by giving out clothing to children in need. But Falls was dissatisfied with this strategy. His goal was to change people's minds, not just their physical condition. As he told *Catholic Worker* readers, "it would be unfortunate if the

²¹ Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 367-82.

²² John Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 8.

²³ Falls, "Chicago Letter."

impression were gained that our only purpose is to hand out food and clothing.” More importantly, the group must meet the “apparent indifference to a Catholic social program on the part of a large section of the local Catholic population,” and also address “the unsatisfactory state of race relations in Catholic institutions in Chicago generally.”²⁴ In other words, Catholic Workers should promote interracial justice.

But first, Falls had to teach these young white Catholics about how racial prejudice and discrimination worked in Chicago. According to Falls, most of the participants in the group’s first discussion on race relations in the city were “cognizant of the widespread discrimination against colored Catholics which exists in our parochial and high schools and, to a less extent, in our colleges.” But, “it was a shocking revelation to many, however, to learn of the denial of even the sacraments of the Church to colored Catholics in many parishes.” Falls blamed the participants’ prejudice on the Catholic Church: “from the very beginning of their education in Catholic institutions, they have had examples of prejudice set by those to whom they looked for spiritual guidance.” Falls would not expect, therefore, that “these same children would have a Christian concept of race-relations when they grow older.”²⁵

Time at the Chicago Catholic Worker broke down young white Catholics’ racial stereotypes pretty quickly. John Cogley, a CISCA alum who later became the editor of the liberal Catholic magazine *Commonweal*, recalled his first visit to the Catholic Worker house on Taylor Street in 1937.²⁶ He and his friend Tom Sullivan read the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, and learned Catholics had organized a group on the west side. Cogley recalled that “any Chicagoans who were interested were invited to attend a meeting in a Taylor Street storefront near the Cook County Hospital.” At the time, Cogley was young, only twenty years old. He and

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Arthur Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *Catholic Worker* 4, no. 9 (October, 1936).

²⁶ For Cogley being a member of CISCA, see Cantwell to Grace, November 5, 1979, folder 1, box 1, CISCA.

Sullivan went to the meeting and upon their arrival, were surprised to learn that the meeting's chairman, Arthur Falls, was black because "it was unheard of that black people should have a position of leadership in a general Roman Catholic undertaking." Cogley described Falls as "remarkably sophisticated, almost patronizing to his inferiors. His attitude was the opposite of the subservience which the few black people we had known affected for white people."²⁷ But unlike the middle-aged woman at the first meeting who stormed out, Cogley stayed.

Though they knew little about racial prejudice, young white Catholic Workers did have a sense of empowerment and openness to the Mystical Body of Christ. Most of the young white Catholics who would become leaders in Chicago's Catholic Worker learned these things from CISCA, of which Falls reported: "this group of Catholic students is going to make Chicago 'CATHOLIC WORKER conscious' in no amazing degree."²⁸

B. CISCA: Laying the Groundwork for Catholic Interracialism²⁹

On May 16, 1935, the Catholic Worker's Dorothy Day met Father Martin Carrabine of CISCA for lunch at St. Scholastica, a Benedictine college preparatory school for Catholic girls on the far north side of the city. Carrabine lived at St. Ignatius, where Falls would chair the first Catholic Worker meeting in a little over a year. The previous year, Carrabine had been appointed moderator of a city-wide student organization called Ciscora, which he renamed CISCA.³⁰ Sister Cecilia Himebaugh, who taught and lived at St. Scholastica and worked closely with Carrabine on CISCA, likely joined them for lunch. Carrabine had told her about the

²⁷ Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale*, 8.

²⁸ Falls, "Chicago Letter."

²⁹ Steven Avella's extensive *This Confident Church* mentions CISCA, but primarily in connection with Bishop Bernard Sheil. As I will show, many other people played more important roles in the history of CISCA than Sheil, who acted as a cover for the group. A former Ciscan, Joan Smith O'Gara also made this point briefly in a letter to the editor of the *New World*, Joan Smith O'Gara, "Letter to the Editor," *New World* April 16, 1993.

³⁰ It was initially called Ciscora, Chicago Inter-student Conference on Religious Activities. CISCA stood for Chicago Students' Catholic Action. The organization was part of a much broader world-wide push for the laity to participate in the work of the hierarchy, or Catholic Action.

meeting in a letter the previous day, and had closed his letter with “I think you’ll love Dorothy Day.”³¹

Himebaugh did become a great admirer of Day and the New York Catholic Worker house, and she and Father Carrabine promoted the cause of the Catholic Worker tirelessly among Chicago’s youth. They were like Falls in that they thought young people were capable of much more than just attending Mass. Through CISCA they expanded the notion of what it meant to participate in the life of the Church. CISCANs learned that to be a faithful Catholic, one must not only exhibit personal piety, but also use one’s faith to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth in every social sphere. No more could they be content practicing their faith as their parents did, by saying rosaries, attending Mass, and perhaps participating in street fairs. In addition to those practices, the students came to believe that they needed to work to bring their whole world under what they called “the dominion of Christ.” To do this, they followed Catholic Action’s three-step model of seeing a situation, judging what was to be done, and acting upon their judgment.

CISCA reached several thousand Catholic high school students with its message of Catholic Action. On any given Saturday in late 1930s Chicago, five to six hundred Catholic high school students boarded the El or the city’s buses in order to go to CISCA meetings at the Auditorium Theater on Michigan Avenue. During the week, an average of 3500-4000 high school students participated in CISCA meetings at their parochial schools. But on Saturdays, they left their parishes, which scholars have argued were the hubs of spiritual formation for Catholics, to go to inter-parish meetings. Eighty-three high schools and ten colleges in the archdiocese participated in 1939.³²

³¹ Carrabine to Sr. Cecilia, May 15, 1935 in Box 7, Folder 3, CISCA.

³² Joseph C. Walen, "Cisca: The West Point of Catholic Action" May 1939, box 1, folder 16, CISCA.

CISCA became a key component in the development of Catholic interracialism for two main reasons. First, because CISCA was an archdiocesan-wide organization, students crossed their parish boundaries and got to know people from other backgrounds. Most white Catholic youth centered their religious *and* social lives in their parish. But the Catholic youth who, through CISCA, began to bring their faith to bear on the problems of race did so in ways that crossed parish, racial, ethnic and class boundaries. As one participant commented, “a youth could broaden his outlook by mixing with fellow Ciscans of different races, nationalities, and social backgrounds, to learn that there were more things in the world than were dreamed of in his philosophy.”³³ Therefore, the youth’s religious space was not just the parish, but increasingly the city and the world. Second, both the priests and the laypeople involved believed the laity had a right and a responsibility to lead in the Catholic Church, as well as to influence things specifically outside the purview of Catholicism as well. This notion, embodied in the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, empowered CISCANS to act in meaningful ways, as Catholics, that often included working in small ways for interracial justice.

CISCA was the brain child of Father Reiner, who Falls knew through the Federated Colored Catholics. Born in Chicago on March 2, 1881, Reiner entered the Society of Jesus on September 2, 1902. In June, 1913, he was ordained at St. Louis University. Prior to moving back to Chicago, he worked in Milwaukee where he taught history and directed a college Sodality, which was focused on cultivating piety among Catholic youth. In 1923, the Jesuits called him to Loyola University where he became the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

³³ "The Cisca Organization: Pro and Con," n.d., box 1, folder 14, CISCA.

Reiner was involved in a variety of organizations dedicated to social issues and had supported Garvy's efforts to build the Loyola Guild for black Loyola students and alums.³⁴

In 1926, Reiner began a fledgling Catholic Action group among his students at Loyola. He kicked it off with a retreat led by Father Daniel Lord, who Falls would come to admire and who had just become the national director of the Sodality of Our Lady and editor *The Queen's Work*, its publication. Lord would become deeply involved in the summer Catholic Action schools the organization later held. That first year, Loyola sponsored a meeting in which 23 schools sent 96 people to discuss the possibility of the organization which became Ciscora. Slowly, the organization expanded, and in 1931 Reiner replaced Rev. Rev. James Mertz, S.J. as moderator for the archdiocese.³⁵ Catholics outside Chicago took note of this new organization, and the Jesuit weekly *America*, which LaFarge edited, called Ciscora "a new movement from the Catholic angle."³⁶

Beyond getting the organization going, Reiner's key contribution was to focus the group on dealing with social structures. This priority matched Falls's, but was even more expansive. The Social Action committee addressed issues far beyond the typical Catholic high school curriculum, including "co-operatives, inter-racial justice, the labor encyclicals, the right of labor to organize, the fallacies on Communism and Fascism—all are discussed with a grasp far beyond that of the average high school or college student."³⁷ Reiner wanted his students to believe they

³⁴ While at Loyola, he was a member of the American Association for Labor Legislation, the American Sociological Society, the Catholic Industrial Conference, the Catholic Association for International Peace, the Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association, the Executive Committee of the Federation of Illinois Colleges, and the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association. Edmund J. Fortman, S.J., "Father Joseph S. Reiner, S.J.," in *A Biographical History of the Chicago Province*, ed. Edmund J. Fortman, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987).

³⁵ Box 1, Folder 19, CISCA. Sources in the archive are not entirely consistent on dates. It is unclear if Reiner held his first meeting in 1926 or 1927, and if he became moderator in 1931 or 1932. The earlier dates make more sense to me, so I have used those.

³⁶ "The Cisca Story," folder 1, box 19, Cisca Anniversary Mass – History 1959, CISCA.

³⁷ Walen, "Cisca: The West Point of Catholic Action."

could bring about the social reign of Christ, and he worked to help them understand what that reign might look like, as well as how to bring it about.

To achieve this, Reiner wanted his students to have specific types of learning experiences that involved the students becoming personally connected to the people they were trying to help. This would later become a hallmark of Catholic interracialism. He believed that mass meetings, which were a key part of the Ciscora educational program served an important purpose, but did not want students to think that just attending a meeting and experiencing the “emotional thrill” of debate and ideas was a form of Catholic Action. Nor did he want them to simply discuss issues or raise money without getting personally involved. That sort of experience, Reiner argued, did not reflect the love of Christ, and was “not a socially vital experience that will carry over and be lasting. The charity that is exercised is long distance or proxy charity, not the charity that is exemplified in the life of Christ and that is impressed upon us by the doctrines of His religion.”³⁸ Instead, Reiner thought, Catholic Action required “earnest effort,” for which an “emotional thrill” could never substitute. Reiner wanted to students to personally engage in the issues of the day and use political ends to bring them in line with Catholic social thought.

Reiner pushed students to work at the institutional level, and to change structures so that charity was not required. Reiner used the example of the poverty of aged populations to make his point. Raising money for the older poor people was not a sufficient form of Catholic Action, nor was visiting them from time to time. Instead, Reiner expected his students, through discussion and debate, to reach the conclusion that the most important thing would be to prevent the misery that “prevails among the aged poor as possible.” Students ought to agree with the hierarchy (and the President Roosevelt) that old age pensions were the way to solve the problems

³⁸ Joseph Reiner, S.J., “A Program for Catholic Social Action,” 6 (St. Louis, MO: The Queen's Work, 1933) in Box 1, Folder, 14, CISCA.

of older lower-class people, and their action step should be along the lines of working with both Catholic and non-Catholic groups to write letters and educate others in order to support legislative changes. Reiner's students were to be politically active in making society's structures more just. This structural, institutional model of change fit well with Arthur Falls's goals of Catholic interracialism. And Reiner included, as a part of his broader program, encouraging students to cooperate with the National Catholic Federation for the Promotion of Better Race Relations, and teaching students "the members of all races and nations are brothers and sisters in Christ, and cultivating an attitude of tolerance and charity toward all, regardless of color or descent."³⁹ But there would be limits to the meaning of charity and tolerance for Ciscora which were built into its very structure.

Despite Reiner's focus on social structures, he had not promoted the most powerful weapon the youth could yield in their battle to bring the world under Christ's dominion: the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. During the night of October 13, 1934, Reiner died in his room at St. Ignatius High School. Father Martin Carrabine was appointed to replace him as moderator of Ciscora, which became CISCA under Carrabine. Carrabine was born on November 11, 1893, and on September 2, 1913, eleven years after Reiner, entered the Society of Jesus. In 1928, Carrabine made his first foray into youth work when he helped Lord organize the first National Sodality Convention in St. Louis.⁴⁰ Under Carrabine's leadership, attendance at the weekly meetings jumped from an average of 75 to 500.⁴¹ But most significantly, Carrabine allowed CISCA to go in a new direction.

³⁹ Joseph Reiner, S.J., "Jesus and Modern Social Problems with Special Reference to Catholic Education: A Program for Catholic Social Action," *Journal of Religious Instruction* 4, no. 10 (June, 1934): 896.

⁴⁰ "Ciscans Honor Carrabine at Farewell Meet," *The New World* March 3, 1950.

⁴¹ Fortman, "Father Joseph S. Reiner, S.J.."

Himebaugh, who taught at St. Scholastica and volunteered as a CISCA moderator, pushed CISCA in this new theological direction. She frequently wrote essays and skits as a part of CISCA's educational program, but was rarely honored in public.⁴² Commemorative pieces about the organization offer pictures of the priests and some of the students involved, but never information about Sister Cecelia.⁴³ But after their work together in CISCA had ended, Carrabine wrote to Sr. Cecilia that few know "(and probably never will) what an important role you had" in the formation of CISCANs.⁴⁴ Other archival sources also reveal her role as a major player in the promotion of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ among CISCANs. With the support of Dom Virgil Michel of St. John's University and Father Carrabine, Himebaugh organized a shift CISCA's curriculum in 1935 to a study of the liturgy and the Mystical Body of Christ. She did not want Catholics to be "routine mumblers of prayers, utterly blind to the wealth of God's truth that is their heritage."⁴⁵ Instead, Himebaugh believed that if the doctrine of the Mystical Body was the "common motivation for all the activities of CISCA," CISCANs would be able to live out their heritage fully.⁴⁶ This shift in emphasis would encourage white CISCANs to respect African Americans, but moved them away from the sociological and structural focus of Joseph Reiner, ultimately limiting the ways CISCANs responded to calls for interracial justice.

With Sister Cecelia's guidance, students learned that the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ powerfully upheld the dignity of individual people because it held that all people were potential members of Christ's body, and thus deserved honor and respect. The doctrine emphasized the corporate nature of humanity, in a direct contrast to the individualism on which

⁴² Sr. Cecilia, "Cisca in Retrospect," 1965, in box 1, folder 20, CISCA.

⁴³ In 1965, Cecilia commented that she was often the ghost writer for skits and other things, but largely remained unknown for her influence since the goal was unity, but "one nun's special prominence as an unelected executive would have been objectionable." Ibid., 3.

⁴⁴ Carrabine to Sr. Cecilia, October 31, 1957, box 7, folder 3, CISCA.

⁴⁵ Sr. Cecilia to Dom Virgil Michel, January 26, 1935, Box 7, Folder 4, CISCA.

⁴⁶ "The Cisca Plan," *Orates Fratres* X, no. 2 (reprint) (December 28, 1935).

these Catholics blamed the Great Depression and which ran rampant in American society. With this doctrine, no one could stand before Christ and say, “I’m not my brother’s keeper.” As Himebaugh wrote, “We are condemned or rewarded for whatever we do to the Mystical Christ, living and needy in the human flesh of every Christian. The Negro, the despised foreigner, the ditch digger, and the poor residue of humanity cast up from the stormy currents of a hectic world into our institutions for the aged, the sick, the blind and maimed, or even the criminal – are all Christ.”⁴⁷ This doctrine had profound implications for racial justice, which Arthur Falls supported, because “all people” included African Americans.

Himebaugh believed there was an “utter incompatibility between the very nature of Catholicism and the spirit of racial prejudice.”⁴⁸ The doctrine in CISCA’s hands focused on people as souls, which had the power to cause all CISCANs to be unified rather than divided. Himebaugh wrote, “This doctrine should raise their minds above the naturalistic viewpoint and make them see in all their fellowmen, regardless of race, color, creed, nationality, or social status, souls created for a supernatural destiny, which is of paramount importance.”⁴⁹

Sister Cecelia’s emphases in teaching about race and the Mystical Body, however, did not support Falls’s desire to break down stereotypes of African Americans as poor and needy. While African Americans did face tougher economic straights than their white counterparts, Falls wanted the black middle-class to be the normative African American representation. CISCA literature, however, from the second half of the 1930s implicitly bundled race and class together, suggesting all African Americans were poor. At one of the Eucharistic-Our Lady meetings in November, 1939, CISCANs asked “How could we here in America really help a

⁴⁷ Box 2, Folder 9, CISCA. This was originally from her 1935 essays. See “Acting as Members of Christ” in box 7, folder 4, CISCA.

⁴⁸ Sr. Cecelia’s article is with Emmanuel Chapman to Cecelia, September 26, 1939, Box 7, folder 4, CISCA.

⁴⁹ Sr. Cecilia, “The Cisca Plan,” 8 in box 1, folder 20, CISCA.

wounded Chinese soldier, a poor Polish prisoner, or a Negro in the slums?”⁵⁰ Himebaugh identified African Americans with outcasts from society, a type of poor “other” who must be brought into the Church. There was little room in her thinking for upwardly mobile, strong black men like Arthur Falls, and the equation of blackness and poverty in the minds of white middle-class students challenged a major tenet of respectability Arthur Falls was working for. This was only the beginning. Through the 1940s, white interracialists would often merge race and class together, reflecting the reality of economic discrimination against African Americans, but also excluding them implicitly from respectability.

The Mystical Body of Christ doctrine also empowered young CISCANs to act as Christ, or on behalf of Christ, in the world. This shift would be phenomenally important for Catholic interracialists from the 1930s on into the future, because it theologically justified the presence and action of the laity in the Church. No longer did only priests matter; as priests offered Christ through the Mass, the laity could offer Christ to the world through their lives. They were, in a real and mystical sense, Christ’s hands and feet in the world. This was a mighty calling for a high school or college student who did not plan on being a priest; he or she was just as important in the life of the Church, indeed, in the life of Christ, as a priest. As Himebaugh wrote, “For, since Christ has given us his own divine life, we must be a part of Him as He continues to live on earth – not in a physical body, but in a MYSTIC or HIDDEN one, which is just as real but less palpable than the body wherein he first made Himself seen by men. So you see, there are two ways in which Christ has remained on earth: His Eucharistic Presence and His abiding in the souls of men.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ Box 2, folder 2, Cisca.

⁵¹ Committee Meeting Agendas, Sept 1940-May 1941, Box 2, Folder 10, Cisca.

CISCANs who grew up under Carrabine's tutelage remembered how he honored them as lay people. As Father Jack Egan, a CISCAN who became a key leader in the fight for interracial justice, later recalled, Carrabine "treated his high school and college students in CISCA as adults. He listened to them and encouraged them to act, to wish, to make mistakes, to dream that perhaps they could have a part in making the world a better place for all peoples."⁵² Nina Polcyn Moore, a Milwaukee Catholic Worker who moved to Chicago and became a major supporter of the lay and interracial movement, described Carrabine as "so inspiring, so available, so enthusiastic for the Lord. To me he was a true priest, wanting to make HIS WORD and LIFE available to all. He was always inviting lay people to come up higher."⁵³ By all accounts, Carrabine had a genuine love for the young people he worked with and, by giving away power, encouraged them to be Christ's hands and feet to others.

A focus on the liturgy completed the doctrine of the Mystical Body and Catholic Action more generally. As CISCANs learned, the liturgy was the "outward form of the Mystical Body."⁵⁴ This focus would become a grounding point for later Catholic interracialists in particular. CISCA encouraged students to participate in daily Mass in a powerful way. They were to offer themselves "as co-victims with Christ (which demands their living as such by the making of sacrifices)." In other words, when the priest offered Jesus's body and blood in the sacrifice of the Mass, CISCANs were to view themselves as being placed on the alter as Christ. Then, they were to carry this sacrificial attitude with them throughout the day, as they served other members of the Mystical Body in their sphere. Daily Mass would also strengthen their "souls through union with the Divine Victim of the Sacrifice, who more fully lives His life in and

⁵² Jack Egan, "The Chicago Youth Ministry Tradition, 1940-1991, Youth Ministry in Those Days," box 2, folder 8, CISCA.

⁵³ Nina Polcyn Moore to Brother Grace, undated, in box 1, folder 1, CISCA.

⁵⁴ Box 5, folder 21, CMRH, Notre Dame, IN: UNDA.

by them every time they receive Him as their food.”⁵⁵ In other words, they believed that by partaking of the transubstantiated bread and wine, they were actually taking Christ and his life into their bodies, which would enable them to bring Christ, through their bodily actions, into the world.

Despite the broader developing milieu of Catholic Action, Sr. Cecilia faced opposition to her ideas. When she had first proposed shifting the focus of Ciscora to the liturgy and the Mystical Body of Christ to Reiner, he did not support her, saying she “could never get CISCANs to understand that much.” Carrabine, on the other hand, was more open to the idea.⁵⁶ But even with Carrabine, Himebaugh thought she had to cast a vision: “I hoped I could at least give Father Carrabine an inkling of the immense possibilities of basing everything on such solid and unsentimental spirituality.”⁵⁷ She believed, too, that students could really learn the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and live it out in all aspects of their lives.

Other priests doubted this possibility. As one priest patronizingly wrote “We have all experienced your admiration for the doctrine, and also have had to be content to wait [as theologians figure out its implications]. It is one thing to study the subject for oneself, and another thing to try to explain it to high-school students. CISCA is a good idea; but it is not a graduate school of theology.”⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Himebaugh pushed on with Carrabine’s full support. Himebaugh saw herself as a teacher and believed she could learn the ins and outs of the doctrine, which was gaining traction all around the world, and translate it into language accessible to laypeople lacking formal theological training.

⁵⁵ “The Cisca Plan,” 2.

⁵⁶ October 21, 1936, Box 7, folder 4, CISCA.

⁵⁷ Sr. Cecilia to Michel, May 25, 1935, Ibid.

⁵⁸ Busch to Sr. Cecelia, December 27, 1945, box 7, folder 5, CISCA.

Once Carrabine and Himebaugh had decided to go ahead with their new focus, they expected the Chicago hierarchy to challenge their boldness, but Bishop Sheil and Dom Virgel Michel helped them out. The pair felt so much pressure and feared Mundelein's censors would not support their efforts to teach the doctrine to the mass of students that they turned to Dom Virgil Michel, the dean of the liturgical movement, for help. Michel and Himebaugh corresponded extensively about the Mystical Body and the liturgical movement, and Michel acted as Himebaugh's theological sounding board as she worked out how to teach CISCAns about the Mystical Body. Later, she said that their project would never have gotten off the ground, "but for him."⁵⁹ When Himebaugh wrote four essays to be used as primers on the Mystical Body, Michel censored the text and gave it his imprimatur, and Sheil allowed them to distribute the essays to religion classes across the archdiocese without first sending them for approval to the "heresy-hunters" at Mundelein Seminary.⁶⁰ Even then, Himebaugh had "grave misgivings" about Carrabine's desire to popularize her essays.⁶¹

Himebaugh also feared the students would reject the new focus on the Mystical Body and the liturgical movement. She wrote to Michel "The idea is going to be a difficult thing to sell to hard-shelled CISCAns, to many of whom the doctrine of the Mystical Body is like a heresy we are trying to promulgate in opposition to the good old-fashioned teachings of their pastor and teachers."⁶² Cecilia and Carrabine knew they would face conflict with pastors, teachers, and students because the idea was, at the time, a radical, new idea for many people, and required much of them. Nonetheless, they wanted to help the students develop big dreams and visions, and believe they really could shape their Church and the world into something reflective of

⁵⁹ Handwritten note on "That Desperate Die-Hard, Mr. Yooh!" in box 7, folder 4, CISCA.

⁶⁰ Sr. Cecelia to Michel, October 22, 1935 in *ibid.* Sr. Cecelia refers to "heresy-hunters" in her January 26, 1935 letter.

⁶¹ October 10, 1935, *Ibid.*

⁶² Box 7, folder 2, CISCA.

Christ. As Carrabine wrote to Cecilia, “why should we not feed these young people - many of them much more idealistic than we fancy - on the stuff that makes visions. Doesn't even the liturgy teach that the completion and fullness of our higher life will be a VISION?”⁶³

But despite Himebaugh's fears, CISCA was gaining and legitimacy in the archdiocese. The same year Carrabine became CISCA's moderator, the organization also came under the sponsorship of Bishop Bernard Sheil. Sheil was in the midst of building his empire of social action in Chicago under the auspices of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). By the time Sheil resigned from his position in the CYO in 1954, “there wasn't a need or an issue in modern society that Bernard J. Sheil's Catholic Youth Organization didn't have a plan or program to deal with.”⁶⁴ Sheil was the same auxiliary bishop who rebuffed Falls's efforts to convince the chancery to take a stand against the Church's racial discrimination. But his support of CISCA and the covering of legitimacy he provided for it would prove to be invaluable as CISCA went in new directions under Carrabine, and the theology the students learned would shape Catholic interracialism.

C. Nuts to Prejudice!

Almost invariably, CISCANs recalling their experience with the organization mention either their learning about racial injustice for the first time, or their work on behalf of racial justice. A pattern emerges from the evidence suggesting that through CISCA, white students experienced a sort of awakening to racial injustice and Catholic responsibility to make things more just. Jack Egan's experience is typical. He first heard about CISCA in 1933 in his third year at DePaul Academy when a faculty member invited him to hear Father Daniel Lord speak at

⁶³ January 3, 1935 in box 7, folder 3, CISCA.

⁶⁴ Steven M. Avella, "The Rise and Fall of Bernard Sheil," in *Catholicism, Chicago Style*, ed. Edward R. Kantowics, Ellen Skerrett, and Steven M. Avella (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1993), 97.

a CISCA event. As Egan recalled, "It was the first time in my life that I was made aware of the evil of racism and the obligation of Catholics to be concerned about our 'colored' brothers and sisters, and about the plight of so many men and women who were still out of work from the terrible Depression which began in 1929. That talk was seminal in my life."⁶⁵ Egan also praised Carrabine for his leadership in the field, saying "It was from him that many of us learned about the injustices meted out against our Black brothers and sisters."⁶⁶ Charles O'Reilly, who became dean of the School of Social Work of Loyola University, said "Martin Carrabine led literally thousands of young Chicago Catholics to understand the liturgy, and to understand that the Doctrine of the Mystical Body required from everyone a personal commitment to social and racial justice."⁶⁷ Indeed, Reiner, Carrabine, and Himebaugh encouraged CISCANs to actively discuss racial prejudice. As one CISCA alum recalled, CISCANs talked about race even though they had been "warned that the race question was 'too hot to handle.'"⁶⁸ College students, not high school students, led the committees dealing with these "more difficult topics" like industry and interracial relations.⁶⁹

Though sincere in their belief in racial equality, at times CISCANs expressed either great insensitivity or total cluelessness about the African Americans' situation. In the September 3, 1938 edition of *Gallery*, a newspaper that offered "the news as seen by the American Catholic Youth, presented seriously, but never solemnly," and was edited by several CISCANs. In commenting on conditions in the South, the paper reported that aside from the situation of sharecroppers "the picture is almost happy." Notably, the paper included African Americans in

⁶⁵ Jack Egan, "The Chicago Youth Ministry Tradition, 1940-1991, Youth Ministry in Those Days." *Upturn* (June-July 1991) in box 9, folder 1, CISCA.

⁶⁶ John Egan, "Homily," 9 November 1986, page 3, box 1, folder 21, CISCA.

⁶⁷ Press Release, 1986, box 1, folder 21, CISCA.

⁶⁸ "The Cisca Organization: Pro and Con."

⁶⁹ Walen, "Cisca: The West Point of Catholic Action."

its description of the South, including them in the body politic. But what it said negated the reality of the deep injustices in the South and suggested that the normative position of African Americans was receiving punishment: "Negroes not on a 'chain gang' (offering room and board, no worries, and a little work) pick cotton and fruit in season, or share in wide-spread relief. Wages, low; cost of living, just as low. Average Negro: satisfied."⁷⁰ Ten years later, CISCAN Lido Andreoni performed in blackface in the CISCAN variety show. The program praised Andreoni for bringing Al Jolson to the stage "as he sang in the minstrel days."⁷¹ Clearly, white CISCANs suffered from not having black people in their lives who could instruct them in how offensive minstrel shows could be.

While CISCANs may have learned about interracial justice at CISCAN, they learned it in theory, not in practice because of the institutional racism of Chicago's Catholic Church. Since CISCAN was built on top of the structure of the Catholic school system, and the vast majority of Catholic schools prohibited or limited black attendance, black participation in CISCAN was small. Several students from St. Elizabeth's did participate, however. In 1933, the St. Elizabeth's students encouraged other CISCANs to read *The Negro Missionary* and other mission magazines so students would "establish a better understanding of inter-racial questions and problems," the *Ciscora News* reported.⁷²

To the chagrin of Falls and other black Catholics, CISCANs failed to believe that interracial justice required structural, not just personal solutions. In CISCANs' hands, interracial

⁷⁰ Box 5, folder 8, CISCAN. Thomas Meehan in 1938, offered a different picture, concluding that black sharecroppers "suffer, as do the white sharecroppers, from all the disadvantages that have been the loss of farmers in general, from a one crop system which imposes upon them virtual slavery, from pitiful living conditions, and from fear of the advent of the mechanical cotton picker." But sharecroppers earned less and were in a more fragile position because of their dependence on the landlord. "It is almost impossible to describe in adequate terms the conditions existing among these peoples. . . . The greater majority of them have no money whatsoever and never receive any. They are continually in debt of the plantation owner for at the end of the year they usually wind up in the red." (Thomas A. Meehan, "Negro Labor," July 29, 1938, Box 5, Folder 25, MRH, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN)).

⁷¹ Box 4, Folder 3, CISCAN.

⁷² "Catholic Social Action Committee," *Ciscora News* 4, no. 4 (May, 1933).

justice lost the institutional focus that it had when the Federation attacked the Church hierarchy. Before he died, Reiner suggested that Catholic students work with the National Catholic Federation for the Promotion of Better Race Relations (the former FCC), as well as non-Catholic organizations working for racial justice like the NAACP and the Urban League, which would have involved students in institutional solutions.⁷³ But in CISCA's heyday under Carrabine, most CISCANs believed that racial prejudice and discrimination were based on how one person felt or thought about another, and since that was the problem, a change of attitude was the solution. Part of this interpretation had to do with CISCANs' position as high school students. Father Lord taught CISCA moderators that CISCANs practice of the Mystical Body of Christ in the social sphere must be "entirely practical. They must see this as something they can take part in . . . with things that THEY CAN DO right here and now."⁷⁴ Thus many CISCANs interpreted interracial justice in terms of small things they could do as individuals, and conceived of interracial justice mostly in personal, not institutional, terms.

Nonetheless, white CISCANs efforts for interracial justice did try to make white concern for black people normative by standing up to white racism in small ways. White CISCANs interpreted practicing interracial justice as being different in a fun, adventurous sort of way. CISCAN Robert Sensor's article "Screwballs Extraordinary" described the adventure of being and loving the Mystical Body on the streets of Chicago:

Down at CISCA meetings Jake had heard a lot about racial equality, about how no Catholic could in conscience discriminate against Negroes. Of course Jake didn't dream that he'd ever run up against a situation which would test his belief in this. He was riding in a rather crowded elevated train one day. There were only two seats empty in the car – next to Jake and next to a man reading a newspaper. A negro [*sic*] came down the aisle and sat down with the man holding the paper. The man glanced at the Negro, dropped his paper to the floor, and got up angrily. He crossed the aisle and seated himself next to

⁷³ Reiner, "A Program for Catholic Social Action."

⁷⁴ Box 5, folder 20, MRH. This outline is from 1943, but Lord likely said this sort of thing earlier as well, and was involved in nearly all, if not all, of the Summer Schools.

Jake. Almost everyone in the car had seen the incident, which seemed to be ended there. But it wasn't. 'Pardon me,' said Jake to the man who sat next to him, as he brushed past. Jake crossed the aisle and sat down next to the colored man. That's a practical illustration of what CISCANS mean when they talk about 'daring to be different.'⁷⁵

Jake's actions were, indeed, different. He could have just as easily sat quietly and ignored the situation, but instead he chose to challenge an entire car full of white people, many of them adults, to sit next to the black man. Sensor intended that Jake's actions would encourage other CISCANS to be different, to practice a new way of being that embodied Christ's kingdom. He and the other CISCANS were trying to make it normal for white Catholics to treat black people with respect.

While small, the gestures of love CISCANS practiced marked them apart from the vast majority of white Catholics. One CISCAN in the late 1930s kept track of his or her good deeds over the summer on a CISCA form called "Record of My Service." The list of potential good deeds included prayer for missions, alms for missions, poor, parish, and schools, kindness to Negroes, Catholic books from library, catechism explained, talks on religious subjects, 'B' and 'C' movies avoided, 'A' class movies recommended, consoling the sad, recreations conducted, and helping the clergy.⁷⁶ This CISCAN practiced "kindness to Negroes" more than ten times over the course of a month. The presence of "kindness to Negroes" is significant in that it helped shift the norm from ignoring or disdaining African Americans toward being kind. But while kindness matters, it does not explicitly address injustice embedded in society.

Other CISCANS shared Jake's experience of coming to believe in racial equality through CISCA. In an article she titled "Nuts to Prejudice," Nancy Colbert described her changing perspective on prejudice. She grew up, she said, associating black people with words like "dirty

⁷⁵ Robert Sensor, "Screwballs Extraordinary," November 1940, box 1, folder 23, CISCA.

⁷⁶ Box 2, folder 2, CISCA.

-- bum -- thief.” At a CISCA meeting, when she heard someone say “we should help the Negro,” I thought to myself – “that guy must be crazy.” Colbert continued to attend CISCA meetings and she changed her opinion on African Americans because of the doctrine of the Mystical Body. She relayed, “it hit me between the eyes -- the Negro is a member of the Mystical Body. That means that I must help him, pray for him.” When Colbert realized she knew little about African Americans, she began to read about them and learned about the “conditions in which Negroes must live” – see the bundling of race and class. She concluded, “I learned what the Americans owed to Negroes as human beings.”⁷⁷ For a young Catholic student, this perspective was radical.

But Colbert’s depiction of the problem and its solutions was, in many ways, limited. First, she implicitly excluded Negroes from American citizenship. While learning about the Mystical Body and African Americans made Colbert believe that Negroes should not be stereotyped, she continued to exhibit a racialized outlook that suggested that “Negroes” were not “Americans.” The word “Americans” stood in for “whites” in her phrase, “I learned what Americans owed to Negroes as human beings.” Second, Colbert did not move beyond the personal shift of acknowledging black people’s humanity toward action that would disrupt racial hierarchies. Colbert’s answer to the problem of the “conditions in which Negroes live,” was to “help him, pray for him.” Her solution illustrated a key tenet of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ: the dignity of each person. But she proposed no concrete political action and continued to view “the Negro” as in a position of dependency.

Students trained up with the new emphasis on the Mystical Body of Christ and the liturgy failed to have the structural-institutional focus that Reiner had emphasized. For instance, young CISCAN Mary Rita Brady mediated on the relationship between middle-class and lower-class

⁷⁷ Box 2, folder 21, in CISCA.

members of the Mystical Body of Christ with a degree of self-hatred. She wrote “We smug and comfortable members seldom realize how much we are indebted to our poor. We are parasites who profit by the sufferings of the poor and are sustained by them, giving nothing in return.” Her solution to poverty did not follow Reiner’s model of political action. Instead, she suggested personal kindness and prayer: “we have an obligation to help them by voluntary material aid, such as food, clothing and money; by small sacrifices and acts of service in our everyday life, and, of course, by formal prayer – especially the Mass, the Greatest Family Get-together of all.”⁷⁸ Thus, Brady hid from political action and sacrifice in platitudes, which would become a tension within CISCA.

An outline from an April 1940 Catholic Action meeting further suggests how CISCANs personalized their efforts for interracial justice. The first thing listed in the outline is race discrimination, suggesting the importance CISCANs gave to the issue. It states that CISCANs must “discountenance,” or disapprove of, race discrimination. Next, the outline says that they must “protest economic injustice,” which suggests that while racial discrimination required a change in perspective or opinion, economic justice required concrete action or protest.⁷⁹ Why the difference? Perhaps it was due to their New Deal context, which emphasized economic provision. Or perhaps it was because by 1940, many CISCANs volunteered regularly at Chicago’s second Catholic Worker house on Blue Island Avenue where they served soup and bread to hungry people waiting in 800-person lines stretching down the street and around the corner. Or maybe it was because they knew people who looked like them, many times in their own families, who had suffered from the Depression, so they were able to connect more with

⁷⁸ Mary Rita Brady, “Cisca News,” in box 1, folder 24, CISCA. This article is likely from 1941 in the *New World*.

⁷⁹ Box 2, folder 8, CISCA.

class issues than with race issues. Whatever the reason, CISCANs' solutions to racial injustice were personal while their plan to attack economic problems was structural.

Nonetheless, Colbert's and Brady's emphasis on prayer suggests a key contribution Cisca made to Catholic interracialism: reminding practitioners that the quest for interracial justice was a spiritual battle. For CISCANs who believed in a world in which God and saints acted to effect change on earth, prayer for interracial justice might be their most potent weapon. In the 1938 Summer School of Catholic Action, for example, they learned that "social praying" would be "of the greatest assistance in combatting the numberless evils which disturb the minds of the faithful and weaken the faith in our age."⁸⁰ Prayer, these students learned, was an effective way to shape society, and perhaps the most important way they could bring about change.

But often, to the chagrin of Falls and other black Catholics who faced discrimination on a daily basis, CISCANs believed that the change would come slowly. Since their battle was not against flesh and blood, prayer was an effective weapon. But the battle would be one on an individual basis, as each person overcame his or her own prejudice. Sister Cecilia said they should not use "bombs and tanks. For this revolution has to be fought out in the depths. Of each individual soul against the natural man with all his undivine nature – his hates, his lust for power and pleasure. In such a warfare victory consists in surrender – the surrender of self to become a perfectly co-ordinated member of the First and only Supernational [*sic*]." The revolution should be one of "patient growth and living prayer" that may take generations.⁸¹ This long-term focus on society's sanctification caused CISCANs to miss opportunities to make concrete changes.

⁸⁰ Box 5, folder 21, MRH.

⁸¹ Box 2, folder 20, in Cisca.

In 1940, white CISCANs had an opportunity to put interracial justice into practice in a concrete way within a student-led organization. That year, Bishop Sheil founded the Catholic Youth Senate which was to unite young Catholics across the archdiocese together. In describing the Senate, Himebaugh wrote that it would give the youth the opportunity to

offer positively and constructively their solution to the world's ills, a solution which originates in the Vatican and which has been proclaimed from there by Christ's Vicar. To this Congress CISCANs and the alumni bring their concept of this solution – the establishment of a Christocracy upon earth – a world order which will have Christ as its center and whose members will be Christ-like because they will be active participants in Christ's Mystical Body.⁸²

The Senate enabled CISCANs and CISCA alumni to work with other groups from separate parishes throughout Chicagoland. They planned their first bit meeting for October 4 – 6 at the Auditorium Theater. Participating in the Congress required youth to make a significant investment. A parish priest or school principle had to sponsor attendees, who in turn were required to attend two of four educational institutes offered prior to the Congress. They also had to pay a fee.⁸³ The events of the meeting proved that while some of the inclusive ideals of Catholic interracialism had taken hold in the youth's minds, it would not extend to their actions.

Participants could feel the electricity in the room during the opening session of the conference. Catholic youth filled every seat in the Auditorium Theater and were ready to take a stand. Several of the young people Falls worked with in the Catholic Worker were present and ready, Falls said, "particularly to participate in the section on civil liberties."⁸⁴ As president of the Senate, CISCA alumnus and 1938 Loyola graduate John Langdon gave the opening speech. He called his fellow young people to join the age of revolutions and lead a Catholic one. "Our

⁸² Sr. Cecilia Hamebaugh, "The Origin of Cisca 1940," in box 1, folder 17, CISCA.

⁸³ Box 5, folder 12, CISCA.

⁸⁴ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 615.

view,” Langdon pronounced, “must be the positive view, the strong view, the courageous view.”⁸⁵

From the outset, the Congress looked like it would be racially fair and progressive. The first session featured Henry Johnson of the National Negro Congress of America and Assistant National Director of the United Packinghouse Workers’ Organizing Committee as part of the panel called “Democracy – Its Foundation and Its Future.” Falls was present during the Congress as well, supporting his young colleagues and hoping for a bold pronouncement of action on integration in Catholic schools. The following evening, October 5, St. Elizabeth’s choir performed “Ballad for Americans” and “God Bless America.”⁸⁶ The audience “roundly applauded . . . in fact, almost hysterically applauded” the choir, Falls recalled.⁸⁷

But, as Falls observed, what followed was a “very enlightening experience” about the limitations of the Congress’s commitment to interracial justice. It was like he was back in Sheil’s office, asking for immediate change and sympathetically being told the time was not yet right. For four years, Falls had been publically asking CISCA to help end segregation in Catholic schools. He had worked with students “focus the attention of both the student body and the faculty of their schools” on segregation in Catholic school, arguing that “if Chicago Catholics hold themselves as advocates of social justice and fail to meet squarely this glaring injustice in our basic structure, we lay ourselves open to the charge so often hurled at us: that of hypocrisy and bigotry.”⁸⁸ Some of the young people Falls knew presented a resolution that the Catholic

⁸⁵ Box 5, folder 10, CISCA.

⁸⁶ Box 5, folder 11, CISCA.

⁸⁷ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 616.

⁸⁸ Falls, “Chicago Letter.”

Youth Congress “take a position approving the opening of Catholic high schools to Negro students” the next day.⁸⁹

But “the group floundered,” Falls remembered with disappointment. “The same individuals who so wildly applauded the St. Elizabeth’s High School Choir the previous evening were adamant in opposing the abolition of segregation in Catholic High Schools.” What made it “even more tragic” was that priests on the platform refused to “commit themselves when their advice was asked.”⁹⁰ The Congress as a whole would only go so far in supporting interracial justice.

In the end, the Senate did make a resolution concerning minority groups. Students resolved to denounce “unChristian [*sic*] economic and social barriers to the fullness of life, which is God’s supreme gift to man on earth. And we most vigorously affirm our determination to do everything in our power, both individually and as a body, to break down the barriers which separate these racial minorities from their rightful human heritage.”⁹¹ This final resolution was probably a compromise, and Falls’s friends likely pushed hard to make it sound tough with words and phrases like “vigorously” and wanting to “do everything in our power” to make change. But the Congress as a whole would not be specific and challenge the current racial orthodoxy of the Catholic Church on segregated education. Instead, they spoke in platitudes and when mentioning Catholic education, only said they resolve to “pledge our support and offer our

⁸⁹ During the Congress, four committees had open discussion forums to debate the resolutions the Congress would pass. Students presented resolutions in the committee meetings and the committees voted on them. The resolutions then went to the Resolutions Committee which decided if the resolutions should be presented at the final business meeting for a vote of the general assembly. The resolution probably made it out of the Committee but failed in the general business meeting.

⁹⁰ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 616.

⁹¹ Box 5, folder 13, CISCA.

thanks to the religious men and women who have made great sacrifices in the cause of Catholic education.”⁹² Segregation would remain the norm among the Catholic Youth.

In July, 1940, a few months before the Catholic Youth Senate’s big meeting, Father Thomas Meehan, a pastor at Immaculate Conception Church just west of Chicago in Elmhurst, IL, praised the progress of Catholic youth on the racial question in an article in the *Interracial Review*.⁹³ Meehan lauded organizations like Sheil’s CYO and CISCA for helping young people to rid themselves of racial prejudice. He reported that “fifteen years ago, few of our schools – whether they be colleges, seminaries, or high schools – manifested any great concern with the interracial problem. Today, all of them to a greater or lesser degree are interested.”⁹⁴ Meehan also described the change in their racial attitudes: “In my earliest experience . . . most of the students felt and many expressed the idea that the Negro was intellectually inferior, that the hue of outer epidermis was a visitation from God in punishment for sin, and that every Negro wished to marry a white. Today . . . this attitude has vanished,” and students wanted to know about Catholic work among Negroes, Catholic Negroes, and why prejudice existed. This change mattered. Many students, Meehan reported, have moved beyond academic questions to practical ones, asking “Why aren’t there any Negroes in our school?”⁹⁵

Meehan was right. Because of organizations like CISCA, fewer white students expressed prejudice and more were willing to challenge racial norms. Not only did its teaching on the Mystical Body of Christ make personal expressions of racial prejudice anathema for a generation of Catholic youth, CISCA piqued students’ curiosity and funneled them into Falls’s interracialist

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Meehan was a friend of Falls’s and would write a pamphlet called “Facts in Black and White” which Friendship House would use. He also became the editor of the *New World* shortly after, and spoke at the 1938 School of Social Action for priests on Negroes.

⁹⁴ Thomas A. Meehan, “Youth Face the Interracial Problem,” *Interracial Review* 13, no. 7 (July, 1940): 102.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 103.

Catholic Worker. Through these organizations they found a whole new world. As CISCAN Ed Marciniak recalled, in his teens he discovered

a Church I had never heard about, a conception of a Church I never knew existed. I discovered it first through the pages of the *Catholic Worker*, then through Dorothy Day herself and through Peter Maurin, through CISCA (a Chicago Catholic student organization), through the English Dominican magazine *Blackfriars*. All of a sudden there was a new world for me, a time of intellectual vitality. I wasn't alone – there were many of us. We read avidly, especially every learned Catholic magazine we could locate. We raised every question that could be raised. We challenged every conceivable position, and we subjected the Church to the most careful scrutiny because we loved it so much. Sometimes our sessions would go on from Sunday afternoon to early Monday morning – one week, Maritain; the next, perhaps the steel strike – and we'd go home tremendously stimulated but physically exhausted. All this kept us alive. Really alive.⁹⁶

Significantly, men and women like Marciniak were coming of age at the same time that other priests in the archdiocese and across the country were catching a similar vision of lay empowerment. In that Chicago, much of that trend among priests was due to one man: Reynold Hillenbrand, who Cardinal Mundelein had appointed rector of St. Mary of the Lake Seminary.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Dan Herr, "The Chicago Dynamo," *The Sign*, September, 1962, box 3, folder 4, Roach Papers.

VI. MAKING INROADS INTO THE HIERARCHY: CATHOLIC INTERRACIALISM AND PRIESTS

“Last Friday,” Sr. Cecilia wrote to Dom Virgil Michel, “I learned to my great glee that Cardinal Mundelein has bestirred himself and organized a Social Action School for priests to be held for four weeks at the Seminary this summer.”¹ A press release for the conference reminded readers of Mundelein’s support for Catholic Action and his assertion that “our place is beside the poor, behind the working man.” Mundelein was inviting priests from all over the country to attend the school in order to learn how to “combat the growing evils of the time, the various kinds of isms, atheism, communism or whatever other name they may bear.”² Mundelein’s protégé, Reynold Hillenbrand, was the man behind the Summer School for priests, and, more broadly, he played a tremendous role in shaping priests in Chicago to support lay activity. And at the summer school, Arthur Falls, of course, had a voice.

As much as the lay movement was developing among Chicago’s young people and black Catholics, it required the support of the hierarchy. Mundelein’s decision to make Hillenbrand rector of his seminary opened the way for the development of the laity. As rector of Mundelein’s St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Hillenbrand taught his priests to support the laity’s work in the world as laypeople, work that would occur in conjunction with the hierarchy. He shaped the priests through the liturgy and exposed the men to cutting edge lay practitioners of Catholic Action by inviting them to speak to the seminarians. The Catholic Worker’s Dorothy Day was the first woman to speak to the men, and Catherine de Hueck, a Russian baroness who was a

¹ Not dated, probably May, 1938, in box 7, folder 4, CISCA.

² Box 5, folder 19, MRH.

strong proponent of interracial justice, spoke to them also. His concern for interracial justice did not always serve him well. Hillenbrand got into “hot water” for allowing de Hueck to speak on “Jim-Crowism in the Catholic Church.”³ Yet many of the priests he taught would come to support the laity’s efforts for Catholic interracialism. A group of them, known as “Hilly’s boys” continued to support one another in their efforts to empower the laity. Shortly after each member of the group had received their first parish they began to meet in order to support one another in the exciting new way of being priests that Hillenbrand had taught them. As Jack Egan, one of Hilly’s boys put it, “We came together for play, for gossip, sure, but basically because we knew we needed each other. We were always concerned about how we were going to implement what we had learned in the seminary, how we would respond to new needs. We were feeling our way.”⁴ Thus, while Mundelein may not have been in favor of Catholic interracialism in its various iterations, he created an institution that would indirectly support it because of the people he put in place.

In particular, Catholics began to argue that interracial justice combatted the Communist Party, which they perceived as a religious movement that took people away from the Church. Discussions about interracial justice as a weapon against communism permeated the summer school and also shaped CISCA. As Sister Cecilia wrote, “The dogma of the mystical body contains not only the answer but even the fulfillment of all the social and economic demands of communism, although its means are not a leveling of all classes of society but rather an uplifting of all men alike into the common sonship of God in Christ.”⁵ Catholics, furthermore, she

³ Ann Harrigan Makletzoff, “Hillenbrand Eulogy,” 1979, in box 3, folder 14, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁴ Quoted in Marjerie Frisbie, *An Alley in Chicago: The Life and Legacy of Monsignor John Egan* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 2002), 83.

⁵ “Some Frozen Assets of Catholicity” in box 7, folder 4, CISCA.

argued, were twiddling their thumbs while Communism grew like a weed in the garden of Chicago. CISCANs and priests were sensitized to this impending threat.

Yet as the Catholic Worker drew people into Catholic interracialism, supported from the bottom up by CISCA and from the top down by Hilly's boys, conflict the Catholic Worker emerged. Some Catholics just did not like the organization and accused it, because of its social concern, of being communist. For the narrative of Catholic interracialism, within the Catholic Worker, Falls clashed with the young, white idealists who joined his camp over the question of poverty.

A. Promoting Catholic Action: Mundelein's Seminary and Reynold Hillenbrand

Chicago would not have become the center of the nation's lay activity without the foundation built by Cardinal Mundelein and Reynold Hillenbrand. Mundelein was a part of the generation of "big bishops" who helped put Catholicism on the map. Of all his accomplishments – and they were many – Mundelein was most proud of building St. Mary of the Lake, a seminary for all the archdiocesan priests built in a northern suburb of Chicago aptly named Mundelein. The seminary opened in 1921 and was completed in 1934. Mundelein envisioned the school as the "intellectual and spiritual heart of the Catholic Church in Chicago."⁶ For the story of Catholic interracialism, two aspects of the seminary are most important. First, it contributed to Mundelein's efforts to centralize his archdiocese; now, all priests would be trained in one common location. Second, Mundelein was infatuated with the Jesuit order and wanted those priests to teach his seminarians. But for the spiritual leadership in the school, he wanted one of his own.

⁶ Kantowicz, *Corporation Sole: Cardinal Mundelein and Chicago Catholicism*.

Mundelein chose Reynold Hillenbrand for the job, appointing Hillenbrand rector in 1936, two years after construction was completed.⁷ For the next eight years, Hillenbrand would shape a generation of priests to encourage the laity to take an active part in the Church. Hillenbrand was an unlikely choice. He was only thirty one in 1936 and had been ordained in September, 1929. But he was one of Mundelein's favorite priests; after his ordination, Mundelein had sent him and a few other priests to Rome for a year of sightseeing and cultural development.

Hillenbrand came of age as a priest during a resurgence of social concern, and the developments he experienced in Europe shaped his perspective. There, Hillenbrand saw the developing liturgical movement in the Benedictine Abbeys, which "saw the Eucharistic celebration as the center of a deep Catholic spirituality and the church itself as the Mystical Body of Christ" and encouraged the laity to take a greater role in the liturgy.⁸ For Hillenbrand, the Mass was of utmost importance. As he would later say, the purpose of the Mass "is to restore the corporate sense and the corporate action . . . to learn our oneness at the altar and to bring that oneness to the other relations of life. This oneness must be brought to our homes . . . to our political life . . . to our social life . . . to our economic life . . . into working life . . . to our international life."⁹ He was also present for the unveiling of the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, which was a recapitulation of *Rerum Novarum* forty years earlier, and contributed to the foundation of the Church's social doctrine.

When Hillenbrand returned to Chicago, his city was in the throes of the Great Depression and Hillenbrand began to apply what he had learned in his home town. Hillenbrand lived at the Cathedral rectory with Monsignor Joseph Morrison who was committed to taking action on

⁷ Much of the biographical information on Hillenbrand comes from Avella, "'Reynold Hillenbrand and Chicago Catholicism,'" *U.S. Catholic Historian* 9, no. 4 (Fall, 1990).

⁸ Patricke Carey, "Lay Catholic Leadership in the United States," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 9, no. 3 (Summer, 1990): 238.

⁹ Quoted in Avella, "Reynold Hillenbrand and Chicago Catholicism," 360.

behalf of the suffering Chicagoans.¹⁰ And so, with the support of Morrison and using *Quadragesimo Anno* and *Rerum Novarum* as his guides, Hillenbrand began to work for a more corporate, organic, social system, the same sort for which Father Reiner taught his students to strive. Hillenbrand also became a huge proponent of the developing Catholic Action movement. Thus, power would be dispensed in the archdiocese and Catholic interracialists could tap into the development of a budding laity.

Hillenbrand was able to have so much faith in the ability of laypeople because of his understanding of the Mystical Body of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Like Carrabine, he believed that because laypeople were a part of Christ's Mystical Body, they had important jobs to do in and for the Church. Hillenbrand's doctoral dissertation looked at the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which was part of a renewed emphasis on the immanence of God. To him, the Mystical Body of Christ was the main lens with which to approach the world. But Hillenbrand was also incredibly authoritarian and specific in his understanding of the laity's role in the Church. He believed they should work under the hierarchy, and also that the priests should focus primarily on empowering the laity to act in the world, and not take over the action of the laity. In later years, this would cause conflict with one of his most devoted priests.¹¹

As rector, Hillenbrand had a tremendous effect on his seminarians. By the time Mundelein's successor, Cardinal Stritch, removed Hillenbrand from his position in 1944, Hillenbrand had worked with about five hundred of the city's priests, including many CISCA alumni who would shape the city and its interracial scene like John Egan and Daniel Cantwell. Long after Hillenbrand left his post at the seminary, a group of priests trained in this new order would get together with Hillenbrand regularly and discuss their efforts around the city.

¹⁰ Morrison would later share his rectory with Daniel Cantwell and be the official head of the CIC.

¹¹ I will discuss this in later chapters, but I am referring to Hillenbrand's treatment of Jack Egan. See Frisbie, *An Alley in Chicago: The Life and Legacy of Monsignor John Egan*.

B. Racial Justice as a Weapon against Communism

In 1938, with Mundelein's support, Hillenbrand sponsored the seminary's first Summer School for Social Action for priests. In all, 250 priests registered for part of or all of the July 18 to August 12 term. Twenty dioceses and 12 religious orders were represented. The school was meant to be "primarily a school in the encyclicals of Pius XI, 'Quadragesimo Anno' and 'Atheistic Communism.'"¹² John A. Ryan, Francis J. Haas, Robert E. Lucey, Father McGowan, and Bernard W. Dempsey taught many of the courses which looked at the intersection of public Christian morality and the economic order. Significantly, the school incorporated African Americans' economic positions into its broader economic focus and set up interracial justice as the antidote to communism. Priests were taught that black people's inequality was not due essentialist racial traits, but a result of an economic order that discriminated against them.

Similar to the Catholic Worker's and CISCA's arguments about Catholic faith, the courses in the summer school argued that religion was not a conservative force. Instead, the Catholic faith as expressed in Catholic Action was a revolutionary weapon in the modern world. "The Holy Father," Mundelein said, ". . . calls us to combat the growing evils of the time, the various kinds of isms, atheism, communism or whatever name they may bear."¹³ For too long, Mundelein said, Catholic leadership had sided with conservative and often unjust people: "the trouble with us in the past has been that we were too often allied or drawn into an alliance with the wrong side. Selfish employers of labor have flattered the Church by calling it a great conservative force, and then called upon it to act as a police force while they paid but a pittance of wage to

¹² Box 5, folder 19, MRH.

¹³ Ibid.

those who worked for them.” The school emphasized “the workingmen, which kept the theory related to the practical work which confronts the priest.”¹⁴

Given his perception of how authority in the Catholic Church worked, Falls must have been delighted that a school for priests would address racial justice. Falls knew that a lay movement would fail without the support of priests. He was constantly trying to influence priestly education about interracial justice. For instance, he wrote to the leadership at St. Columban’s Seminary in Nebraska: “Particularly I do hope that you will institute next fall a study group on race-relations, in order that those who are to be our spiritual leaders may be thoroughly acquainted with the true state of affairs and the applications of the teachings of the Holy Mother Church to these particular problems.”¹⁵

The course included a surprising amount on African Americans and the race relations. Father Thomas Meehan, who would later write for the *Interracial Review*, spoke on African Americans and labor, University of Chicago sociologist Horace Cayton spoke about African Americans’ housing situation, and in a discussion on Communism, Father Franklin Kennedy of Milwaukee cited Arthur Falls extensively on African Americans and Communism.

Two common themes resonated in Meehan’s and Kennedy’s sessions. First, the speakers assumed that discussions about the economic order and the Popes’ encyclicals included African Americans. In a racialized Church that viewed black people as a secondary concern, this was a big step. Second, they suggested that if the priests did not lead their flocks in ending racial prejudice and helping to create a more just social order, African Americans would continue their flight to Communism, which only made sense. One way to fight Communism, therefore, was to work for racial justice. The theme of interracial justice as an antidote to Communism had

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Arthur Falls to St. Columban Fathers, July 13, 1934, DD-CW.

already resonated with Arthur Falls, but would become even more important as white Catholics became interracialists.

Meehan, who was a friend of Falls's, addressed the group on "The Negro and Labor." Meehan couched his talk in terms that connected to the priests in the Depression context: security. There was no way, Meehan said, a "group of such proportion [as African Americans] can suffer such persistent insecurity without affecting the security of the entire country." For example, Meehan cited statistics showing that African Americans relief from the government "entirely out of proportion with their percent of the total population." It might have seemed initially as though Meehan was going to play into Catholics' racist assumptions about African Americans. Meehan, however, challenged the stereotypes that African Americans were either poor workers or lazy.¹⁶

This situation, which affected not only the security of black people but of the entire country, was due to the "economic conditions" facing African Americans. First, as white workers lost their jobs, they took jobs black workers had previously filled. Second, "the Negro still has a hard row to hoe as a result of discrimination rising from race-hatred and prejudice" from his employers and fellow workers. Although African Americans' situation seemed uniquely dismal, Meehan said, they belonged to the Mystical Body just like anyone else.¹⁷

The encyclicals shaping the priests' views on workers included "not only white workers but all workers without distinction as to race and color." Meehan reminded the priests that "the question of wage is an economic question but nevertheless so fraught with moral implications that it is a moral question as well," and therefore deserving of their attention as priests. "Much of their moral delinquency, immorality, and criminality, to say nothing of their lack of regularity

¹⁶ Thomas A. Meehan, "Negro Labor," July 29, 1938 in Box 5, Folder 25, MRH, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

¹⁷ Ibid.

and the high mortality rate amongst them [African Americans],” Meehan argued, “is due to inadequate housing, lack of sanitation and medical care, besides lack of education and technical training. All of these evils in one way or another can be traced to the fact that they are consigned to low wage brackets, are numbered among marginal workers, or are totally unemployed.” Therefore, priests could not blame Negroes’ dismal economic and moral situation on inherited racial characteristics. Instead, it was due to the sin of white people not paying them enough. Economic justice would require a change of heart, and Catholics’ demonstration that all people were members of the Mystical Body of Christ.¹⁸

Meehan’s solutions sounded like the sort Father Reiner had favored: political action and direct involvement. At the national level, Meehan supported the National Labor Relations Act, because it would support African Americans’ labor organizing, and the Minimum Wage and Hour Law because it would raise black standards of living. At the state level, Meehan favored legislation “in regard to housing and congestion and slum areas on behalf of the Negro.” He also encouraged the full integration of unions formally and informally, and highlighted the positive contributions of the Congress on Industrial Equality (CIO). The CIO, Meehan pointed out, “like the A.F. of L. [American Federation of Labor, another major union umbrella], promises organization without regard to creed, color, or sex, but with this difference that thus far it has kept its promise.” Meehan concluded with a warning about the dangers of Communism’s spread among African Americans. He reluctantly “admitted that in many instances they [Communists] have insisted upon absolute equality in rights,” which had not been the Catholic Church’s consistent stance.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Sociologist Horace Cayton's talk also challenged stereotypes about African Americans, particularly about African Americans as bad neighbors. Cayton, in a few years, would publish a seminal book on black Chicago and was sociology professor at the University of Chicago, which influenced the Urban League and the Federation.²⁰ This discussion spoke to the heart of many parish priests' concerns as they faced African American "invasions" into their neighborhoods. The integration of neighborhoods affected the very heart of white ethnic Catholicism. Cayton kept his description sociological and out of the realm of theology. First, he laid out the dismal housing situation Negroes faced in Chicago. He gave several descriptive examples of "the problem of overcrowding, the doubling-up of families, the keeping of lodgers and boarders, which has resulted in high juvenile delinquency, adult crimes, death and infant mortality rates, and consequently had become a croni[c] problem in the community." Cayton then brought the discussion to one of economics, arguing that the overcrowding, exploitation of black Chicagoans by landlords, and restrictions on where they could live made African Americans actually pay more than white Americans for worse living quarters. Cayton reminded priests of the price black Americans paid when they moved to white Americans. Many lived in legitimate fear of white people bombing their homes and starting race riots. The whole situation was made worse, Cayton pointed out, by the increasing black population in the city. Then, Cayton brought his argument close to his own institutional home. He argued that the University of Chicago was unjustly supporting restrictive covenants in the Woodlawn neighborhood to its Southwest to create a "buffer zone" around the University.

Father Franklyn Kennedy used Arthur Falls's words to educate priests on the Communist Party's work among African Americans. Kennedy, editor of the *Catholic Citizen Herald*, in

²⁰ St Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, Rev. and enl. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950*; Hobbs, *Cayton Legacy: An African American Family*.

Milwaukee, situated his remarks on Negroes and Communism as part of a broader talk on communism in the United States and Chicago generally. But the relationship between the communism and Negroes, Kennedy said, was “best discussed by Dr. Arthur G. Falls.” Kennedy then quoted a typed two-page, single-spaced letter of Falls’s. Falls’s letter that Kennedy read to the priests expressed limited admiration for the communists’ stance on human rights and persistence in organizing.

Falls had, indeed, become quote an authority on the communist party in black Chicago. For years, Falls had observed and, at times, worked with members and affiliates of the Communist Party in Chicago. For several years, as the Communist Party advanced its efforts among black Chicagoans through its Popular Front, Arthur and Lillian Falls observed their actions, worked with them when necessary, and challenged them at other times.²¹ For example, Falls and a Methodist woman had worked to recruit Christian and Jewish people to work on the religious committee of the American League Against War and Fascism. They struggled mightily to convince religious people to participate, but Falls remembered that Socialist and Communist groups attended every meeting.²² At the time, Falls had been entirely willing to work with them, but had to work hard to keep the group’s resolutions from having a communist tone.

By this time, Falls had come to appreciate communists’ persistence. Falls was “impressed by the sincerity and the devotion of the Communists in pursuing their aims,” but did not appreciate what he viewed as their lack of “regard for any really basic democratic procedures.”²³ He appreciated their valiant fight “against discrimination based upon color or creed, something we

²¹ For more on the Communist Party in Chicago, see B. Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935-46* (University of Illinois Press, 1999).

²² Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 537.

²³ *Ibid.*, 527.

did not find in other groups.”²⁴ Social change, Falls had come to believe, occurred only through diligent labor. As he recalled, “I could not help but feel, however, in viewing this conference against war and Fascism that the non-Communist people would certainly not keep control if they sat home and listened to radio while the other people attended meetings, typed letters, put postage stamps on, and otherwise fulfilled all the requirements needed for a conference or for an organization.”²⁵ When observing how some organizations eventually came under the control of Communists or other left-wing groups, Falls said,

my observation [is] that such control occurred because of the laziness and inertia of the non-Communists who originally started the organization or who originally were the majority group. Over and over again in an organization I have seen members of the Communist Party work diligently for the purpose of the organization while other people stayed at home. I have never been able to accept the theory that Communists were more clever or more brilliant or more ingenious than non-Communists. I have been willing to admit that many of them have been much more conscientious in following their objectives than had been non-Communists, particularly those who considered themselves Christians.²⁶

Not only did Falls admire Communists’ diligence and commitment, he thought they helped the cause of interracial and interreligious relationships. He wrote that Communists and other left-wing group members “rendered a distinct service, particularly in bringing about contact between people of various ethnic groups; in training people of various ethnic groups including Negroes, to organize and effectively work for better human relations, and thirdly, in giving many uneducated and unlettered Negroes a sense of human dignity which they had not had before, and which the Church had not given them.”²⁷ Thus, Falls’ experience with Communists – as well as with Catholics who denied him and other African Americans racial justice – led him to have many good things to say about the left, but few positive reports about Christians.

²⁴ Ibid., 528.

²⁵ Ibid., 528.

²⁶ Ibid., 583.

²⁷ Ibid., 583-84.

Falls brought this perspective of wry admiration for the Communist Party in Chicago to bear when he wrote the letter for Kennedy. First, he had little good to say about Catholics' treatment of African Americans as compared to Communists. "For instance," Falls wrote,

Suppose a Negro were going to apply to a manager of a plant for a job, and he was told that his manager was a member of the Christian Church. It wouldn't mean anything to that Negro; i.e. it wouldn't give him any assurance that he would be treated with courtesy or with fairness. If he were told that this manager were a Communist, that Negro would have a fair degree of assurance that he would be treated with fairness. Or let us assume that a Jew wished to rent a flat, and he learned that the owner was a member of the Catholic Church; that would tell the Jew nothing as to whether he would be given the same opportunity to rent the flat that a non-Jew would have. If he were told that the owner was a Communist, he would have a fair degree of assurance that he would be given equal opportunity.²⁸

Furthermore, Falls continued, "the Communist Group is the only one in which human brotherhood is accepted without qualification. Many Catholics, for instance, believe that Negroes ought to be given equal opportunity in jobs and wages, but object to their being admitted to Catholic schools."

In a theme that would emerge repeatedly from black people in interracial partnerships, Falls wrote that he also appreciated Communists' partnership with, not patronage toward, Negroes. "Their activity," he said, "however, is with Negroes, not for Negroes." Communists' attitude meant that (and perhaps Falls was speaking autobiographically here), "the Negro Catholic often feels far more at home among a group of Communists who accept him simply as another human being than he does among a group of Catholics, who, as John Bowers [a member of the Catholic Worker] says, believe in the "Mythical Body of Christ," not in the Mystical Body of Christ."

Most Catholics, Falls was suggesting, did not include Negroes in Christ's Mystical Body, and in doing so, they were hypocrites. In Falls's observation, "educated, cultured Negroes," of

²⁸ Box 5, folder 19, MRH.

the sort he knew, had not been drawn to Communism. But they had no interest in Christianity – including Catholicism – either. They viewed “Christian Church as simply a temple of hypocrisy,” he wrote. Falls concluded that he had hope that “members of minority groups are far more likely to be attracted to Catholicism than to Communism, provided the lives of Catholics are the fulfillment of the doctrines of Catholicism. There is the rub!”²⁹

The lessons the two hundred and fifty priests at the summer school learned were far different from what most of them would have been exposed to in their home parishes. The school fused together labor and race, and blamed structures, not black individuals, for the lower economic status of African Americans. It also asserted that as God demanded justice for the white workingman, so he demanded justice for the black one. This school was the beginning of powerful dynamic of change.

The school also gave legitimacy to the general thrust of Catholic Social Thought that the Catholic Worker and CISCA promoted. Falls recalled, for example, that two parishes that were “proudly speaking of their Catholic Labor Schools” in 1938 had “turned us down flatly in 1934” when Falls tried to convince them to sponsor a labor school. “Much,” Falls concluded in an understatement, “had developed in the Catholic fold so that now the schools were respectable.”³⁰

While effective in sensitizing Catholics to interracial justice, pairing interracial justice with anti-communism could also maintain a racial hierarchy of white people “rescuing” hapless black people from the grip of Communism. In other words, pursuing interracial justice was not necessarily an end in itself, worthy of pursuit because of the inherent dignity of all people. Instead, by justifying it as a weapon against Communism, it reduced black people’s agency and

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 605.

subsumed their dignity, indeed their membership in the Mystical body, below the battle against communism.³¹

As formal education occurred at the seminary, other informal networks drew priests onto the edges of Catholic interracialism. Falls, for instance, not only was able to second-handedly influence priests at the summer school, he also met with a group of them to talk about Catholic interracial justice. He probably gained access to them because of his Catholic Worker experience, and Hillenbrand may have supported his efforts. The details here are hazy. In a 1990 interview, Falls recalled getting together with seminarians on their vacations in someone's home and sitting up "until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning discussing racial relations. First opportunity they had of discussing it."³² Falls also wrote in his memoir that in 1937, he met with a group of about 30 seminarians, including John Egan and John Joseph Dillan, in the home of Martin Ferrell, discussing human relations. Farrell would later become a very active priest in black neighborhoods and the source of many Catholic converts and Egan a community organizer and proponent of Catholic interracialism.³³ Falls recalled that when many of those seminarians graduated in 1938, they "gave a lift to Fr. John Hayes and a few priests who had been constantly working with us."³⁴ Hayes, who was a faithful Catholic Worker participant on Taylor Street, had

³¹ In CISCA, for instance, teachers seemed to be most concerned about African Americans in the face of the communist threat. The brief of the second day's meeting at the 1940 Summer School of Catholic Action, which Carrabine organized, reported that the students discussed the dangers of Communism spreading among the "underprivileged." They concluded that "the negro population is one of the greatest fields for communistic activity because they are underprivileged socially. The negro has an inferiority complex. Catholics are just as bad as other groups in failing to live up to their doctrine of brotherly love." Box 3, folder 8 in CISCA, LUA (Chicago, IL). Only by the mid-1940s would the Summer Schools for Catholic Action would offer electives on interracialism. Dan Cantwell, a CISCA alumnus who became a priest, taught a class on interracialism in 1946, and that year the summer school advertised a group called Friendship House, which was "famous across the country for its work in the field of inter-racial problems. The ad reflected the coupling of race and class, however, as it highlighted the work of Friendship House "on Chicago's South side amidst the worst of American slums." Box 3, folder 9, CISCA, LUA (Chicago, IL).

³² Falls, "Oral History Interview," 8.

³³ Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*, 283-88.

³⁴ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 588.

been running a study club for priests.³⁵ The Catholic Worker, indeed, continued to teach white Catholics about interracial justice.

C. Chicago's Catholic Worker Promotes Ecumenical Interracialism

For Falls, the Catholic Worker house was primarily an interracial center and a place to shape people intellectually more than it was the more typical Catholic Worker house of hospitality. Despite the poverty in Chicago across races because of the Depression, he “did not think there was a crying need” for traditional houses of hospitality which would give away bread and provide shelter for those in need.³⁶ Falls appreciated Catholic Worker houses around the country which provided these services, but he wanted to support a group that would “work to change a society into one that would permit minorities to bake their own bread.”³⁷ To do so, Falls held clarification of thought meetings and exposed the white Catholic Workers to an entirely new interracial world. To affect society’s institutions, including the Church, he would have to educate the people who would be shaping those institutions. Falls thought that “what we needed in Chicago more was an avenue for bringing together white and colored Catholics for mutual enterprise.”³⁸ Falls did not, however, limit his focus to Catholics alone. He sought to make connections between the Catholic Worker house, Protestants, and Jews.

Falls’s stance on what would constitute Chicago’s Catholic Worker would become a source of conflict between Falls and Day, but for a few years, Falls had nearly free reign in influencing the Catholic Workers to think about racial discrimination. Cogley called the house a “conference center with religious overtones” and claimed that “there was little or no emphasis on

³⁵ Box 7, folder 4, CISCA. The letter is not dated, but I think it is from May, 1938.

³⁶ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 586.

³⁷ Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 133.

³⁸ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 586.

the themes of the *Catholic Worker* [the newspaper] itself.”³⁹ Of this season, Falls wrote “I had the feeling that Dorothy Day was not particularly pleased with the fact that we were not throwing a great deal of support into the House of Hospitality where people who were down and out might find shelter and food.”⁴⁰

Falls and the other Catholic Workers adopted several strategies to push the interracialist agenda. Falls focused first on the issue of segregation and discrimination in Catholic schools, which he and his son had experienced first-hand. Several of the young people who came to the Catholic Worker house were still in high school, and, as Falls recalled, he encouraged them to “ask certain questions. Of course, all through your religious training there are plenty of opportunities to ask ‘why?’ The universal church. Why is it that the blacks don’t go to our parish then?” As the interracial program spread through the Catholic Worker and through CISCA, a handful of nuns – who did most of the teaching in Catholic schools – began to embrace the Catholic interracialist ideal, and some of them indulged students in a conversation about discrimination in Catholic institutions. Falls relayed that if all went according to plan, when the mother superior objected to discussions about the school’s discrimination, the nun would say “but the children are asking. I have to answer it.”⁴¹ Many of these same students would be the ones who put forth the resolution on integration in Catholic schools at the Catholic Youth Senate in 1940.

Modeling interracialism was a key strategy for Falls and the Catholic Worker. According to our standards today, it might not be a big deal to have black and white people simply being

³⁹ Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale*, 10. Falls’s influence was also national, with his frequent column in the *Catholic Worker* paper on the interracial scene in Chicago, which often deplored the state of Catholic interracialism. Falls wrote a “Chicago Letter” to the Catholic Worker paper, including mention of efforts in Chicago on behalf of CW, and often giving an interracial report, which was not very often good.

⁴⁰ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 587.

⁴¹ Falls, “Oral History Interview,” 8 in Falls, Arthur, Interviewed by Rosalie Troester, MUA (Milwaukee, WI).

together, but it was significant in the late 1930s. They modeled interracialism in a number of different ways. In 1938, they hosted “A Hearing on Interracial Justice,” at St. Elizabeth’s hall. The event was a sort of mock trial which made a case for interracial justice, which the Hon. John B. McGoorty, judge of the Superior Court, presided over. McGoorty would later become a member of a Catholic interracialist organization. What Falls thought was the most significant aspect of the event was that white and black CISCAN girls worked together as ushers for the evening. As “simple as this form of cooperation was,” Falls recalled, “it was something new in 1938.”⁴² They also hosted musical performances of people from a variety of backgrounds. Both events were meant to be a “visible demonstration of interracial cooperation,” and also draw in people who might not participate in the Catholic Worker.⁴³

Falls and the Catholic Worker also brushed the edges of one of the biggest racial bugaboos of the time: interracial dating and marriage. Falls had a history of integrating dances. When he and his sister Regina were in high school, they would frequently be the only two black children at the dances in their all-white Englewood high school. Now, he had influence over several other people, and he organized interracial groups from the Catholic Worker to attend Catholic dances which, to put it mildly, “seemed to surprise” the other white Catholics attending the dance.⁴⁴ Making dances interracial fit into Falls’s larger strategy of challenging the normativity of segregation. As he had refused to leave his white parish, protesting segregation by his very presence, he refused to let white Catholics remain comfortable in segregation. He wanted racial mixing to become normal for all people.

Friendships based on mutual enjoyment instead of partnerships based on a common goal were a key component of normalizing integration, and friendship became an important

⁴² Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 589.

⁴³ Ibid., 589.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 565.

foundation for Catholic interracialism. By 1938, the group decided they should try to gather interracial groups for fun, outside the usual work and activism of the Catholic Worker. The Catholic Workers decided to host interracial folk dances with the Co-Op Youth League. This expansion of their focus gave people who might not be really attracted to the Catholic Worker movement itself opportunity to have interracial experiences.

Despite all the lay-led activities, Catholic interracialism under the Catholic Worker was still limited by the structure of the Catholic Church. They could protest the lack of integration in parishes and schools and draw more priests and nuns into sympathy with Catholic interracialism, but residential and school segregation still limited opportunities to practice interracialism. “In the Catholic School system there was absolute jim-crow, so that the nuns and the priests who were favorably inclined toward the Catholic Worker had no colored students with whom they could deal; nor were there colored parish[i]oners in some of the parishes of the few priests who were interested.”⁴⁵ Nonetheless, Falls and the Catholic Workers pressed on and began to develop what would become one of the most important components of Catholic interracialism: its connections to the liturgical movement.

In part through the Catholic Worker in Chicago, developments in Catholic interracialism connected with developments in the liturgical movement. Catholic Action, in general, supported the liturgical movement, which favored greater involvement of Catholics in the liturgy of the Church, as well as in society as Catholics. Sister Cecilia and Father Carrabine of CISCA were connecting their students to the movement. Through the Catholic Worker, Falls came to know a number of leading priests and connected with them through Catholic interracialist vision. These priests and others exposed him to a new type of thinking: the liturgical movement. He read Jacques Maratain, material published by St. John’s Abbey’s Liturgical Press in Minnesota, and

⁴⁵ Ibid., 565.

the social encyclicals of the popes. Father Paul Hanley Furfey from Catholic University and Sister Cecilia's friend Dom Virgil Michel of St. John's visited the Catholic Worker the in winter of 1936-37. As Falls reported, they "gave us a good deal on which to ponder, and left us with a glow which spurred us on to renewed efforts."⁴⁶ Their stopping by was part of the larger ethos of the Catholic Worker in which (often prominent) people from all over the country stopped by houses. Falls and Michel became friends, and the Fallses visited Michel on a family vacation. Falls was able to speak with several priests, nuns, and seminarians at St. John's and St. Benedict's, St. John's's sister school. Falls called Michel "one of the few persons who commanded my utter respect and devotion."⁴⁷

Falls's and Catholic interracialism's connection with these national networks highlights an important aspect of Catholic interracialism: as in the Federation era, with the Catholic Worker Catholic interracialism continued to draw on sources from beyond any parish boundary. The ideas and people shaping and practicing Catholic interracialism were not available within the parish. In the late 1920s, Falls had to go outside his parish and even beyond the city's black parish to connect with the national network of the Federated Colored Catholics. Now, the Catholic Worker opened doors for him to connect with a broader spectrum of Catholics. This was powerful. As Falls read the literature of the liturgical movement, he discovered a world of activist Catholics committed to participating in the faith in new and more active ways. Falls and the other Catholic Workers began to eat what would become the diet of Catholic Workers across the country, but they had not found the sustenance at their local parish.⁴⁸ As Falls recalled, "I often wondered whether the ordinary priest with whom I came in contact, ever read this

⁴⁶ Falls, "Chicago Letter."

⁴⁷ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 593.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 566.

material.”⁴⁹ While the ordinary priests mattered, the Catholic interracialist movement did not need them to develop. The Catholic Worker was not a parish-based movement, as Falls’s Our Lady of Solace chapter of the FCC had been. Since it was city-wide and national, a small number of people interested in Catholic interracialism and Catholic social action more broadly were able to connect with one another and plant the seeds for great change.

In addition, the Catholic Worker, like the Federation, did not remain in Catholic-only circles. As a convert, Dorothy Day was not committed to the Catholic isolationism of some of her Catholic peers, and as we have seen, neither was Arthur Falls. Falls had recently become a member of the Protestant Chicago Church Federation’s Interracial Commission which created “Race Relations Sunday,” and had worked with his friend Dr. John A. Lapp who he met at the City Club in the Chicago Roundtable of the Conference of Christians and Jews. Falls and fellow black doctor Roscoe C. Giles both shared the impression the latter group had “studiously avoided incorporating Negroes into their programs.”⁵⁰

Through the Catholic Worker, Falls connected many young Catholics with his network of liberal social activists. Falls’s overall strategy with the Catholic Worker group was to bring young white Catholics along on his journey of working with non-Catholics. As Falls wrote, “What I was interested in doing was incorporating Catholic activity into the overall activity. I didn’t see any reason to have a Catholic interracial activity sitting all by itself separate from the other activity which was going on. And so what I did was to merge it. And I did it in many ways.”⁵¹ He invited non-Catholics to the Catholic Worker meetings and, as he said, “I had a regular post-graduate course by bringing these people in.” The non-Catholics Falls brought to the Catholic Worker house reflected his class position and network; they were all well-educated

⁴⁹ Ibid., 567.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 629.

⁵¹ Falls, “Oral History Interview,” 7.

rabbis, ministers, social workers, doctors, and lawyers. This exposure to non-Catholics was new for many of these young white Catholics: “a lot of the young people had never, believe it or not, had never talked to a non-Catholic.”⁵²

At the Catholic Worker, then, Falls “made a deliberate effort to bring Jews and Catholics together with some success.”⁵³ When the group began a credit union, Falls advertised it as open to all, regardless of race or creed.⁵⁴ The group held a series of discussions on the content of America, and group members had to research different ethnic groups’ contributions to the nation which “required a great deal of reading on our part, so that all of us learned a great deal about members of other ethnic groups.”⁵⁵ Falls efforts paid off. As he recalled, “Interestingly enough also, I was able to interest quite a number of my Jewish friends in the Catholic Worker Movement.”⁵⁶ Falls also had success in interesting Catholic folks in work against anti-semitism. Ed Marciniak, one of the young white Catholics who joined Falls at the Catholic Worker, became chair of the Chicago Committee of Catholics for Human Rights (which was first called the Committee of Catholics to Fight Anti-Semitism).⁵⁷

Falls also brought young Catholic Workers to non-Catholic meetings related to interracialism. As Falls recalled, when he brought white Catholic students to non-Catholic events and introduced them as Catholics, “people would say, ‘you must be kidding!’”⁵⁸ In just its first few months, members of the Catholic Worker addressed groups at the Cosmopolitan Community Church (5249 S. Wabash), the Olivet Institute Free Forum, the Committee of South Side Citizens, the Hyde Park Youth Council, and the Chicago Round Table of the National

⁵² Ibid., 7.

⁵³ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 557.

⁵⁴ Arthur Falls, “Chicago Letter,” *Catholic Worker* 4, no. 11 (March, 1937).

⁵⁵ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 557.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 566.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 606.

⁵⁸ Falls, “Oral History Interview,” 4.

Conference of Christians and Jews.⁵⁹ None of these groups was Catholic. Father John Hayes became the first priest, to Falls's knowledge, to attend an Urban League board meeting. All of this mixing among activists was truly radical. It shocked non-Catholics and also provided an opportunity for Catholics to see a glimpse of activism outside the Catholic fold.

Falls hoped that by connecting Catholics to non-Catholics, he would help break down racial and religious barriers. His actions highlight the broader theme of ecumenism within Catholic interracialism. The discrimination minority groups expressed toward one another "interested" Falls. As he recalled, "as I came more and more in contact with Catholics I was impressed with the amount of anti-Semitism which existed among them. I had already noticed the amount of anti-Catholicism among Jewish people."⁶⁰ When he participated in a radio broadcast called "A Catholic Looks at Anti-Semitism" as a way to fight the influence of the anti-semitic and wildly popular Father Charles Coughlin, he began to feel the wrath of his fellow Catholics in ways more threatening than their response to his interracialism. "With the announcement of this broadcast," Falls recalled, "I began to receive anonymous communications and numerous telephone calls including threats of bodily harm from the Disciples of Love and Charity who called themselves disciples of Fr. Coughlin. This was only the beginning of many anonymous communications both by mail and by telephone from irate co-religionists of mine."⁶¹

The Chicago Catholic Worker movement also supported the labor movement in Chicago, building Catholic interracialism into their efforts. This support of labor not only reflected Day's position that the Church should be with the workingman, it also reflected Falls relationship to the Urban League and the developing liberal Catholicism more generally in Chicago. Falls had helped the labor movement at several intervals during the 1930s. During the 1937 Republic

⁵⁹ Falls, "Chicago Letter."

⁶⁰ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 557.

⁶¹ Ibid., 605.

Steel strike, for instance, Catholic Workers supported the strikers with soup lines, and Falls provided medical care.⁶² They also tried to educate Catholics about labor, as well as about the evils of poll taxes and lynching, through pamphlets and selling the *Catholic Worker*. Falls recalled that many of the Catholic clergymen and laymen he met were not familiar with Catholic social teachings, the encyclicals, the right of workers to organize, and the “responsibility of Catholics to ensure that working people had adequate working conditions.”⁶³

Thus Falls used the Catholic Worker house to be a sort of school in interracialism. In doing so, he began to build bridges between white Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, but always toward the end of improving Negroes’ and other’s access to the fruits of American prosperity. Despite these successes, Catholic interracialism at the Catholic Worker struggled in two ways. First, Falls struggled to attract black people to the Catholic Worker. While the Federation had hardly been able to recruit white Catholics, try as he might, Falls could not attract many other black Catholics to the Catholic Worker. The Catholic Worker’s Catholic interracialism, therefore, found expression more in word than in deed. Second, Fall’s version of the Catholic Worker fundamentally conflicted with Dorothy Day’s. For Day, voluntary poverty was at the heart of the Catholic Worker spirit, a decision to give up access the halls of power and instead witness for justice by standing outside the system. Falls, on the other hand, wanted access to that same system. Soon enough, this fissure at the core of the Catholic Worker, between a Catholic interracialism that would improve the lot of black people and work within the system and a Catholic Worker vision of poverty, came into the open.

⁶² In 1934, Falls was on the committee for support of the Marine Workers who were trying to organize in the Great Lakes area. In 1937, he was a member of the Citizens Emergency Committee on Industrial Relations, in 1938, he helped Willard S. Townsend with the International Brotherhood of Redcaps (Falls had worked as a redcap one summer during medical school), and in 1938 worked with Niva Ryan, President of the Domestic Workers Association. With that group, he also worked with Thyra Edwards, president of the Citizens Committee to sponsor a conference on domestic service at the Women’s Trade Union League. He financially supported the Southern Tenant Farmers Union’s National Sharecroppers Week in 1939, 1940, and 1941 (ibid., 642-44).

⁶³ Ibid., 571.

D. Challenges to the Catholic Worker's Interracialism

Many of those same priests and laypeople were not receptive to the Catholic Worker. Perhaps because of Falls's focus on upwardly-mobile Catholic interracialism and aversion to voluntary poverty, Sister Cecilia Himebaugh of CISCA did not think Falls was living out the Catholic Worker vision. Shortly after Falls founded the Catholic Worker, Himebaugh wrote to Michel, "I suppose you heard that the Catholic Worker has started a branch here. One of the CISCA boys attends; thinks Dr. Falls is a cultured version of Peter Maurin. Poor Peter! He never seems to make much of an impression on this 'tough' old city."⁶⁴ Himebaugh also thought Falls was much too eager to push the interracial agenda. She said Falls was "a bit hasty" because he "interpreted a scarcely intimated desire of the Pres. of Rosary College as a decision to open their doors to negro students and published the news in the Catholic Worker."⁶⁵ Rather than expressing frustration, as Falls had, about the discrimination black students faced, Himebaugh showed more concern about a press release Falls gave that Rosary would be integrating. "I have always felt that the C.W. group here in Chicago," Himebaugh told Michel the following month, was "almost pure theorists playing at a fad for a time – at least they did not seem to me to have the genuine fire of the New York variety."⁶⁶ Michel defended the Chicago group, saying he thought "they had worked out some splendid practical projects suitable to their conditions and had also tackled the theoretical side of things very properly."⁶⁷ He understood Falls's position.

Other Catholics not associated with the Catholic Worker disliked its interracial focus as well, and Falls cited several examples of white Catholics who attacked the Catholic Worker because of its interracialism. First, the group's insistence on making every event interracial –

⁶⁴ July 25, 1936 in box 7, folder 4, CISCA.

⁶⁵ August 9, 1936 in *ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Letter not dated, but probably in December, 1937 or January, 1938.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* February 4, 1938.

even if it meant that only one black person was present – upset white people. As Falls commented, “In view of the almost complete segregation which existed in the Catholic fold in Chicago this was accepted as a direct challenge to the existing order.”⁶⁸ Second, Falls’s parish leadership rejected the Catholic Worker. When Falls asked to present on the Catholic Worker at a meeting of the parish’s Holy Name Society, “after a good deal of hemming and hawing,” the assistant pastor said no. It is likely that Falls’s abrasive determination on discrimination in the parish made the priest wary. As Falls recalled, Nealis said “I am not going to have you coming in to stir up my men to do something.”⁶⁹ Whether it was fear of interracialism or fear of communism remains unclear, but Falls pointed out that the “worker” part of the Catholic Worker made some white Catholics cry “communism.” Finally, Falls claimed that Mundelein’s hierarchy tried to close the Catholic Worker house by attacking racial division. He recalled that the chancery “called in some of the white men and tried to get them to disassociate from us.”⁷⁰ But those white men would not be dissuaded.

Falls could handle pressure from the hierarchy, but he could not overcome the hierarchy to attract black people to the Catholic Worker movement. Nearly as much as Falls had failed to attract white Chicago Catholics to the Federated Colored Catholics, he struggled to attract black Catholics to the Catholic Worker movement. Although white college students, young adults, seminarians, and priests were coming to the storefront Catholic Worker meetings from all over the city, no other black people besides Falls and his wife regularly participated in the group’s activities. This failure had to do both with the small pool of black Catholics to draw from, as well as the racism of the hierarchy, which was most obvious in school discrimination. As Falls mentioned frequently most black Chicagoans “didn’t trust Catholics. They didn’t trust the

⁶⁸ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 572.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 570.

⁷⁰ Falls, “Oral History Interview,” 13.

Catholic Church. . . . People said, ‘Yeah Falls is a Catholic. But he really doesn’t represent the Catholic Church. The things he says are not what the Catholics are saying.’ . . . even when I quoted the precepts of the Church, they’d say ‘Yeah, but that’s not what the archbishop is saying.’⁷¹ The Catholic Worker’s location in a neighborhood with a large black population, however, could have enabled some African Americans to participate.

But Falls’s class bias limited his effectiveness in recruiting these lower-class black neighbors to the Catholic Worker. When John Bowers started a program for local children around the Taylor Street house, the Catholic Worker had an opportunity to engage with black children and parents.⁷² But although the children’s programs attracted some of the parents, Falls believed that these lower-class participants had little to offer to the Catholic Worker house. As he recalled, they “were not on the same cultural level as the members of the high school and college groups who were participating in the Catholic Worker Movement and who were furnishing services. In other words the colored children and adults in this part of Chicago were really recipients and not contributors in the program of the Catholic Worker group, with the exception of Mrs. Beguesse, an able civic leader who lived on the west side and who did furnish some leadership.”⁷³ Falls wanted black middle-class Catholic leaders to partner with these young middle-class white Catholics to change the city and could not imagine the local children and their parents as anything more than recipients of the Catholic Worker’s good deeds. In his mind, they were not partners in the interracial work to be done. Whatever potential was present for organizing among black lower-class families was lost on Falls.

⁷¹ Ibid., 22.

⁷² Bowers kept the Taylor Street Catholic Worker house running until his death in 1950. He began a day care center, organized sewing classes for young girls, and helped integrate the previously all-white St. Ignatius school by paying tuition for a number of black students. See F. J. Sicius, "The Chicago Catholic Worker," in *A Revolution of the Heart*, ed. Patrick G. Coy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).

⁷³ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 565-66.

Dorothy Day's position on voluntary poverty, expressed in the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, may also have kept black Catholics away from the Catholic Worker house. As much as Falls tried to ignore it, Day was committed to voluntary poverty while he, and most of Chicago's other upwardly mobile Catholics, were not. As Frank Sicius, the historian of the Chicago Catholic Worker, has written, "the rejection of white middle-class values represented by the Catholic Worker was a luxury blacks could not yet share," and the white participants in the Catholic Worker movement who had fled bourgeoisie values were not "going to lead a stampede of blacks in the opposite direction."⁷⁴ Voluntary poverty, or a commitment to live with poor people as they lived, was a fundamental tenet of Dorothy Day's program. Day wanted to depend on God to provide for the Catholic Worker and fully identify with the poor. Unlike Day who at least had the privilege her white skin offered her, white racism and discrimination severely limited Falls's income prospects and, although he was better off than most of his Negro peers, he had to fight for every dollar he earned. Voluntary poverty did not appeal to Falls, and it is unlikely that it appealed to many other black Chicagoans.

The divergence between Falls and Day over voluntary poverty also reflected a difference of opinion over how to accomplish their work and what constituted the goal of that work. Day, as a radical, used voluntary poverty as a way to identify with the poor and witness against capitalism. Falls, on the other hand, wanted to change his position and that of other African Americans so they had an equal shot at the material fruits of American society. Early on in his career, he had witnessed money's power to integrate a hospital. An all-white hospital's rich benefactor had sent one of his black servants for care. When the hospital refused to serve the black servant, the man called the hospital and said that unless they took care of his servant, he would stop donating

⁷⁴ Francis J. Sicius, *The Word Made Flesh: The Chicago Catholic Worker and the Emergence of Lay Activism in the Church* (University Press of America, 1990), 344.

money. The hospital, of course, admitted the patient. As Falls observed, “here again the matter of money seemed to change people’s policies.”⁷⁵

But as Falls knew well, Day’s radical witness and influence had not been effective in changing hospital policies. At one point while visiting Chicago, Day hurt her arm and was taken to Little Company of Mary, a local Catholic hospital. “The religious sisters who staffed the hospital were in a flutter over this icon who represented their most deeply felt values. She was New Testament faith personified. They would be honored to treat her.”⁷⁶ Day then asked to have her personal physician in Chicago, Dr. Arthur Falls, care for her. Once the sisters realized their hero’s personal physician was black, they expressed “great consternation.”⁷⁷ They permitted Falls to perform the operation, but when he applied for staff status at the hospital after a decent interval, the sisters refused to hire him. Their respect for Day did not extend to hiring her Negro physician. Falls knew from this experience and others that “Negroes themselves seemed to have so little power” when it came to human relations, and he lamented that “many of the white people who were usually interested in human relations and who participated on boards such as the Urban League were people of great social vision but not of great economic power.”⁷⁸

The issues of voluntary poverty and strategy for change drove a wedge between Falls and Day. For Day and many white Catholics she influenced, Catholic interracialism was part of a larger struggle which must be fought through poverty and witness. For Falls, voluntary poverty would limit Catholic interracialism too much. Yet despite their different agendas, Falls esteemed Day. He recalled, “she was different from me as day is from night. My program was entirely different. I had a lot of respect for her. She was sincere. Normally the sincere Catholics

⁷⁵ Falls, “Unpublished Autobiography,” S3/8. The man’s name was H.L. Smith.

⁷⁶ Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 124; Falls, “Memoir Manuscript.”

⁷⁷ Falls, “Memoir Manuscript,” 586.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 318.

interested in race were an anomaly, and there's no question about her sincerity. And there's no question about her aggressiveness. She was not fearful to speak out. A rare person to me."⁷⁹

But Falls's Taylor Street Catholic Worker house was not big enough for Day's vision. Day responded by starting a new house. When Day came to Chicago in May 1937, not even a year after Falls had opened the first Catholic Worker house, "she was," according to John Cogley, "obviously not happy about the way things were going on Taylor Street." The activities of the group "were not precisely Dorothy Day's idea of how a Catholic Worker house should function in the second largest city in the nation."⁸⁰ Day was staying at St. Elizabeth's rectory and decided that the parish needed a Catholic Worker house to supplement the work of the church. According to John Cogley, "completely without consultation with the Taylor Street group, she paid a few month's rent on a ramshackle apartment near St. Elizabeth's rectory, with no specific purpose in mind."⁸¹ The apartment was at 4103 S. Wabash Avenue, about a block from St. Elizabeth's. Day asked Cogley and Paul Byrne, a sophomore at Loyola University, to move into the house and run it after she left. The opening of the house was interracial, reflecting the character of the neighborhood and the Chicago Catholic Workers. Black students from St. Elizabeth's high school and white students from St. Xavier college worked together to clean up the apartment. Day thought that this might be a way to encourage more African Americans to be involved in the Catholic Worker. Falls, for his part, "did not feel that this was a wise move but decided to wait and see."⁸² Perhaps Falls knew something about the power dynamics in St. Elizabeth's parish, and thought that the priests might not tolerate a strong, lay-led group.

⁷⁹ Falls, "Oral History Interview," 21.

⁸⁰ Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale*, 11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸² Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 573.

The Catholic Worker house in St. Elizabeth's parish lasted only a short while. According to Cogley, Father Drescher, SVD, the parish priest, thought the Catholic Worker house duplicated services the parish already provided. "The rectory was open to all, and it teemed with life. There was always bread and ham or cheese on the table for unannounced visitors and plenty of lively conversation. . . . In such a parish, the Catholic Worker was something of a fifth wheel."⁸³ Drescher told Cogley he saw no need for a Catholic Worker house in the parish, and when the rent Day had put down on the Wabash apartment was out, Cogley and Byrne left, and "the ghetto experiment would have to be counted as a failure."⁸⁴ For the immediate future, Cogley's life centered again around the Taylor Street house.

Enough of the young white Catholics in the Catholic Worker wanted to follow Day's practice of voluntary poverty and hospitality, though. After the summer of 1937, Ed Marciniak and Al Reser rented an old bakery on Blue Island Avenue a few blocks from the Taylor Street house and opened the St. Joseph House of Hospitality where poor people could come and stay. In 1938, Cogley and Marciniak began a paper they called the *Chicago Catholic Worker*. Despite the divide, though, Falls and the other Catholic Workers remained close and partnered in several endeavors. St. Joseph's House of Hospitality on Blue Island is the one usually remembered as the first Catholic Worker house in Chicago, but Falls's house on Taylor Street served as the incubator for the Catholic Worker in Chicago and gave a strong dose of practical Catholic interracialism to the young white people.

E. From Mundelein to Stritch: Smoothing the Path for Catholic Interracialism

⁸³ Cogley, *A Canterbury Tale*, 14.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

As Falls knew all too well, the Church hierarchy placed limits on the scope of Catholic interracialism's practice. Mundelein's influence was mixed. He had played a significant role in helping set up a binary racial hierarchy in Chicago, but by appointing Hillenbrand as rector of St. Mary's Seminary, Mundelein opened the doors to a generation of priests to learn about interracial justice. When he died in 1939, Falls felt little sorrow and recalled that "we were hopeful that his successor would take a far more dynamic stand on human relations."⁸⁵ A look at Mundelein's racial record, Falls suggested, revealed he was hardly a true Catholic. Shortly after Mundelein's death, Samuel Stritch was named Archbishop of Chicago to replace Mundelein. Late in his life, Falls argued, "There isn't a dime's worth of difference between Mundelein and Stritch. . . . When you appealed to them, the answer was always the same. They saw themselves burdened with administrative duties all the time. They were always going to get to the race one, but the time was never ripe."⁸⁶

But contrary to Falls's assessment, there were differences between Stritch and Mundelein, and Stritch brought a laid-back style that empowered Chicago's priests and laity and enabled many Catholic interracialist developments during his tenure. Shortly after his arrival in Chicago, Stritch began to reach out to black Catholics in ways Mundelein never did. Falls was delighted when, in 1939, Stritch invited Falls to talk with two priests about setting up a Catholic booth at the American Negro Exposition the following summer. As Falls recalled, "To Negroes this represented the very first indication of awakened interest on the part of the Catholic Church in Chicago."⁸⁷ Other Catholic groups supported the fair as well. An announcement of the Catholic week at the Exposition and an encouragement to attend the fair filled the front page of the August, 1940 CISCA Alumni newsletter. Stritch participated in the ceremonies, as well as

⁸⁵ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 606.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Unsworth, *Catholics on the Edge*, 134.

⁸⁷ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 615.

Bishop Sheil and CYO alumnus and Olympic track star Ralph Metcalfe.⁸⁸ Falls was delighted when, after Stritch presided over the Midwest Clergy Conference on Negro Welfare in 1940, Stritch responded to Falls's letter of appreciation. This indicated, Falls recalled, "a radical departure from the past because Cardinal Mundelein had never answered any communications of mine." Falls heard that Stritch had given a "drubbing" to the heads of Catholic hospitals (which he could not directly control) because of their prejudice, but little change ensued.

Stritch also increased the presence of black priests and nuns in the city. Under Stritch's tenure, Father Vincent Smith, the first black priest working in Chicago since Augustine Tolton, was assigned to work in the archdiocese. Smith was a member of the Society of the Divine Word and worked at St. Elizabeth's parish. Although Falls recalled that "Mundelein reportedly refused to have any colored priests in the Archdiocese," Smith had, ironically been a beneficiary of Mundelein's efforts.⁸⁹ Smith was one of the first four black priests ordained at the order's seminary in Bay St. Louis in 1934, and Mundelein, who had been the president of the American Board of Catholic Missions, fully supported the establishment of a separate, segregated, parish in Lafayette, Louisiana, where the priests could work.⁹⁰ In keeping with Mundelein's segregation policy, these priests had been groomed to do mission work among African Americans in the South. That Smith was working in Chicago after Mundelein's death speaks volumes. But as a member of the Society of the Divine Word, he was still a missionary priest working among those considered to be a missionary population. In 1941, Chicago became home to the city's first black nuns, the Oblate Sisters of Providence. In that year as well, the Catholic Charities

⁸⁸ Box 3, folder 16, CISCA.

⁸⁹ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 615.

⁹⁰ S.V.D. H.J. Patzelt, "Colored Priests in Charge of New Parish," *Interracial Review* 8, no. 7 (July, 1935).

advertising pamphlet included one example of an integrated group, although it also showed segregated institutions.⁹¹

F. Passing the Baton

Between 1938 and 1942, the Catholic Worker houses on Taylor Street and Blue Island Avenue continued to focus on interracial justice, but increasingly did so as part of a larger project to change the world. Falls and his wife began to host a group of Catholic Workers at their house at 5917 S. Throop Street in order to have a “closely knit active group well informed on the subject of human relations and willing to seriously consider methods of approach toward improvement in this status of human relations in Chicago.” Despite Falls’ connections to the National Catholic Interracial Federation, hardly any black members of the group joined.⁹²

By the early 1940s, Falls and his wife decreased their involvement in the Catholic Worker. As the war ramped up, Falls’s work load as a doctor increased, and he secured a job as the examining physician for Quaker Oats which had just opened a plant in Chicago. He had less time for civic engagement, often staying up until two or three in the morning to finish his work, and so he had to choose even more carefully. After the Interracial Commission folded, the two began to participate in more diverse groups that focused more narrowly on human relations. Falls became active in the National Conference of Christians and Jews which worked against religious discrimination, as well as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) which worked against racial discrimination.⁹³ As the National Catholic Interracial Federation was petering out in Chicago, eventually so did Falls’ involvement with the Catholic Worker movement.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 652.

⁹² Ibid., 605.

⁹³ Arthur and Lillian Falls became connected to the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) through their connections with the University of Chicago. Although the Fallses were no pacifists, they advised the group (most of the

The Chicago Catholic Worker was facing its own struggles as the United States began to send troops to fight in World War II. The draft took many of the young men who had been leading the Catholic Worker to war, and the group on Blue Island Avenue conflicted with Day on the question of pacifism. By 1942, the Blue Island House closed. John Bowers continued to be a mainstay at the Taylor Street Catholic Worker until his death in 1950. Falls's assessment of his own and the Catholic Worker's effect on the larger Chicago scene was stark: "by and large it had not been possible to interest Catholics in the Social Action movement even into such a conservative field as Consumer Cooperatives, which, of course, were not considered to be conservative by the business interests."⁹⁵ The two exceptions Falls saw were Sister Mary Henry of Rosary College and Sister Mary Liguori of Mundelein College, both women's schools. Falls's assessment, however, was not right on target. It is true that through the Catholic Worker in the 1930s, Falls failed to end racial discrimination in the Catholic Church.

But Falls laid the groundwork for much of what would be accomplished in later years by bringing not only a theoretical, but an experiential insistence on the importance of Catholic interracialism. In the 1940s, Chicago would become the seedbed of lay Catholic Activity, and many of those organizations would be led by young men and women, religious and lay, who had grown up in CISCA, were influenced by Hillenbrand and his priests, and had either known Falls

members were much younger). In 1941, Bernice Fisher asked them to meet with the race relations cell of FOR that had just started. Falls recalled that "We were asked to orient them in terms of the problems of Negroes in Chicago and also to advise them as to field trips, study materials, and possible action. This last segment of the request stirred us mostly, as we found relatively few people who were really interested in action" (*ibid.*, 659.). In FOR, the Fallses found a way to take direct action. In 1942, they became founding members of CORE. Falls appreciated the people of CORE (and of its predecessor the Fellowship of Racial Equality) because they were eager to act on their principles; in the early 1940s, the group protested racial discrimination in Chicago's restaurants. Falls recalled that Falls thought that "in the whole history of human relations in the United States, perhaps no group has shown more dedication to the ideals and methods of non-violent direct action than the membership of CORE throughout the years." *Ibid.*, 686.

⁹⁴ Falls was still on the board of the National Catholic Interracial Federation organization in 1940, and that year the Federated Colored Catholics was reestablished in Chicago under the leadership of Dr. Taft C. Raines and Cassius J. Foster as secretary. *Ibid.*, 636.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-4.

personally through the Catholic Worker, or had a connection to the Catholic interracialist ideal though that organization. Falls had leavened Chicago's liberal, active lay Catholics with Catholic interracialism and although he did not see immediate results, these young white Catholics were changed. They had to account for racial discrimination and could no longer ignore it or claim ignorance.

Nonetheless, despite all of Falls's efforts and the changes that were occurring among Chicago's laity and new generation of priests, hindrances remained that limited Catholic interracialism's influence. First, Chicago still did not have a strong institution that could facilitate extended interactions between black and white Catholics. The Federation, which had lost steam, was mostly black; CISCA and the Catholic Worker were mostly white. Catholic interracialists needed a bridge, a way to bring black and white Catholics together. Nor had Falls been able to convince members of the hierarchy to institute interracial justice in the Catholic Church from on high. Finally, by the early 1940s, Chicago still had no strong white Catholic interracialist leader to support Falls's agenda. Still, Falls' perceptions of power that emphasized engaging in the system rather than standing outside of it was the forerunners to the liberal Catholic interracialism of the 1950s. But during the 1940s, a group of women from New York carried the Catholic interracialist baton in Chicago, merging voluntary poverty with an intense focus on interracial justice. They also solved many of the problems Catholic interracialists had failed previously to address.

The organization's name was Friendship House. Falls had learned about Friendship House in 1938 while visiting New York. He had spent had "spent an interesting one hour and one half" with the Baroness Catherine de Hueck, a refuge from Communist Russia who had recently

moved to black Harlem in New York City from Canada.⁹⁶ De Hueck's Friendship House would be the burst of oxygen that would cause Chicago's small fire of Catholic interracialism to burst into flame.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 591.

VII. BORN IN HARLEM: FRIENDSHIP HOUSE'S CHRIST IN THE NEGRO¹

An aura of mystery and passion surrounded Catherine de Hueck. Running youth clubs, a Catholic library, a clothing room, and lectures out of two storefronts which she called Friendship House, de Hueck lived in Harlem among poor African Americans in order to provide relief for their immediate needs. Most importantly to Falls, de Hueck worked ardently for interracial justice through, among other things, her monthly newspaper which proclaimed that "without interracial justice social justice will fail." In 1942, de Hueck met with Falls in Chicago. She was visiting the city to lay the groundwork for a new Friendship House, which Bishop Sheil had invited her to open.

Unlike Falls, de Hueck seemed to have an uncanny amount of influence Sheil. The day following their 1942 meeting, Falls heard that de Hueck had "obtained five scholarships out of twenty for colored youth at the Lewis Aeronautical Institute, which previously had not admitted colored Catholics."² Sheil had founded the school in 1932 outside Chicago, and for the first decade of its existence, it admitted no black students. De Hueck, it seemed, could exercise influence where Falls could not, particularly in convincing Sheil to take more of a stand for interracial justice. These five scholarships, it would turn out, were only the tip of the iceberg in the partnership between Sheil and de Hueck. Sheil would become more of a champion of interracial justice in part because of de Hueck's influence.

¹ For the national Friendship House movement, see Elizabeth Louis Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement" (Dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1977), 249-54. For more on de Hueck, see Duquinn, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine De Hueck Doherty*.

² Ibid., 694.

Falls would have been surprised at how Sheil's invitation to de Hueck had come about. Falls's – and Chicago's Catholic interracialists' – seeming good fortune was due to an unlikely source: a newspaperman named Eddie Doherty who was in love with Catherine de Hueck. Doherty met de Hueck in 1940 while on assignment for *Liberty* magazine, where he reportedly drew the highest salary of any newspaperman in the nation. While working on a story on Harlem, Doherty went to Friendship House to interview de Hueck. He left with more than a story. He left with a longing to spend more time with de Hueck, who possessed a charisma that entranced nearly everyone she met and emanated a palpable love for God. De Hueck's charisma and love for God entranced Doherty, and he would call her his "angel of Harlem." Doherty pursued de Hueck and asked her to marry him. It seemed a match made in heaven.

Except for one tiny detail. De Hueck said no. She was committed to her work in Harlem and could only have one husband: Christ. Doherty asked again, and again de Hueck said no. So Doherty left New York City and moved to Chicago, where he had grown up, to work for the new paper the *Chicago Sun*. In Chicago, he developed a relationship with Sheil, and when de Hueck came to Chicago to visit Doherty, he introduced her to Sheil, planning to have Sheil convince de Hueck to marry him.

Doherty's plan, however, backfired. As de Hueck shared her vision for Friendship House, Sheil became caught up in it. Before the meeting had ended, Sheil affirmed de Hueck's decision to remain single. After meeting de Hueck in Chicago, Sheil flew to Harlem to visit Friendship House. He hid in the back, listening to the participants' discussions in light of the tension leading up to the 1943 race riot in Harlem. Shortly after the visit, he gave de Hueck an official

invitation to open another Friendship House in Chicago's Black Belt.³ De Hueck agreed, and planned to send two of her New York volunteers to open the house.

What was most intriguing about Friendship House was its commitment to interracial living. De Hueck, who was white, lived with black people and she expected the white members of her Friendship House staff to do the same. In Chicago, Friendship House would provide the first on-the-ground model of Catholic interracial living in which white people engaged black culture, rather than black people assimilating to white culture. Always, a tension over the questions of power and assimilation lingered at Friendship House. De Hueck and her protégé, Ann Harrigan, both white, would become the most prominent voices of Catholic interracialism in the 1940s. Significantly, they merged Catholic interracialism with Catholic devotional practices and personal piety. But their practice of Catholic interracialism, although forged in Harlem and later lived out in black Chicago, upset Negro supporters of Friendship House. White Catholicism and international developments, in addition to black Harlem, influenced the development of Friendship House's interracialism.

The interracial justice Friendship House worked and prayed for matched the concerns scholars have demonstrated African Americans had in the long civil rights movement, which counters the narrative that the main white people involved in the long civil rights movement were communists.⁴ Their concerns, which included fair employment, payment, and educational opportunities, as well as an end to segregation in businesses, public places, and housing, also suggest the wide range of concerns in the long civil rights movement. Part of the Friendship House creed read:

³ Ellen Tarry, oral history interview with Lorene Hanley Duquinn, 1991, 1998.052-072, MHA.

⁴ Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City*; Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*. Biondi mentions a white Friendship House worker advocating black social equality, but she does not address the significance of religion. Biondi, 84.

AS LONG AS A NEGRO IN AMERICA HAS TO SUBMIT TO THE UNCHRISTIAN UNDEMOCRATIC LAWS OF JIM CROWISM AND SEGREGATION . . . *Friendship House has work to do.*

AS LONG AS A NEGRO IN AMERICA CANNOT VOTE . . . *Friendship House has work to do.*

AS LONG AS A NEGRO IN AMERICA HAS TO LIVE IN GHETTO-SLUMS . . . *Friendship House has work to do.*

AS LONG AS A NEGRO IN AMERICA IS REFUSED A BED IN A HOSPITAL BECAUSE OF COLOR . . . *Friendship House has work to do.*

AS LONG AS A NEGRO IS REFUSED ADMITTANCE TO A GRADE, PAROCHIAL HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE BECAUSE OF COLOR . . . *Friendship House has work to do.*

AS LONG AS A NEGRO IS REFUSED A JOB IN AMERICA BECAUSE OF COLOR . . . *Friendship House has work to do.*

AS LONG AS A NEGRO IN AMERICA IS NOT TREATED AS OUR BROTHER IN CHRIST AND A CHILD OF OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, NOR GIVEN HIS DUE DIGNITY AS A MAN, AS WELL AS HIS JUST AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS . . . *Friendship House has work to do.*⁵

Because of the strong influence of African Americans on Friendship House, its white and black members believed they must root prejudice out of the very structures of society.

They focused on the economic consequences of racial discrimination among black people and highlighted black poverty in a way that would have made Arthur Falls uncomfortable. More like Day's Catholic Worker than Falls's Catholic Worker, Friendship House disdained the notion that one should be comfortable. As Harrigan put it, Friendship House tried to help people leave "the protection of their bourgeois world" and enter the "exciting, often scary world" of Friendship House "that encouraged them to question the status quo, to feel free to bring out lingering doubts. By personal contacts, by lectures and discussions and reading they were enabled to develop a critical consciousness about the injustice, the terrible havoc prejudice

⁵ "Manifesto," *Harlem Friendship House News* (December, 1943).

worked on people's lives – white as well as black.”⁶ The women of Friendship House used their lives – where they lived, who they ate with, how they spent their time – to paint a profound moral picture of what interracial living across a variety of classes could look like. Like Falls, they made interracialism equivalent with true Christianity, proclaiming that one could not be a Christian if one did not love one's brother. By making interracialism more of a religious than a political problem, they placed it within the realm of what the Church could address.

To achieve this goal, they helped black and white people build friendships with one another in order to break down prejudice. In the context of Catholic Action, which required its adherents to not only see and judge, but to act, they believed that changed people would change society. Friendship House's members saw their primary role as changing hearts so that white and black people could love one another. By providing an interracial space where interracial friendships could occur, and by modeling those friendships, the women and men of Friendship House offered a strong witness to Catholics and non-Catholics across the nation. The theology and practice of Catholic interracialism Friendship House developed also shaped and was shaped by a variety of classed, raced, gendered, and religious concerns and dynamics. Because the women of Friendship House brought a version of Catholic interracialism to Chicago that was, more-or-less, already formed by their experiences in Harlem, it is worth pausing to consider how Friendship House's Catholic interracialism was born.

**A. “The Dynamite of Christianity can Dynamite the Dynamite of Communists”:
Interracial Justice Emerges from Social Justice**

Catherine de Hueck and Ann Harrigan, the two leading lay Catholic interracialists of the 1940s, became advocates of interracial justice only after they had spent substantial time working

⁶ Box 3, folder 10, CMAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

for social justice more broadly. They came to interracial justice in a roundabout way because the Catholic Church was so shaped by race; it was only after they submerged themselves in a black context that they saw a need for interracial justice. For each of them, their journey to interracial justice required first understanding that the Catholic faith was about serving the poor in body and in spirit. Their journeys happened in tension with the claims of Communism and in the context of the Great Depression, and they required both women to abandon the hope of a traditional married life for the insecurity of a single life, dependent on God for provision.

Unlike Arthur Falls and the Federation members who spoke up for justice because they themselves had not had it, Harrigan and de Hueck were both born as privileged members of society. Their position mirrored that of the CISCANs who would become interracialists in Chicago, but they were a generation older. Because of their age and the connections they built, they were able to build an institution that would become a laboratory of interracial relations and eventually bring it to Chicago where CISCANs and CISCA alums were exploring interracial justice in theory, but had not taken advantage of their few opportunities to live it out.

Catherine de Hueck's journey to interracialism crossed an ocean and a continent. De Hueck was born in 1896 to a Russian noble family. She married the baron, Boris de Hueck in 1912 when she was only 15 years old. Catherine would often say, "My life can be divided into two parts: Up to my marriage, it was heaven. After my marriage, it was hell."⁷ Boris De Hueck turned out to be an adulterer who sought to control his young bride, writing in a diary he gave to her, "In this book you will write day by day what has happened to you. As you know I have affection for what is mine, whether it be much or little. You will hide no bad things or even

⁷ Lorene Hanley Duquinn, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine De Hueck Doherty* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 2000), 29.

thoughts from me . . .”⁸ Boris, however, was a much less deadly foe than the rising Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

Catherine de Hueck experienced Communist persecution first-hand and she would use this experience as a key motivator in seeking social, and then interracial justice. Communists targeted de Hueck and her family because of their elite position in society, and de Hueck watched soldiers from the Red Army execute members of her family. She heard of the deaths of others. In all, they killed her brother, father, and twenty of her relatives.⁹ Then, soldiers imprisoned her and Boris in their estate, intending to starve them to death or watch them kill one another. According to her biographer, “Catherine’s body swelled, her teeth loosened, and her hair fell out in clumps.” Catherine contemplated suicide, and after three months, she would tell people, in a last gasp, she bargained with God: “If you save me from this, in some sort of way I will offer my life to you.”¹⁰

She would have a chance to fulfill this promise. Catherine reportedly became unconscious, but finally woke up to the shouts of the White Army that had come to rescue the couple. Catherine and Boris eventually immigrated to Canada, where Catherine gave birth to their only son, George, and later began to work as a lecturer on a local Chautauqua circuit. In her lectures, de Hueck portrayed herself as an exotic Russian noblewoman and often embellished the life story she shared with audiences. She called fellow Christians to care for the poor, and, not surprisingly, condemned Communism. During that time, de Hueck perfected her oratorical skills and learned to spell-bind her audiences; her experience with these lectures prepared her for

⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, 47.

⁹ Catherine De Hueck, “The Story of Friendship House,” 1939 in box 1, folder 28, Ellen Tarry Papers, Schomburg (New York). De Hueck was known to exaggerate numbers in order to make a larger point, so it is possible that twenty is not an accurate count of her relatives killed by the Bolsheviks.

¹⁰ Quoted in Duquinn, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine De Hueck Doherty*, 51.

a life time of speaking.¹¹ But while Catherine worked, Boris played. He struggled to find work and used the money his wife provided to support his mistresses. Although she was a successful speaker, de Hueck claimed could not shake the idea that perhaps she had been rescued from death for a different purpose.

De Hueck's notion of social justice was tightly bound up with anti-Communism, but it was a far cry from the McCarthyism of the 1950s. Instead of rooting out Communists, de Hueck called the Church to embrace their methods while offering a different message. In this, she was like Arthur Falls. De Hueck found her purpose in advocating for the poor. In 1932, in the midst of the Depression, she began to work for the Archdiocese of Toronto to investigate the spread of Communism. De Hueck concluded that the Church was abandoning workers while Communists were providing the poor with reading rooms and labor halls: "There he finds a warm welcome," she wrote, "good free entertainment, and mischievous propaganda sapping slowly but surely his spiritual strength. Yet, when he turns to his own, they know him not."¹² The answer, de Hueck declared, was for the Church to act like the Church and make the concerns of poor workers its own. This focus on fighting Communism, rooted in de Hueck's experience of it in Russia and Canada, would become a key theme for white Catholic interracialists in the 1940s.

De Hueck helped the poor by living with them, which would become a marker of Friendship House's devotional Catholic interracialism in the coming years. In 1933, the same year Dorothy Day started the Catholic Worker, de Hueck asked her bishop if she could move

¹¹ Ibid., 87-93; *ibid.*

¹² Quoted in *ibid.*, 121. Reflecting her context, de Hueck was virulently anti-Communist. More broadly, though, she joined a tradition of women calling the Church to care for the poor. Day preached a similar message, and they were both like union organizer Leonora Barry Lake, who wrote in 1894: "when such conditions are permitted to exist in so-called Christian communities, with only occasional and spasmodic efforts to relieve the pressing need of the multitude, whose every hour is spent in relentless and unceasing battle with the gaunt wolf that stands ever at the door? Is it any wonder that from their despairing hearts there goes up that bitter cry, 'There is no God for the poor?'" (Paula M. Kane, James Kenneally, Karen Kennelly *Gender Identities in American Catholicism* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2001), 137).

into the slums and provide shelter, education, and food for working class people who needed help. He agreed. De Hueck she left her son George to the care of Boris and his mistress and opened a settlement house that she named Friendship House. De Hueck's concern for the poor, and her desire to "live the Gospel without compromise," as she put it, would become a guiding light for her in her entire life. In her mind, the gospel, God's good news, covered broad expanses. Above all, she wanted people to fall in love with God and demonstrate this by loving other people.

De Hueck's move into Toronto's slums solidified her participation in the developing international Catholic Action movement, which, to varying degrees, also included Sister Cecilia, Father Carrabine, Arthur Falls, Reynold Hillenbrand, Cardinal Mundelein, the CISCA students, and Dorothy Day. Although these folks were scattered across continents, they drew strength from hearing about each other's work. They wrote letters to one another and read each other's newspapers. In particular, the Catholic Worker and Friendship House developed a deep connection not only because of their common cause, but because of the friendship between Dorothy Day and de Hueck. Day and de Hueck corresponded frequently. Indeed, de Hueck reflected, "I doubt if I would have persevered in the apostolate were it not for the help of these two burning apostles [Day and Maurin] of God and his love." Maurin, in particular, helped de Hueck conclude that "we were all **responsible for the state of the whole world everywhere**, for each person individually and for all collectively. We all in fact were our brother's keeper."¹³ De Hueck promoted the ideas of the Catholic Worker by distributing the paper, using it for her indoctrination of Catholic immigrant workers in Toronto. She also asked Peter Maurin, the Catholic Worker's co-founder, to speak at Friendship House. In March, 1935 Day reported that

¹³ De Hueck Doherty, "Excerpt from *Parables*," in *Comrades Stumbling Along: The Friendship of Catherine De Hueck Doherty and Dorothy Day as Revealed through Their Letters*, ed. Robert Wild (New York: St. Paul/Alba House, 2009), 23. Bold in original.

Friendship House was distributing 2000 copies of *The Catholic Worker* a month.¹⁴ Soon, these friends would live much closer to each other.

In 1936, de Hueck left Toronto in the midst of scandal, accused of being a Communist and a charlatan. Nuns across the city asked their students to pray for her soul. They thought, de Hueck told later staff workers that she was “on the high seas with \$25,000 belonging to F.H. that I was to deliver to Stalin, my destination being Russia, as I was branded a Communist.”¹⁵ More soberly, de Hueck summed up her damaged reputation for Father Carr, Friendship House’s spiritual director:

I am accused of

- i. Being a Communist boring from within
- ii. Having absconded with Friendship House money
- iii. Being an immoral and unworthy character
- iv. Seducing priests
- v. Being a Communist spy.¹⁶

With Day, de Hueck was more frank: “FH Toronto is closed down. The reasons? To you I can tell the truth: too radical Catholic Action stepping on ecclesiastical and rich people’s toes.

Priestly jealousy. That is all.”¹⁷ De Hueck had alienated the parish priests because her strong personality and radical love for the poor posed a threat to their power.

De Hueck’s handling of the scandal reflected a deep commitment to clerical authority, a commitment Arthur Falls did not share. Throughout the 1940s, the women of Friendship House in Chicago would seek to submit to Church authority, while simultaneously undermining the

¹⁴ Dorothy Day, “Day after Day,” in *Comrades Stumbling Along: The Friendship of Catherine De Hueck Doherty and Dorothy Day as Revealed through Their Letters*, ed. Robert Wild (New York: Society of St. Paul/Alba House, 2009).

¹⁵ Catherine De Hueck Doherty, “Training Directives to Directors,” 1946, in box 2001.258, Folder 25, Catherine de Hueck Doherty Papers, Madonna House Archive (Combermere, Canada).

¹⁶ Catherine De Hueck to Father Carr, November 25, 1936, in *Comrades Stumbling Along: The Friendship of Catherine De Hueck Doherty and Dorothy Day as Revealed through Their Letters*, ed. Robert Wild (New York: St. Paul/Alba, 2009).

¹⁷ Catherine De Hueck to Day, November 25, 1936, in *Comrades Stumbling Along: The Friendship of Catherine De Hueck Doherty and Dorothy Day as Revealed through Their Letters*, ed. Robert Wild (New York: St. Paul/Alba, 2009).

Church's racism. In leaving Toronto, de Hueck dealt with these accusations silently in order to not hinder the faith of others who needed to believe in an infallible Church. De Hueck claimed that Archbishop James McGuigan supported her work but she was willing to be disgraced to protect the Church's reputation. If she tried to justify herself, de Hueck told day, "it will show an Archbishop and clique of priests – and with them the human Church – just what the Communists say they are. And there you are. To the world I am a failure – a thief, a Communist spy, and immoral woman."¹⁸ To Father Carr, de Hueck wrote "My path is lonely, homeless, and penniless, with no one to whom to go but into the big, wide world like a rolling-stone. It will take courage that I do not possess."¹⁹

While personally painful, de Hueck's response suggests one way lay people interacted with the hierarchy. She always acknowledged priestly authority and, at points, seemed to crave their approval. Unlike Arthur Falls, she held a tremendous respect for priests and wanted to uphold their dignity at all costs. She would not, like Falls, name those who refused to live up to the Church's call for social justice, but she did challenge them to live the Gospel more fully, as she saw it. De Hueck wanted to protect the Church's reputation; to do otherwise would be to give ground to Communist arguments about the humanity of the Church, de Hueck believed. Her desire to not air the Church's dirty laundry reflected the forms of respectability her counterpart lay Catholics of the FCC had practiced in Chicago before Falls joined the organization.

Toronto's rejection led de Hueck to a new opportunity, closely connected to Catholic perceptions of Communist efforts among black New Yorkers. Communists, in the midst of their Popular Front efforts to partner with other leftists and work with black Americans for civil rights,

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ De Hueck to Father Carr, November 25, 1936."

were active in Harlem and their ideology was anathema to the Catholic Church.²⁰ De Hueck entered this world when she went to New York City and stayed with Day to heal and regain her bearings. While in New York, de Hueck, by chance bumped into Father John LaFarge, the champion of interracial justice who, only five years earlier, had helped engineer Thomas Wyatt Turner's ouster from the Federated Colored Catholics. LaFarge appreciated de Hueck's concern for the poor and thought she might be useful in advancing interracial justice and helping Harlem. He convinced Father Michael Mulvoy of Harlem's St. Mark's parish to invite de Hueck to set up a Friendship House in his parish to help counter Communist influences among African Americans.

Two years later, in 1938, de Hueck accepted LaFarge's and Mulvoy's invitation and moved to Harlem.²¹ Taking the name from her project in Canada, de Hueck named it Friendship House. Father Ford, who worked as the chaplain of the city's Newman Clubs, offered to pay rent on a storefront for de Hueck's settlement house. De Hueck, in turn, busied herself with getting to know her new neighbors and their history, and became a patron at her local public library. Living in Harlem meant that de Hueck submerged herself in black culture and history, made black friends, and learned quickly about America's "race problem." De Hueck's submersion in black life, preceded by a life lived for social justice, would change her profoundly. She met, as she named him, "Christ in the Negro." Soon, partly through Father Ford's Newman Clubs, partly through her speaking about what she was learning, de Hueck would begin collecting volunteers for her Friendship House project. One of those volunteers was Ann Harrigan who was fifteen years younger than de Hueck.

²⁰ See Bill V. Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999). Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Viking, 2001), 133-59.

²¹ Prior to her move, de Hueck worked abroad writing for *Sign* magazine.

Like de Hueck, the poverty of the Depression and the leftist milieu had profoundly shaped Harrigan, but in a very different context. Harrigan was born in 1911 to Irish Catholic immigrants and attended Catholic schools all the way through college. She was part of the generation of Catholics that were first making their foray into America's middle class. Like many unmarried Irish Catholic women, Harrigan taught in the public schools; she worked at Grover Cleveland High School teaching English.²² Because Harrigan came of age during the Depression era, she faced real and deep questions about the social concern of the Church which eventually launched her into an intense involvement of Catholic social thought. Like the white CISCANs in Chicago, Harrigan would be faced with a question: how to engage the problems of the world, and of her city, as a Catholic. Her first step in answering this question was to go through a crucible of fire: the allure of Communism and socialism.

During the Depression, Harrigan guiltily dabbled on the fringes of Marxism - guilty because of the profound anti-Communism Catholics expressed.²³ Harrigan's Marxist boyfriend, Harry, urged her to abandon the Church because it was not addressing the material needs of the poor. Beyond the titillating conversations with Harry, Harrigan found his Marxist critique of society very appealing because it seemed to her that Communists, compared to most Catholics she knew, actually cared for the down-and-out people in society. As she recalled, "I was getting fed up with the inaction and apathy in the Church, and I was much taken with Marxian theories concerning the reform of society."²⁴

Harrigan would say that Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker saved her from the snare of apostasy and brought her into the Catholic counter-culture. Harrigan's description was idealized: she was a bourgeoisie woman, saved from the bourgeoisie world by an exciting new

²² Campbell, "Reformers and Activists," 154.

²³ Patrick Allitt, "Catholic Anti-Communism," *Catholicity*(2009).

²⁴ Ann Harrigan Makletsoff, "Canadian Recalls Impact of Dorothy Day," *Catholic New Times* December 28, 1980.

idea. In an obituary she wrote of Day in 1980, Harrigan recalled “the thrill of that wet Saturday afternoon in 1933 when, arms full of packages, I pushed my way out of Macy’s on 34th Street and stood waiting for the rain to stop.” That afternoon Harrigan said she “heard a voice near me yelling, “*Catholic Worker!* Buy the *Catholic Worker!*” Her ears perked up. Harrigan knew of the *Daily Worker*, the Communist Party’s newspaper, but had never heard of the *Catholic Worker*. “Could I have heard right?” she wondered, “*Daily Worker*, yes – this was their favorite spot to hawk – but the *Catholic Worker*? Incredible, I said to myself, and bought the paper.”²⁵

That purchase led Harrigan into a new world of Catholic social thought and action which changed her life. She not only read that issue of the *Catholic Worker*, she went to the Catholic Worker house and began to volunteer. Through her friendship with Day, Harrigan began to live an alternate life to what she would refer to as the “bourgeoisie” manner of her upwardly mobile family. No more would she be found leaving Macy’s with arms full of packages; she had left such ways behind her. By joining the Catholic Worker movement, Harrigan came into contact with other people concerned with the poor, as well as an orbit of Catholics centered on the publishing husband-wife team of Ed Sheed and Maisie Ward. Sheed and Ward published books by influential Catholic authors who thought and wrote broadly on a number of topics, including social justice.²⁶ Radical and liberal Catholics devoured the books Sheed and Ward published, and through them gained access to European thinking on the relationship between faith, the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Prior to 1937, Harrigan read the books Sheed and Ward published, sitting under the thinking of a group of intense Catholics who were bringing their faith to bear on social, economic, and spiritual issues with what Ann called a attitude which allowed them to address the shortcomings of the Church. Authors Harrigan recalled reading included Leon Bloy, Henri Gheon, G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Jacques Maritain, and Christopher Dawson. (Ann Harrigan Makletsoff, “40 Years - from Harlem to Chicago: Living a Revolution at Friendship House,” *Commonweal* 1978, 777.) In 1937, Sheed and Ward opened a publishing house in New York and their friendship became very important to Ann. Ann Harrigan Makletsoff, Memoir, 1982-1983, box 3, folder 5a, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN); Duquinn, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine De Hueck Doherty*, 159, 87. For more on Sheed and Ward, see Wilfrid Sheed, *Frank and Maisie: A Memoir with Parents* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

intellect, and the social issues of the world. Although Harrigan had not submerged herself in the European liturgical and Catholic Action revivals like Reynold Hillenbrand, she met great European thinkers through their books. Catholics who read Sheed and Ward's books practiced an intellectual and practical faith; they read vociferously and sought to change the world.²⁷ The Catholic Worker, along with Sheed and Ward, gave Harrigan a language and a practice to connect her Catholic beliefs directly to the problems of the Great Depression, and for the next five years, Harrigan continued to teach school during the day and volunteer at the Catholic Worker House in the evenings.

Harrigan never abandoned the language of Marxism she had adopted with Harry; it colored her view of the Church and society. In her memoirs, Harrigan repeatedly commented on her disdain for the "bourgeoisie" and praised Marxists' "truly accurate mirror to our dollar-worshipping society."²⁸ Harrigan believed, though, that Catholicism in its truest form would prove Communists wrong and agreed with Peter Maurin who said "the dynamite of Christianity can dynamite the dynamite of Communism."²⁹ Communism, in Harrigan's eyes, served as a thorn in the Church's flesh to make people of faith practice the social teaching of the Church. Yet despite her concern for social justice, Harrigan had little concern or awareness of interracial justice.

B. Finding "Christ in the Negro"

For de Hueck and Harrigan to develop a deep concern for interracial justice, they had to first immerse themselves in a black context. De Hueck's experience in Harlem led her to

²⁷ Sheed, *Frank and Maisie: A Memoir with Parents*. Sheed and Ward were also closely connected with Catholics in Chicago. They often spoke to various Catholic gatherings, and their books were well-stocked at the CYO's St. Benet's bookstore. Numerous Chicago Catholics, in addition to Harrigan, mention the influence of Sheed and Ward.

²⁸ Makletzoff, Memoir, box 3, folder 5a.

²⁹ Makletzoff, "Canadian Recalls Impact of Dorothy Day."

develop a new way of seeing Jesus and black people. “Christ in the Negro” made explicit what was implicit in the Mystical Body of Christ doctrine, because it emphasized both the humanity of black people and also their divinity, which came through their identification with Christ. De Hueck used the phrase to make a laser-sharp focus on black people’s position in Christ’s mystical body. This emphasis on the blackness of Christ’s body produced two main results. First, it gave white people associated with Friendship House, who followed de Hueck and crossed racial boundaries, living with, eating with, and communing with Negroes, something to hold on to when they faced the ostracism of their white friends and family. Second, it served as a powerful evangelistic tool among white people because it connected their service to Christ in the Negro with their salvation, thus giving Friendship House increasing prominence. Christ in the Negro was one of Friendship House’s most important, and for many, most troubling, contributions to Catholic interracialism.

While Harrigan was dabbling on the secular left, de Hueck was going through a crash course in American racism that was testing her faith in the Catholic Church. De Hueck said that for her, Harlem was a “totally new situation.” She had grown up in a cosmopolitan family in Russia and throughout Europe, and her parents, “kept us from developing any kind of racial prejudice. I didn’t know what a ‘racial prejudice’ was.”³⁰ While living in Canada, she had traveled in the United States to speak, and had been shocked to learn about the depth of white Americans’ hatred for black Americans. When she moved to Harlem and began to learn more about black people’s situation and saw that the Catholic Church largely supported this injustice, she “entered a no-man’s-land of fear and doubt” and faced an “agony, a temptation, that is very hard to describe. The temptation came from seeing the evil done by people in the U.S. to the Negro and other minorities while mouthing the Gospel. This was hypocrisy. Where was God in

³⁰ Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1979), 145.

all this?”³¹ She met black people who could not send their children to Catholic school and were refused the sacraments in their local churches, and she burned with anger and sorrow. She talked with mothers superior who said admitting black students to their schools would ruin their reputations and faced priests who mocked her for being thrown out of Canada and ending up in Harlem. The emotion and contradiction of America was too much for her. “I used to lie on that linoleum [of her flat],” she recalled, “and cry out to God: ‘Why have you brought me here? Why have you asked me to try to bring racial justice to a land born from a revolution for justice?’”³²

On the other side of her initial trial, de Hueck determined to live a life that was whole and complete, not hypocritical like most white Catholics. She knew she must make white people see that Christ in the Negro required justice, and she sought to identify with Negroes and use her white skin to make their cause, and Christ’s cause, known where they would not be heard. Despite priests’ arguments that de Hueck was pushing for interracial justice too early, that she was wrong, that she was going to hell, or that mixing black and white people would do no good, she continued to speak. De Hueck thought that it was God who gave her strength: “yet, always, the Spirit urged me on and gave me courage. You have to preach the gospel without compromise or shut up. One or the other. I tried to preach it without compromise.”³³ Some white Catholics began to listen.

One of those people was a young man named Thomas Merton, who later described de Hueck’s charisma in his best-selling book *Seven Story Mountain*. In August, 1939, St. Bonaventure University in New York, where Merton was working as an English teacher, invited de Hueck to speak. Merton wandered into the hall where de Hueck was lecturing and was startled by seeing a woman on the stage. That night at Bonaventure, Merton wrote, de Hueck

³¹ Ibid., 148.

³² Ibid., 151.

³³ Ibid., 152.

“was dressed in clothes that were nondescript and plain, even poor. She had no artful way of walking around, either. She had no fancy tricks, nothing for the gallery.” But de Hueck had mesmerized the group: “the impression she was making on that room full of nuns and clerics and priests and various laypeople pervaded the place with such power that it nearly knocked me backwards down the stairs which I had just ascended.” De Hueck had a “strong voice, and strong convictions, and strong things to say, and she was saying them in the simplest, most unvarnished, bluntest possible kind of talk, and with such uncompromising directness that it stunned.”³⁴ De Hueck’s charisma needed to capture audiences since her message was so controversial.

De Hueck preached about Christ in the Negro. In essence, de Hueck made Christ black; she called him “Christ in the Negro.” De Hueck argued that Jesus Christ lived and breathed among America’s black population, and that to know Christ, America’s white Catholics must spend time with African Americans. Christ in the Negro slashed through racial hierarchies, elevating black Americans to the level of Jesus Christ, and made interracial justice essential to being a true Catholic. By not caring for black Americans, Catholics were not caring for Christ who languished, segregated in large cities and towns across America, as De Hueck wrote, by “walls of . . . prejudice and discrimination that most of us have in our hearts.”

De Hueck made serving Christ in the Negro a matter of heaven and hell. If Catholics failed to help Christ in the Negro, they would lose their salvation. The Gospels, de Hueck observed, are “perfectly clear and quite simple” about what God expects of his people, and practicing “corporeal and spiritual acts of mercy toward our brethren, especially the least of them

³⁴ *The Seven Storey Mountain* (1948), excerpted in Thomas Merton, “The Sleeping Volcano,” *Community* 37, no. 3 (1978): 6.

. . . was, and is, and always shall be a part of our faith, without which we cannot save our souls.”³⁵ His suffering would condemn American Catholics.

De Hueck ended her messages with a prophetic punch that directly applied the language of Matthew 25 to America’s racial situation:

I ended all my lectures this way: “Sooner or later, all of us are going to die. We will appear before God for judgment. The Lord will look at us and say, ‘I was naked and you didn’t clothe me. I was hungry and you didn’t give me anything to eat. I was thirsty and you didn’t give me a drink. I was sick and you didn’t nurse me. I was in prison and you didn’t come to visit me.’ And we shall say, ‘Lord, when did I not do these things?’ I would stop here, pause, and in a very loud voice, say “*When I was a Negro and you were a white American Catholic.*” That was the end of the lecture. That’s when the rotten eggs and tomatoes would start to fly!³⁶

With Friendship House, Matthew 25 became a central passage for Catholic interracialists, particularly in settings in which they were trying to convince white Americans to change their views about black Americans. De Hueck left little room for debate.

How was De Hueck, a white woman, able to portray Christ as a black man deserving justice? She was, after all, implicitly challenging common Catholic visual representations of Jesus that painted him as white.³⁷ Her strength lay in her claim to simple obedience. She described herself and her followers as almost childlike, just listening to God because they loved him. This rhetorical move shifted the authority of her message from herself to God and suggested that everyone should be able to understand and obey. She also drew on the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, whose corporate and corporeal emphases limited individualism and demanded concern for present pain: if one part of Christ’s body, in this case African Americans, was

³⁵ "The Yardstick of Heaven," *Harlem Friendship House News*, August 1941.

³⁶ de Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life*, 152.

³⁷ For more on depictions of Jesus’s body in U.S. History, see Edward Blum and Paul Harvey, *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America* (Chapel Hills: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

suffering, were, then all parts should suffer with it and work to alleviate that part's pain. Christ, the head of the body, and the Pope, Christ's visible head, demanded no less.

Despite de Hueck's good intentions, by identifying Christ in the Negro with "the least of these," de Hueck made black people victims of white prejudice and created space for white people to view themselves as Christ's saviors. The notion of Christ in the Negro put black people in a subordinate position and had the potential to limit their agency within Friendship House and in the minds of the white people Friendship House drew into the struggle. It lumped black people together and prevented the individual recognition that people like Arthur Falls worked so hard for. It also tied blackness to suffering, which many black people wanted to leave behind.

Like the priests at Hillenbrand's Summer School for Social Action, De Hueck made anti-communism central to her message of serving Christ in the Negro. De Hueck, said serving Christ in the Negro would limit Communism's spread. If Catholics really acted like Catholics by loving and helping one another, Communism would cease being a viable option for the poor. Communism, de Hueck argued, was "not only a new political and economic theory - *it is religion*." In Harlem, de Hueck proclaimed,

Poverty, misery, race discrimination bring much hardship and sorrow. Here Communists find a fertile ground for their loud claims that they have the only solution of the race problem, which, like many other of their claims, is false, for here again the Church alone has the solution. But alas, most Catholics seem to have forgotten to come and not only tell the Negro about it, but show them by example that the Mystical Body of Christ is a reality.³⁸

De Hueck meant Friendship House's "to combat atheism through love of God and our neighbor, through corporal and spiritual works of mercy, service to all men to bring, with the

³⁸ De Hueck, "The Story of Friendship House."

grace of God, all back to Christ.”³⁹ Unlike Hillenbrand’s priests, however, she had personal reasons for despising and fearing Communism. Nonetheless, de Hueck did not, as Falls did, embrace the tenets of capitalism. Like Day, she attacked America’s capitalist system that depersonalized workers and drove them away from the faith.

Although de Hueck promoted Negroes’ humanity, she did not promote integration. Instead, her initial efforts were more like those of the original FCC. She based them on a segregated model, something Cardinal Mundelein might even have approved. She wanted to support the “Negro apostolate,” or to build up black leaders to lead their own people. De Hueck’s solution for protecting Christ in the Negro from communism was to provide settlement house services to the black residents of Harlem in order to try to alleviate overcrowding, provide recreation for local residents and to build up leadership among Harlem’s youth. She became a strong advocate for black Catholic students, writing letters to schools pleading for them to admit black students. Friendship House brandished the study club as its main weapon, where members would teach Catholic youth and adults about true Catholic teachings. For the youth, de Hueck set up a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), extending Bishop Sheil’s organization into Harlem. For adults, she ran study clubs, debates, and lectures. De Hueck modeled her Friendship House on what she had observed Communists doing among the poor.

But soon, de Hueck’s strategy shifted, ever so slightly, and she began to support full and complete integration as the only way to achieve black advancement. She came to believe that without integration, Negroes would never achieve equal standing in the United States. De Hueck shifted her focus to building up an “interracial apostolate.” In addition to pouring into African Americans, de Hueck invited her white listeners to join her at Friendship House. De Hueck called it “keeping your date with Christ in the Negro.” She encouraged them to come by and

³⁹ Ibid.

bring clothing, to volunteer to run one of the clubs for youth, or to just enjoy dinner – which was often watered-down soup – with the other people who stopped by Friendship House. People responded to her call. Thomas Merton worked at Friendship House for a few weeks and seriously considered joining as a staff worker before he decided to become a monk.⁴⁰ Ann Harrigan came as well.

De Hueck's strategy of building personal relationships between people was similar to one Arthur and Lillian Falls had been practicing since the early 1930s. In November, 1931, Falls and Lil decided to inaugurate what they called an "evening of friendship." At regular intervals, they hosted a gathering of black and white friends of theirs to just be together and not discuss racial issues. Of their first evening of friendship, Falls wrote, "we had an excellent time and I think everyone was interested in the fact that a group of colored and white people who were friends (because each one there knew someone else there) could get together for an evening of friendship and not talk about 'the race problem.'"⁴¹ Falls wanted to change the institutional discrimination and racism, but he also wanted to develop true friendship between people from different backgrounds. But opportunities like those the Fallses and de Hueck offered were rare.

C. The Joys and Sorrows of Keeping One's Date with Christ in the Negro

White people who came to Friendship House experienced a mixed blessing. On the one hand, many felt that they had discovered a way of life that was right and true, and they embraced interracial justice as serving Christ himself. White and black people who came to Friendship House discovered, and helped create, an interracial world that stood in stark contrast to the

⁴⁰ Merton seriously considered serving full time at Friendship House, making it his vocation. He decided, however, to become a Trappist monk instead. See Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain: An Autobiography of Faith* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948).

⁴¹ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 397.

racially segregated Church institutions they mostly frequented. They found hope for a different way of life in that world because they could practice interracial living at Friendship House and develop an ideology that supported their decisions. Friendship House, in essence, became a place of boundary-crossing as a way to love God. But being a part of Friendship House required much of its adherents, costs that ultimately wed them more to the group and, for the white people, to Christ in the Negro. This type of Catholic interracialism could not, for those who chose to participate, be simply a passing fad, or something to talk about but never practice. Friendship House's white Catholic interracialists forged their commitment to Christ in the Negro in the fires of rejection from white Catholic society, often from their own family, friends, or parish priests. This rejection, coupled with the close relationships that grew at Friendship House made their commitment to Friendship House's Catholic interracialism, for Christ's sake, deep and hard to shake.⁴² This commitment would serve them well in Chicago, too.

One night in 1938, when she was 28 years old, Harrigan decided to go hear Catherine de Hueck speak on Christ in the Negro at a local parish. She had not heard de Hueck before. Harrigan experienced a conversion that night, which reflects how much her life was shaped the racialized Catholic Church. Despite her developing social critique and sophistication through her association with the Catholic Worker – which boasted a black and white worker clasping hands on its newspapers banner, courtesy of Arthur Falls – the injustice black Americans faced did not bother Harrigan. But de Hueck would change that. In an unpublished draft of her memoirs, Harrigan recalled that de Hueck's speech on white Catholics' participation in the oppression of black Americans had shocked her: "All kinds of mixed feelings clamored inside

⁴² Rodney Stark's discussion of religious groups' successes is a helpful context for Friendship House's strong requirements. Friendship House would fit loosely into Stark's definition of a sect, which is different than a church in that it has a greater degree of tension with the dominant culture and society. Because of this tension, adherents must give up more to be a part of a sect, so the sects grow. See Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (Rutgers Univ Pr, 2005).

me – gnawing regret, the turmoil of wondering how I ever could make amends for these terrible injustices, alternating with an immense relief at knowing that perhaps I could do something, and the sensation of sweet joy of having come upon a precious treasure – the truth.”⁴³

Harrigan’s depiction of her turn to Friendship House as a conversion experience was common among those who were, in some capacity, part of Friendship House. She, like most other Catholics – white and black – who came to Friendship House had lived their religious lives in racially separated spaces. Harrigan was the product of a racialized upbringing in which she traveled in white circles, policed by white authorities. For instance, when Harrigan’s mother found out about her desire to go to Harlem, she asked her daughter, “Have I read to you all the stories of rape and murder by Negroes in vain?”⁴⁴ Even when she ventured out into the radical Catholic left – which included few African Americans - Harrigan did not think about interracial justice because in the late 1930s, for many Catholics social justice excluded racial justice and Catholic interracial theology had not yet blossomed. Harrigan’s mono-racial experience limited her outlook, and it took a woman as charismatic as de Hueck to popularize the notion that black and white Catholics should live and work together.

But de Hueck’s charisma could only take a curious or convicted convert only so far. White people had to get to know black people in order to really be converted, and Harrigan responded to de Hueck’s invitation to visit Harlem spend time with the Negroes who frequented Friendship House.

Harrigan’s interracialist conversion led her to cross racial, theological, economic and geographic lines. Soon, she was spending every moment she could at Friendship House. Like de Hueck, Harrigan immersed herself in black culture, giving her conversion to interracialism

⁴³ Ann Harrigan Makletsoff, *Memoir*, 1982-1983, box 3, folder 05b, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁴⁴ Ann Harrigan, "A Study in Fear," 1943, in box 3, folder 22, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame: IN). Harrigan mentions her mother’s fears about rape several times in her speeches and writings from the 1940s.

true life. She learned about black history and read James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and poets like Countee Cullen and Claude McKay, who would later convert to Catholicism through his relationship with the women at Friendship House. She prayed to black saints and holy men, particularly Blessed Martin de Porres, the product of an interracial marriage, cultivated friendships with African Americans, and developed black love interests.⁴⁵ Harrigan helped lead Friendship House's CYO group, and, as her interracialist consciousness grew, began to lecture on Catholic interracialism, becoming a public mouthpiece for Friendship House's message.

Friendship House's way of life could be all-consuming for those who joined, and it required complete devotion in ways that limited a person's ability to live a "normal" life. Friendship House and interracialism, for instance, consumed Harrigan, and, while extreme, her schedule reflected the commitment of many people associated with Friendship House. As Harrigan recalled, she "ate, drank and slept Friendship House . . . spending all my waking time there except for teaching and travelling too [and] from Brooklyn."⁴⁶ Her day started at 6:30 AM and ended at midnight. Harrigan went to 6:30 Mass, commuted one hour to Grover Cleveland High School and taught from 8:25 – 3:00, commuted another hour home to make supper, correct papers, and read, then traveled another hour to Harlem. She took "a stinking subway, where perverts & drunks & drug addicts & queers & all the poor --- of rich, poor men & women swayed back and forth in the light & in the darkness." At Friendship House, Harrigan volunteered from 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM with the children, only to commute back to Brooklyn and

⁴⁵ Makletzoff, Memoir, box 3, folder 5b. Claude McKay became a Catholic and was very involved in Friendship House both in New York and Chicago. See Ellen Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman* (London: Staples Press Limited, 1956), 178, 253-55.

⁴⁶ Makletzoff, Memoir, box 3, folder 5b.

fall into bed, exhausted.⁴⁷ Harrigan's schedule would have worn even the strongest person out. After spending a summer running Friendship House while de Hueck was abroad, Harrigan described her work there as, in part, "an extended hangover – heat, noise, endless itching b./c of the bed bugs, and little sleep."⁴⁸ But throughout this busy schedule, Harrigan began to understand her faith in such a way that it became impossible to separate it from serving Christ in the Negro.

When white people spent time in black Harlem, their friends and family often questioned them about it. Harrigan's family did not think she should spend so much time at Friendship House and, furthermore, denied that to be a true Catholic, one must love Christ in the Negro. Harrigan called her mother a "great stumbling block," recounting in her diary that her mother made racist comments and could not understand why her daughter was so obsessed with the people in Harlem. Pete, Harrigan's priest brother, sat his sister down several times to try to intervene, saying she was being duped by a Communist. During her second year of going to Harlem, Pete, Harrigan mused, "told me he feared I was losing my faith! Oh, how this hurt - a priest to tell me this, shook me - and made me ask myself for the thousandth time (as he did often): who am I - that I'm so sure? So many priests and nuns are opposed to this idea . . . Who am I?"⁴⁹ Even Rita, the sister she lived with and was closest to, became angry with Harrigan when the pair discovered they had bed bugs. Rita blamed Harrigan for bringing Harlem's pests to their apartment. Nonetheless, Harrigan kept on going to Harlem in order to serve Christ in the Negro.

Although they faced steep costs for going to Friendship House, white participants also gained much from their time. For Harrigan in the late 1930s and early 1940s, de Hueck's charisma and

⁴⁷ Harrigan, "A Study in Fear."

⁴⁸ Makletzoff, Memoir, box 3, folder 5a.

⁴⁹ Harrigan, "A Study in Fear."

the safe, interracial space she created for white and black folks coming together over a meal seemed like a glimpse of heaven. The Friendship House group shared the hope that they could change the world by building cross-racial friendships and reforming themselves. From there, they planned to help rebuild all of society from the inside out. Of these early days, Harrigan wrote,

The ambience was unforgettable: walls lined with books, a place of not many lights, muted by smoke. (The “B” [de Hueck] as we called her smoked like a chimney then.) White faces, black faces, talking, laughing, friendly, sipping coffee. How simple the solution all seemed then: the sooner we of different races learned to work together, to pray together, to eat, to study, to laugh together, the sooner we’d be on the way to interracial justice.⁵⁰

Friendship House members forged an alternative community that sustained them and gave them hope.

Without a doubt, *Christ in the Negro* was not the only draw for Friendship House interracialists; de Hueck’s charisma helped make converts. De Hueck held court in Harlem, striding “around her little one room flat in Harlem like a strange goddess, puffing on cigarette after cigarette.” She crashed “petty limits” of her listeners’ “provincial world with the dynamite of her words, by the very push of a tremendous personality who thinks in terms of the cosmos.”⁵¹ Harrigan often questioned if she was putting herself through such trials because she loved *Christ in the Negro*, or because she loved de Hueck. For Harrigan,

to be in the same room with [de Hueck] was an honor - This was love, for when I had to leave on an errand or at the end of an evening, it was like putting out a fire & walking into the cold - It took no small amount of guts in those days to obey promptly & go on the errand or work over in that store - away from the glowing one who spoke so strangely, convincingly of *Christ* - was it *Christ* that attracted - or was it the lady with the blue eyes?⁵²

⁵⁰ Makletzoff, memoir, box 3, folder 5a.

⁵¹ Ann Harrigan, “The New Arch and the New Provincial,” n.d., box 3, folder 22, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁵² Harrigan, “A Study in Fear.”

In the end, although she knew the allure of de Hueck was strong, Harrigan convinced herself that she loved Christ in the Negro first.

There was never a shortage of volunteers at Friendship House. Because of her connections with Father Ford and New York's Newman Clubs, a steady stream of Catholic college students volunteered at Friendship House, in addition to the volunteers like Harrigan and Merton that de Hueck recruited while giving speeches. Some of the volunteers, like Harrigan, came consistently.

Over time, Friendship House developed a formal visiting volunteer program which drew people to Friendship Houses across the country for a brief season of service and spiritual formation. Betty Schneider and Josephine Zehnle, the first two visiting volunteers at Friendship House, first learned about Friendship House when de Hueck lectured at St. Benedict's college, which was in St. Joseph, Minnesota. St. Joseph was also the home of St. John's Abbey, where Falls's and Sr. Cecilia's friend Dom Virgil Michel lived and worked before his death in 1938. After hearing de Hueck and Dorothy Day speak at their college, Schneider and Zehnle decided to write to both women to see if they could spend the summer at one of their houses. Day was out of town and did not respond, but de Hueck wrote back, inviting them to come and work at Friendship House, and live with a black family. Schneider would eventually devote a greater portion of her life to the work of Friendship House and serve as its national director in the 1950s.

Many of the volunteers who came were women. The *Harlem Friendship House Newspaper* always described the women as attractive, intelligent, and faithful, which normalized serving Christ in the Negro and countered what might have been an implicit suggestion that women would work full time at Friendship House only if they could not find a husband. One *Harlem Friendship House News* article described how Marion Fitzgerald, a staff worker, came to

Harlem. One day, the article playfully relayed, the Holy Ghost discussed a problem he was facing with St. Joseph: “It’s that Catherine de Hueck; she keeps asking me and asking me. She says it isn’t enough that I’m down there with her in Harlem; she wants a girl to help her – someone young and pretty and clever and full of Me.” St. Joseph promptly recommended Fitzgerald for the job.⁵³

The newspaper’s depiction of the Holy Ghost and St. Joseph playing an active role in Friendship House suggests how Friendship House interwove their devotion to Christ in the Negro with the devotionism of the period. The women of Friendship House lived in a world in which God and saints regularly intervened in their lives, and in which their suffering served a greater purpose. The Friendship House staff prayed diligently to Blessed Martin, who would later be canonized, because he was the offspring of a black mother and a white father, and they fully expected that Martin would provide for them. Like other Catholics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the women of Friendship House conceptualized their suffering “as an intimate and privileged connection to the redemptive suffering of Jesus on the cross and with the company of saints in their martyrdom.”⁵⁴ Thus, when the women suffered rejection from others, they took it in stride, believing that their suffering would heal the Mystical Body.

More than any of the previous iterations of Catholic interracialism, Friendship House made practicing Catholic interracialism a tenet of Christianity. Friendship House kept following Christ at the center of its message because members believed that if Christians lived their faith, the world would be made right. “Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. Christianity has just never been tried,” said Harrigan, quoting one of her favorite authors, G.K. Chesterton.

⁵³ Peggy Parsons, “Staff Reporter: How Marion Fitzgerald Came to Harlem,” *Harlem Friendship House News* September, 1941.

⁵⁴ Orsi, “U.S. Catholics between Memory and Modernity: How Catholics Are American,” 14. See also Robert Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

Harrigan continued, “We are Christians to the extent that we not only believe but PRACTICE the belief that ALL men are our brothers.” To eradicate racial prejudice, Friendship House tried to model what it meant for members of the Mystical Body to care for one another, believing that as others practiced what they practiced, the world would be changed. According to Harrigan, Friendship House sought to heal the Mystical Body “by dramatizing in every possible way the old doctrine that all men are brothers because we are all equal in the sight of God, and therefore responsible for one another’s welfare whether that be for physical things like food and shelter or for spiritual things, like hunger for justice and the liberty of the children of God.” “Any Christian,” Harrigan continued, citing a common Friendship House saying, “who harbors race prejudice is living a lie.”⁵⁵

The Mystical Body of Christ doctrine explicitly and implicitly shaped Friendship House’s religious project. It gave life to Friendship House as its adherents tried to heal the Mystical Body, bruised and battered by racism, by serving every person as though he or she were Christ. Friendship House returned again and again to Matthew 25, in which Christ divides the sheep from the goats and sends the goats to everlasting torment because they did not care for him on earth, and brings the sheep with him to eternal glory because they did care for him.

Friendship House’s practice of the Mystical Body of Christ doctrine challenged American society and Catholicism practice. It subverted the strains of American individualism reemerging from American businesses and other sectors of society as the nation left the Depression.⁵⁶ At its core, the doctrine was corporatist because it proclaimed that Catholics could never think of themselves as individuals, but must always consider the entire Body. Harrigan made it very

⁵⁵ Ann Harrigan, "Friendship House: Laboratory of Race Relations," 1947, box 3, folder 19, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁵⁶ Wendy Wall, *Inventing the "American Way" : The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 57.

corporeal when she said, at the end of her life, “Unlike people who say my body is my own, I realized that it is only partly my own, it also belongs to society.”⁵⁷ For Harrigan in the 1940s, not only did her body belong to society, but it was woven together with society, united with it by the Holy Spirit. Since she was united with all other people, she had to tend to those relationships. This priority countered the traditional Catholic focus on one’s individual relationship with God, cultivated by saying novenas and rosaries. But for Friendship House and others living the Mystical Body, religion changed. As the priest Jack Egan’s biographer put it, these Christians knew “that an individual can have a personal relationship with God, but never an individual relationship.”⁵⁸

As it had for Ciscans, the Friendship House’s preaching of the Mystical Body empowered the laity. The doctrine gave its members the legitimacy not only to view themselves as contributing to the Church, but to challenge priests who supported racial discrimination and exclusion. They lived out a corporate expression of Catholic faith that questioned authority and did not look like the faith of a generation reared on individual piety and Mass attendance. Indeed, the women involved in Friendship House spoke like prophetic priests not only to the male and female laity, but to the hierarchy, thus contesting the social order within Catholicism.⁵⁹

The racial dynamic at Friendship House could be a hard one for young white people like Schneider, Zehnle, and Harrigan to navigate. They volunteered mostly with black children who came to the variety of clubs and activities Friendship House offered. Harrigan’s 1941 reflections on her interactions with the black teenagers at Friendship House illuminate some of the racial

⁵⁷ Ann Harrigan Makletzoff, oral history interview transcript, conducted 14 September 1983, Toronto, ed. Rosemary Frazel, Albert Schorsch Personal Papers. Later in the interview, Harrigan relates society to the Mystical Body of Christ.

⁵⁸ Frisbie, *An Alley in Chicago: The Life and Legacy of Monsignor John Egan*, 85.

⁵⁹ Unlike later civil rights advocates, the early Catholic interracialists continued to submit to church leadership, at least in their rhetoric. See also Fisher, *The Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933-1962*.

and intergenerational challenges of the relationships between the black youth and the white volunteers. She and the other white volunteers struggled to exercise their authority in the club. They were trying to teach the youth parliamentary procedures so they could run their clubs with a particular order. But the youth did not want to listen. Harrigan posed the question: “when is authority not authority? ANS: when it is white domination. As children of many of the colored have white hate so inbred in them that it is not uncommon for any attempt to keep or restore discipline to be met with, 'No white stuff's going to put their hands on me!’”⁶⁰ Harrigan reported that one white college student volunteer named Jim got into a fight with a black teenager. Ironically, the pair only stopped their scuffle when they realized the scandal it would cause to interracial justice. But since Harrigan, and many others, would not yell or hit the children, they thought she was weak. Despite the challenges, she continued to go to the clubroom, night after night, telling herself she was working for Christ, not for herself. She must show up, keep her date with Christ in the Negro to prove her own, and Friendship House’s, sincerity to the youth.

This sincerity, however, often took the form of charity not justice, which further complicated the relationship of power and dependence among Friendship House’s white volunteers and black youth. De Hueck’s connections frequently brought resources to the youth in Harlem like scholarships to a camp on Long Island or a fancy dinner out with seminarians. Rather than rejoice about the opportunities the youth had, Harrigan was ambivalent about this situation. She commented that the CYO youth, who were led by a young man named Victor Malabere, viewed “everything that [emanates] from us as a handout, and they're going to get all they can while it lasts. The Club was no exception.”⁶¹ Activities like those, Harrigan commented, bordered on charity which, she was keenly aware, many black critics of Friendship

⁶⁰ Ann Harrigan, "Ferndale - Diary," 1941, box 3, folder 22, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁶¹ Harrigan, "The New Arch and the New Provincial."

House abhorred. Harrigan knew that Friendship House had “a terrible weakness to be indulgent to the Negro, even when it fostered the tendency of the outstretched hand which intelligent, independent Negroes have always worked against as debasing.”⁶² While racism might shape all American Negroes’ lives, Harrigan knew that not all wanted charity, and the more educated ones often criticized Friendship House.

Friendship House’s practice of Catholic interracialism forced white people to cross boundaries and enter a black world. Significantly, it required white people to submit to and learn from Negroes about their experiences, which reversed, in part, the power dynamics of a Church and society that required Negroes to assimilate to white culture. This immersion experience required much of its white adherents, but they gained a sense that they were part of something much larger than themselves and earning their salvation by serving Christ in the Negro. This experience, in particular, shaped Harrigan, who would, after 1942, become a significant white spokeswoman for interracial justice in Chicago. She would transplant Friendship House’s Catholic interracialism from New York to Chicago. But she would bring with her a Catholic interracialism that was troubled by tension between Friendship House’s white and black members.

D. *Christ and the Negro* vs. *Christ in the Negro*: The Struggles of Doing Catholic Interracialism

Black critics, often deeply loyal to Friendship House and de Hueck, also shaped Friendship House’s Catholic interracialism and forced the group to consider the form and purpose of Friendship House’s Catholic interracialism. Most significantly, Friendship House’s black and white members struggled to determine the role of charity in the group’s struggle for justice. The

⁶² Ibid.

question of class, or which Negroes Friendship House should seek out, followed the question of charity. They also walked between the two poles of white people helping Negroes and Negroes and white people partnering together, loving God and working for interracial justice. Finally, Friendship House members debated the extent to which interracial justice required black people to assimilate to white culture. Friendship House required its participants to do the hard work of interracial living, dialogue, and partnership, and these tasks were not easy. Ultimately, Friendship House, while located in black Harlem, failed to draw many black people into its inner circle because of its commitment to voluntary poverty. It became a space for Catholic interracialism in black Harlem often with more white than black people participating.

One of these “intelligent, independent” critics was Ellen Tarry. Tarry was drawn to Friendship House less as a way to meet Jesus, and more because of de Hueck’s charisma, focus on civil rights, and emphasis on what de Hueck argued was true Catholicism. She first visited Friendship House at the request of her pastor, Father Michael Mulvoy, who had invited Friendship House to his parish.⁶³ Tarry was not a New York native or a Catholic by birth; she grew up in a middle-class black family in Birmingham and converted to Catholicism while at Rock Castle, which was founded by Katharine Drexel in 1899 as a boarding school for black girls. She had moved to New York City like scores of other black migrants, looking for a better life and a chance to pursue her dreams. Like de Hueck and Harrigan, Tarry was also very charismatic. One admirer wrote to her “I don’t know when I’ve met anyone to whom I’ve been so attracted.”⁶⁴ Tarry could have easily passed as white, but she chose to identify as a black woman and work on behalf of her people for civil rights. Her identity would play a major role in how she worked on the Catholic interracialist project.

⁶³ Mulvoy’s parishioners called him the “blackest white man in Harlem” because of his understanding of and concern for them. Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 138.

⁶⁴ Chicago Sunday Bee to Tarry, January 2, 1943, box 1, folder 15, Ellen Tarry Papers, Schomburg (New York).

At first, Tarry was skeptical about Friendship House. On her inaugural visit to de Hueck's Harlem flat, Tarry found a group of mostly white young people from the local college's Newman Clubs gathered around de Hueck. But as she listened to the conversation, Tarry's skepticism began to wane: "I could catch phrases like 'the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man' or 'the Negro and the Mystical Body' which indicated much more depth than I had attributed to these youngsters," Tarry recalled. She "entered the room as a Doubting Thomas and left as an ardent disciple."⁶⁵

But as Tarry would discover, the white people at Friendship House had a lot to learn about how to partner with African Americans. She recalled in her memoir that,

I was convinced that Friendship House needed me and many other Negroes if it was to be the Catholic Center the Baroness said was needed to combat the forces of Godless Communism in Harlem. But I would have to get more Negroes to help me and we would have to explain to these well-intentioned white boys and girls that, instead of working *for* the Negro, they would have to work *with* us.⁶⁶

Tarry solved the first problem, of connecting Friendship House with more Negroes, by bringing Friendship House into contact with other members of Harlem's black intelligentsia. As Tarry recalled, "although the 'B' and other Friendship House workers met upper-class Negroes at meetings and conferences, invitations to visit the better homes were few." So Tarry invited de Hueck to her apartment on Sugar Hill: "in my little St. Nicholas Avenue apartment the 'B' met brilliant Negroes."⁶⁷ Tarry connected black poet Claude McKay with Friendship House when she found him sick and alone in his apartment in 1942. She knew McKay well from working together in the Negro Writers' Guild in the mid-1930s. Concerned about McKay's health, Tarry asked her friends at Friendship House to care for him. Tarry recalled that she "had no one to

⁶⁵ Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 144.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

appeal to but my friends at Friendship House.”⁶⁸ McKay eventually converted to Catholicism and moved to Chicago.

Tarry’s second issue, teaching white people to work *with* rather than *for* Negroes, proved to be challenging but crucial for Friendship House’s interracialism. This distinction— of a partnership rather than a relationship of dependence – would prove to be crucial disrupted the power hierarchy that placed white leaders in a position of influence and helped cultivate black leadership within Friendship House. With partnership rather than dependence, black and white people could become interdependent, each depending on the other. Friendship House would then be able to practice interracial justice – not charity – within its walls because black and white people met on equal planes. To this end, Tarry became, in many senses, Catherine de Hueck’s teacher about African Americans and the pair developed a close, although stormy, friendship. From 1938 to 1942, Tarry participated extensively at Friendship House and struggled mightily with the limitations of Friendship House’s Catholic interracialism, which always drifted away from partnership and toward a relationship of dependence.

Because it was based on personal relationships, Friendship House’s Catholic interracialism also required interpersonal and intercultural work, which meant that white and black people had to learn how to speak to one another and to offer each other grace. De Hueck asked Tarry to “drill” the new white staff workers “on what not to do or say when among Negroes.”⁶⁹ Tarry offered them an education in their own prejudice and another culture. But de Hueck, Tarry thought, never quite learned the lesson. She struggled to work with de Hueck because of how hard it was for them to understand one another. Some of their conflict was related to personality, other parts were related to race. Tarry wrote to de Hueck in 1942, “Lordy, Lord! We need to

⁶⁸ Ibid., 187.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 148.

ask the Holy Ghost to tell us what not to say, more than what to say, because my folks are so sensitive. There are times when I want to choke you so you can't say another word, and at the same time, I know there will be a day when others feel the same way about me."⁷⁰ But although de Hueck offended some African Americans, Tarry was willing to stick by de Hueck because of their friendship.

Tarry could, however, understand the deep hatred many black people harbored towards white people. Her letters from the summer of 1940, when she returned to the South to see family and research, reveal her ambivalence about interracialism despite her deep commitment to it. As war raged in Europe, she observed that southern African Americans seemed indifferent to the death toll in Europe, thinking "Heck! The white man has been killing us all along, so maybe he'll give us a rest and kill his blood brothers for a while." But, Tarry wrote to de Hueck, "I can't condemn my folk for their bitterness . . . but I try to see or understand my white brother's point of view." Tarry was only able to come to this conclusion because of her time at Friendship House.

At its core, then, Friendship House's Catholic interracialism offered proponents friendship between black and white people based on their faith in God. Tarry, for instance, concluded in a letter from the South, "So many of my brothers in Christ are white. And my blood brothers are black. Why we can't see the folly of hatred between us is perplexing at times." The kinship she experienced with white people at Friendship House, to whom she was linked by the Mystical Body of Christ, made her unable to condemn white people. Tarry came to believe that friendship – centered on Christ and promoting justice - was essential for interracial justice. Then, referring to her friendship with de Hueck, Tarry wrote, "I know we share a similar slogan, 'God and the

⁷⁰ Ellen Tarry to De Hueck, July 4, 1942, Ellen Tarry 1940-1942 1992 042-250, Madonna House Archive (Combermere, Canada).

Negro' and that is a powerfully strong connecting link.”⁷¹ As she later reflected, “Negro and white Americans must first come to know one another before they can be expected to understand or respect each other’s problems.”⁷²

But Friendship House also required Tarry to give up some of her notions about which black people were worth her time. De Hueck’s commitment to serving poor African Americans made Tarry cross class boundaries. Unlike Falls, who had only limited engagement with the poor black neighbors of the Taylor Street Catholic Worker House, Tarry confronted some of her own prejudices and move beyond her notion of respectability. She began to associate with people her mother would have called “common.”⁷³ Nonetheless, Tarry persisted because she believed that Friendship House and the Catholic interracialism it promoted could help her people achieve civil rights, primarily by changing the perspective of white Americans.

Notably, Tarry did not adopt de Hueck’s, and later Harrigan’s, language of “Christ in the Negro.” Instead, Tarry changed it to “God *and* the Negro.”⁷⁴ The difference between “in” and “and” was a significant one theologically and practically. For de Hueck and Harrigan, the phrase Christ in the Negro worked to remind white Catholics that African Americans were God’s image bearers and members of Christ, and therefore could not be excluded from white Catholics’ concern. Tarry, on the other hand, like Falls, did not need a particular doctrine to know of God’s love for her people and that they, too, had souls. While de Hueck and Harrigan use of “Christ *in* the Negro” conflated God with African Americans, and promoted their cause jointly, Tarry’s “God *and* the Negro” promoted both causes but did so somewhat independently. As a Catholic

⁷¹ Ellen Tarry, July 9, 1941.

⁷² Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 150.

⁷³ Ellen Tarry to De Hueck, 1940, Ellen Tarry 1940-1942 1992 042-250 (Combermere, Canada). For a discussion of Tarry and class, see Stephanie Brown, “Bourgeois Blackness and Autobiographical Authenticity in Ellen Tarry’s the Third Door,” *African American Review* 41, no. 3 (2007).

⁷⁴ My emphasis. Ellen Tarry to Catherine de Hueck, July 9, 1941.

in the pre-Vatican II era, and a convert, Tarry wanted to advocate for a Catholic understanding of God. She also wanted to work for racial justice and the advancement of African Americans, making the world a better place for her people. Tarry was trying to craft what she later called “Third Door,” through which white and black people could enter freely and equally, rather than being relegated to white-only and black-only spaces.

The tension over black assimilation to white cultural norms existed in Friendship House’s Catholic interracialism. Would Catholic interracialism allow room for black people to remain black, or did it require all people to be the same, which in essence meant adopting white normativity? For instance, as much as Tarry promoted racial justice, she was careful to not promote color-blindness, which the white members of Friendship House sometimes did. Perhaps because she had chosen to identify as a black woman, when she could have lived as a white woman, Tarry emphasized the differences between black and white people. In a 1940 article called “Lest We Forget Our Heritage,” Tarry expressed pride in her blackness and exhorted her fellow African Americans to appreciate their past, or risk becoming a “badly blurred carbon copy of the American white man.”⁷⁵ Tarry’s refusal to ignore color also prevented the white people from ignoring the institutional and structural inequalities that black people faced. Black and white people could meet one another as individuals and overcome personal prejudices, but discrimination and segregation always loomed in the background and had to be addressed.

De Hueck, on the other hand, disagreed with Tarry on the extent to which black people should remain culturally black. De Hueck wrote to Tarry,

I so dislike this division Negroes . . . White . . . Jews . . . RC's [Roman Catholics] protestants . . . Aren't we all human being with the same FUNDAMENTAL COMMON DENOMINATORS . . . The more we harp on differences, the more we so to speak underline them . . . I have such a burning desire to eliminate them that as you say I must be a walking mistake . . . But to me the Negro IS NOT A NEGRO but a human being . . . Like me.”

⁷⁵ Ellen Tarry, “Lest We Forget Our Heritage,” *Interracial Review* May, 1940.

De Hueck's emphasis on the universality of Christ enabled her to promote racial justice and attempt to live with black people as equals, but it also led her to, at times, to demand that Negroes become white. Tarry accused Friendship House of "forcing things down people's throats," likely by encouraging them to adopt certain "white habits." De Hueck defended her position by arguing that since "the Negro" was such a small percentage of the national population, "he too has to consider the white man's ways . . . And that whereas he MUST BE INTEGRATED IN JUSTICE AND CHRISTIANITY AS WELL AS DEMOCRACY INTO THE STREAM OF AMERICAN CHRISTIAN LIFE . . . It will have to be done the American way i.e. the white way . . ." ⁷⁶ De Hueck knew the power of whiteness. Tarry wanted to fight it, but under de Hueck's leadership, African Americans were in danger of becoming "badly blurred carbon copies of the American white man."

Friendship House's interracialism, while located in a black community, struggled to attract black people full-time to its apostolate. Friendship House developed a three tier system of association, with staff members who devoted themselves full-time to Friendship House, volunteers, like Tarry and Harrigan, who came regularly to Friendship House, and members of the Outer Circle, who supported Friendship House financially, visited occasionally, and read its publications. Tarry pointed out what Friendship House's white members were painfully aware of: that Friendship House claimed to be interracial, but had very few black volunteers or staff workers. The majority, but not all, black people connected with Friendship House did so in a relationship of dependence, receiving material aid from the women.

⁷⁶ Catherine De Hueck to Ellen Tarry, January 8, 194[3], box 1, folder 20, Ellen Tarry Papers, Schomburg (New York).

Part of the issue was that Friendship House was so unique and black people in Harlem had little context for white women living among them, seeking to share life with them.⁷⁷ As Tarry remembered, de Hueck

knew that a white woman of Russian birth, noble or otherwise, living in Harlem would cause talk, it was difficult for the 'B' [de Hueck] to understand how the Negroes she had come to serve could question her motives . . . Once, when she was very weary, the "B" told me that working with the Negro was like walking on eggshells. As the years rolled by she came to understand the background which had bred so much suspicion.⁷⁸

Friendship House had a few hundred years of history to overcome, and the social, religious, and interpersonal work it attempted was hard.

Money also limited black people's involvement at Friendship House, and as in the conflict between Day and Falls in Chicago over the Catholic Worker's voluntary poverty, Friendship House's commitment to poverty was distasteful to many African Americans. To be a staff worker, which meant that one lived and worked at Friendship House and was devoted full-time to interracial justice, one had to commit to live in voluntary poverty. De Hueck insisted on voluntary poverty as a way to stand outside and witness against the unfettered capitalism and racism of American society, and to identify with the poorest African Americans. Choosing to be materially poor must be accompanied by a poverty of spirit. According to Harrigan, voluntary poverty meant "limiting your DESIRES to fewer things so that you have more time to spend in the service of others. Possessions tend to possess you. The more you have, the less there is for others."⁷⁹ In practice for members of Friendship House this meant earning no wage, wearing second-hand clothing, holding no health insurance, and eating whatever they could buy with the donations they received. As Tarry pointed out, "voluntary poverty is not attractive or practical

⁷⁷ Most white settlement houses, for instance, were located in white immigrant neighborhoods, not in black neighborhoods. In Chicago, Jane Addams's Hull House primarily served white immigrants.

⁷⁸ Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 147.

⁷⁹ Ann Harrigan, "Chicago House," *Harlem Friendship House News*, September, 1941.

for the average trained Negro.”⁸⁰ Only white, middle class people like Harrigan and de Hueck had the luxury of adopting voluntary poverty.

E. The Problems of the Negro are White Problems: Targeting White People for the Cause of Interracial Justice

Significantly, Friendship House members renamed what most people called a “Negro problem” as a “white problem.” This move shaped their practice of Catholic interracialism; if white people were responsible for racial injustice, white people had to change. Similarly to what priests learned at Hillenbrand’s summer school, Friendship House’s framing of the issue shifted responsibility for the Negroes’ poverty segregation, and struggles from some innate depravity or slow progress toward a white standard to the shoulders of white people. As Richard White, a black author and friend of Tarry’s said, “There isn’t any Negro problem; there is only a white problem.” Wright’s, and Friendship House’s, elevation of the notion of a “white problem” over a “Negro problem” made explicit the hidden assumptions of most white Americans at the time, “that racial polarization comes from the existence of blacks rather than from the behavior of whites, that black people are a ‘problem’ for whites rather than fellow citizens entitled to justice, and that, unless otherwise specific, ‘Americans’ means ‘whites.’”⁸¹ Friendship House, then, focused its interracialist educational efforts mostly on white people

But this decision had paradoxical consequences. By assuming its audience was white, not black, Friendship House further limited black involvement in its form of Catholic interracialism. Thus under Friendship House, the quest for interracial justice, which had earlier been carried forward mostly by black Catholics, would now be pursued by white leaders with black

⁸⁰ Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 148.

⁸¹ George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 1.

supporters. Friendship House limited the black voices and black concerns in the newspaper, *Harlem Friendship House News*, and focused primarily on how white people needed to change. De Hueck, who oversaw the production of the paper, explicitly targeted it toward a white audience. The paper preached the doctrine of Christ in the Negro and told stories of how Friendship House was helping poor black people. While it narrated anecdotes about black achievements and featured black authors, many black potential readers would have found the paper offensive and patronizing. When Tarry accused de Hueck of offending African Americans, de Hueck responded “Mia culpa. . I know I am a clumsy lout, that walks like an elephant in a fragile china shop. . . And yet cheerfully and simply I'd give my very life for them . . . Strange isn't it, that one can give so much, counting it as naught. . Glad to give joyful in fact. . And yet get so little. . Reach only so far and no further.”⁸²

For de Hueck, targeting white people was the only way to help convince them to share their power. White people, she believed, not black people needed to convert to interracialism. De Hueck told Tarry, “Perhaps it has been meant that MY job is the whites . . And FHNews darling as I see it, is for the whites, , for without them no matter how good the Negro leadership is, it will not go very far . . They are the majority, the bosses of the land . . So in a little distant way, I have prepared [sic] or and preparing [sic] perhaps the Catholic soil for the Negro to work at and in.”⁸³

Friendship House ultimately focused on offering a practical example of interracial living, and while its model was radical, it did not engage in politics. De Hueck insisted that she – and those who would join Friendship House – had a very specific role to play in the liberation of African Americans. De Hueck wanted Friendship House to remain a small endeavor, believing they

⁸² Catherine De Hueck to Tarry, May 18, 1942, box 1, folder 20, Ellen Tary Papers, Schomburg (New York).

⁸³ Ibid.

could work in small ways to pioneer the practice of interracialism. This would prepare the soil for a harvest of change among the opinions of white Catholics. De Hueck saw her own strength, and therefore Friendship House's, in her smallness and dependence on God. She expected this dependence to be a witness that would make the way straight for those who followed her: "But then again, I think that that is my destiny. . I am but a little soldier in the army to come . . You see all I do, is clear the heaviest of underbrush. . With a very old and dull axe . . And I am an unexperienced [*sic*] woodsman in this neck of overgrown wood . . Who will remember the funny woman from Russia who came to chop?" de Hueck asked Tarry. "But behind me," de Hueck wrote, "there will come others, and they will know how, and they will have sharp well balanced tools and much money, and help and [th]en the Race will see understand and come with confidence."⁸⁴ In some ways, then, de Hueck was no different from the gradualist white priests with who Falls struggled: both said wait. But unlike the gradualist priests, de Hueck explicitly called racism, segregation, and discrimination a sin, and she practiced interracial living. Tarry, however, wanted to see the harvest more quickly.

Despite their differences, Tarry worked actively with Friendship House in New York for four years. But in May, 1942, Tarry tried to disassociate herself from Friendship House. De Hueck refused, saying "I can't accept the resignation of my best critic, at this time, for after all this IS an emergency."⁸⁵ De Hueck knew she needed Tarry's input and open criticism in order to make her project succeed. Tarry agreed to stay on.

When Sheil invited Friendship House to Chicago, de Hueck asked Tarry to help open the new house. Tarry reluctantly agreed to move to the city of big shoulders for one year. Moving would require leaving her job as a reporter for the *Amsterdam News* and letting the momentum of

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

her two children's books – both which promoted interracial friendship and love – slow down. She viewed her sacrifice as giving a year to serve her race.⁸⁶ De Hueck also asked Harrigan to open the house in Chicago. For Harrigan, it was a dream come true. De Hueck planned for Tarry to direct the black staff workers and volunteers, and for Harrigan to direct the white ones.

Racial inequalities and power struggles overshadowed Tarry's and Harrigan's preparations for leaving for Chicago. De Hueck had asked both women to direct the house, but expected Harrigan to take a leading position. Was it because she was white, or because she was more eager to be a director of a Friendship House? Bishop Sheil offered to pay salaries to Harrigan and Tarry in part to entice Tarry to come to Chicago, but when de Hueck realized that the rent for the property was higher than she had budgeted, she announced she would reduce Tarry's pay. Both Tarry and Harrigan protested vehemently. Tarry also struggled with de Hueck's leadership in other ways. As Harrigan wrote in her journal, de Hueck had "expected both of us to take her word for every thing re Chi[cago] – to ask no questions; to swim in generalities of praise and optimism, to see our bed of roses as she paints it."⁸⁷ While both women argued with de Hueck and insisted that they be independent of her in Chicago, Harrigan, in contrast to Tarry, remained fiercely loyal to de Hueck. Harrigan's rigidly ordered world gave de Hueck a place, like it or not, as a spiritual mentor or sort of a Mother Superior, to be obeyed. In Chicago, however, the struggle over the meaning of Friendship House's interracialism would become even more intense.

⁸⁶ Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 185.

⁸⁷ Ann Harrigan Makletzoff, Diary, August 21, 1942, box 1, folder 1, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

VIII: BACK TO CHIAGO: THE LABORATORY OF INTERRACIAL RELATIONS

In September, 1942, Harrigan and Tarry finished up their preparations for their new project in Chicago, prepared to bring Harlem's Friendship House to the Black Metropolis. Harrigan left two weeks before Tarry, without fanfare. Despite Sheil's promise that a priest would meet her at Chicago's Union Station, Harrigan could see no tell-tale white collar in sight that would indicate the archdiocese's welcoming arms. Instead, she saw a hall full of servicemen in uniform and other travelers bustling around her, not caring about her arrival at all. She felt alone, a New Yorker transplanted to a new city, a white woman moving to a black neighborhood, and a Catholic living among Protestants. Full of anxiety, Harrigan navigated her way to St. Elizabeth's church on the South Side, to meet Fathers Drescher and Smith, who led the city's flagship black parish.

Harrigan carried her few possessions, as well as her looming fears about her mission. She worried Friendship House was entering into an unequal partnership with Bishop Sheil because "his reputation is that money can do any thing," and Harrigan believed Sheil's money could not bring an end to segregation.¹ Harrigan, by contrast, was schooled in New York's Friendship House philosophy that said eradicating the sin of segregation was a spiritual problem with a spiritual solution: transformed hearts. Harrigan also trembled at the politics of Chicago's Church and black community. In August, about a month before she left for Chicago, Harrigan met Horace Cayton, who would soon publish *Black Metropolis* and become a Friendship House ally. Cayton, she wrote in her diary, "made clear something I'm so afraid of I could lie down

¹ Ibid. June 9, 1942.

and die – that how I start, who introduces me to whom, who I’m seen with, etc, could make or break me.”² Again, Harrigan calmed fears by turning to God: “I must trust the HG [Holy Ghost] entirely,” she wrote in her diary. Finally, Harrigan feared Friendship House’s enemies, the “intrigue and plots that I’ll have to circumvent – for there are many.” She had been booed and hissed already, lecturing from Friendship House, and knew how the Toronto priests had run de Hueck out of their archdiocese.

But the work would not fail, Harrigan told herself, “if I’m generous enough with myself to God.”³ The key for her success, Harrigan believed, was to devote her body, time, mind, and pride to God. With her focus on God, Harrigan made some inroads into the Black Metropolis. She filled her days with making connections with a variety of people, including the librarian Vivian Harsh, Women’s Club leader Mary Bethune (about who Ellen Tarry had written an article in the *Harlem Friendship House News*), and labor organizer John Yancey, who would become a consistent leader and player for the Catholic interracialist cause.⁴

When Tarry joined her in Chicago, Tarry was dismayed that the only housing Harrigan had been able to procure was in a funeral parlor. The housing shortage in black Chicago was stark. But they were committed to Catholic interracialism in word and in deed, and, despite the unresolved tensions in Friendship House’s Catholic interracialism, they had learned a lot in their four years with Friendship House in Harlem.

Tarry paved the way for Friendship House in Chicago’s black metropolis in ways Harrigan could not. Tarry reconnected with many of her friends from Alabama and New York

² Ibid. August 26, 1942. In her memoir drafts, Harrigan described the encounter somewhat differently. She adds a third “strike” she had against her, recalling that Cayton said: “You’ve got 3 strikes against you: You’re Catholic, you’re white, and you’re from New York.” (Makletzoff, “Mak 3/05b: Finished Work and Drafts 1982-1983.”)

³ Makletzoff, Diary, August 12, 1942, box 1, folder 1, MAK

⁴ See “National Council ‘Workshop’ Produces These Scenes,” *The Chicago Defender* October 24, 1942; Makletzoff, Diary, September 20, 1942, box 1, folder 1, MAK.

City, who had migrated to the city in search of war work or to follow family. Tarry had, it seemed to Harrigan, a natural network of supporters. Being black in Chicago's Black Belt certainly had its advantages. Tarry used her connections with black business, civic, social service, and intelligentsia leaders in Chicago, to gain Friendship House favor among African Americans and in their main newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, which, as Tarry later suggested, would have skewered Friendship House without her help.⁵

Tarry also brought Harrigan into black Chicago's vibrant social scene. Harrigan, however, went nearly kicking and screaming. Years later, when writing about those first months, Harrigan recalled Tarry dragging her out to bars and clubs across the South Side. Harrigan disparaged the fleshly atmosphere Tarry brought her into and hated the busyness getting Friendship House up and running seemed to require. Harrigan told her diary, for instance, how she and Tarry had gone "to eat F.[rench] fried shrimp and drink too much – met a fresh piece [who was] obsessed with sex."⁶ Harrigan lamented the "hours involving noise, smoke, drinks, incessant badinage, and an occasional meal," but went because Tarry said it would build good will for Friendship House.⁷ Harrigan would rather slow down and pray. She told her diary, "Satan can delude into action, make me lose the all-interior prayer."⁸ The early days were not all bars and clubs, and Harrigan believed her exhaustion was for good cause.

The women invested many of their days in preparing Friendship House's physical location. De Hueck had selected two store fronts at 308-309 E. 43rd Street. When Tarry and Harrigan first saw the storefronts, they were shocked. When they opened the door, all they saw were four bare walls and a "floor filthy" with three layers of linoleum lined with thousands of

⁵ According to Tarry, the publisher said "If you say the Bishop is all right . . . we will take your word for it and the paper will go along with you." (Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 193.)

⁶ Ann Harrigan Makletzoff, Diary, October 4, 1942, box 1, folder 4, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁷ Makletzoff, Memoir, box 3, folder 5b.

⁸ Makletzoff, Diary, October 5, 1942, box 1, folder 4, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

tacks, which they would have to remove one by one with their own hands and the occasional help of curious people walking by. They had no furniture, dishes, pots, pans, cutlery, towels, dust cloths, lights, or sink. The only money in their pockets came from Sheil, who gave them fifty dollars to get started.⁹

Things began to look up on October 22, when the pair had lunch with Lillian and Arthur Falls. Tarry and de Hueck were delighted with the opportunity to meet the Fallses because of Arthur Falls's tremendous reputation in black Chicago. Tarry told de Hueck that she was "awfully happy about Falls. Every Negro from Chicago I know speaks of him in glowing terms. But he doesn't believe in compromise."¹⁰ Falls, who was in the process of shifting his focus to non-Catholic organizing and focusing more on his work as a doctor, planned to orient the pair to the racial and religious politics in the city to "set the basis for cooperation with other people who were active in the social and civic work of Chicago."¹¹

Tarry and Harrigan found help from other people too. Volunteers and supporters of Friendship House helped Tarry and Harrigan order the storefront. In the December issue of *Harlem Friendship House News*, Harrigan listed several of the individual people who helped them. Her specificity suggests the importance of individuals at Friendship House, and also suggests that Friendship House's initial connections were within St. Elizabeth's parish and the Catholic liberal community. Bob Palmer and Joe Wiley, a relative of St. Elizabeth's parishioner Mildred Wiley who Sheil hired to work in the office for Friendship House, waxed the new linoleum that Father Gorey and Monsignor Morrison helped them buy. Father May made walnut-stained bookshelves for their library and Father Freytag helped fill the up with books.

⁹ Ann Harrigan, Chicago Friendship House Scrapbook, 1942-1945, box 3, folder 27, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

¹⁰ Ellen Tarry to De Hueck, n.d., Ellen Tarry 1940-1942 1992 042-250, Madonna House Archives (Combermere, Canada). This letter was written before FH in Chicago opened.

¹¹ Falls, "Memoir Manuscript," 694.

Harrigan commented that Freytag “fleeced every pastor from here to Techny,” the headquarters of the Society of the Divine Word, which staffed St. Elizabeth’s parish.¹² Velma Fleming from St. Elizabeth’s parish made blue pillows for the wicker set of furniture Mildred Wiley painted red. Neighbors Russell Marshall, David James, and Bernard James did a “magnificent job putting up pictures, writing invitations, carting books, and a hundred things, while they heatedly discussed the big error of modern times – compromise, not being willing to die for your beliefs.”¹³ Marshall, who had been volunteering at Blessed Martin de Porres, another Catholic settlement house on the west side, and the entire James family, would become long-time volunteers and supporters of Friendship House.¹⁴

Finally, Friendship House could fling open its doors for the grand opening. Two storefronts at 305 and 309 East 43rd Street housed a children’s center, a Catholic library, and Friendship House’s office. According to Harrigan, “It was the right location. Stores, milling crowds, trolley cars, trucks, the El, all close by. Cheap theatres, taverns, hundreds of kids running around the streets, broken-down houses, with here and there a street of home-owners who kept up their property carefully.”¹⁵ Surely people would come in, and when they did, they would see a statue and picture of Blessed Martin de Porres, who watched over the house, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, gracing the walls.

Friendship House could rightly celebrate a successful grand opening. Bishop Sheil spoke, giving credibility to Friendship House from the hierarchy. Horace Cayton welcomed Friendship House on behalf of the black community. Pictures show de Hueck, Tarry, and Wiley smiling

¹² Ann Harrigan, “November - Red Letter Day,” *Harlem Friendship House News* (December, 1942).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Clif Thomas Betty Schneider, Russ Marshall, “Friendship House Oral History,” *Community* 37, no. 3 (1978). Mary Widman, a white woman, ran the Blessed Martin de Porres settlement house. CISCA volunteers helped out at the center. She started the center in 1936 or 1937 and, similarly to Friendship House, she tried to improve interracial relations and provide for black Chicagoans spiritually and physically. See box 3, folder 27, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

¹⁵ Quoted in Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *Friendship House* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1947), 86.

with these men, as well as Father Vincent Smith, the only black priest in Chicago. In all, about two hundred guests came to the grand opening, and Tarry and Harrigan were able to breathe a sigh of relief. They had made it into the Promised Land.

For many people who would walk through Friendship House's doors, the place offered them their first glimpse of true interracial fellowship, lived for the love of God. This was their greatest impact: although small in numbers, Friendship House converted white and black Catholics and non-Catholics alike to the cause of interracial friendship and justice because it provided an institutional space in a deeply segregated city where interracial friendship, learning, and partnership could occur. Because it offered a devotional form of Catholic interracialism, similar to what CISCA and Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker promoted, white Catholics flocked to Friendship House and in doing so, they went into black neighborhoods. Thus, the New York Friendship House's new house filled the gap in Chicago's Catholic interracialism, and Chicago's Friendship House would become the first on-the-ground and enduring manifestation of Catholic interracialism. Friendship House would make Chicago's Catholic interracialism burn brightly in a variety of colors and patterns.

But this space was not without conflict. To Tarry's chagrin, Harrigan would make Chicago's Friendship House maintain de Hueck's commitment to voluntary poverty and the life of the spirit rather than pursue Tarry's – and Falls's – preference for civic activism, partnership and respectability. While at times patronizing, Friendship House's coupling of economic and social critiques of American society would prove to be the most radical version of Catholic interracialism.

Nonetheless, Friendship House's emphasis on inclusion in the Mystical Body of Christ mirrored a shift among American liberals that had begun to develop in the 1930s.¹⁶ But Friendship House's members, who would have called themselves Catholics, not liberals, continued to frame race in America as a spiritual and moral concern. In 1947, Harrigan wrote that the interracial problem had economic, political, psychological, and educational causes and "we do all that we can ourselves and in conjunction with others, to hasten the day when a good job, a decent home, regular accommodations on trains, buses, in hotels, etc., will be the due of every man. We look forward to the day when there will be no more jim crowism in the USA anywhere - in schools, churches, hospitals, defense jobs, armed forces." But, she continued, "we insist that greater issues are at stake; we insist that this is fundamentally a moral, a spiritual problem. For all those items listed above could be gained, and still there would remain prejudice in men's hearts."¹⁷ Since it was a spiritual concern, prejudice required a spiritual solution: the love of God transforming individuals. Christians, Friendship House proclaimed, could lead America in overcoming prejudice. Friendship House's emphasis on the immorality of racism by no means put it in the gradualist camp, but it did mean that members focused on religion more than politics which could limit political change. On the other hand, making racism and interracial justice a spiritual concern made it legitimate for the Church to engage because it was a religious, and not a political issue, which would set the stage for the rhetorical ascendancy of Catholic interracialism in the late 1950s.

¹⁶ Philip Gleason argues that for liberal intellectuals, from the 1940s to the 1960s, ideology trumped ethnicity as a way of determining who was "American." Gleason, "Americans All: World War II and the Shaping of American Identity." John McGreevy suggests that liberals pointedly excluded Catholics from their growing cosmopolitanism. McGreevy, "Thinking on One's Own: Catholicism in the American Intellectual Imagination, 1928-1960." Kevin Schultz shows how the National Conference of Christians and Jews worked to overcome the anti-Catholicism McGreevy points to in order to bring increasing religious tolerance to America. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise*.

¹⁷ Harrigan, "Friendship House: Laboratory of Race Relations."

A. Supernatural or Natural Means? Challenges within Friendship House

But there were still battles to be fought and peace to be won because tension between the black and white members of Chicago's Friendship House was brewing. Tarry's vision for Friendship House conflicted with Harrigan's and de Hueck's, and within a couple months of Friendship House's opening, Tarry would face a painful decision of whether or not to stay in Chicago at Friendship House. She wrote in her autobiography that she had to choose between a deep friendship with de Hueck and losing "the respect of [her] people," a statement that suggests the profound questions at stake, and highlights the difficult interracial dynamics at play between the women and Chicago's black community. The challenges inherent in Friendship House work complicated Tarry's situation, especially because she and Harrigan were navigating a new city on a shoe-string budget and working twelve to fourteen hour days. Tarry felt stuck. She "felt disloyal to my own kind and equally disloyal to these two friends [de Hueck and Harrigan] who had joined hands with me to launch this interracial venture."¹⁸ Tarry's decision would not be an easy one.¹⁹

Harrigan's and Tarry's problems highlight the challenges of interracial living in black Chicago. Chicago's Negro neighborhoods, even more than the rest of the city, were in the midst of a severe housing shortage. Even if they had both been black, finding an apartment in Chicago's black belt would have been a challenge. White-on-black violence and restrictive housing covenants crammed black Chicagoans into a limited space. Before Tarry arrived, Harrigan found a room at Sunshine Edwards's funeral parlor on south Michigan Avenue, but neither woman enjoyed walking by corpses on their way up to their second-floor room, so they kept looking. Tarry could never tell Harrigan "how many times I had found living quarters for

¹⁸ Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 202.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

us and was told ‘Oh, that’s different,’ when I explained my roommate was white.”²⁰ When Harrigan was out at night without Tarry, Tarry stayed up until Harrigan returned home, fearing for Harrigan’s safety.²¹

Tarry also disagreed with de Hueck about how Friendship House should approach charity. De Hueck insisted that Friendship House host a clothing room to provide free clothing to local residents. The clothing room in New York served two purposes: it recruited white volunteers who were willing to donate clothes, and provided clothing for the black people. But Tarry wanted to do things differently in Chicago. Returning to the old tension between white people working *with* Negroes rather than *for* them, Tarry pointed out that the clothing room created a negative relationship in which poor black people depended on Friendship House. She argued that “the least fortunate of my people needed an opportunity to help themselves instead of an angel of mercy to dole out food and clothing.”²² A clothing room, Tarry believed, took away her people’s dignity. It might also assuage white donors’ guilt; they could help Negroes by donating their castoffs but not have to work with Negroes for justice. Bishop Sheil solved the immediate conflict by saying that another Catholic organization in Chicago handled clothing distribution and he did not want Friendship House to focus on that, but the division between de Hueck and Tarry over how to serve black Chicago was deep, and Tarry would return to it shortly with Sheil.

At stake was Friendship House’s purpose. Would it be a religious endeavor, working by supernatural means to bring justice to Christ in the Negro? Or, would it be a community center, rooted in devotion to God, but using all the temporal means possible to bring interracial justice? At home, silent feuds and quiet misunderstandings peppered Friendship House’s staff meetings, which included Mildred Wiley, and fundamentally different beliefs over Friendship House’s

²⁰ Ibid., 202.

²¹ Ibid., 209.

²² Ibid., 203.

purpose fueled the conflict between Tarry, on the one hand, and de Hueck and Harrigan on the other. Tarry wanted Friendship House to empower Chicago's black metropolis by serving as a community center, while Harrigan wanted to emphasize the corporate devotional aspects of Friendship House, which she envisioned as a pioneering lay religious order. For Tarry, Friendship House was a more secular endeavor, for Harrigan, it was, first and foremost, religious. Tarry did not, then, want to follow the extensive religious regimen Harrigan had designed, which was based on interracial prayer, study, and work.²³ Harrigan complained in her journal that Tarry was not "really interested in social work – her vocation is journalism," and that Tarry viewed the year as "merely giving a year of her life to her race."²⁴ This presented a major problem because Harrigan thought Tarry felt "coerced when we talk about things spiritual and says she's independent." Since Harrigan was convinced that a corporate spiritual life and personal sanctification constituted the most fundamental tenets in any hope of overcoming prejudice, segregation, and discrimination, Tarry's resistance to Harrigan, for Harrigan, constituted a major blow to the promise of interracialism. To make matters worse, Harrigan believed that Tarry shied away from using the language of the Mystical Body of Christ, which undergirded Harrigan's whole understanding of her calling, because Tarry thought "it sounds phony."²⁵

But for Harrigan, the essential task of healing the Mystical Body of Christ, which was torn apart by the division between black and white people, meant following a strict daily liturgy. She based it on de Hueck's practices. It included attending morning Mass, corporate prayer and devotional reading, individual prayer and devotional reading, and common meal times. Harrigan also compiled a list of books for her staff to read that addressed topics like the Mystical Body,

²³ Tarry, "Lorene Hanley Duquinn Oral History Interview, 1991."

²⁴ Makletzoff, Diary, August 21, 1942, box 1, folder 4, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

²⁵ Ibid.

labor unions, liturgy, secular and church history, sociology, literature, and Personalism.

Participating in daily Mass was a chance to lay one's life down alongside Christ, to co-offer oneself with Christ on the altar. This sacrifice was not just symbolic; Harrigan – and other Catholics – believed that it worked mystically to bring healing. Harrigan also expected the liturgy to transform individuals and would gradually develop mature lay apostles who would be prepared to fight the battle for interracial justice for many years. They had to dig a deep well of holiness from which to draw in the long years ahead. This daily liturgy, which reflected the experience of most male seminarians at the time, would also provide boundaries for members' passions, helping them to focus on God and his work, rather than on their own desires.²⁶ Tarry thought Harrigan was too authoritarian and domineering with the daily rule, but it made sense to Harrigan based on her understanding of the task before her: if white people's oppression of black people was a spiritual sickness that harms all members of the Mystical Body, the first solution was a spiritual one.

Harrigan did not doubt that interracial justice required material effort. She planned to – and she and Tarry did – “work like hell.” But Harrigan spiritualized their labor, seeing it as a discipline that would transform their bodies and souls, and help them achieve the goodness of Christ. “If there is no logical reason for interracial prejudice why has it lasted so long – because there wasn't anyone good enough to overcome these evils,” Harrigan suggested in her diary.²⁷

Harrigan embraced the suffering she experienced in the early days of living as a white woman in a black neighborhood. Harrigan's troubles did not stop when she left Friendship House, either. She felt trapped in the Black Belt, and trapped in her white skin. She resented her new community as a “den of iniquity” with the “liquor, drugs, prostitution, juvenile delinquency

²⁶ Steve Rosswurm, *The FBI and the Catholic Church, 1935-1962* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009).

²⁷ Makletzoff, diary, 10 April 1942 and following, box 1, folder 1, MAK.

– toughs, embittered Negroes, [and] hard shell Protestants.” The Catholic Church on the South Side, Harrigan claimed, was a “nice stony portion of the Lord’s vineyard.”²⁸ Harrigan also felt excluded by the relationship developing between Tarry and Wiley. But try as she might to fit in, Harrigan’s white skin made her an outsider. De Hueck later wrote of this sort of experience, saying “we find it hard to see that our identification with the Negro is not complete . . . sorry to have the pass-key, with which we can pass through the thick folds of the Veil. WE ARE WHITE. . . . We can stay and we can go. . . . THE NEGRO CAN’T.”²⁹

Harrigan gave meaning to her situation by using a theology of suffering to sustain herself in her efforts to cross racial boundaries. She received her troubles as a corporeal and spiritual discipline from God. She tried to rejoice because she believed that in Christ’s Mystical Body, one members’ suffering would bring healing to another member. Harrigan told herself she needed “to be weaned away from people” and instead depend on God.³⁰ Sometimes Harrigan berated herself for her sense of aloneness: “why should the fact that N[egroes] take care of N[egroes] – and leave you out in the cold – that’s not so terrible – and yet it cuts me to the heart. . . . Why should I get attentions – Why do I expect them?”³¹ At other times, overwhelmed by the number of tasks and a “bitter sense of futility” that her efforts would accomplish anything, Harrigan wrote that she was “a hostage to the negro in earnest of all the white folks who’ve done wrong to the colored.”³²

Above all, Harrigan believed that Friendship House must fight hate with love, which required sacrifice. This love was costly and painful, and Harrigan described it in physical terms:

²⁸ Makletzoff, diary, 22 September 1942, box 1, folder 4, MAK.

²⁹ Doherty, *Friendship House*, 60. In addition, this section of de Hueck Doherty’s book is included in Kane, *Gender Identities in American Catholicism*, 103-04.

³⁰ Makletzoff, Diary, September 29, 1942, box 1, folder 4, MAK.

³¹ Ibid, October 21, 1942.

³² Ibid, October 23, 1942.

“bringing love into the world is not unlike physical childbirth – Long hours and weeks and more pain are necessary before we learn what God wants us to be and do – trying to love others we must do violence to ourselves, our likes.”³³ Harrigan knew the cost. She had been pushing herself for four years by the time she moved to Chicago. In March, 1940, Harrigan had lamented, “I guess I am tired – I can’t go 18 hours without small rest – I must try to get in 15 or 20” [minutes for a nap]. . . about 4 or 5 o’clock. I feel as if God is emasculating me – if that is possible – if He already didn’t do that at my birth – I get so proud – of my health, my looks, my ideas, my God.”³⁴ In embracing the suffering love required, Harrigan drew on the Catholic sacred memory that embraced suffering, believing that pain was evidence not of God’s disdain, but of his love.³⁵

By December, the situation at Friendship House had reached a breaking point. On December 12, Harrigan flew back to New York City to be with her sister Rita who was seriously ill. By this point, Harrigan was totally overwhelmed with the work of developing a program for Friendship House, cultivating volunteers, and dealing with the conflict between herself, Tarry, and Wiley. Tarry, too, was at the end of her rope and did not see how she could turn Friendship House into the activist community center she so desired. With Harrigan out of town, Tarry wrote a letter of resignation to de Hueck, afraid to meet with her in person because she knew de Hueck’s powerful influence might convince her to stay.³⁶ Tarry also penned an extensive resignation letter to Bishop Sheil.

³³ Makletzoff, diary, 10 April 1942 and following, box 1, folder 1, MAK.

³⁴ Ibid, March 7, 2008. An admonition to young men from 1912 that declared “Self-denial is the very substance of manliness – which may be defined as: “A body subjected to the mind,” helps to explain her use of the word “emasculating.” To be manly was to be able subjugate oneself. (Quoted from a source by F.M. de Zulueta in Kane, *Gender Identities in American Catholicism*, 30-31.)

³⁵ Orsi, “U.S. Catholics between Memory and Modernity: How Catholics Are American.”

³⁶ Tarry, oral history interview.

De Hueck's, Tarry's, and Harrigan's public spin on Tarry's departure made it seem like an easy and happy event. De Hueck assured Tarry that she would make sure that – both inside Friendship House and to the public – people knew was Tarry leaving because she wanted to write, and Friendship House stood in the way of that calling. In addition, de Hueck showered praises on Tarry, telling the other staff that “Ellen did an "A1 job and that we were eternally in your debt that is all.”³⁷ Harrigan reported in her “Chicago Column” in the *Harlem Friendship House News* that Tarry was leaving because there was “another book in the offing.”³⁸ Harrigan suggested that Tarry would continue to be a part of Friendship House in New York and called Tarry “one of the moving spirits of interracial justice.” But Tarry could not, Harrigan reported, be a director of Friendship House and successfully work on her next book. The book would be a sequel to Tarry's *Hezekiah Horton*, which talked about a young black boy named Hezekiah and his ride in Eddie Doherty's big, red shiny convertible. Like Tarry's other stories, *Hezekiah Horton* showed interracial cooperation, an ideal Friendship House praised. Harrigan reported that “we all extended our hopes for the successful completion of her book.”³⁹

The public description of Tarry's departure was not all fabricated; she really was concerned about her writing. Tarry told Sheil that when she came to Chicago, she had hoped to have time to write and direct Friendship House, but “the demands are so great we seldom manage even get a Sunday off.”⁴⁰ But for all the public story revealed, it obscured the deep divide between Tarry and her white friends over Friendship House's devotional Catholic interracialism.

De Hueck accepted Tarry's resignation gracefully but reiterated her commitment to keeping Friendship House as it was. “I am deeply deeply grateful - without you FH in C. would not be

³⁷ De Hueck to Ellen Tarry, n.d.

³⁸ Ann Harrigan, “Chicago House,” *Harlem Friendship House News* (February, 1943).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ellen Tarry to Bishop Bernard Sheil, 17 December 1942, box 1, folder 28, Ellen Tarry Papers, Schomburg (New York).

what it is,” de Hueck wrote. Both women knew the hardships and struggles associated with their work. “As regard to the policies of FH,” de Hueck continued, “I know we do not quite see eye to eye Because we go to the same goals in a different manner.” Tarry’s desire to organize and protest should not be Friendship House’s primary goal, de Hueck told Tarry. Change would come one individual at a time as, soul by soul, people began to love God and love their neighbor. “And always everything built on sacrifice - and giving up of a few individuals in love with God . . . That IS my vision . . . Above all others. The rest are human means,” de Hueck concluded. De Hueck measured her success by the individual white and black people who were changing their perspectives about one another, helping one another out, and loving God.⁴¹

Tarry’s resignation letter to Sheil further laid out her concerns for Friendship House moving forward. Friendship House must, Tarry implored, maintain its interracial policy by hiring an experienced black person to fill her role and cultivating black leadership from within the organization. Harrigan had struggled with this very issue as she tried to lead Friendship House without acting in an overly domineering way. Most importantly, though, Tarry wanted Friendship House to avoid perpetuating a relationship of dependence of black people upon white people.

Tarry pointed to one of Friendship House’s key struggles as it pursued interracial justice: how to build meaningful partnerships between black and white people that disrupted America’s racial hierarchies. This issue would reemerge to help destroy Catholic interracialism in the late 1960s. Tarry told Sheil that Friendship House must avoid a “fairy-godmother attitude” and assume that white people could come into a black community and make everything better. “Negroes,” she asserted, “want equal opportunity to earn their own keep. And while their white brethren must help until such a time as these equal opportunities are attained, great care must be

⁴¹ Catherine De Hueck to Tarry, 31 December 1942, box 1, folder 20, Ellen Tarry Papers, Schomburg (New York).

exercised - lest the purpose be defeated.” Tarry was referring to the question Harrigan had wrestled with in Harlem: how to work for justice instead of just giving poor black citizens gifts. Partnership between black and white people was the solution: “It also follows that those who would serve humble people must be humble. A dictator attitude is interpreted as 'white domination'. No white person can come into a Negro community and work for Negroes. He must work with them.”⁴² With that, Tarry took her leave.

When Harrigan returned to Chicago from visiting her sister, Rita, in New York, the world seemed to crash down upon her. The thought of returning had “nauseated and revolted” her “beyond words - one can endure so much. Insults . . . No solitude, no privacy, the landlady further aiding by her quixotic refusal of towels, sheets, hardly concealed animosity.”⁴³ On New Year’s Eve, Sunny Edwards, who ran the funeral home where Tarry and Harrigan lived, kicked Harrigan out, accusing her of driving Tarry away. Harrigan left, devastated and ashamed, and shared the knowledge of her homelessness with only one person: Peter Maurin of the Catholic Worker. The thought of the good this suffering would bring to Christ’s Mystical Body comforted Harrigan as she searched for a new place to live.

The consumption of food then became an opportunity to commune with Christ, because he was present in all members of the Mystical Body. In the weeks Harrigan was searching for a new room to rent, her eating became even more irregular because she had no place to prepare a meal.⁴⁴ When she wrote about her troubles, she placed her lack of “routinized . . . eating and

⁴² Tarry to Bishop Bernard Sheil.

⁴³ Harrigan, "Chicago Friendship House Scrapbook, 1942-1945."

⁴⁴ It took her so long to find a room not only because of the Black Belt’s wartime housing crunch, but because she was white. Often, when Ann called about a room, the landlord told her it was available. But when she arrived at the building to check it out, the room had suddenly been filled. Ann attributed her lack of luck to “whispering tongues” who were working against her. (Makletzoff, diary, January 8, 1943, box 1, folder 1, MAK). One of her friends, a black volunteer at Friendship House, gave Ann perspective, saying “when a Negro sees a white woman in this neighborhood, he knows she’s either a prostitute or a communist!” (Ann Harrigan Makletzoff, memoir notes and drafts, box 3, folder 7, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN). Ann eventually found a room in a gray stone at 4152

prayer” alongside one another and sought to feast on spiritual food: “Mass, Communion, meditation, spir[itual]. reading, complete trust in you, going ahead despite many things collapsing”⁴⁵ This suffering, Harrigan thought, would help to heal and sanctify the Mystical Body; if one member suffered, the whole Body suffered. Her suffering, Harrigan believed, in a mystical way, helped heal the Mystical Body. Her suffering also made her able to identify with Christ and she consoled herself, writing, “Christ was lonely too . . .”⁴⁶

Chicago’s Friendship House had weathered its first battle over if it would use supernatural or natural means for interracial justice. For a time, the white people’s vision of Friendship House beat out that of an important Negro critic. Harrigan’s and de Hueck’s vision had won, and Tarry left gracefully, if angrily. She could see the limits to Friendship House’s interracialism. But like Christ in the Easter narrative, Harrigan – and Friendship House - would rise again.

B. Chicago’s “Laboratory of Race Relations”: Making Space for Interracial Relationships

In this midst of all of this foment, Friendship House did its most important work: providing an opportunity and a space for black and white people to get to know one another. In a city in which friendships across racial lines were rare, Friendship House allowed that to happen. It helped people cross their parish boundaries, moving out of their usual racial and ethnic circles, which led to increasing interracialism. Most significantly for changing the Catholic Church and involving Catholics in the civil rights movement, it gave white people the opportunity to venture out into the Black Belt for the first time. But they could not just learn about racism. In keeping with Catholic Action, they had to judge it and act upon it as well. Therefore, many who came to

Prairie Street that had been originally built as a two flat but was housing eight or nine families in kitchenettes. Her new home was only a block away from the storefronts and she lived there until she left Chicago in 1948.

⁴⁵ Makletzoff, diary, January 7, 1943 January 8, 1943, box 1, folder 1, MAK.

⁴⁶ Ibid, January 10, 1943.

Friendship House were changed, and the commitments they developed through their relationships there led them into civil rights activism.

Peggy Roach was one of those people. In 1940, on the eve of World War II, Peggy Roach's parents enrolled her at the all-white St. Scholastica high school on Chicago's far north side, where Sister Cecilia Himebaugh, who had, six years earlier, engineered CISCA's focus on the Mystical Body of Christ, taught. As a high school student, Roach soaked up CISCA's teaching on the Mystical Body and racial justice. But the realities of Chicago's segregation and the limits of CISCA hindered her. As Roach recalled, at CISCA "we were learning about the race issue, but had little or no contact with counterpart Black students. They were not enrolled in our high schools."⁴⁷ St. Elizabeth's was the main exception to Roach's assertion; it had a CISCA branch. That the majority of Catholic high schools did not have black students reflected Mundelein's segregationist thrust and the daily decisions to segregate made by the priests and nuns who ran the city's Catholic schools. Thus, although Roach was beginning to care about interracial justice, she needed a bridge, a way to cross the Church's and the city's racial boundaries.

Friendship House served as that bridge by providing space for interracial interactions to occur, modeling interracial living, work, and worship, and giving others a vision and a hope for a truly interracial society. Friendship House taught white Catholics in an experiential and practical way about the injustices African Americans faced in Chicago. Harrigan observed how these interactions changed white people's perspectives, saying that for many white people who came to volunteer, "the logic of every day living and working and exchanging opinions finally could not be denied. Getting to know personally the people who suffer all these injustices made the

⁴⁷ Roach, "Reflections on a Journey."

difference between doing something and doing nothing about it.”⁴⁸ Harrigan saw that white people getting to know black people, and seeing, “from the inside how jim crow in the armed forces works such hardship to friends we have grown to know and appreciate, brings this fight for equality, real equality much closer.”⁴⁹

By mid-1943, Chicago’s Friendship House boasted a kitchen, a library, an office, a publicity department, family visiting crews, liturgy study group, and adult activities that included Monday night lectures, a labor school, Spanish lessons taught by Bernard James, black history, and children’s activities, including crafts, classes in religion, black history, reading, and library time. Busily involved in overseeing these activities, Harrigan also lectured to white and black audiences to help fund Friendship House. Her lecturing thrust her into the ferment of lay Catholic activism in Chicago and allowed her to develop some deep relationships with many of the other white Catholics who participated in Chicago’s vibrant Catholic life of the 1940s.

Friendship House’s strategy worked, too. Lay leader Patty Crowley of the Christian Family Movement met black people socially at Friendship House for the first time. She recalled, “We felt so brave going from the sheltered white suburbs to the South Side. For most of us it was our first contact with blacks socially . . . we would go to Friendship House . . . which awakened us to horrible prejudices that existed in our city.”⁵⁰ But Friendship House did not offer an education to white Americans only.

Friendship House also presented a vision of interracial living to African Americans. As Gerry Adams, a volunteer for Friendship House remembered, “I really went there kind of seeing for the first time that Black and White people could live together . . . my experience had been that . . . It was just impossible for us to live together. . . . It just seemed like we were destined to

⁴⁸ Harrigan, "Friendship House: Laboratory of Race Relations."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Patty Crowley, "Patty Crowley," *Community* 37, no. 3 (1978).

be two separate societies.”⁵¹ For many, Friendship House really did offer a chance to break down racial barriers – and pursue justice – through friendship.

But not everyone who was interested could travel to Friendship Houses’ vibrant interracial space in the Black Belt. When Roach first heard about Friendship House, she desperately wanted to go visit, but she was limited by the realities of Chicago’s racial segregation and her mother’s fears of a white girl traveling to the Black Belt. In short, Roach’s mom would not let her go to Friendship House without an escort, and Roach couldn’t find anyone who would go with her. Her problem solved when Catherine de Hueck finally said yes to Eddie Doherty’s proposals of marriage.

In late 1943, de Hueck moved to Chicago and married Doherty in a private, secret ceremony that Sheil officiated. The newlyweds, however, did not settle with the other Friendship House folks in the black belt. De Hueck claimed they could not find an apartment by Friendship House because of the severe housing shortage in black neighborhoods. Housing was severely limited, and exceptionally expensive, because of the barriers white Chicagoans put up to keep black, middle-class, upwardly mobile folks out of their neighborhoods. But de Hueck may also have been concerned about bringing her new husband into the black belt. Harrigan was upset by de Hueck’s decision to not live in the Black Belt with its unique pressures, thinking it went against what Friendship House stood for. No matter the reason, though, the pair settled on Chicago’s near north side in a white neighborhood by Holy Name Cathedral, which further opened up the possibilities of Friendship House’s interracialism.

When de Hueck began to hold interracial Friday night meetings at her apartment, Roach could finally participate at Friendship House. While the black belt was off limits for Roach, her mother would let her go to the Doherty’s apartment, and in fact, went there with her. De

⁵¹ Gerry Adams, "FH Oral History, Part 2," *Community* 37, no. 3 (1978).

Hueck's position in a white neighborhood opened up interracialism to people like Peggy Roach, who attended these meetings with her mother, and there, for the first time, developed relationships with black people. When the interracial group gathering at de Hueck's apartment grew beyond what the little flat could hold, it met at the Cathedral. Through these meetings, Roach was able to continue to move beyond her parish boundaries.

Friendship House wove itself into the larger fabric of the developing lay movement in Chicago, which historian Steven Avella has called "this confident church."⁵² Priests and lay people, women, and men tackled the social problems of the day with the belief that they could – and would – change the world. Men and women active in the Catholic Church spoke at and participated in each other's events, shared lunches and dinners, and read each other's newsletters and periodicals. Friendship House advertised at CISCA's yearly Summer School for Catholic Action and sponsored field trips to Friendship House, exposing students from all over the city to their techniques and strategies. CISCA alum Ed Marciniak found the Catholic Labor Alliance (CLA) and its corresponding newspaper *WORK* in 1943. Marciniak and CLA consistently supported interracial justice among working people in Chicago and cross-pollinated with Friendship House through labor schools, writing, and talks. Harrigan appreciated the hospitality of Pat and Patty Crawley, who developed the innovative Christian Family Movement (CFM) in Chicago. The CFM adopted a program supporting interracial justice. And of course, Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker, as well as the Catholic Worker houses in Chicago overlapped. The women and men of this exciting period were, indeed, confident that they, as Catholics, could help redeem the world.

Leading priests also sponsored the group in a variety of ways. Hillenbrand, who was still rector of St. Mary's Seminary where he was shaping a generation of priests to be concerned for

⁵² See Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*.

the poor and support the laity in their action, became Harrigan's confessor. Nearly all the women at Friendship House had a personal confessor, someone with whom they discussed various issues. Harrigan's relationship with Hillenbrand was close, and she worked to be obedient to his instruction. Harrigan's previous confessor, Paul Hanley Furfey, the priest-sociologist at Georgetown whose 1936 *Fire on the Earth* promoted what he called "Catholic extremism" in an effort to live faithfully, had been no less illustrious.⁵³

Friendship House also gained a gem when the young Father Dan Cantwell, also a CISCA alum, was assigned to be its chaplain. Cantwell would become the key priestly driving force behind the Catholic interracialist movement in Chicago. Cantwell was one of "Hilly's boys," a group of priest devotees to Hillenbrand who met monthly on Sunday nights at seven. Cantwell and Hillenbrand became two of Harrigan's most important supporters. Five years into her role as Friendship House director in Chicago, she commented that without them, "I'd be out of this long ago. . . . These men live close to Christ - and they stick to me God knows why."⁵⁴ Friendship House was a partnership between the laity and the priests.

C. The Hierarchy Supports Catholic Interracialism

Chicago's lay movement, and Friendship House in particular, was so successful because the hierarchy supported its activities. Samuel Stritch, Mundelein's replacement, offered Friendship House benign neglect. But perhaps most important for Friendship House's standing in the archdiocese, Bishop Sheil lent his name – and his money and voice at times – to Friendship House and the cause of interracial justice. Under Stritch's reign, Sheil's empire of Catholic Action continued to grow. Because Sheil had invited Friendship House to Chicago and

⁵³ Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America*, chapter 4.

⁵⁴ Ann Harrigan to Nicholas Makletsoff, "17 May 1947, box 2, folder 20, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

kept an eye on it by incorporating it into the CYO, he provided an institutional covering for the group. Also, because of de Hueck's influence and perhaps because of Mundelein's death, incorporated interracial justice more explicitly into his various endeavors.

Sheil was not always an easy supporter to handle. According to the people who worked with him, Sheil was not only committed to helping needy people, but he was also mercurial. Nina Polcyn, a Catholic Worker from Milwaukee who de Hueck recruited to Chicago to work on one of Sheil's projects, described Sheil as a "wild man of a hierarch" with a "quicksilver personality."⁵⁵ Harrigan wrote that Sheil "was irascible, played favorites, demanded but did not give loyalty, fiercely loved and fiercely hated, yet his intuitive grasp of the basic issues of that time and his courage in taking the flak for telling the truth, make him a catalyst of equal, though different, calibre with M[s]gr. Hillenbrand."⁵⁶ She also suspected that he thought most problems in the world could be fixed with money, which went against Harrigan's commitment to voluntary poverty and belief that God would change individual people's hearts. Whatever his flaws – and Arthur Falls would have pointed out many – Sheil incorporated Friendship House and a measure of Catholic interracialism into the empire he was building under the auspices of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO).

During the 1940s, Bishop Bernard Sheil took stronger public stands on interracial justice than he had when Mundelein was alive. In addition to his interracial sports leagues for Catholic youth, Sheil provided institutional spaces for Catholic interracialism by sponsoring Friendship House and an adult education school called the Sheil School for Social Studies. Sheil also spoke in favor of interracial justice in public speeches. His words began to make more acceptable the notion of racial justice, and he challenged the biases white people of all faiths had against black

⁵⁵ Nina Polcyn to Grace, n.d., box 1, folder 1, CISCA, LUA (Chicago, IL).

⁵⁶ Ann Harrigan, "The Sheil Era," box 3, folder 20, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

people.⁵⁷ In addition, he and his projects wove together concerns for the full citizenship of black people as well as people of all religious backgrounds. By the time he left his post at the CYO in 1954, Sheil had done much to advance, legitimize, and normalize the cause of interracial justice.

Catherine de Hueck helped shape Sheil's empire and influenced his concern about racial justice. Sheil used the CYO, which he reportedly conceived of while working with youth in Cook County jail, to bring about his vision of society. He wanted to establish CYO branches in "the very midst of the slum districts" to provide lower-class children "wholesome activities which previously had been enjoyed only by the children of the better families."⁵⁸ According to Harrigan, "how much of a hand the Baroness had in Sheil's ventures has to be speculation," but the pair did collaborate. In a letter de Hueck wrote to Tarry before the fall of 1942, de Hueck enclosed a draft of a "letter" she was working on for Sheil to share with the other bishops. De Hueck commented, "on sat[urday] he and I will work it out together some more, it ought to jolt the old boys..."⁵⁹ De Hueck and Sheil also likely collaborated on Sheil's September, 1943 speech that he gave at Catholic Charities Conference in Kansas City which was, according to the *Harlem Friendship House News*, a "smashing speech . . . pleading for the cessation of Jim Crowism in the Mystical Body."⁶⁰

Sheil's speech did not hold back; like de Hueck he criticized the Catholic Church for not living up to its high calling to support brotherhood for all men and women. In language reminiscent of Mundelein's, Sheil argued

The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man are the basic dogmas of the Christian faith; they are the expression of the creation and the Incarnation with all the relationship that these imply. More, they must be the very source of our Christian way of

⁵⁷ For more on Sheil, see Avella, "The Rise and Fall of Bernard Sheil."

⁵⁸ Bernard Sheil, Speech, C.Y.O. 8th Anniversary, Boxing Show 1939," 44979.01, folder 5, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil Papers, AAC (Chicago, IL)

⁵⁹ Catherine De Hueck to Tarry, n.d. in Ellen Tarry Papers, Shomburg (New York.).

⁶⁰ Harrigan, "November - Red Letter Day," Harrigan, "The Sheil Era."

life. Failure to understand this is failure to grasp the very core of the Christian religion. Nor do they offer any room for compromise. Too often in the past religious leaders under the guise of prudence have failed to appreciate or to teach fearlessly what the Brotherhood of Man means in terms of practical justice for the poor, the underprivileged, the oppressed of the world. Too much respect for the local banker, industrialist, or politician has caused them to be silent when the teachings of Christ should have been literally shouted from the house-tops.

But unlike his old mentor, Sheil then took a strong stand in favor of black civil rights.

Sheil's position reflected the increasing militancy among the nation's African Americans, but he made it in a distinctively Catholic way. Echoing the Double-V campaign conducted by African Americans that worked for victory at home over racism and victory abroad over fascism and Nazism, Sheil supported black demands as entirely reasonable. He said

They are simply asking that they be given their rights as American citizens, rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution of this country. The opportunity to progress, to better themselves economically, to share in the industrial, social, political, and cultural life of America - these are the things that the American Negro seeks - and he can no longer be denied them. If the Negro is worthy to die with the white men, then he is worthy to live with him on terms of honest, objective equality. It is the most dangerous kind of hypocrisy to wage a war for democracy and at the same time to deny the basic benefits of democracy and to any group of citizens. Democracy is not divisible. We cannot be part free and part slave any more in 1942 than we could in 1862.

Furthermore, in a move that linked all humanity together, Sheil argued that "Jim Crowism in the Mystical Body of Christ is a disgraceful anomaly. Christianity pays no heed to accidental differences of race, color, or economic status. To see Christ in every creature is of the very essence of the Christian religion."⁶¹

Sheil followed Friendship House's understanding of interracial justice as a white, not a Negro, problem. Not only did Sheil support the brotherhood of mankind, he also blamed white people for higher crime rates among African Americans and suggested the very life of the

⁶¹ Bernard Sheil, speech, 'Delinquency and Racial Minority Groups,' Conference of Catholic Charities, Sept 27-30, 1942," 44979.01, folder 25, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil Papers, AAC.

Church depended on its embrace of interracial justice. The Church must consider any “delinquency” among blacks as a “protest against discrimination . . . that is ethically indefensible, socially unjustifiable, and radically un-Christian.” The state, Sheil claimed, existed “not to be a sublimated watchman of private property but to secure the social well-being and happiness of all its citizens.” But for the Church, Sheil reserved his harshest criticism, saying that “to allow communism to become synonymous with social justice is not only stupid, but false,” since only the Church could offer true social justice. Using the language of Marxism, Sheil warned his listeners of a decline in the Church unless they took care of the poor:

History gives overwhelming evidence of this one fact; that when the Church loses sight of her first duty to Christ’s poor, to the masses – or the proletariat, if you prefer that term – then does the Church begin to decline, to become infected with worldliness, to lose the love and the loyalty of the small people, the little ones of Christ, whom the Church must not only teach and guide but also protect.⁶²

Sheil’s leadership had a limited effect. The following month, the American bishops took a watered-down stand on racial justice, not mentioning black equality in Catholic schools and hospitals.⁶³

With the help of de Hueck, Sheil continued to create institutional space for Catholic interracialism. Not only did Sheil help protect Friendship House, he also created a school of adult education. For de Hueck, education posed a fundamental problem for Catholics when it came to caring for Christ in the Negro – and living out their Catholic faith in new ways in other contexts. She developed a plan for an adult education program that would become a part of Sheil’s CYO empire. Sheil eventually called it the Sheil School of Social Studies and it opened

⁶² Ibid. *The Harlem Friendship House News* reprinted the speech in full in the October, 1942 issue. In her autobiography, Ellen Tarry also quoted from this speech (Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 193-95.) Sheil asked Catherine to attend the conference with him (Duquinn, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine De Hueck Doherty*, 203.)

⁶³ Duquinn, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine De Hueck Doherty*, 203.

on February 1, 1943.⁶⁴ Most courses were nine weeks long, although the Sheil Forum on Friday nights sponsored one-time speaking events.

As in other parts of Sheil's empire, volunteers were central. De Hueck recruited women she knew, including Nina Polcyn who had helped found Milwaukee's Catholic Worker house in 1939 and would be a consistent actor in Catholic interracialist circles, to help Sheil set up the school. People associated with Friendship House, including Ann Harrigan, Catherine de Hueck Doherty, Eddie Doherty, Ed Marciniak, labor organizer John Yancey, and Claude McKay, taught many of the courses on racial justice and also on other material like the "bourgeoisie mind" and labor. McKay, who had recently moved to Chicago and wanted Cantwell to baptize him, taught courses called "American Negro Literature," "The Negro: His World Position," "The Negro in American Life," "Negro Culture," and "Poetry in Modern Life."⁶⁵

The Sheil School of Social Studies became a fixture in Catholic interracialist circles, providing a venue for their message. For the school's first five years, the course catalog prominently featured subjects relating to interracial (and interreligious) justice. The 1945 course bulletin for the winter term asked readers if they knew that "That while only five major colleges or universities have one Negro faculty member, Sheil School has had Negro teachers consistently since its beginning in 1943?"⁶⁶ Friendship House and other interracialists sponsored several courses on interracial justice, black history, and housing. Drawing from Friendship House's tag line, the program proclaimed that "without interracial justice there can be no social justice."⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Nina Polcyn, Oral History Interview, n.d., box 6, folder 16, CISCA, LUA (Chicago).

⁶⁵ See course descriptions in box 8: The Sheil School of Social Studies, CRD, UNDA Notre Dame, IN). Cantwell did not baptize McKay because of jurisdiction.

⁶⁶ First Term, 1945, course bulletin, box 8, folder 3, Sheil School Bulletins Year 1945, CRD, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁶⁷ Sheil School of Social Studies 1943-1944, box 15, folder 1-4, CRD, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

Beyond interracial justice, the Sheil School of Social Studies continued Falls's and the Catholic Worker's earlier merging of concerns for racial and religious tolerance. Cantwell taught a class on anti-semitism, and one bulletin opened with a question: "What are you going to do about the problems there are?" Many Chicagoans, it said, would choose the "old method" of making a particular group a scapegoat: "You select some group of your neighbors (brothers), e.g. the Jews, the Negroes, or the Irish, who then become again, e.g. 'the Sheenies,' 'the Niggers,' or punitive as porcupines. Henceforward they are responsible for everything from the war to the pain in your toe." But that decision, the book argued, was a problem: "The least thing wrong with this 'solution' is that it is irrational and debasingly ignorant. The worst feature of it is that it too can send you to Hell." Hell would also welcome people who tried to be more moderate, only making "statements now and then that you know some 'good Jews' or that you've nothing against Negroes who keep 'their place' or that the Irish are 'just as good as everyone else' - then watch it."⁶⁸ In addition, while the courses had a decidedly Catholic flair, Sheil did not limit instructor positions to Catholics alone. For example, his friend, labor-organizer Saul Alinsky, made many appearances as did representatives from organizations like the National Conference of Christians and Jews made frequent appearances.⁶⁹

By placing race and religious concerns alongside one another, the Sheil School – and the interracialists who taught in it – brought concerns about Negro rights solidly into what Kevin Schultz has called "tri-faith America." According to Schultz, tri-faith American was a "national image that was, for the first time, inclusive of both Catholics and Jews in what only recently had been widely referred to as a 'Protestant country.'" The image, Schultz writes, "challenged the nation in unexpected ways, forcing it to alter the way power as meted out, who was deserving of

⁶⁸ Fourth Term, 1944, Sheil School of Social Studies, CRD.

⁶⁹ For more on Sheil and Alinsky, see Sanford D. Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me Rebel: Saul Alinsky - His Life and Legacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).

social, political, and cultural recognition, and what that recognition would mean for the way the country conducted its business.”⁷⁰ Schultz finds that Catholics’ and Jews’ forging of tri-faith America, while aware of racial justice, was mostly a white endeavor prior to the early 1960s. But Catholics at the Sheil School pushed forth the image of tri-faith America in ways that combined racial and religious tolerance by practicing and teaching the inclusion of African Americans and Jews in the larger body politic, which suggests an earlier meaningful concern with questions of race in tri-faith America.

Friendship House’s hands, for instance, gave Catholics a theological argument for tri-faith America centered on questions of citizenship. Sister Cecilia Himbaugh of CISCA had not pushed the boundaries of the Mystical Body in the 1930s and was not explicit in its inclusion of Protestants and Jews; in her context, one was a member of the Body if one was a baptized Catholic. According to Harrigan, however, Catholics must consider all people as potentially members of the Mystical Body because “some there are who are without grace, yet will afterwards obtain it, and some have it already.”⁷¹ She and Friendship House moved around the question of baptism by considering the question of time: they did not know when a person might become a Catholic. Therefore, Harrigan argued, “whether a man be a capitalist, a communist, a Negro, a Jew, a Protestant, etc., he is our brother because ALL MEN ARE OUR BROTHERS.”⁷² Because Harrigan taught at the Sheil School, hundreds of Chicago’s Catholics were exposed to this practical theology.

D. Women, Voluntary Poverty and the Lay Apostolate

⁷⁰ Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise*, 7.

⁷¹ Sheen, *The Mystical Body of Christ*, 80.

⁷² Ann Harrigan, “Rendezvous with God,” *Harlem Friendship House News* May, 1942.

Although supported by Sheil and their priest-confessors, the women of Friendship House knew that they played a role in the Mystical Body that only laypeople could play. Just as the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ gave Friendship House staff workers a language for their work, the developing idea of the lay apostolate, rooted in the Mystical Body doctrine, forged legitimacy for their life choices. Most of the staff workers at Friendship House were unmarried women, although men occasionally joined. All were in a peculiar position. Unlike most of their Catholic peers, they were not marrying, nor were they joining the priesthood or a convent. Instead, they lived in a new in-between place, committed to serving Christ in the Negro in a radical way that was different than their peers, but living without the security of a religious order. They were joining with two other women-led, Catholic Action based movements, the Catholic Worker and the Grail, in forging a new role for the laity: the lay apostolate.⁷³

The women of Chicago's Friendship House viewed voluntary poverty as a key component of their version of the lay apostolate. For Friendship House, voluntary poverty referred both to the members' commitment to material poverty as well as their acceptance of those others rejected. De Hueck had initially insisted that her staff voluntarily submit to poverty as a way to identify with poor Negroes, limited in their access to the fruits of American society by white racism. De Hueck wanted Friendship House to serve the poorest African Americans in the city, believing that Christ was present among them and also that they were the most at risk for becoming Communists. For its first year in Chicago, Sheil paid the salaries of the women at Friendship House, but after that they went off what they called the "gold standard." For the rest of Friendship House's existence, it relied entirely on donations from supporters the staff workers solicited through "begging letters" and the money staff workers made by lecturing across the city

⁷³ Karen Kennelly, *American Catholic Women : A Historical Exploration*, Makers of the Catholic Community (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 175-77. Kalven, *Women Breaking Boundaries: A Grail Journey, 1940-1995*.

and the nation on interracial justice. Voluntary poverty had its downsides: it limited black full-time involvement at Friendship House and helped normalize black poverty. But despite its limitations, Friendship House's decision to embrace voluntary poverty made the group the most radical Catholic interracialist group, closer to radicalism of the Communists than to the respectability of the Urban League.

While all lay Catholics had a responsibility to love the Mystical Body of Christ, members of the lay apostolate did it in special ways. As Harrigan described it in a 1942 article, some lay people had "special vocations" and bore the responsibility of leaving their "normal work for a particular field of action which has been founded for that purpose."⁷⁴ As members of the lay apostolate, they did not wear the religious clothing of a nun or have the security of public vows and an order. Instead, they took internal vows of poverty, chastity, and charity and let their inner commitment to Christ drive the work of interracialism. Because their vows were secret, they could move among lay people freely and blend in, unlike nuns who were often cloistered, or priests whose religious garb marked them as other, and be the hands and feet of Christ in different ways. For Harrigan, the lay apostolate seemed to be almost a higher calling than that of a religious order. As she recalled, it "tapped deep wells within me."⁷⁵

In 1943, Pope Pius XII gave the Mystical Body doctrine tremendous support, which legitimated Friendship House's emphasis on it and the lay apostolate. No longer would its adherents have any concerns about being censored, as Sister Cecilia had experienced. That year, he published the encyclical "Mystici Corporis Christi" on the Mystical Body of Christ. Friendship House's members were elated. Harrigan recalled that it was "big news" for them because "it was the doctrinal basis on which all of our work in Friendship House depended

⁷⁴ Harrigan, "Rendezvous with God."

⁷⁵ Makletzoff, finished works and drafts, box 3, folder 5a, MAK.

upon.”⁷⁶ Finally they could reference an extended, official document that proclaimed what Catholics thought was an unchanging truth. Thus, Harrigan could answer the question of if she considered herself a Catholic liberal, she could say “my viewpoint is that of Jesus Christ, which has no distinction, conservative, liberal, etc., but is the same yesterday, today and forever.”⁷⁷

Harrigan understood the lay apostolate as a potentially lonely, but definitely exhilarating, road, and for her it was. Because it was so new, the lay apostolate was bound to be misunderstood all angles, Harrigan suggested, and would not be at home with either their co-religionists or their co-social activists. Valorizing the narrow path she walked, she warned potential members that their fellow Catholic might declare “only nuns and priests can be really holy. Only the religious have a right to get serious about becoming holy . . . If you’re so anxious to be holy why don’t you enter a convent.” Harrigan warned that their fellow leftists would call them fools “because you are trying to do the impossible . . . leaven the natural with the supernatural, for they are materialists, and think the only solution to all our problems can be material things, like more money, more jobs, etc.” Nonetheless, Harrigan expressed an excited hope that “no matter where our job, no matter whom we are thrown in with, we *can*, by the grace of God, conquer them for Christ, not become part of them but make them a part of us, and hence of the living Mystical Body. Thus we shall sanctify the profane . . .”⁷⁸ But the lay apostolate was not only a complicated road because of its religious and activist isolation.

It also challenged gender norms that were complicated by white women’s (and men’s) presence in a black community. In the Catholic Church, marriage was a sacrament, a way to experience God’s grace, and women were expected to participate in it. If they wanted to devote themselves fully to God, they could become nuns. White nuns had been living and working in

⁷⁶ Harrigan, “The Sheil Era.”

⁷⁷ February 10, 1947, box 1, folder 12, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁷⁸ Harrigan, “Rendezvous with God.”

Chicago's black belt for years.⁷⁹ As Amy Koehlinger has shown, white nuns working and living in black communities who wore their habits were an "inconclusive race" and had ambiguous gender identifies.⁸⁰ "By enshrouding women in layers of black and white cloth," Koehlinger argues, "the habit disembodied sisters [sic] faces and desexualized their bodies."⁸¹ But Friendship House's lay workers were different than these nuns: they did not wear a habit. Clearly, they were single women, and although they had taken vows of chastity, the question of interracial marriage and dating loomed large.

Friendship House's voluntary poverty critiqued the United States' racial system and meant that its white members refused to participate in the system's economic benefits or play by its rules that determined who "mattered." Friendship House's commitment to serving the poorest African Americans stemmed from an assertion that the upwardly mobile, capitalist system that most Catholics had bought into was wrong. Throughout Friendship House's rhetoric and concern was a belief that to be "bourgeoisie" was bad. Bourgeoisie traits ran the gamut from wanting to wear new, fashionable clothing to trying to identify oneself with only the "respectable" people. For the women (and men) of Friendship House, any drunk, poor, or unstable person who walked through their doors was as important as Bishop Sheil or Father Hesburgh, the president of Notre Dame and an admirer of Friendship House. Harrigan condemned "the pettiness of the bourgeoisie mind when he draws a circle, keeping out all those who do not come within the pale of their idea of respectability."⁸² To those who would exclude

⁷⁹ Hoy, *Good Hearts : Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past*. As Hoy shows, women religious had crossed color lines in Chicago for many years prior to Friendship House's arrival. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, and the Daughters of Charity engaged with the black migrants against the sensibilities of most white Catholics. And of course, the Society of the Divine Word priests had worked in the black parishes.

⁸⁰ Koehlinger, *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s*, 154.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁸² Ann Harrigan, "Around the House," *Harlem Friendship House News* (April, 1943).

outcasts from society, which de Hueck dubbed the “brothers Christopher,” Harrigan argued that “the Church is the universal mother” and “she must take care of all her children.”

Friendship House’s commitment to welcoming of the “Brother’s Christopher” caused tension between the members. Harrigan and de Hueck argued about the standards a potential staff worker should meet before she or he came on staff. Harrigan wanted more regulation, insisting that the staff workers be mentally stable, while de Hueck was more welcoming. In addition, practicing hospitality toward people who faced mental instability and drug and alcohol addictions tested the patience and resources of the Friendship House staff. They found that in order to protect themselves and their property, they had to be mindful and keep a constant eye on the folks they knew were unstable.

Among white people, staff workers’ voluntary poverty and commitment to sharing in the life of their neighbors gave them more power. For Harrigan, who spoke around Chicago and the nation, where she lived became a source of strength against hostile audiences supported by segregationist priests.⁸³ By placing her body in a black neighborhood, integrating when priests refused to open the doors of their parish, Harrigan usurped their authority. Because Friendship House members spoke so virulently against racism, their choice of voluntary poverty also served a practical purpose.

Voluntary poverty limited the hierarchy’s influence on Friendship House, which mattered mightily because Friendship House was willing to take a stronger stand for racial justice than Archbishop Stritch. Asking Stritch or Catholic Charities, the social arm of the archdiocese, for money would make Friendship House beholden to the hierarchy, but voluntary poverty protected Friendship House’s independence from the man Harrigan called the “cardinal from Tennessee.”

⁸³ Makletzoff, memoirs – notes and drafts, box 3, folder 7, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

In her opinion, Stritch had not shaken his Southern racism.⁸⁴ One of Friendship House's first interactions with Stritch made clear to Harrigan and Tarry his position on Negroes' segregation from white people. While Tarry was still at Friendship House, followers of the anti-semitic radio priest Charles Coughlin attacked Friendship House and broke its windows. De Hueck and Tarry, who looked white, went to see Stritch about the incident. Thinking he was among white people, Stritch, in an off-handed manner, told de Hueck and Tarry that they should not promote intermarriage because "no one likes a mulatto."⁸⁵ The women decided to steer clear of Stritch as much as possible. Luckily for them, his hands off leadership style lent itself to this strategy and also helped them in their cause.⁸⁶ Stritch's comment, though, also revealed his concern with one of the key aspects of the civil rights movement and Catholic interracialism in the North: the meaning of white womanhood and sexuality.

Voluntary poverty deepened the faith of its adherents because they had to depend on God and the saints for help. Often, people would provide gifts of food, clothing, or material needs just at the moment when Friendship House needed it the most. Harrigan and the other staff workers attributed these gifts to the Holy Ghost, who they referred to as the "HG." Harrigan reported "some visitors to Fr. House [were] shocked to hear the familiar way that the young Negroes explained the source of the new ping pong table in their club room, or the additional set of cards that arrived from out of the blue. 'The good old HG', they heard the B [de Hueck] say, so they followed suit."⁸⁷ Friendship House also turned to Brother (later Saint) Martin de Porres for help.

Because of voluntary poverty, Friendship House's interracial living was largely a result of white women living and working for Friendship House in the black belt with black women

⁸⁴ Ann Harrigan, Diary, May 19, 1947, box 1, folder 12, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁸⁵ People, Tarry, Ellen (Harlem) 1998.052-072, in Ellen Tarry Papers, Madonna House Archive (Combermere: Canada).

⁸⁶ For more on Stritch and race, see Skerrett, Kantowicz, and Avella, *Catholicism, Chicago Style*, 249-88.

⁸⁷ Harrigan, "The New Arch and the New Provincial."

and men who worked outside Friendship House. As Tarry had argued it would, voluntary poverty limited black participation as staff workers.⁸⁸ Voluntary poverty, though, limited who would choose to join Friendship House; few Negroes wanted to give up their income. When Sheil stopped paying the staff workers' salary after their first year in Chicago, Mildred Wiley and Artice Baldwin, both Negroes, left Friendship House. Several long-time volunteers who worked outside Friendship House, such as the James family and Russ Marshall, provided crucial support to Friendship House.

Internally, voluntary poverty raised complicated questions at Friendship House about appropriate gender roles and suggests an intersection of gender and religion that positioned the women as dependents of a male God. Harrigan, for instance, was well aware of the fact that for them, the Holy Spirit fulfilled the function of what Catholic popular culture said a man should do for his wife. The Holy Spirit provided for her.⁸⁹ By depending on God and not a man for her clothing and food, Harrigan wed herself to God through her interracial work.

Not all Friendship House staff workers and volunteers, however, remained married to God alone; as it grew many staff workers and volunteers met and married their spouses, which led to a deep conflict over the role of married people in Friendship House. Initially, the people at Friendship House assumed that marriage was off the table for members of Friendship House; one could not be married and serve as a staff worker because one's attention would be split, necessarily, between one's husband and children, and the exhausting work Friendship House. The mutually exclusive callings of being a spouse and a staff worker were further complicated

⁸⁸ Black Chicagoans made less money than white Chicagoans. See Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis : A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, 214-63.

⁸⁹ A pre-Cana Conference Outline from 1950, put together by the organization Harrigan's friends Pat and Patty Crawley founded, describes the man as "the protector and provider, has the job of beating the world and carving out of his environment a living (food, housing, clothing) for himself and his family." Kane, *Gender Identities in American Catholicism*, 7.

when the staff worker was a man. The Friendship House directors decided that it would be wrong for a husband to live in voluntary poverty, dependent on the Holy Ghost for provision, because he would not be fulfilling his duty of providing for his family. Therefore, because of the specific, gendered duties of each vocation, a person could not be married and be a staff worker.

The bomb dropped when de Hueck and Doherty got married. Aware of the concerns over the role of a married person at Friendship House, Sheil had agreed to perform the ceremony on the condition that for de Hueck, Friendship House must come before Eddie.⁹⁰ De Hueck chose not to tell her staff workers, who were supposedly her closest confidants, because she did not want to hurt them. But Harrigan was furious and hurt. She and de Hueck shared many confidences, and to not know that de Hueck married Doherty until after the fact left her raw. She wrote to a friend, “As you know, I was right here in Chicago, and I was not even told, no less invited to the wedding - an almost total stranger was bridesmaid.” Although she was: “so near it was if I had never existed.”⁹¹ De Hueck’s decision also reopened the topic of marriage at Friendship House. After a heart-wrenching conversation between Harrigan, Nancy Grinnell (the Harlem Friendship House’s director), de Hueck, and Father Furfey (one of Friendship House’s spiritual advisors), the group decided that de Hueck could remain as Friendship House’s director general.

As a married woman, de Hueck did not seem to practice the same voluntary poverty she expected out of her staff. She lived out of the black ghetto, had Doherty’s salary to fall back on should God not come through, and could escape to a charming house in Canada that Doherty had purchased for her should she need to get away. De Hueck’s actions challenged Harrigan’s belief that voluntary poverty was the best way to model dependence on the Holy Ghost, and love and

⁹⁰ Duquinn, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine De Hueck Doherty*, 207.

⁹¹ Ann Harrigan to Makletzoff, 12 September 1943, box 2, folder 20, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

identification with Christ in the Negro. In 1946, when Friendship House faced eviction from its storefronts because the landlord wanted to replace them with a more profitable bar, conflict over the different standards burst onto the scene. As Harrigan fumed to her friend Nicholas Makletzoff,

The difficulty is that she is living one life - she has a husband, a home and security - and the rest of us are living a quite different one - with no husbands, homes, or any security whatsoever - and there is no meeting of the minds, no common ground, so to speak, on this level. The whole idea of poverty, for example, is complete different for her and for us. Now, for example, we actually face no where to go. Even if she and Eddie were here, they would still have their house as a refuge - and Eddie could still make plenty of money.⁹²

To Harrigan, de Hueck was a hypocrite: she told her staff to depend on the Holy Ghost as their provider but had her own backup should God not come through: her husband.

E. “Would You Let Your Sister Marry a Negro?” Friendship House and Interracial Marriage

A husband is precisely what Harrigan had wanted for years, and she had consistently turned away from marriage in order to pursue God, first in the Catholic Worker and then at Friendship House. She approached this situation by embracing suffering. Harrigan thought herself destined to a life of being alone and was willing to be lonely, she wrote to God in her diary, because if loneliness was “to be my particular little hair shirt, then I can only try to follow.” But Harrigan fought hard to crucify her longings and in doing so, sought to kill her sexuality in a slow, painful way: “O God,” she wrote in the months before she moved to Chicago, “this is so hard – almost too hard – Why do you ask so much – Will not one bit less satisfy you This suicide of self without losing life is a process too painful to even describe.”⁹³

⁹² Ann Harrigan to Nicholas Makletzoff, 10 November 1946, box 2, folder 20, MAK, UNDA (Notre Dame, IN).

⁹³ Makletzoff, diary, 7 May 1942, box 1, folder 1, MAK.

She wondered at her longings, asking “what is this terrific in us that makes us so full of life and fire and sparkle [. . .] and then betrays us if we indulge?” And in letter she wrote to her brother, Peter, she said, “True I could have married and got myself cured of this urge, but at what cost? (more than I wish to pay) So I am single, without a date in 2 or 3 years, feeling very much abused and imposed upon (!)”⁹⁴ She believed men to be, for her, “worldly things” from which she had to turn away. The men she fled were both white and black.

The real, practical questions about interracial marriage at Friendship House suggest that Friendship House reluctantly made interracial marriage a cornerstone in their teaching on Catholic interracialism. With white women living in a black neighborhood, and white and black young men and women coming together at Friendship House events, interracial dating and marriage became unavoidable issues for Friendship House’s women. Historians have shown that white people used religious arguments against interracial marriage to uphold segregation. According to Jane Dailey, in the southern, modern civil rights movement, southern segregationists married their anti-miscegenation beliefs with religious arguments against civil rights: “it was . . . through sex that segregation assumed, for believing Christians, cosmological significance.”⁹⁵ Friendship House, too, dealt with interracial marriage, merging it with religion, but to a profoundly different end.

When white audiences objected to Friendship House’s interracialist message, they almost always asked a question that took this form: “would you let your sister marry a Negro?” The question reflected the women’s unmarried state; because the women had no children to protect, audiences turned to their families. De Hueck reflected, “for five long years, every private statement of the first two commandments that we have made, every lecture that we have given . .

⁹⁴ Ibid, March 9, 1942.

⁹⁵ Jane Dailey, “Sex, Segregation, and the Sacred,” *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (2004).

. we have been faced with this strangely irrelevant ‘stock’ question: WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR SISTER TO MARRY A NEGRO?”⁹⁶ Interracial sex and marriage, it seems, was at the heart of racial prejudice, discrimination, and segregation, and white Catholics wanted little to do with it. This question would plague Catholic interracialists into the 1950s as well. But unlike Dailey’s southern Protestants, Catholic interracialists could appeal to a different meaning of marriage.

Publically, Friendship House approached marriage from a Catholic perspective, viewing it as a sacrament to be experienced by a husband and wife, no matter their race.⁹⁷ According to de Hueck, “IF THE CHURCH DOES NOT OBJECT TO THEM [interracial marriage] WHY SHOULD CATHOLICS?”⁹⁸ As Cantwell, Friendship House’s chaplain, wrote, “interracial marriage in itself is not a moral problem. I have known interracial marriages that give every evidence of coming as close to the Christian ideal as any I have ever seen.”⁹⁹

But in an effort to smooth the way for interracial justice, fearing that the endorsement of interracial marriage would make white people less likely to work for justice, Friendship House accommodated white racism by suggesting that interracial justice would lead to fewer, not more, instances of interracial sex. “Social equality,” Friendship House suggested, would answer white people’s concerns about interracial marriage because “if ‘forbidden fruit’ is no longer forbidden, it is not nearly so desirable.”¹⁰⁰ Friendship House also pointed out the obvious: interracial sex, initiated by white people, had and continued to happen in America. “Since eight out of ten

⁹⁶ De Hueck, Catherine, “Would You Let Your Sister Marry a Negro?” in *Harlem Friendship House News*, November, 1942.

⁹⁷ For a discussion of Catholics and efforts to fight anti-miscegenation laws, see Fay Botham, *Almighty God Created the Races: Christianity, Interracial Marriage, and American Law* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

⁹⁸ De Hueck, Catherine, “Would You Let Your Sister Marry a Negro?” in *Harlem Friendship House News*, November, 1942.

⁹⁹ Daniel Cantwell, “Postscript on the Cicero Riot,” *The Commonwealth* September 14, 1951, 545.

¹⁰⁰ “Christ in the Negro,” *Harlem Friendship House News*, October 1941. In this, they were following the thinking of LaFarge. See Southern, *John La Farge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963*, 228, 73-74.

Negroes who we meet are of mixed blood,” the *Harlem Friendship House News* proclaimed, “intermarriage is an accomplished fact.”¹⁰¹ As Tarry put it, “if it’s the white skin they think our men crave, they (our men) have not to leave the colored race for that, especially down here in my own Dixie. Certain practices dating from the beginning of slavery produced these!”¹⁰²

While de Hueck supported interracial marriage in principal publically, she warned her staff against pursuing black men. In her mind, if Friendship House avoided interracial dating, it would help the cause of interracial justice. But de Hueck’s staff workers, who lived with black families and socialized with black men, felt differently. Harrigan led the way in causing controversy.

While in Chicago, Harrigan fell in love with Bernard James, one of Friendship House’s first volunteers and a member of a middle-class black family. The James family greatly supported Friendship House and provided hospitality and friendship to many of the staff workers and visiting volunteers who came for the summer. James taught Spanish at Friendship House and was one of Harrigan’s closest confidants as she struggled to direct Friendship House. When he joined the military during World War II, Harrigan was devastated. In 1946, James was still stationed abroad, but he and Harrigan had been writing love letters to one another. Harrigan’s diary from that year reveals her heart-wrenching struggle over whether or not to marry James. To her dismay, Hillenbrand, her spiritual advisor, counseled her against it “because of age, color and lack of practical support.”¹⁰³ His stance reflected de Hueck’s concern about the practicality of interracial marriages.

¹⁰¹ “Christ in the Negro,” *Harlem Friendship House News*, October 1941.

¹⁰² Ellen Tarry, “Mr. Hoover and Jim Crow,” n.d., box 5, folder 5: 1940-1992, Writings, Ellen Tarry Papers, Schomburg (New York).

¹⁰³ Ann Harrigan Makletsoff, diary, 11 August 1946, box 1, folder 1, MAK.

Harrigan, however, would not be so easily swayed. For two and a half more months, she writhed in agony as she debated going against her spiritual leader and following her passion. One day, a letter in the mail arrived from James, announcing he had fallen in love with an Italian woman. Harrigan rejoiced. She interpreted the turn of events as a gift from God, writing in her diary “this is how the Lord took issue with the temptation” that would have ensued had James come back and pursued her. She concluded months of torment with, “How unsearchable are Thy ways, O Lord! How deep and unfathomable Thy paths! D.G. [Deo gratias, thanks be to God, or Dei gratia, by the grace of God]”¹⁰⁴ Harrigan’s praised God not because she would have betrayed Friendship House’s public line on interracial marriage. Rather, it was because she thought that to marry James would have been to succumb to a temptation to abandon her calling, which was to devote her whole self to Christ in the Negro, who resided in all black people, and not just James. For Harrigan, however, the temptation of marriage would not disappear.

Other members of Friendship House struggled with de Hueck’s proscription against interracial marriage. By the late 1940s, many at Friendship House assumed that their calling to the lay apostolate would one day be replaced by a calling to marriage and for many, their marriages were interracial. Nancy Grinnell, the Harlem house’s white director, married Donald Dubois who had come to Friendship House after receiving an honorable discharge from the army.¹⁰⁵ Mary Gallagher, a white staff worker, married David King, a black staff worker.¹⁰⁶ Genie Galloway married David James, Bernard’s brother.¹⁰⁷ In addition, Friendship House’s staff workers and volunteers had no problems going out interracial in public. They had built

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, October 24, 1946.

¹⁰⁵ DuBois to Tarry, 4 September 1943, box 1, folder 15: Letters to Tarry from "Album," 1937-1950's," Ellen Tarry Papers, Schomburg (New York).

¹⁰⁶ Fr. John Cullen to Cantwell, box 4, folder December 1947-1947, FH, CHM (Chicago).

¹⁰⁷ Betty to Jean, Sept 20, 1949, in Box 5, Folder September - December, 1949; 1949 Undated, FH, CHM (Chicago).

friendships and dating relationships across racial lines and displayed them publically, to the ire of white observers.

Friendship House soon discovered the violent response these public displays of interracial relationships between men and women could evoke from other white people. In the summer of 1946, an interracial, co-ed group of Friendship House workers and volunteers walked through a white neighborhood as they returned from the beach. White people attacked the group and beat up the black members in what was one of many instances of white-on-black violence in the city of Chicago.¹⁰⁸ After the incident, De Hueck clamped down, telling her staff and volunteers that co-ed, interracial groups should not appear in public, and certainly should not drink publically. She wanted to do everything possible to make smooth Friendship House's path and did not want to have to bail her staff workers out of jail.

De Hueck also instituted a policy directly relating to interracial dating, which complicated her public stance that there was nothing hindering two Catholics from marrying. She told her staff that they should request a transfer if they felt "attracted to a Negro." The following year, the staff argued that the policy was "inconsistent." An attraction "may be an inspiration from the Holy Ghost," they argued, and the policy seemed egregious since "there is no unanimity of opinion as to whether or not the time is ripe for interracial marriage."¹⁰⁹ It is unclear whether or not de Hueck reversed her decision. Either way, the staff's conflict with de Hueck over interracial marriage at Friendship House was just the tip of the iceberg.

By 1946, de Hueck and the other leaders of Friendship House began to split over the issue of Friendship House's purpose. The conflict connected with the staff worker's efforts to assert their

¹⁰⁸ Mayor's Commission on Human Relations, September 11, 1946, Box 17, Folder 6: Housing July - December 1946, in DC, CHM (Chicago).

¹⁰⁹ Staff Workers' Report, A, 1947 F.H. Convention, Box 4, Folder January - February, 1948, FH, CHM (Chicago).

position as members of the lay apostolate and focus on the rising incidences of racial violence. Their experience being attacked that summer was one in a growing number of white-on-black attacks and they wanted to shift Friendship House away from its social work activities, like providing food and clothing for poor Negroes, toward focusing on the relationship between Negroes and white people. De Hueck, arguing that obedience was at the heart of the Friendship House vocation, did not want to grant local directors more autonomy. Friendship House, de Hueck countered, had to be free to live out the Mystical Body of Christ in any way a bishop asked them – whether that be among Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, or other immigrants, in a city or in a rural area. In 1947, the director continued to debate if Friendship House should devote itself solely to the relationship between black and white people, or if it would be open to other concerns. De Hueck continued to push for a more open stance, arguing that Friendship House was a way of life and should be open to working in ways not focused on interracial justice alone, but the other directors – including Harrigan - disagreed.

The conflict, however, was too much for de Hueck. In 1947, de Hueck decided that rather than force Friendship House to obey her commands, she would leave and focus on founding a sister apostolate called Madonna House in Combermere, Canada. In May, she and Doherty left for Combermere, Harrigan noted bitterly, in their “new \$2,500.00 car - a black beauty” that Sheil had purportedly given to the couple.¹¹⁰ Friendship House’s staff workers felt like de Hueck was abandoning them, but de Hueck claimed she was just following God’s will. In the year following the split, many staff workers left Friendship house.¹¹¹

Harrigan was one of them. She left because she could no longer resist the call of marriage in favor of the difficult, lonely task of running Friendship House. She married

¹¹⁰ Harrigan to Makletzoff, May 17, 1947, MAK.

¹¹¹ De Hueck continued to be a part of Friendship House USA, as it came to be called, from a distance.

Nicholas Makletzoff. Makletzoff, a Russian emigrant architect two decades Harrigan's senior, lived in Canada and had been a supporter of the Friendship House for years. De Hueck, who claimed Makletzoff was her cousin, sponsored him when he fled Russia. The pair co-owned land on the Madagaskwa River in Combermere where Nicholas built de Hueck a house. After de Hueck and Doherty married, Doherty bought out Makletzoff's half of the house and Nicholas built another small house for himself on an island a short distance away. Harrigan and Makletzoff got to know one another when Harrigan and other staff workers went up to de Hueck's house in Combermere for vacation. When Harrigan married Makletzoff, she did so in secret, disregarding Cantwell's and Hillenbrand's council in order to flee the pressures of Friendship House and escape to what she thought would be marital bliss in Canada.

Although de Hueck and Harrigan left Friendship House for Canada, it did not die out. New staff workers came and continued to provide an interracial space in Chicago and influence the city and the nation in favor of interracial justice. In the coming years, Friendship House would move away from voluntary poverty. Friendship House, however, remained small. Circulation of the paper never moved beyond about 2000, and they never had much money. Its participants dressed in second-hand clothing and ate watered down soup. But for Friendship House in the 1940s, their smallness was part of their glory; it was just what de Hueck had wanted. And they suggested an alternate path through the wilderness of Catholicism and race relations than an experience of race bounded by the parish.

Assessments of Friendship House by its friends were mixed. As Tarry wrote in her autobiography, although she was one of Friendship House's "most severe critics," she believed that Friendship house "held the line in Harlem for the Church."¹¹² For McKay, Friendship House failed to be more effective because it focused too much on interracial friendship and not

¹¹² Tarry, *The Third Door: The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman*, 146.

enough on the structures holding society together. He told Cantwell that Friendship House was a “fine missionary endeavor and nothing more,” since “the social plight of the Negro has an economic basis.”¹¹³ For her part, Harrigan considered herself and the other members of Friendship House pioneers in the civil rights movement, long before the boycotts, marches, and sit-ins of the 1960s.

But the road to justice stretching out before Chicago’s Catholic interracialists still looked long and arduous. They had made a case for the spiritual legitimacy of Catholic interracialism, and created an interracial center where Catholics could go, but they needed to take the message back into the parish boundaries. This would prove to be their greatest challenge. The 1946 attack on Friendship House workers was just a foreshadowing of what was to come. From the late 1940s through the 1950s, housing came into the light as the major issue separating white and black people, and Catholic interracialists worked on the ground and through the government to promote integrated living. Father Daniel Cantwell, Friendship House’s chaplain, who Friendship House had profoundly shaped, would be the catalyst for a new, male-dominated Catholic interracialist organization.

¹¹³ McKay to Cantwell, November 14, 1944, Box 1, Folder 4 - 1944, DC, CHM (Chicago).

IX: THE CATHOLIC INTERRACIAL COUNCIL: CATHOLIC INTERRACILIAM AS THE RATIONAL RESPONSE TO RACIAL CONFLICT

In 1952, eighth grader Richard Bachert wrote an essay called “A Christian’s Attitude toward His Neighbor” in which he reflected on what he, as a Catholic school student, could do to help end race prejudice in his sphere of influence. He, along with 3700 other students from 75 schools in the archdiocese submitted posters or essays to a new Catholic interracialist group: the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago (CIC).¹ After declaring that “God created all men equal,” Bachert’s first strategy for ending race prejudice addressed what white people should do when black people move into the neighborhood. “We should not get up a petition to try to get them out of the neighborhood,” Bachert wrote, “but we should try to make them feel welcome and make friends with them.”²

Bachert’s essay reflected the key issue facing Catholic interracialists in the post-war era: housing. During World War II and immediately following, Chicago faced a severe housing shortage, but as building began again after the war, racial lines began to fluctuate again. Restrictive covenants, put in place by white people to limit black movement into certain neighborhoods, did little to stabilize the racial lines in Chicago. When, in 1948 the Supreme Court deemed restrictive covenants unconstitutional, the victory in Chicago was mostly symbolic.³

¹ Box 2, Folder 1952 Undated Items, CIC, CHM (Chicago)

² Richard Bachert, “A Christian’s Attitude Toward His Neighbor,” Box 3, April - May 1952,” CIC, CHM (Chicago).

³ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, 16, 29-30. Restrictive covenants had emerged after a 1917 decision declaring segregation ordinances at the municipal level unconstitutional. Enterprising homeowners turned to another strategy: the restrictive covenant in which homeowners in a

Liberal Catholics had fought restrictive covenants for years and rejoiced when they were no longer legal. Friendship House likened restrictive covenants to a declaration of “civil war,” and argued that they caused everyone, not only African Americans, suffering. *WORK*, Marciniak’s Catholic Labor Alliance periodical, argued that “restrictive covenants are fostered at least partially by bad housing among Negroes. Bad housing among Negroes is fostered by the rich booty coming to slum profiteers. Slum profiteering is fostered by too many people needing too few homes, the supply of housing being tightly limited by restrictive covenants. And so we are back where we started.”⁴ Cantwell argued that restrictive covenants defiled social justice because black people could not access decent housing faced higher rents than white people, and that restrictive covenants violated charity.⁵ Sheil compared restrictive covenants to “legalistic concentration camps” and contrasted them with the ideals of brotherhood.⁶ But once the legal means of restricting black people’s housing options were no longer legal, many people hoped that black housing would improve. Unfortunately, that was not to be the case. As Cantwell argued in an *Interracial Review* article in 1948, restrictive covenants’ end would not solve the fear white people had of black people. For that, heart work was required.⁷

From the 1943 Detroit riot through the 1950s, racial violence over housing increasingly plagued the archdiocese. As black people moved into formerly all-white neighborhoods, they faced arson, vandalism, and targeted mob violence.⁸ In 1947, Homer Jack of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination, an organization of Protestants, Catholics,

neighborhood could covenant together that no one would sell their house to a Negro (ironically Arthur and Lillian Falls bought their first house in a community covered by a restrictive covenant).

⁴ “Restrictive Covenants Bring Bad Housing To Chicago,” *WORK* (April, 1944).

⁵ Cantwell to Ryan, June 18, 1945, Box 1, Folder 1932-1945, DC.

⁶ Box 44979.05, Folder 28 and Box 44979.03, Folder 15, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil Papers, AAC. Hirsch argues that restrictive covenants were ineffective in keeping black people in ghettos during the Great Migration (Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, 16, 29, 30).

⁷ Cantwell, “Experiment in Chicago,” *Interracial Review* (April, 1948).

⁸ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*.

and Jews founded in the wake of the 1943 Detroit riots, noted that since V-J day, over 100 instances of white on black violence had been reported.⁹ Some of the most violent and sustained riots were over the integration of public housing for veterans and regular citizens. In 1946, white people rioted at Airport Homes housing project, in 1947 at Fernwood Park housing project, in 1949 at Park Manor at 71st and Lawrence, in 1949 in Englewood at 56th and Peoria, in 1953 at Trumbull Park housing project, and in 1957 in Calumet Park. Catholics were often at the forefront of the rioting, and frequently the local clergy either approved or did little to stop the violence. They had a stake in keeping their parishes white as well.¹⁰ Ignoring the violence many of his parishioners committed against Catholic and non-Catholic African Americans, Stritch, according to Steven Avella, “kept silent or issued bland noncommittal replies in private correspondence.”¹¹

If violence did not work to keep black neighbors away, white people moved. The reasons they gave for moving were varied. The minority, such as the members of the White Circle League, drew on explicit arguments for white superiority. Most claimed they were not prejudiced, but that black people made property values drop and made neighborhoods unsafe. They were, they claimed, just doing what was best for their families. Many expressed frustration, asking why “the Negro” insisted on “destroying” their homes and neighborhoods. Many said they were willing to work side-by-side with the black Americans, but they did not want to mix socially. In essence, they preferred the philosophy of Booker T. Washington: that in all things purely social, white and black people should be as separate as the fingers of a hand. A man, after all, they argued, had a right to choose his neighbor. But these folks could not escape a

⁹ Homer Jack to Affiliates of the Chicago Council, August 27, 1947, Box 6, Folder 7 Chicago, Illinois Commission on Human Relations, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (Springfield, IL).

¹⁰ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*.

¹¹ Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*, 265. See also Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*.

question ringing out from across the centuries that had a particular saliency in post-World War II America: who is my neighbor?

The suburbs, at first, seemed to be bastions of white projection comfort. White people could live in towns outside Chicago in places like Western Springs or Deerfield with others who had similar educational and cultural backgrounds, and they could still access the city. Bolstered by low down payment requirements, mortgage subsidies, and red-lining, white Americans pushed back the crabgrass frontier to build middle-class suburban utopias, free from the noise and crime (and implicitly the black people) of the city.¹² Here, protected by highways and high housing costs, white Americans could live with other respectable people, away from the jumble of city neighborhoods in which lower-class and upper-class people mixed in the sweaty grime of the elevated trains and buses. But some white suburbs soon discovered that black people, too, wanted to live in bucolic America.

In the post-war period, the CIC led the charge among Catholics dealing with housing. The group not only focused on housing as the lynchpin for racial justice in the North, but it also shifted the direction of Catholic interracialism. First, because housing dealt with specific

¹² Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). For more on the debate over suburbanization, see Robert Self's *American Babylon*, which complicates Jackson's understanding of suburbanization as pushing back an uninhabited crabgrass frontier by demonstrating that white migrants displaced people already living on Oakland's fringes: Mexicans and Mexican Americans and places suburbanization in the context of the civil rights movement. Andrew Wiese argues that pre-1940 black unincorporated working-class communities on the outskirts of town qualified as suburbs. His categorization challenges the esteemed Chicago School's urban theory, the argument that cities develop in a concentric fashion with the lowest classes living in the urban centers and the richest classes residing on the edges. Wiese's suburbs are neither rich nor white, and he views suburbanization not as the movement of whites to suburbs, but as the process of people's decentralization from the city to suburbs. Amanda Seligman points out that many white homeowners left their urban homes only after a long political struggle to keep their property. Kevin Kruse explores both the struggle within Atlanta between blacks and whites and the developing suburban conservative ideology that took residence in the suburbs. Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Amanda Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

neighborhoods and parishes, Catholic interracialists, who had developed a network of supporters that spanned parish and Archdiocesan boundaries, shifted their focus back into the parish boundaries. Second, the CIC successfully increased the legitimacy of the Catholic interracialist project in part because its members were men traveling in powerful political, business, and religious circles. They began to shift Catholic interracialism into the halls of power and worked to make it, as black Catholics had in the 1930s, respectable. In their efforts to expand the legitimacy of integrated living, Catholic interracialists waged a war with white ethnics over the meaning of “respectability” and “American,” arguing that it was respectable, sensible, and right to promote integrated living among people of the same class and cultural background. Third, they increased the organizational partnerships centered on interracial justice between Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations.

The CIC’s ecumenical work suggests the centrality of efforts for interracial justice in bringing together Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, and the leading role Chicago’s Catholics played. In the early 1950s, the CIC led the way in bringing racial issues into tri-faith America as Catholics, Protestants and Jews partnered to promote interracial housing. That Catholics worked together with Protestants and Jews on interracial housing suggests that questions of race were not peripheral to some aspects of the tri-faith partnership, as Schultz suggests it was until the early 1960s.¹³ Instead, concern about racial justice, not religious equality, was *the* motivating factor in bringing together Catholics, Protestants, and Jews into tri-faith partnership. Rather than being something that perplexed and bothered Jews and Catholics as they sought to make their faith as

¹³ Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise*. In addition, the alignment of liberal Catholics, Protestants, and Jews on the issue of interracial housing also adds to Robert Wuthnow’s argument that at mid-century, American religion was “restructured,” as a division along liberal and conservative lines replaced the one along denominational lines. Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion : Society and Faith since World War II*, Studies in Church and State (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

American as that of Protestants, the inclusion of black people as full citizens was a central factor in forging tri-faith America in Chicago. Chicago's Catholic interracialists paid attention to the lessons they learned through their interreligious partnership and would eventually model those for the nation.

The *Defender* called the CIC a “spark and prime movers of interracial justice and equality. It is the one religious organization which has received the endorsement and support of every legitimate social and interracial movement in the country.”¹⁴ But while the CIC did make progress toward racial justice, for most of the 1950s, its members were not radical crusaders. Instead, they were passionate about racial justice, but always sought, as they put it, to temper their zeal with prudence.

A. The Founding of the CIC: 12 Respectable Men and a Priest

The Catholic Interracial Council emerged from the liberal Catholic interracialist milieu in Chicago, and Father Daniel Cantwell birthed and raised the group. Cantwell had long been a student of Catholic interracialism and its Catholic action context, and he cited Hillenbrand, de Hueck, Harrigan, and Marciniak as “awakening me to the social implications of Christianity.”¹⁵ As a CISCA alum, a student and then colleague of Hillenbrand at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, the Friendship House chaplain, and the chaplain of Marciniak's Catholic Labor Alliance, Cantwell spent much of his life traveling in liberal, Catholic interracialist circles. Through his connection with Friendship House, in 1945 Cantwell began to teach on interracialism at Father Lord's Summer School for Catholic Action.

¹⁴ Quoted in News Letter, May 1954, Box 5, April - May 1954, CIC.

¹⁵ "Monsignor Toils for Others for 25 Years," *Chicago Tribune* April 19, 1964. One admirer called Cantwell “a great and good friend of thousands of people in Chicago. His best friends are probably among the downtrodden, poor, afflicted minorities. For them, his best and steadiest work has been unselfishly done.” (O.S.M. Hugh Calkins, "Two Worlds," *Novena Notes* (July 4, 1952).

Cantwell took to heart Friendship House's emphasis on building interracial friendships as the foundation of social justice. For Cantwell, it was having close Negro friends that kept him persevering in supporting efforts to seek justice. As Cantwell reflected, "When you meet one Negro who you know as a friend, a person who means something to you, then he becomes, for you, the victim of every injustice you see done to any Negro. So you work to get rid of the thing so that no one suffers." For Cantwell, "John Yancey was this friend."¹⁶ Yancey, who worked as a labor leader for the AFL-CIO and served as a housing commissioner for the Chicago Housing Authority, regularly participated in Catholic liberal and interracialist circles, lecturing at Friendship House and helping to found the CLA and CIC. Cantwell's experience of friendship likely led him to use a particular strategy to found the CIC.

Sometime in late 1944 or 1945, Cantwell recruited 12 men, six Negro and six white, to have informal discussions about race and Catholicism. Cantwell's strategy suggests that he believed that before these men could partner effectively for racial justice, they would first need to build trust and develop personal relationships. The group met at Augustine Bowe's home nearly in secret. Bowe was a National Conference of Christians and Jews charter member, lawyer, and soon-to-be judge. As Cantwell recalled, "both the Black guys and the White guys were afraid of what they were doing. The Black guys didn't want to be Uncle Tom's and the White guys were afraid of what their . . . colleague would say about them."¹⁷ The group met for about a year, getting to know one another and sharing their life experiences. In the end, Judge Roger Kiley, former alderman George Kells, lawyer John P. McGoorty, Jr., and Augustine J. Bowe officially founded the group.¹⁸

¹⁶ "Monsignor Toils for Others for 25 Years."

¹⁷ Daniel Cantwell, oral history interview conducted by Martin Zielinski, AAC. See also Edward Marciniak oral history interview conducted by Martin Zielinski, AAC.

¹⁸ Campbell, "Reformers and Activists."

Cantwell created a group that was able to influence city's politics, labor unions, and church leadership from within, which was very different from the women-led Friendship House. Instead of standing outside the power structure, the men he chose were deeply connected to it. Friendship House, by contrast, acted as a prophetic voice, removed from the halls of power. The men of the CIC were also more politically savvy, which meant that they lacked Friendship House's sharp prophetic edge, but were able to win the respect and approval of a different constituency. They explicitly avoided the more emotional appeals of de Hueck's suffering Christ in the Negro, and instead promoted their group as the sane, rational, and sensible response to interracial discord, emphasizing their goals as prudent and in line with "law and order," in contrast to the racial violence that plagued Chicago's streets..

The CIC drew its members – and money – from the ranks of respectable, professional professionals and, as men presenting a respectable image, they had more access to political and religious power. The first president, Thomas Crowe, worked as a building contractor. Russell Marshall, who volunteered extensively with Friendship House, worked at the post office. Teachers, lawyers, physicians, reporters, social workers, and municipal employees filled the ranks of the group. The CIC also developed close ties with Chicago's Commission on Human Relations (CHR), an organization Chicago's mayor formed after the 1943 Detroit riot. Bowe served as the CHR's chairman and in 1960, Marciniak became its executive director. While they worked to bring women into leadership, the organization really developed through the networking of businessmen, priests, male labor leaders, and male professionals.

Several years after their founding, they began to try to recruit more women to the CIC. In 1952, Joan Kearns was elected president of Loyola's CIC unit. She was the first woman in this position. Previous Loyola unit presidents had attended the board meetings of their parent

organization, but Kearns was never invited. According to one former president of Loyola's unit, since all the officers and directors of the CIC were men, "the atmosphere of the Board and its meetings is masculine to the point where it would probably be uncomfortable for a woman to attend its regular meetings."¹⁹ The situation must have troubled some members of the Board because the following year, the members of Board assessed its constitution to see if anything prevented women from serving. When they determined it did not, they added three women to the Board of Directors. Nonetheless, a substantial number of women did not take an active, official role in the CIC until it formed a women's board in 1959. Even then, women worked in a subordinate position; the women's board was commissioned to help, as needed, on the projects and fundraising, work that the male staff of the group had done previously.²⁰ Reflecting the class position of these women participants, many had the leisure to volunteer extensively because they were married and did not work outside the home, or were not yet married.

As in the case of the FCC, the Catholic Worker, and Friendship House, developments in New York influenced Chicago. While the CIC was a Chicago movement, it drew on the model LaFarge set up in New York. Fourteen years earlier, Chicago's black Catholics chose LaFarge and Markoe over the leadership of a black layman for the Federated Colored Catholics. Soon after, Markoe, who had previously been free to devote his career to Federation work, was reassigned to full-time parish work in St. Louis, so his efforts in the Federation dropped off. LaFarge's interest in the FCC also dwindled after the 1932 controversy and in 1934 he, along with George Hunton, turned his efforts to developing a new, local organization called the

¹⁹ Unknown to Rev. Louis Snider, S.J., May 15, 1952, Box 3, April - May 1952, CIC.

²⁰ Davis to Mrs. Crowe, September 8, 1959, box 33, September 1-15, 1959, CIC.

Catholic Interracial Council of New York over which he had close control.²¹ Cantwell gave credit to LaFarge not only for the model of a Catholic Interracial Council, but for prodding it along. While few lay members of the CIC acknowledged this connection, Cantwell said that LaFarge's "push," "drive," and "quiet courage . . . helped us."²² LaFarge had contacted Msgr. Morrison of Holy Name Cathedral about founding a CIC in Chicago. Morrison, who was committed to Catholic Action, had previously shared his rectory with Hillenbrand and was at present living with Cantwell, agreed to support it. While Cantwell, did the most leg work in organizing the CIC, Morrison served as its official chaplain until his death in 1957. Then, Cantwell moved up from assistant chaplain to chaplain of the CIC. But he had a much more hands-off understanding of his relationship to the laymen of the CIC than LaFarge. Eventually Cantwell's understanding of the lay/priest partnership, forged in Chicago, would become the model for the nation's Catholic interracialists.

Cantwell trusted and fostered the laymen's leadership, and did not assume that as a priest he should be the leader. By empowering the laity, he laid the groundwork for their independence from a hierarchy at times more concerned with maintaining peace than with justice. As Marciniak argued, lay organizations in Chicago "flowered" in part because "lay people were assisted by, encouraged by, energized by the priests like them [Cantwell]. And therefore, it wasn't a clerically dominated context."²³ Other laymen saw Cantwell's leadership similarly. As one friend commented, "He respected the autonomy of lay people, their freedom. . . He never managed or manipulated people. He listened to them and respected their competence. He would

²¹ Many former Federation members were a part of the new organization. See Martin Zielinski, "Working for Interracial Justice: The Catholic Interracial Council of New York, 1934-1964," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 7, no. 2&3 (1988).

²² Daniel Cantwell oral history, AAC.

²³ Edward Marciniak oral history, AAC.

give advice when asked, but he didn't offer it otherwise.”²⁴ As much as Cantwell facilitated the CIC with respect for the laity, his – and Morrison’s – presence as its advocates paved the way for the group in the archdiocese’s halls of power.

When a layman tried to start a Catholic Interracial Council before 1946, the archbishop ignored the request. In 1941, a year after Archbishop Samuel Stritch replaced Mundelein, Falls wrote Stritch, asking him to “consider the possibilities of a Chicago Catholic Interracial Council, developed under your auspices.” Falls, no doubt wary of Friendship House’s emphasis on poor black people, wanted to reconnect Chicago’s Catholics with what he might have seen as a more respectable national network than the one Friendship House offered. But Stritch hesitated when it came to any group that wanted to talk about, and possibly antagonize others on, racial issues. Stritch ignored Falls’s request, responding only, “I am pained to learn from your letter that here in Chicago there is some difficulty in securing for our Colored brothers the recognition of their rights.”²⁵

That Stritch allowed a CIC in 1946 but not 1941 was a result of two things. First, the 1946 request for a CIC came from a white priest, not a black layman. While Falls’s no-nonsense, abrasive reputation on racial issues likely preceded his request, Stritch may have refused any layman who asked to start a CIC. But the 1946 proposal for a CIC fit Stritch’s model of the proper lay/clergy partnership. He thought the group was clergy-led and thus more directly under his control. According to Marciniak, one of the original 12, the CIC managed Stritch strategically. Lay-run organizations communicated with Stritch through priests; they would have a priest approach Stritch about the organization, and gain his approval. “Stritch made them responsible or thought they were responsible,” Marciniak said, but the laity ran the

²⁴ *Chicago Tribune*, January 4, 1996. Quote by Russell Barta. Barta ran the Adult Education Center, which the Sheil School of Social Studies became.

²⁵ Quoted in Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*, 255.

organization.²⁶ Second, by 1945, Stritch had begun to slowly overturn Mundelein's policy of segregation because, as one historian put it, his "conscience began to give him trouble about the racial issue."²⁷ But Stritch did so quietly and, some would argue, ineffectively. For instance, he supported school integration from behind the scenes, but did not make a fuss about discrimination in Catholic hospitals.

Although Cantwell and the other founders of the CIC wanted the group to be a lay-led organization, they planned to operate partly according to the structure of the FCC, which began to move Catholic interracialism back into the parish boundaries. They planned have a central fact-finding and policy-making group, but also set up CIC "units" within each parish whose members would be able to act as leaven among their co-communicants. The Holy Name Cathedral Parish hosted the first CIC and eventually they moved their offices to 21 W. Superior, an office building that served as a hub of Catholic Action. Working at the parish level had its limits, however. Priests could be one of the biggest obstacles because they acted as the gatekeepers to new parish organizations. Thus the CIC's early growth happened in fits and starts. One priest struggled to get a CIC unit going because he wanted to run it but had no time, another insisted on nominating all members of the CIC to maintain control, while others flat-out refused. The sympathetic ones said the time was not yet ripe.²⁸ But several priests, including Fr. Nealis of Our Lady of Solace, Arthur Falls's home parish, did support the CIC and during its first few years, financial donations from the clergy constituted nearly one third of the CIC's income.

Despite some people's fears about the CIC, its initial goals were, in many respects, conservative. Stritch made it plain to the CIC's members that they were not to make waves or

²⁶ Edward Marciniak oral history.

²⁷ Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*, 259.

²⁸ See correspondence in Box 1, Folder 1946-1947, CIC.

upset people with their rhetoric and actions. He told them, “not to use an emotional approach to the problem of promoting better race relations, but to recognize reality and realize that the only approach to the problem which would have lasting results was a supernatural one.”²⁹ Like Cantwell, Stritch saw the problem first of all as a moral one, but he wanted only nominal action. The CIC also faced the challenging task of recruiting respectable businessmen to their cause, men who were not already interracialists. To do this, they made the commitment to the CIC minimal and drew on Church teaching for further legitimacy. For example, one CIC charter member told parishioners he was trying to recruit to the cause that, “The object is to have a small group of Catholic men in each parish fully conversant with the church’s teachings on racial justice. There are no obligations concerned with this activity other than a willingness to acquaint oneself exactly with the teachings of the church in this matter and to, wherever possible, spread the idea.”³⁰ Arthur Falls, in fact, did not join the CIC until 1953. Marciniak later pondered why Falls had not joined, or been asked to join, sooner. Perhaps both sides knew Falls was too radical, Marciniak suggested: “It may be there was a feeling that at that point he was too militant and might scare off” other people.³¹

The CIC gained some members from black and interracialist Catholic networks already in place. After the split in the Federation in 1932, Turner and his loyal followers had reincorporated themselves as the Federated Colored Catholics. Almost from the start, the two factions made efforts to reunite, but were never successful. Although the Chicago Federation fizzled out, the FCC maintained a presence in Chicago, drawing its support mostly from black Catholics in Corpus Christi, St. Anselm, St. Elizabeth, and a few other parishes. Father Arnold Garvy served as the spiritual director, Dr. Taft Raines as president, Aileen Vernon as vice

²⁹ Press Release, September 10, 1954, Box 6, August - September 15, 1954, CIC.

³⁰ Bulgar to Sir, March 3, 1947, Box 1, Folder 1946-1947, CIC.

³¹ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*.

president, and Cassius Foster as secretary. Following Turner's lead, the group had maintained its focus on black advancement, not interracialism.

But now they thought it would be more effective to join forces. In 1945, Foster wrote to Marciniak asking if the Chicago branch of the FCC could be affiliated with the newly forming CIC. The Chicago FCC, he wrote, "after due consideration, has reached the conclusion that the effectiveness of its program lies in affiliation with Catholics of all races." Interestingly, Foster's argument for requesting affiliation was similar to the one Falls had made 13 years earlier: interracial partnership would be a more effective means to achieve racial justice. Then, in an implicit reference to the great debate over the name of the organization, Foster concluded, "it is understood that should this application be accepted, that the name of the Federated Colored Catholics, Chicago Branch, will have to be changed and that its members will accept the provisions of the constitution and by laws of the Catholic Interracial Council."³² The FCC did join the CIC, and FCC members put their efforts into promoting the CIC.

While the CIC built on earlier forms of Catholic interracialism, it also represented a departure from the recent history. Like Friendship House, its members first focused on building interracial friendships with one another, but their strategy for making change meant that they worked from within the halls of power, rather than standing outside the gates like an unwanted prophet. While lay-led, and therefore potentially more radical than the hierarchy, they maintained a more conservative stance than Friendship House. In doing so, they also returned to an emphasis on the respectability of the middle-class black women and men who had led the FCC, and they furthered the emphasis on interracialism that Arthur Falls had maintained in the FCC. In addition, they had more resources than Friendship House and focused mainly on

³² Foster to Marciniak, January 16, 1945, Box 1, Folder 1932-1945, CIC. This letter may have been from 1946 and not 1945. Other evidence suggests that the CIC was founded in 1946.

cultivating interracial good will among white people, rather than on alleviating immediate needs. Their specific focus, commitment to working within the parish, and spread-out constituency allowed them to influence the archdiocese and the metropolitan region in a broader way.

Even so, for the first five years, the CIC remained a volunteer-run organization and had a limited capacity to effect change. All that shifted in 1951 when Catholic bus driver Harvey Clark, his wife, and their two children tried to move to a nice six-bedroom apartment in Cicero, a town bordering Chicago's western boundary. The welcome he received changed the way the nation viewed housing violence and offered the CIC a new opportunity.

B. Cicero's Shame is the CIC's Gain

Despite the frequency of targeted violence against African Americans in white neighborhoods in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the press rarely reported it. Historian Arnold Hirsch has called this the "era of hidden violence" because of the pact the city's newspapers made with the Commission on Human Relations (CHR).³³ The CHR had the best of intentions; its members believed that not reporting on racial violence would keep outsiders away and thus minimize the impact. Above all, they wanted to avoid the massive destruction of the Detroit riot, in which black people fought back ferociously. But all of that changed in 1951 in Cicero.

From July 10 – July 12, 1951, white people rioted and attacked the apartment building in which Clark rented a unit, located on the street dividing the towns of Cicero and Berwyn. Cicero was a middle-class, all-white town whose residents came primarily from Czech and Polish backgrounds. Sixty to eighty percent of the Berywn-Cicero area was Catholic and many of

³³ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, 40-67.

Cicero's family heads were first generation immigrants, committed to home ownership.³⁴

Although Cicero received all the attention, people from neighboring suburbs were just as culpable for the violence. On the Clark's moving day, a committee met them at the apartment and informed them they were not welcome. Clark, with help from the NAACP, got a federal injunction to stop the Cicero police from preventing his family from moving in, and to force the police to provide protection. When the Clark family tried to move for the second time a month later, they were successful, but that night an angry crowd met them. The crowd methodically attacked the apartment building, throwing the Clark's belongings out the window – including the piano Harvey Clark had bought his daughter – and burning them. The local police did little to stop the violence, and for two days, the Chicago dailies carried no news of the activity in Cicero. But Cicero did not have the police manpower that Chicago did, and finally the town was forced to call in the National Guard for reinforcements to contain the riot. The Guard's involvement meant that the riot could not go unreported; newspapers and local television began carrying reports. Cicero was the first riot covered by local television. Hirsch called Cicero “both the world debut and the dramatic climax to the era of large scale housing disorders.”³⁵ Not only did the riot make headlines across the world, Chicagoans outside the immediate vicinity learned about it.

For the CIC, Cicero's shame acted as the catalyst for its expansion in size and influence among Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Crises like this strengthened the CIC because they showed how necessary it was to improve race relations, and the CIC capitalized on the drama. Cicero was particularly helpful to the CIC because of the international coverage it received;

³⁴ Gremley, “Social Control in Cicero, Box 2, Folder July - September 1951,” CIC. Gremley says that 70-80 percent of the population is Catholic in William Gremley, “The Scandal of Cicero,” *America*, August 25, 1951. In the unpublished report “Social Control in Cicero,” Gremley says that sixty percent of the population is Catholic.

³⁵ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, 63.

white northerners' racism was out in the open and people across the world demanded an account. The CIC offered one, positioning itself as the rational, orderly, peaceful option compared to the chaos of violence. To mitigate white residents' fears of integration, they sought to link the fear of declining property values with violence, not with the presence of black people, and to forge a different meaning of respectability than the notion of an all-white neighborhood. In addition, their efforts to work for interracial justice brought them into partnership with Protestants and Jews, which suggests the continuing importance of race in the forging of tri-faith America.

While not a strictly Catholic event, the emphasis on the Cicero residents' Catholicism received wide attention. Catholics across the country read what William Gremley called "The Scandal of Cicero" in his article in *America* magazine, edited by John LaFarge. Gremley was a former employee of Bishop Sheil's CYO and World War II veteran who worked for the CHR and would soon joined the CIC. He risked his life to observe the riot first hand and placed most of the blame on Catholics. Gremley said, "the shame that is again [referring to Al Capone] Cicero's belongs partly to the Catholic schools and churches of Cicero." Nearly half of Cicero's population was Catholic, Gremley noted, and many of the rioters wore "sweaters with school names or crests on the back, Knights of Columbus lapel pins and rings, [or] scapular or other medals seen through an open shirt."³⁶ Clearly, the working-class white response – as in other cases of housing integration – was not warm and welcoming.

In keeping with its earlier pattern, the hierarchy failed to work actively to quell the violence and restore peace. Despite the violence and all the discussions about Catholic involvement, Stritch remained silent, apart from asking the Cicero and Berwyn pastors to deliver sermons on

³⁶ Gremley, "The Scandal of Cicero." For information on Gremley, see Gladys Priddy, "Shows Human Relations Role in Zone Cases," *Chicago Daily Tribune* August 28, 1952.

the equality of all men and property rights in a “quiet, inconspicuous way.”³⁷ Most of Cicero’s and Berwyn’s priests took this to mean that Stritch agreed with them, and that the time was not yet right for integration in the near western suburbs. But members of the CIC disagreed and Cantwell sprang into action.

Acting behind the scenes, Cantwell recruited Catholic property-owners in the near western suburbs to counter the Catholic “scandal of Cicero” and present a different picture of the Catholic stance on integration. He recruited 24 Catholics living in Cicero and the adjoining western suburbs of Oak Park, Berwyn, and Forest Park to write a refutation of the bald display of hatred. They published a “Dear Neighbor” letter that cited a higher Catholic authority and pushed its readers to a point of decision. They drew on the authority of Rome’s Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith’s 1950 statement that “work for the Negroes is dashed against a hopeless obstacle unless the walls of prejudice and racial discrimination are broken down by a specially directed program of interracial justice.” Then, they asked themselves – and their fellow Catholics – if their attitude about the Clark family was “pleasing or displeasing to God – in light of the principles contained in the above statement,” if it was their “duty to Christ and the Church to change our attitude and to help others to change,” and if they should feel personal responsibility “to make some restitution to the Clarks for the destruction of all their personal possessions”?³⁸ The letter, its writers claimed, reached an audience of some five million readers. Several Chicago newspapers and newspapers across the country printed it in full or part. But the letter also caused division, even within homes. Martha Stoeck, who

³⁷ Memo, September 13, Box 2, Folder July - September 1951, CIC.

³⁸ Dear Neighbor, Box 21, Folder 5, DC.

worked at the Merchandise Mart and was friends with Arthur Falls's sister, Regina Falls Merritt, convinced her mother, Mrs. F.A. Stoeck of Berwyn to sign the letter. Stoeck's father refused.³⁹

The Dear Neighbor letter writers formed the core of a new branch of the CIC: the West Suburban CIC (WSCIC). Ed Kralovec, the council president, usually represented the WSCIC members at events, but the women of the WSCIC, including Martha Stoeck, who served on the board, did most of the work in the background, organizing and writing letters. In comparison to the male-dominated CIC, about half the members of the WSCIC were women.⁴⁰ Most, if not all members, were white, reflecting Chicago's white inner core of western suburbs. But they were working for integration. The WSCIC drew its numbers from 32 parishes in 13 different suburbs, and they thought of their organization in terms of parish boundaries, calling roll by parish.⁴¹ In doing so, they implicitly acknowledged the importance of the parish in housing and race relations. The city-wide, para-parish and national movement had formed leaders who were able to take what they learned and implement it at the parish level.

Like their parent organization, the WSCIC members saw their work primarily as educational and drew on the many resources, Catholic and non-Catholic, across the city. Reflecting their white constituency, they held an essay contest on topics like "Why We Should Accept the Negro and Members of Other Races as Neighbors," and "God, the Negro and I." Similarly to Friendship House, the essay questions focused on the moral aspects of race relations.⁴² They proposed sending interracial pairs of couples to white churches for Mass in order to get people used to the idea of integration.⁴³ The WSCIC also tapped into a broad network of social activists

³⁹ Martha Stoeck to Cantwell, July 22, 1951, "Box 2, Folder July - September 1951," CIC.

⁴⁰ Addresses of WSCIC Members, box 2, folder 1952 undated items, CIC.

⁴¹ Constitution, box 2, folder 1951 undated items, CIC.

⁴² WSCIC executive committee meeting, February 20, box 2, folder 1951 undated items, CIC. Marillac House, a Catholic settlement house on the West Side, provided institutional space for them.

⁴³ For examples of efforts to integrate churches in another context, see Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).

for its programming, which increased its effectiveness and strength as it built on the expertise present in the network other Catholic interracialists had already cultivated. At one meeting the speakers included Ann Stull, who was the current director of Friendship House, Cantwell, Thomas Crowe, the CIC's president, and Robert Taylor, a colleague of Falls's who had recently resigned the chairmanship of the Chicago Housing Authority.⁴⁴

Members of the WSCIC presented themselves as respectable and, in effect, entered into a contest over the meaning of respectability that would span the decade. According to Hirsch, the white ethnics in Cicero and other housing conflicts that violently opposed integration in their neighborhoods did so in an effort to claim their identity as white people.⁴⁵ As recent immigrants who faced nativism and Catholics who were, in a larger context, trying to forge an America that valued Catholics as much as Protestants, they were seeking respectability. For them, respectability included living in an all-white area. As in past riots, many anti-integrationists blamed Communists or civil rights organizations with inciting the riot. The WSCIC, however, offered a different definition of respectability. Its newsletter stated that members "were not a group of radicals. They were responsible men and women of young adult and middle age, property owners, who worked in shops and offices, social workers, businessmen, professional men, and housewives." They said that the "terrible shame" brought upon Cicero and its neighbors brought them together in an effort to rebuild the area's good name. Thus, the white ethnics who rioted in Cicero and the WSCIC advocated different notions of respectability.

⁴⁴ Julia Kadlec to Editor, April 17, Box 3, Folder April 1952-Feb 1953, CIC.

⁴⁵ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, 186-200. Hirsch suggests that these efforts were misguided because they failed in the context of post-war race relations. By asserting their whiteness, they led to their own invisibility; since they were white, ethnic interests had no special concern. This was problematic because, compared to the native-born, immigrants did have specific concerns, such as their desire to own a home and live there for several years.

Rhetoric of sensibility and rationality filled the newsletters and other educational components of the WSCIC, as well as those of the CIC more broadly. The groups drew powerful contrasts between the “law and order” they sought to achieve and housing violence. A CIC pamphlet showed white and black people eating together at a CIC function and contrasted it to an image of the National Guard holding back angry white men. “Which is better,” the pamphlet asked, “solving problems at the conference table or in the streets?”⁴⁶ One CIC leader wrote down notes on the points he wanted to make in all contacts and speeches regarding housing. “We are rational creatures,” his notes began, and “we must seriously discuss, like the rational people we are, how to solve problems which arise,” when pursuing integration.⁴⁷ Rational action would prevent panic, violence, and plunging property values, they argued. If white people just accepted their neighbors, then everyone could win.

The Chicago School thinking on poverty knowledge and racial change overshadowed the thinking of Catholic interracialists regarding housing integration. They tried, throughout the decade, to argue that black Americans should be able to experience the same “natural succession” that foreign immigrants did as they moved out of poorer areas. And in later years, the high school and college groups of the CIC would consider the Negro in the larger context of “newcomers to the city” at their conferences.⁴⁸ All newcomers had a right to move throughout the city, according to their economic means. This thinking did not encourage cross-class mixing, but pushed forward an agenda of class division and respectability.

⁴⁶ Box 2, folder 1941 undated items, CIC.

⁴⁷ “Archbishop’s Statement a Reading Must,” *The New World* May 15, 1959, Points to be Made in All Contacts and Speeches.

⁴⁸ For more on the Chicago School, see Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). For the Chicago School’s influence on the Urban League, see Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950*.

Most significantly, the Cicero incident offered the CIC a chance to hire its first full-time employee, a move that made Chicago's CIC differentiate itself from New York. In September, LaFarge wrote Cantwell, offering to send George Hunton to Chicago to help out with the Cicero situation. Cantwell asked for money instead. He wanted Chicago's CIC to stand up on its own feet, and to build up local organizations that would function independently and more broadly.⁴⁹ To accomplish this task, the CIC planned to hire Dave McNamara, a white Loyola graduate who had served as a member of Loyola's CIC unit.⁵⁰ The money for the McNamara's salary came, in part from a six month grant from the Field Foundation. McNamara reported not only to the CIC, but also to the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker group.⁵¹

Members of the CIC prided the organization on its cross-faith partnerships because of its efficacy for social change. In a 1953 grant application, the members emphasized that the CIC deserved a grant because it could be the Catholic representative for partnership with Protestants and Jews. Before the CIC, they wrote, human relations advocates found it "extremely difficult" to involve Catholics in their programs. Now, "organizations like the National Conference of Christians and Jews, American Friends Service Committee, and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith . . . realize that if they need the support of Catholics in some particular project, they need only turn to the Catholic Interracial Council for assistance."⁵² These partnerships built on a larger pattern, present even in the 1930s when Arthur Falls brought Catholic youth into interreligious settings: partnership across religious lines on social issues.

The partnerships took a variety of forms, and cross pollination occurred most often between Catholic interracialist organizations and Jewish groups like the Anti-Defamation League

⁴⁹ Cantwell to LaFarge, August 2, 1951, Box 2, Folder July - September 1951, CIC.

⁵⁰ McNamara to McAvoy, January 26, Box 2, Folder 1952 Undated Items, CIC.

⁵¹ The Quakers were very active in working for civil rights in the North. See Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*.

⁵² --- to Maxwell Hahn, July 29, 1953, Box 4, June - July 1953, CIC.

(ADL).⁵³ They spoke at each other's conferences, co-distributed literature on race relations, and worked together as representatives of their religious organizations on committees. In Cicero, McNamara worked closely with Bayard Rustin of the AFSC and enthusiastically reached out to other non-Catholic organizations for help. They worked to expand the WSCIC by drawing on their contacts in the Chicago Council against Racial and Religious Discrimination, founded in 1943 along with the CHR.⁵⁴ The American Jewish Committee offered to help facilitate a joint committee program in Cicero and produced a pamphlet with the CIC, which showed that black and white people could live together in middle-class settings, and that black people did not always bring the "ghetto" with them. The CIC also paired racial and religious prejudice in its 1952 essay and poster contest, which asked what a Catholic could do to offset racial and religious prejudice. Religious prejudice here obviously referred to anti-semitism.⁵⁵

Directly related to the need to change ethnic whites' thinking on respectability, Hans Adler of the ADL led an effort to shape public opinion on integration through foreign language newspapers, which many residents of Cicero read. Since Cicero was largely Czech and Polish, Adler needed to influence those papers so interracialism could be preached to all "white" Americans, not just those who read English-language papers. McNamara used his Catholicism to serve as one of the liaisons for Adler with the newspaper editors after Adler asked for McNamara's help, because so much of the newspapers' audiences were Catholic. This effort pushed forward a larger project to convince English-language newspapers to not racially label

⁵³ In 1955, sociologist Will Herberg argued in *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* that in post-war America, for white people, religion replaced ethnicity as the main marker of social identification. For both black and white members of the CIC, their identification as Catholics did matter more to them than their identification as Irish, Polish, Italian, or even black. Will Herberg, *Protestant - Catholic - Jew: An Essay in Religious Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983 (1955)).

⁵⁴ Ed Marciniak and Arthur Falls were founding members of the CCARRD.

⁵⁵ Box 3, Folder April 1952-Feb 1953, CIC.

black people in their stories, particularly in crime stories.⁵⁶ Adler frequently partnered with Catholic interracialist organizations, delivering lectures at a program for teaching nuns in the archdiocese and making appearances at Friendship House's summer workshops on interracial living, which brought together people from different backgrounds to live together in the country and learn about racial justice and Catholicism.⁵⁷

McNamara, in the meantime, continued his work trying to create an environment in Cicero conducive to integration but ran into many stumbling blocks, often in the form of priests. He met with Cicero's priests, ministers and village leaders. Most of Cicero's and neighboring Berwyn's priests were reluctant to partner with the CIC or favor Negroes' movement to Cicero. Most of the time, even those who seemed amicable failed to offer McNamara help. Because of Stritch's lack of leadership on the interracial front, when the priests discussed the Cardinal's letter on quietly giving sermons on the equality of all men, many argued that Stritch supported their own view that black people should not live in Cicero. McNamara concluded that two pastors and two assistants out of the eleven teams he had interviewed were "reasonable" in their attitudes towards interracial justice, five were disinterested or annoyed, but would not obstruct "any prudent, sound program that we or others might conduct," and three were downright hostile. McNamara attributed their hostility to their lack of confidence in God and their parishioners.⁵⁸ Even within an individual parish, there could be conflict. Father Roger, the assistant at St. Mary of Celle told McNamara to expect no cooperation from Father Robert

⁵⁶ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, 178.

⁵⁷ Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise*, Program, Chicago Archdiocesan Teachers' Institute.

⁵⁸ Confidential Memo, October 12, box 2, folder October – December, 1951, CIC.

Mastney, who was “sensitive” to parishioner attitudes. Roger, on the other hand, volunteered to be the chaplain for the WSCIC.⁵⁹

Catholics, in fact, were embroiled in a debate over how to talk about, act upon, and even understand what happened in Cicero. On the one hand, Cantwell pointed to the moral decisions a person must make, which would affect one’s salvation. His concern was primarily for the consciences of Catholics, that they would not corrupt their own souls by prejudice. “A Catholic who draws lines racially makes a lie of his faith,” Cantwell wrote.⁶⁰ In keeping with his faith in humanity, Cantwell argued that the residents of Cicero were not entirely bad and not completely racist. Instead, he suggested that their notion of the good had been corrupted by materialism and a belief that they had arrived in a “middle-class suburban utopia” that would be disturbed by low class brown skin. On the other hand, many Catholics and non-Catholics pushed back against the CIC’s programs, trying to take discussions about Catholicism and the proper “Catholic” response out of the discussion about Cicero.

Several Catholics in Cicero and Berwyn disparaged not that Catholics had rioted, but that the world knew they had. “Such publicity hurts the work of the Church,” one priest told a CIC member.⁶¹ The principal of Fenwick High School in neighboring Oak Park, which Gremley had mentioned, said “In my own mind, I am firmly convinced that Fenwick students were not involved in this instigation.”⁶² Other priests, pointing to the arrest records, denied their parishioners had taken part in the riot. They failed to note that the police did not arrest any white rioters the first two days of the riot. It was only after the National Guard came to Cicero and the riot received city- and nation-wide publicity that they began to make arrests, and by then, several

⁵⁹ Ibid., Confidential Memo, October 24.

⁶⁰ Daniel Cantwell, “Catholics and Prejudice,” *Voice of St. Jude* 6-7, 11 (July, 1952): 7. *Voice of St. Jude* made 30,000 reprints of this article.

⁶¹ Confidential Memo, Sept 12, 1951, Box 2, Folder July - September 1951, CIC.

⁶² Box 2, Folder January - March 1952, CIC.

outsiders had come to Cicero. In addition, many Catholics did not like that the CIC was getting involved in Cicero, despite the group's claims of respectability and prudence. One man noted that he agreed with the CIC's goal, but not its means. He said Cicero was badly handled: "intemperate language, unverified statements and hasty conclusions - none of these helped our position."⁶³ But since the world already knew about the scandal of Cicero, Cantwell argued that they must work to overcome the scandal. Cicero, and other instances of racial violence and prejudice, hurt America in the international world and gave Communists fodder against the United States, he argued.⁶⁴

Many folks in Cicero tried to deny that the riot had occurred because the Clarks were a black family moving into a white neighborhood. Their actions represented what was – and is – a key marker of race in the North: the denial of its power and existence. One member of Cicero's newly formed Cicero Civic Commission, which worked mostly to try to restore Cicero's good name, argued that there was nothing racial about the riot. The town's attorney denied that fear of integration had anything to do with the riot. Cicero residents were concerned about property values, not about race, they claimed.⁶⁵ Many priests agreed; if black people did not bring down property values, then they would be glad to have them. In the end, indictments were dropped against Cicero officials, and the Cook County Grand Jury ignored the more than 100 rioters arrested. Instead, the court indicted the white landlord and three black people who had been involved in renting the property to the Clarks for plotting to lower Cicero's property values.⁶⁶ Northerners did not want to be called racists.

⁶³ Gerald Kealy to Morrison, May 8, 1952, Box 3, Folder April 1952-Feb 1953, CIC.

⁶⁴ Cantwell's concern with what the world thought of the racial violence in Cicero suggests that cold war concerns shaped his civil rights activism as well. For more on the effect of the international cold war on civil rights, see Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton Univ Pr, 2002).

⁶⁵ Box 2, Folder July - September 1951, Box 2, Folder January - March 1952, CIC.

⁶⁶ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, 200; Box 3, June - July 1952, CIC.

Cantwell, however, knew white northerners feared integration and pointed to education as the solution to dispelling that fear. Suggesting the beginning of what would become a pre-emptive strategy of trying to introduce discussions of race to communities before integration was imminent, Cantwell argued that white people must talk about race in all-white areas; they must learn about how hard it is to raise children in the ghetto to understand why middle-class Negroes wanted to move away from the Black Belt; they must learn the truth about black people's effects on property values, which actually went up initially when Negroes moved in because of the exploitation of contract buyers, and that black people do take care of their homes. "There is no good reason why one should leave when a Negro moves into his neighborhood," Cantwell intoned. "But racism has so penetrated our society and established our social customs that few men can muster up courage enough to resist the social pressure." Cantwell continued "Thank God the number of those who do resist is increasing."⁶⁷ And it is to those people that all Catholics should look, Cantwell argued, because they offered a model of Christ's love and a practical guide for dealing with race. Catholics needed examples, and the CIC and other courageous people offered those examples, Cantwell said.

The CIC soon hired a new man who would lead the CIC through the morass of housing debates in the 1950s. In 1952, McNamara took a job with the Commission on Human Relations and the CIC hired Lloyd Davis, a 24-year old African American man who served in the army during the Korean War. He was a member of the 6th armored division, which was a pilot unit for integration. Davis brought with him connections to the South Side and a commitment to advance the publicity of the CIC's work. While on staff, he completed a bachelor of philosophy degree at DePaul and a MA in sociology and personnel administration at Loyola.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Cantwell, "Postscript on the Cicero Riot," 545.

⁶⁸ Roi Ottley, "Cites Minority Housing Problem," n.d , Box 3, April - May 1952, CIC.

In the end, Cicero did two things for the CIC. First, it made housing violence explicit and began to underscore the importance of housing as a lynch pin for civil rights in the North. Because the CIC was able to be on the scene and had a natural constituency of Catholics in the area, it gave them greater credibility and a chance to grow, in addition to a CIC a national audience as Catholics across the nation watched to see how Chicago's Catholics would handle Cicero. Second, it thrust the CIC solidly into tri-faith partnerships based on concern over interracial housing. As Catholic interracialists continued to chip away at white racism concerning housing, they increased their efforts to make their position the respectable, "Catholic" one.

Under Davis's leadership, the CIC used the momentum it developed with Cicero to continue to grow in its strength and influence, but it maintained its conservative interracialist stance. As violence and conflict over integrated housing continued throughout the 1950s, the CIC and other Catholic interracialists continued to target their fellow Catholics' hearts and minds, pushing forward an agenda vastly different from that of the scores of Catholics who fought to keep black people out of "their" neighborhoods. As Chicago's CIC was forced to navigate the fine line of working for interracial justice while publically upholding a hierarchy that was often silent in the face of racial hatred, its members would gradually become more militant.

X: MIDDLE CLASS CATHOLIC INTERRACIALISM GOES FROM EDUCATION TO ACTION

The Clark's story in Cicero was typical of the era, and Cicero was not the only instance of racial violence and housing the Catholic interracialists addressed. While CIC leaders spent much of their time on the ground, dealing with and keeping tabs on instances of racial violence throughout Chicago and its suburbs, their main goal was not to mediate conflict, but to prevent it.¹ Many of the CIC's efforts throughout the 1950s focused on educating white Catholics about racial justice.

They wielded education as their main weapon in their fight for interracial justice, always including moral arguments. They focused their efforts primarily on white people, believing, like de Hueck, that white people must change in order to for black Americans to enjoy equal citizenship. According to one charter member, the CIC should "educate the community so that it can distinguish fact from prejudice in questions concerning race, and to 'bring home' the utter immorality of discrimination and the social distortion of segregation."² From our perspective today, it may seem like these educational efforts were naïve at best and, at worst, weak attempts to change an oppressive system. But while the CIC's efforts were more liberal than radical, in their context, education was a radical thing that they believed would be able to help white people change the structures of racism limiting black choices.

¹ For more on the CIC's involvement in one particularly long episode of violence, see Arnold Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (September, 1995).

² For more information on Bowe see *Chicago Daily News*, October 24, 1959.

But by the end of the 1950s, in an incident provoked, in part, by Arthur Falls, the members of the CIC began to rethink their position on education as *the* main way to further interracial justice. Under new leadership, the group began to push the boundaries of what its members – and the hierarchy – thought was acceptable. Chicago's CIC began to define its Catholic interracialism as different from, and more militant than, the that of LaFarge. They came to be called “the Young Turks.”

In addition, at the end of the 1950s, Catholic interracialists decided to take their stand in suburbia, not within the city limits. They insisted that suburban integration was the key to racial justice in the broader housing market. This decision meant that they shifted the Catholic interracialist project away from the concern over economic equality as a form of racial justice toward integration along class lines as the main goal.

Catholic interracialists' actions on the housing front suggest new ways of thinking about housing and the civil rights movement. First, as John McGreevy shows about religion and place more generally, Catholic interracialist housing efforts suggest how religious rhetoric and practice shaped the arguments about interracial housing. Key pieces on housing and race, however, portray it as primarily a political debate and fail to underscore the importance of religion.³ By considering the intersection of religion and housing, we can more fully enter the strongly religious world of the 1950s and see how people on both sides of the conflict drew on various iterations of religious belief, practice, and theology to support their position.⁴ Second, building on the work of historians of the long civil rights movement in the North like Thomas Sugrue, Catholic interracialists' efforts on the housing front suggest that the civil rights movement after

³ Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto : Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*. While Hirsch's excellent work mentions the religious players involved, he does not use religion as a structuring framework.

⁴ For a sociological discussion of the religiosity of Americans in the 1950s, see Herberg, *Protestant - Catholic - Jew: An Essay in Religious Sociology*.

1954 was not just a legislative battle against a clear and obvious foe. Instead, it was one that required exposing bits and pieces of racism that were deeply intertwined with and often inseparable from white desires to protect property values and a (sometimes a recently attained) middle-class way of life from supposed “outsiders,” whether they were from the Communist Party or the NAACP. But many of these “outsiders” were actually insiders, living in the communities they wanted to integrate.

In addition, placing the Catholic interracialists’ efforts for housing integration complicates the relationship between the concerns of the modern and long civil rights movement. As historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall argues, if we consider the civil rights movement only in the 1954-1965 period the movement seems to be primarily about integration.⁵ From one perspective, Catholic interracialists’ focus on middle-class integration might, then, would suggest that integration was their main interest. But by taking a longer view, we can see the wider concerns of the activists who were people molded by the civil rights battles of the 1930s and 1940s, which focused on economic equality. While broader concerns about social justice shaped them, they chose to work on middle-class integration as a strategy to achieve social justice that included increasing economic equality.

For the most part, they were not copping out and losing their leftist edge because they thought it would lead, in the end, to social justice. This strategy complicates Beryl Satter’s assessment of these Catholic liberals’ actions on the other side of the 1950s as well, when the CIC encouraged members to join Freedom of Residence (FOR), a group working for open occupancy legislation. Satter argues that those focusing on open occupancy as the solution to the dual housing market either did not understand how the housing market worked, or had a vested

⁵ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005).

interest in maintaining the unjust structures of the housing and mortgage industry, and that their attack using legislation suggests an insincerity in what they wanted to change. Open housing was, she argues, a “smoke screen promoted by redlining bankers and mortgage brokers - and one that, not coincidentally, entirely elided their own contributions to the creation of the city's slums.”⁶ But the divide between liberals who supported open housing legislation and radicals who knew the truth about unjust lending and selling practices Satter makes is not quite so neat. Open housing's advocates came from a variety of backgrounds. Many of the Catholic interracialists who did join FOR were aware of the problems in the housing and mortgage industry in large part because they had worked with Mark Satter, the protagonist of Beryl Satter's book, but thought that open occupancy would be one more tool to break down the dual housing market.

A. The “Catholic” Response to Trumbull Park: Building Interracial Good Will

In their effort to build interracial good will, the CIC faced the sticky task of trying to present the Catholic Church as officially favoring integration when it seemed to actually favor peace over justice. The group went back to the tried and true strategy its leaders had learned through CISCA: involve young people through education and Catholic Action. Their educational efforts led to increased prominence and respectability in Chicago's hierarchy and business community as they continued Catholic interracialism's shift away from the voluntary poverty of the war years, to greater tri-faith involvement, and to the expansion of Catholic interracialism across the archdiocese through the schools as Catholic interracialists sought to make interracial harmony normal. Ultimately, they wanted to continue Cantwell's efforts to counter the “Catholic”

⁶ Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*, 136..

response of violence to integrated housing with the “Catholic” response of the interracialists, projecting a different meaning of Catholicism than the image dragged through the dirt in Cicero. In doing so, the CIC leveraged the notion of “Catholic” for two purposes. First, as Catholic interracialists had been doing since the late 1920s, they challenged the very Catholicity of the white Catholics who discriminated against black people. Second, they used it to put what they saw as a positive spin on the Catholic Church, disassociating the Church from the violence committed by its members.

At times, the CIC acted almost as a public relations firm for the hierarchy, claiming that they represented the true position of the Catholic Church, while all the while Stritch failed to take a positive stand. The CIC’s actions reflected its somewhat tenuous position in the archdiocese, and its competing desires to work for racial justice while also maintaining a good relationship with the hierarchy. In 1949, Homer Jack, Unitarian minister and former executive secretary of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination, severely criticized Visitation Parish and Cardinal Stritch after a riot in Englewood, the neighborhood, incidentally, where Falls had grown up. The parish hosted meetings that aimed to keep black people out of the neighborhood, Jack pointed out, and “despite many requests, some by liberal Catholics, neither the local parish nor Cardinal Stritch, so far as is known, has in any way condemned the violence, as Protestants throughout the city did during and after the riots in Fernwood, a predominantly Protestant section in 1947.”⁷ During the Trumbull Park disturbances, which lasted nearly a decade and required an around-the-clock police presence to protect black residents, the CIC’s executive secretary complained to the Council Against Discrimination, which coordinated

⁷ Homer Jack, “Chicago’s Violent Armistice,” *The Nation* December 10, 1949, 572.

responses to Trumbull Park, that it was not giving the CIC, and implicitly the Catholic Church, credit for its work.⁸

In addition to their on-the-ground efforts, the CIC poured its resources into educating young people with the aim of motivating students to take leadership in the charge for interracial justice. Starting in 1953, the CIC put together interracial study days in which students across the diocese would meet and, loosely following the Catholic Action pattern of “see, judge, act,” which their leaders had been trained in, explored questions of interracial justice. In the midst of the violence at Trumbull Park, the CIC billed interracial study days as the “Catholic” response to Trumbull Park. Once again, they contrasted order and interracial good will with bombs and police. The study days, which the CIC offered to both college and high school students, were part of a larger trend of human relations study days other groups, like the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), sponsored. In this, too, tri-faith organizations cross-pollinated, speaking at one another’s sessions and encouraging students to attend. The CIC also tapped into Chicago’s liberal Catholic network to promote their efforts and staff events. Everyone proclaimed the first study day a great success. Seven hundred youth from across the archdiocese attended.

In keeping with Cantwell’s desire to make interracialism the norm, the study day focused on the successes of interracial living rather than the violence so prominent in the city. Contrasting peace with the violence at Trumbull Park, Cantwell told the students that 25,000 Negroes had successfully integrated “white” neighborhoods. He also pointed to racial progress on other fronts: “Five years ago no State Street store would employ a Negro person. Now many of them

⁸ See Lloyd Davis correspondence in Box 4, October 11-November 3, 1953, CIC. The CIC distributed flyers, issued strong statements in favor of integration, quoted from sermons on interracial justice, and attempted to help St. Kevin’s, the main Catholic parish in the area, successfully integrate. For more on Trumbull Park, see Hirsch, “Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966.”

do. . . . Five years ago it was feared that employment of Negroes on streetcars and L trains would cause trouble. Now their employment is commonplace . . . [as are] interracial parishes and churches in Chicago.” Progress would continue, Cantwell argued, as long as “we have confidence in ourselves. Above all Christians must have confidence in their faith.”⁹ Cantwell did have a point; there were examples of integrating parishes which the CIC could cite. Most of the time, however, because of racial change, these interracial parishes did not remain interracial over several generations.

But in the early 1950s, Catholic interracialists hoped these parishes would remain interracial and advertised them as examples of successful interracial living, hoping to normalize interracial parishes. Cantwell knew that without examples, appeals to principles of faith would fail. In an article published right after the Cicero riot, Cantwell reflected on his experiences with rioting over interracial housing in Chicago. In the heat of the moment, he had failed to stop rioters by appealing to the faith. They needed models of interracial living, he said, examples that could show them it was possible.¹⁰

The CIC found one such model in St. Joachim’s parish, whose pastor, Msgr. William H. Byron, won the NCCJ’s James M. Yard Brotherhood Award in 1952. Transferred to the parish in 1946, Byron became involved in community affairs with his work on the Chatham-Avalon Park Community Council. The area was, he said, “on the fringe of a pressure area, and the white people are concerned about Negroes moving in.” Byron called their concerns about declining property values “nonsensical,” saying that “property values go down when people fail to take care of their property. We’re trying to teach them they can live in harmony with other races.” He and the council tried to publicize the work of “unscrupulous real estate dealers who sell at

⁹ Press Release, November 14, 1953, Box 4, October 11-November 3, 1953, CIC.

¹⁰ Daniel Cantwell, “Riot Spirit in Chicago,” *The Commonweal* July 27, 1951.

outrageous prices and tell the buyers to make up the difference through illegal conversions into a multiple dwelling unit” and work to enforce zoning laws.¹¹ He also integrated his parish school over the complaints of his parishioners and preached the Mystical Body of Christ. Byron’s work represented some of the best of what the CIC hoped would happen in a parish: the priest preemptively working to equip his people to ease integration while maintaining property values before black people moved into his parish.¹² The group nominated Byron for the CHR’s 1953 human relations award, and reprinted CISCA alum Bob Senser’s WORK article on St. Joachim’s “A Colorful Parish.” According to Senser, Byron knew “Negroes and whites can live together in peace in the same parish. His view isn’t just a theoretical one. It is drawn from experience in his own interracial parish.”¹³ Members of the CIC believed that St. Joachim’s could be repeated, if enough people saw the possibilities.

The CIC’s work in the early 1950s helped it to gain the support of Stritch who continued to push the group towards what he called “prudence.” Although Stritch had allowed the CIC to function in his archdiocese, he largely stayed out of its efforts until early 1954 when he accepted an invitation to meet informally with the CIC’s board. At the meeting he called the CIC and its staff “level-headed, realistic men and women,” who were “doing an effective and important job in familiarizing Catholics with the principles of interracial justice and charity and in particular with their application to practical problems.”¹⁴ He encouraged the CIC to stay on a “prudent” path and to not push too hard to overcome racial boundaries, saying “we want of course to

¹¹ St. Joachim’s eventually became an all-black parish (See Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, 471-74. Koenig does not talk about the racial change in St. Joachim’s). Interracial neighborhoods were hard to sustain. As Hirsch argues in *Making the Second Ghetto*, Hyde Park was only successful in maintaining an interracial neighborhood because of the political clout and money of the University of Chicago, which viewed middle- and upper- class black people as a necessary evil. The on-the-ground efforts to enforce building codes and keep streets clean would not have been enough on their own to maintain a stable, integrated neighborhood.

¹² *Sun-Times*, February 9, 1953; Davis to Byron, February 16, 1953, Box 3, Folder January - February, 1953, CIC; Box 3, June - July 1952, CIC.

¹³ Bob Senser, “A Colorful Parish,” reprint, Box 5, 1953 Undated Items, CIC.

¹⁴ Press Release, September 10, 1954, Box 6, August - September 15, 1954, CIC.

carefully analyze situations and to avoid uncontrolled emotion in the solution of them. There is a work of education and it will not be accomplished in a day. . . . I think that if prudence regulates zeal we shall be able to solve very stubborn and very difficult problems.”¹⁵ For Stritch, prudence no doubt meant not pushing integration on a legislative level since he had not supported the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* for that reason.¹⁶ Later that year, Stritch finally addressed an interracial study day. The CIC milked Stritch’s words for all they were worth, publicizing them as a way to legitimize their program.

The organization also gained legitimacy in Chicago’s business and political community, and Sargent Shriver proved to be one of their biggest catches. In late 1952, Shriver, who ran the Merchandise Mart as assistant manager in Chicago for Joseph P. Kennedy and married Eunice Kennedy in May, 1953, sent a letter to the men of the Catholic Interracial Council asking to join the organization. It was just the kind of group this young, up-and-coming Catholic idealist – who would later run his brother-in-law John F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign in Illinois and found the Peace Corps – wanted to join.¹⁷ By 1953, he served on the CIC’s schools committee, and the following year he became president of the Chicago Public Schools board. In 1955, CIC’s board elected him their president. Shriver offered the CIC his connections, his strategy, and his charisma. After participating in his first interracial study day, requests came pouring in to have him speak at schools.

Shriver also helped solve the CIC’s never-ending problem with finances, and in doing so added to its prestige in Chicago’s business community. Prior to 1957, the CIC raised money through a communion breakfast, benefits, grants, and personal donations. At one point, Eunice

¹⁵ Clifford Campbell, The Work of the Catholic Interracial Council, Box 5, Folder January - March, 1954, CIC.

¹⁶ Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*, 275.

¹⁷ Shriver to Sirs, n.d., Box 2, Folder 1952 Undated Items, CIC. For more on Shriver, including his Catholic idealism, see Scott Stossel, *Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2004).

Shriver gave the CIC a loan of \$3000. But in 1957, Shriver created a Citizens Committee, which raised funds by soliciting donations from businesses and businessmen across the city.

The Citizens Committee appealed to businesses' desire for stability and presented the CIC as a tri-faith endeavor. Throughout the 1950s, the CIC shifted its membership from Catholics-only to being open to all people concerned with their work. In the late 1950s, Joseph Merrion, chair of the Citizens Committee and president of a housing development company, advanced a three-pronged approach. Drawing on a notion of respectability that included a model of businessmen of the three Judeo-Christian faiths executing their civic duty, he pointed to the upstanding Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish men who were members of the CIC and supported its "sensible work." Then, continuing the strategy of linking violence rather than the presence of black bodies to declining property values and instability in the city, he asked businessmen, "who have a dollar and cents interest in the good reputation of this community, and in its peaceable and orderly development," to donate money to the CIC. Finally, he pointed out that strategic importance of the CIC, saying that the spiritual leader of nearly half the city backed the CIC.

The CIC was successful in advancing its message in schools in as much as it partnered with the other institutional resources of the Church committed to Catholic Action. In 1953, teaming up with Friendship House, Sister Mary Ellen O'Hanlon from Rosary College in River Forest, and Frank Brown of DePaul University, the CIC launched its first attempt to formally educate Catholic school teachers.¹⁸ Aiming to indoctrinate teachers so the teachers could adequately educate their students on human relations by incorporate these teachings into their classrooms, members ran an institute for teachers at the Sheil School of Social Studies, facilitated a session at the Archdiocesan Teachers' Institute, and conducted workshops on-site at elementary schools

¹⁸ Box 4, Folder August - October, 1953, CIC. Sister Mary Ellen was active in the Catholic interracialist movement. She appeared with the CIC as a panelist on radio programs, and also wrote the pamphlets "Racial Myths" and "Heresy of Race."

and high schools for staff. By 1959, this adult education was a solidly tri-faith endeavor.¹⁹ Hans Adler, of B'nai B'rith and Indiana University, gave three lectures at one institute. In addition, the CIC encouraged schools to form human relations clubs, similar to the CISCA model, which would address interracial justice.

But nothing, the CIC's leaders believed, could help human relations at a local high school more than to have a black student in attendance. They hoped that by having black students in Catholic schools in changing areas, the white children would pave the way for peaceful integration because they already had a black friend.²⁰ To that end in 1953, the CIC started a scholarship fund and asked school principals to grant scholarships for black students attending Catholic high schools. Dr. Ann Lally, a Mundelein College graduate who became principal of Marshall High School in 1958, chaired the committee during the 1950s. At its peak, the CIC sponsored about sixty minority students.²¹ The CIC's request that principals give black students scholarship was revealing, as principals frankly answered whether or not they would allow black students into their schools. The fund also supported the CIC's larger goal of raising up black Catholic leaders. The CIC targeted schools in communities where black people already lived, adjacent to black communities, or where they were moving.

Students, however, did not have a lot of control over their parents' decision to flee a parish if black people moved in. Catholic interracialists knew, then, that they had to change white

¹⁹ News Release, April 11, 1953, Box 4, Folder March - April 1953, CIC.

²⁰ Board of Directors' Meeting, May 17, 1954, Box 5, April - May 1954, CIC. Catholic interracialists also offered several courses at the Sheil School of Social Studies throughout the 1940s and 1950s. After his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1944, Claude McKay taught several courses at the Sheil School of Social Studies until his death in 1948. McKay converted to Catholicism in part through his relationships with the women of Friendship House. He knew Ellen Tarry, and she sent him to Friendship House for care when he was sick. McKay wanted Cantwell to baptize him into the Church, but Cantwell could not because of jurisdiction. He asked to have either Yancey or Marciniak be his godfather. See Cantwell/McKay correspondence in Box 1, Folder 4, DC.

²¹ They targeted black students, but would sponsor students from other minority groups as well.

people's perspective on what black people brought to the neighborhood. They advanced their educative project on several fronts.

First, Catholic interracialists attacked on the broad moral front with arguments that could encompass Catholics and other Christians. When Father Hugh Calkins of the Chicago-based *Novena Notes* wrote a series blasting prejudice, the CIC reprinted the essay which debunked what they called "phony fears about property devaluation," and distributed it to Chicago newspapers, several of which printed the essay or portions of it. "Let's bluntly shout what too many people whisper," Calkins wrote, "I'm willing to love all my neighbors. But let's be reasonable. Can't we protect our homes and neighborhoods from undesirable characters?" This stance, Calkins argued, was wrong. If a black family moved onto a white block, the white families should stay and live "like Christians."²²

Second, Cantwell furthered the war against prejudice on the specifically Catholic theological front, compiling a collection of quotes from prominent Catholic religious and lay leaders entitled "Catholics Speak on Race Relations." Here, Cantwell used the classic interracialist strategy: appealing to higher authorities for an unwelcome message. The CIC made Cantwell's pamphlet widely available at the cost of 20 cents a pamphlet, and printed 100,000 copies of the first edition.²³ Calkins positively reviewed the pamphlet in *Novena Notes*, commenting that "Father Dan has packed some of the strongest words ever published by Catholics on race relations. Thank God he did." Cantwell's pamphlet, Calkins concluded, "is built upon basic truths every Catholic must believe. And every right-thinking American willingly accepts." At the core was

²² Quoted in *Defender*, July 19, 1952.

²³ Cantwell, "Catholics and Prejudice," Undated Memo.

the unity of mankind, which “comes from the fact that all human beings share humanity with Christ and each other.”²⁴

Third, Catholic interracialists also tried to educate white homeowners in the truth about racial change and property values. They were well aware of what Beryl Satter demonstrates in *Family Properties*, that slums were profitable to people who would exploit their fellow man and that property devaluation was due to panic peddlers and an unjust mortgage system, not an inherent racial quality of African Americans.²⁵ Right after Cicero, Cantwell pointed out that “Negroes do own and take care of property when given the chance. They do have beautiful apartment buildings when not exploited.” Few people, he argued, “know that the conservative National Association of Real Estate Boards and honest real estate men here in Chicago have admitted that a Negro tenant will take care of property as well as any tenant on the same economic level.”²⁶ But they were up against the emotionalism and fear of white people whose concerns were buoyed by the common notion that black neighbors meant the whole neighborhood would become a slum.

To counter this fear of black neighbors, Friendship House advanced a fourth strategy that involved experiential learning. Already, Friendship House modeled interracial living in a unique way, with white women and men living in the Black Belt. This in itself was powerful for white and black people alike. One volunteer, Gerry Adams, recalled, “just being able to see people living together, and to see that young White people had moved *into* the South Side - my goodness my father [who was black] wouldn't have ever let me move into an apartment around 43rd Street, and yet here were all these gals living there . . . And feeling good about it, and really

²⁴ Hugh Calkins, “Two Worlds.”

²⁵ Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*.

²⁶ Cantwell, “Postscript on the Cicero Riot.”

supporting one another.”²⁷ As Adams suggested, though, Friendship House’s location did not spotlight the homes of middle-class black people. But Friendship House came up with a way to help middle class white people see their points of commonality with middle class black people, and to open they eyes of white people to the possibility of interracial living among people of a similar income level. Since the majority of black people who were able to buy outside the Black Belt and integrate white neighborhoods were middle class, they acted strategically.²⁸

Like so many things at Friendship House, the program emerged organically. Adams, who had first come to Friendship House because she heard about it from a sociology professor at Loyola in 1946, was busy raising children during the 1950s and did not have long hours to volunteer at Friendship House. She did, however, stay in touch with her friends from Friendship House by participating in informal, interracial, discussions about race, God, and everything else at people’s houses associated with Friendship House.²⁹ Friendship House’s home visit program emerged out of these conversations. If these informal meetings strengthened relationships among people already affiliated with Friendship House in some way, why not offer them to others?

The home visit program brought white people into black middle-class homes for conversation, a goal that reflected their philosophy that social changed happened by individuals

²⁷ Adams, "FH Oral History, Part 2." Adams, a middle class black woman, grew up on the far South Side of Chicago. After her first husband was killed in World War II, she moved back to Chicago and began to take classes at Loyola. A sociology professor there told her about Friendship House and she began to volunteer there in 1946, although she, like Ellen Tarry, had a problem with some of their programs, particularly those that created relationships of dependence. Addams met her second husband at Friendship House.

²⁸ Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*. Most banks would not give mortgages to black families, especially those on the early side of integration, so black families had to buy “on contract.” In these situations, white owners would buy property and then sell it to a black family at two to three times the price they had paid. The white owners sold it “on contract,” holding the mortgage which stipulated that if a black family was late on even one payment, they lost the property and all their equity. Since black people were paid less than white people, and were paying two to three times the rent as white folks, black people who succeeded in paying off their mortgage were really incredible. Most of the time, white owners would then sell the property to another black family until that family defaulted. It was very profitable for white owners.

²⁹ See Adams, "FH Oral History, Part 2" and Box 5, Folder May - September 1950, FH.

changing. These visits were one more step in Friendship House's promotion of face-to-face conversation. As one headline about the program somewhat over-exuberantly put it, "friendly strangers" could "topple race bars," just by having a conversation.³⁰ People affiliated with Friendship House developed a network of black families who would be willing to host white visitors and be frank about their experiences of racism as black people. The black hosts educated their white guests by offering friendship, a model of black respectability, and frank discussion.³¹ Friendship House worked with other Catholic groups, including Young Christian Students (YCS) and the Christian Family Movement (CFM) to recruit white Catholics to visit black families. Often, a home visit was the first time a white person ever visited the home of a black person. For many, it was a profound experience. As Friendship House formalized the program, it sponsored one to two visiting days a month, and some months up to four, and created a list of about 150 black people who would host white people on a regular basis. White visitors would start out at Friendship House's headquarters, now moved to 43rd and Indiana, to see the poverty of the ghetto, and then would go to a black middle-class home. A Friendship House worker accompanied the visitors and ran a debriefing session after the home visit.

B. Catholic Interracialists Focus on the Middle Class

The home visit program fit with the larger trend among Catholic interracialists in shifting the focus from economic inequality to middle-class integration. After a season of soul searching, the Friendship House staff members decided to forgo their settlement house work, which had been

³⁰ *Chicago Daily News*, July 17, 1959.

³¹ Friendship House prioritized having white people go into black homes, although their publicity frequently mentioned that sometimes white people returned the invitation to black people. This strategy of bringing white people into black homes countered that of Catherine de Hueck who, by the mid-1940s, was promoting interracialism in white areas as well. She opened a farm in Marathon, Wisconsin that she planned to be a retreat house and interracial center in an all-white community calling it the "second way of our two-way bridge of interracial justice." Many of Friendship House's workers disagreed with this strategy, arguing that they should focus their efforts on the Black Belt. Sheil paid for the farm. Box 2001.258, Folder 26: FH USA," MHA.

so central to Friendship House's mission, in order to free up staff workers to work on human relations exclusively. Their rhetoric shifted away from describing poor black people trapped in the ghetto toward promoting African Americans as respectable, middle-class people. Members of the CIC conceptualized the problem similarly. Writing about what his faith meant to him, Thomas Crowe, the first president of the CIC, commented "As a neighbor it means I have the right to live anywhere my economic status will allow."³² Clifford Campbell, director of the Dunbar Trade School, told a group of participants at a Sheil School of Social Studies John Ryan Forum that if they thought people from different races should not live together because of "cultural differences," they should remember that each group had cultural diversity, and "there are people, both up and down the scale of cultural development . . . but this is not primarily, nor even substantially, a response based on race."³³ And those at the same level of "cultural development" should be able to live in the same neighborhood, no matter their race.

Drama and internal struggle plagued Friendship House's move toward middle-class Catholic interracialism. Although de Hueck Doherty had agreed to step back from the governance of Friendship House in the United States when she moved to Canada, she remained engaged in the debate members continued to have over the purpose of Friendship House. De Hueck Doherty continued to argue for an expansive understanding of Friendship House's mission. Cantwell and other Chicago representatives, on the other hand, pushed for Friendship House to focus on interracial justice, wanting Friendship House to make a clear and decisive shift toward focusing all its efforts on working for institutional changes. In 1954 Cantwell wrote, "the primary direct object of our apostolate is interracial justice and equality. . . .

³² Thomas Crowe, "What My Religion Means to Me, Box 3, April - May 1952, CIC.

³³ Statement by Clifford J. Campbell, Box 5, April - May 1954, CIC.

expressing our work in this manner supposes, I believe, an outlook which differs rather fundamentally from the one which prevailed in the early days of Friendship House.”³⁴

Chicago’s Friendship House argued that Friendship House’s new expression of its work should not include caring for poor black people through the myriad home visits, hospital visits, efforts to help people find jobs and food, and providing free clothing. These activities took the staff workers away from the more important work of educating white people which would lead to institutional changes. The clothing room, in particular, continued to be a point of contention. Since its founding, Friendship House had provided material care for poor people through a clothing room as a form of corporal mercy. Chicago, too, had eventually adopted the habit. De Hueck believed that the clothing room not only met immediate needs, but drew white people into the work of Friendship House. But by the mid-1950s, Chicago’s Friendship House, in agreement with the New York members, argued that Friendship House needed to turn its focus away from providing for the needy and instead focus on changing society’s structures. Most specifically, they wanted to stop the offering the clothing room. The other Friendship Houses were more tied to de Hueck’s vision for Friendship House that emphasized corporeal and spiritual acts of mercy.

Chicago’s arguments for this move reflected a vision of Catholic interracialism that focused on integrating the middle-class and a desire to shift from practicing charity to justice. This understanding of Catholic interracialism matched that put forward by the CIC. Chicago’s staff said that the clothing room hurt the cause of interracialism because it reinforced white stereotypes about black people’s poverty, which would make middle-class white people less likely to accept middle-class black people as their neighbors. When white people came to Friendship House to donate clothing, they saw intoxicated and indigent Negroes, not the many middle-class black people Friendship House’s staff knew. Chicago’s staff also argued that by

³⁴ Quoted in Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement," 283

providing a venue to donate clothing, Friendship House was further hurting the cause of interracialism because donating clothing made white people feel good about themselves, but did not require them to donate their time and talents to the pursuit of justice. Finally, they argued, the clothing room attracted poor black people to Friendship House, which upset many of their neighbors.³⁵ The other houses agreed that Chicago's house could experiment for a year, practicing this new type of interracialism. At the 1956 planning conference the following year, Friendship House adopted the innovators' vision of what the group should do.³⁶ De Hueck Doherty subsequently offered her resignation from involvement with Friendship House USA.

In crafting a "Catholic" response to racial violence during the 1950s, Catholic interracialists focused primarily on educating white people so that they would be willing to live alongside black people of a similar class. In part because they shifted their focus away from economic inequality, they returned the Catholic interracialist project to the realm of respectability. But by the end of the decade, this strategy also proved to have serious limits.

C. Building Interracial Good Will in Suburban Western Springs

In addition to inviting white families into urban black homes, there was at least one other way to show that interracial living worked: successfully integrating a suburb. Although that had failed miserably in Cicero in 1951, other suburbs had been integrated successfully. Arthur Falls provided one concrete example when he and Lillian, along with Falls's sister Regina Falls Merritt, bought adjoining property at 4812 Fair Elms and 4806 Fair Elms to build houses in the all-white suburb of Western Springs, IL in 1952, the year after the Cicero riot. Western Springs, located about twenty miles west of Chicago's Loop, was a small town of about seven thousand

³⁵ Ibid., 269.

³⁶ This decision was painful and complicated. See *ibid.*, 284-291.

souls. Citizens of this idyllic location could boast of one large 26-acre park and several smaller parks in a town with an average home price of about \$18,000. Western Springs rested well within the upper-middle class, just the kind of place Falls felt comfortable. Like so many other moments in his life, Falls was on the edge of integration. He and his family would be the first black people in Western Springs, and even if this integration was limited to two families, Western Springs would still have a black population.³⁷

By the end of the decade, Catholic interracialists concluded that if they could successfully integrate suburbs, then they could eliminate the dual housing market and begin to eliminate northern racism. Falls's battle in Western Springs propelled him into the conflict in Chicago and the surrounding region over interracial housing in the suburbs. He also drew the CIC and Friendship House into a national controversy that centered on integration in Deerfield, a wealthy North Shore suburb of Chicago. Ultimately, these conflicts led Catholic interracialists to shift their strategy from one of education to following Falls and doing "direct action" in order to integrate the suburbs. Some members came to believe that only when middle- and upper-class African Americans successfully integrated into white suburbs would the problem of the expanding black ghetto be solved. They argued that they should actively and preemptively facilitate suburban integration, rather than just respond to crises as had been their pattern. This would provide what Cantwell had been arguing for years was so important: more successful models of integrated living. It would also prevent mortgage companies from arguing that black people in white neighborhoods made mortgages too risky, and would help stop white people

³⁷ Scholars have debated the effects of black suburbanization and its relationship to later urban issues. William Julius Wilson suggests that black out-migration from the inner-city hurt those left behind because of, for example, the marginalization of urban politics. Thomas Sugrue argues for a broad swath of structural causes. See William Julius Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Wilson argued this further in *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997). Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crises: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

from fleeing black in-migration – because they would not be able to get away from black people if they were already in the suburbs. The archdiocese had a particular stake in this last concern, as it struggled to maintain the bricks and mortar institutions in the city while building more as Catholics founded new suburban parishes.

Since the early 1940s, Falls had largely left behind his explicit partnership with Catholic organizations working for interracial justice and instead focused on Negro rights in the medical profession and by working with non-Catholic civic organizations. During the 1940s, Falls served on the board of directors of the Urban League, as president of the Ogden Park Consumers' Cooperative, which he had helped found in 1936, and as an advisory board member of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination. At 51, he was practicing medicine as a thoracic surgeon at Provident Hospital, which was still the only private hospital that would serve African Americans unconditionally, and was working his way up the institutional ladder. From 1956-1959, he would be the president of the hospital's medical staff.³⁸ When the Fallses moved out of the city, they joined thousands of other Chicagoans in a move from the city to the suburbs.

Most of those other Chicagoans, and Americans more generally, however, were white, and their moves were being subsidized by a generous gift from the federal government. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation's (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Authority's (FHA) discriminatory practices in the 1930s and 1940s facilitated conditions for the white suburbanization of the 1950s and 1960s. According to historian Kenneth Jackson, the HOLC, signed into law in 1933, "introduced, perfected and proved in practice the feasibility of the long-term self-amortizing mortgage with uniform payments spread out over the whole life of the

³⁸ McDermott to Mrs. Crowe, October 21, 1960, box 38, folder October 21-31, 1960, CIC.

debt.”³⁹ These new mortgages allowed more Americans to become homeowners. But, because of the HOLC, few of those Americans were black directly. The HOLC systematized appraisal methods throughout the nation and initiated practices that led to red-lining. According to the appraisal standards, the socioeconomic characteristics of a neighborhood determined the value of the housing stock; the HOLC advised that any black presence in even a well-kept neighborhood decreased property value; therefore, the houses were riskier to fund than in an all-white neighborhood. The corporation developed a series of secret maps that indicated levels of risk associated with loaning to different urban areas. While the HOLC did not discriminate in its lending, its ultimate damage, Jackson argued, was “not through its own actions, but through the influence of its appraisal system on the financial decisions of other institutions.”⁴⁰ As the CIC discovered, the notion that mortgages held by white and black people in newly integrating neighborhoods and mortgages held by black people more generally were risky dominated the mindset of Chicago’s mortgage lenders.

More broadly, the FHA took the standards the HOLC set up and applied them on a national level. It increased mortgage length, provided a standardized, objective, and uniform way of evaluating houses, and required on-site inspections. Those on-site inspections, completed by an unbiased observer, guaranteed that the FHA would grant the vast majority of its loans outside cities for new homes in all-white neighborhoods. Members of the FHA were concerned about race mixing because they believed it would lower the value of homes and they illegally recommended that neighborhoods set up covenants, and compiled “detailed reports and maps charting the present and most likely future residential locations of black families.”⁴¹ This meant

³⁹ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 196.

⁴⁰ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 203.

⁴¹ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 208.

that for white people, it was easier and cheaper to get a mortgage on a new suburban home than to buy a home in the city, while for most black people, obtaining a mortgage for a suburban home or a house in a white neighborhood was nearly impossible.⁴² While it is unclear if Falls was able to take out a mortgage or paid for the property with cash, he was able to purchase the land in Western Springs and had enough money to build a home.

Problems arose, however, when some residents of Western Springs discovered that Arthur Falls, Lillian Proctor Falls, and Regina Falls Merritt were black. At first, the construction faced a series of delays. Permits for the property became hard to get and vandals damaged the contractors' equipment. At one point, three members of their neighborhood's property owners association – two of them members of the board of trustees of the Congregational Church – asked the Fallses to not build in Western Springs, so it could remain a "happy all-white community."⁴³ Falls would not be moved. But when the Falls family members insisted that they would build, the Park Board took action. That November, the Board passed a resolution to condemn the Fallses' property for a park.

But the Fallses were not ones to have their dreams trampled upon. They objected to the Park Board's decision and the case went to court. Falls also reached out to his colleagues in the Council Against Discrimination (formerly the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination). He also contacted the CIC, which he had joined only a few months earlier, by writing a letter to Lloyd Davis describing his situation. In a testament to the CIC's small staff and covert racism in the North, Davis responded that he knew nothing about Falls's troubles. But Davis notified the WSCIC about the Falls's situation, and Davis along with Ed Kralovec of

⁴² Andrew Wiese points out that the notion of suburbs as strictly lily-white is false. Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*.

⁴³ Jack, "Chicago's Violent Armistice," Reprint of Mrs. Hugh E. Bogardus and Mr. James E. Davis, "Experience in Interracial Living", Box 4, May 1953, CIC.

the WSCIC joined a group that supported the integration of Western Springs, sponsored by the Council Against Discrimination.⁴⁴ The group was a tri-faith endeavor. Other sponsoring organizations included the Jewish Labor Committee, AFSC, ADL, and the Church Federation of Greater Chicago, along with members of civil rights and housing organizations.⁴⁵

After 18 months of litigation, the judge ruled in favor of the Fallses. This was the first suit of its type that had been fought to the finish. Ten years prior, African Americans bought property in suburban Glencoe, but gave up their land when threatened with a suit. The previous year, one of Falls's co-workers at Provident gave up property in Brookfield.⁴⁶ The judge commented that while the village could certainly use more park land, "it appears from the evidence in this case that they were not attempting to get the land at this time for park purposes; the reason the Park District wished to acquire this land was to remove Doctor and Mrs. Falls from Western Springs because of their color, and for no other reason."⁴⁷ Drawing on the language of brotherhood, the judge continued, "it would seem that the people in question here who live in Western Springs would want to wait for a period of five years, . . . perhaps fifty or one hundred years . . . before they wished to engage in and enjoy the fraternity of brotherhood, perhaps to wait that long before they would experience the faith of their fathers or before they would try the true Americanism which other communities have enjoyed." Therefore, the judge proclaimed, if the Falls's land were condemned for a park, "it would be a monument in that particular area to hate and intolerance." He dismissed the Park District's petition.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Davis to Falls, March 24, 1953; Davis to Falls, April 1, 53, Box 4, Folder March - April 1953, CIC.

⁴⁵ Council Against Discrimination, News Letter, July 1953, Box 4, June - July 1953, CIC.

⁴⁶ *Sun-Times*, June 10, 1953.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Council Against Discrimination - Western Springs Committee Meeting, box 4, folder June - July 1953, CIC.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Falls, "Oral History Interview," 16.

Opponents of integration in Western Springs would not be dissuaded. The Park Board decided to appeal the case, but in order to purchase the land and pay legal fees, it had to gain voter support for a \$116,000 bond issue. Falls's supporters took action to make sure the Park Board's plan failed.

They waged a publicity campaign against the Board's decision. Careful to conceal their position as outsiders, they circulated a newsletter arguing that it would be too expensive to buy land every time a black family tried to move into Western Springs.⁴⁹ Notably, a piece on the Falls' experience that the AFSC later reprinted emphasizes the Falls's respectability: they were "qualified by culture, education, and income" to live in Western Springs. This was a far cry from Friendship House's earlier cross-class and cross-race efforts of interracialism. On July 11, 1953, voters voted against adding "needed recreational area" to Western Springs.

Clearly it took a lot of effort to successfully integrate a white suburb, even if it was only with two families. Once it was determined that the Fallses would move to Western Springs, their supporters planned events to build good will. They sponsored a work party to landscape the Falls's land, a group to help with the move-in, and then a work party and picnic after they moved in. All friends of the Fallses – and their potential friends in Western Springs – were invited. The Falls family successfully built their home and moved in, and Arthur Falls became one of the founding members of the Catholic parish in Western Springs.⁵⁰ Falls reported that his move-in was not violent, either. Only once was a rock thrown at their home, and they quickly connected with their neighbors. And to the delight of Catholic interracialists, the property values in Western Springs did not fall. Western Springs could be a shining example of integration.

⁴⁹ Human relations news, October 1959, Box 32, Folder October 26-31, 1959, CIC.

⁵⁰ American Friends Service Committee, November 20, 1959, box 33, folder November 23-30, 1959, CIC.

Falls believed and had proven that middle-class suburbs could be successfully, and relatively peacefully, integrated, and he was in a growing minority. Between 1940 and 1957, the non-white population of the metropolitan area increased from 52,621 to 147,000. But those 147,000 people were concentrated in Gary and East Chicago, where 62 percent of them lived, and only 25 towns had non-white populations of more than 250.⁵¹ More black people, Falls believed, needed to live in lily-white suburbs like Western Springs.

D. “We Have All Worked to Keep Integration Out of It”: The Battle for Integration in Deerfield

In the midst of the battle over his property in Western Springs, Falls began to meet with an AFSC-sponsored group of people interested in further integrating the suburbs. The group spent several years conducting studies and, at one point, invited Morris Milgram to consult them on building and interracial housing development. Milgram, a Jewish developer and president of the Modern Development Corporation, built housing developments that he kept interracial through a controlled occupancy quota system limiting secondary sales. Falls’s group incorporated itself as the Progress Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Milgram’s Modern Development Corporation.⁵² Falls served as the chair, and by 1959 they had set their sights on another Chicago suburb.

That suburb was Deerfield, a small village of 4,500 people north of Chicago settled in 1835 and incorporated in 1903. Many of Deerfield’s male citizens worked as junior executives at firms in Chicago, and they viewed their homes as temporary investments. They were climbers of the corporate ladder and hoped to gain a promotion in Chicago, so they could afford to move a

⁵¹ “Human Relations News,” October, 1959, box 32, folder October 26-31, 1959, CIC.

⁵² Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely, “The South in the North,” reprint, Box 12, Folder Deerfield Documents 1959-1960, Illinois Commission on Human Relations. For more on Milgram, see Jack, “Chicago’s Violent Armistice,” Chronology of Events Leading up to Deerfield Park Board Condemnation Proceedings, box 7, folder 1 Chicago 1948-1950, Illinois Commission on Human Relations.

few miles east to some of the older, wealthier suburbs, or to be transferred. Either way, Deerfield residents viewed their homes as ways to make money so they were deeply invested in maintaining property values. This small town would come to be known as the Little Rock of the North the country and world.⁵³

Here, Falls, the CIC and Friendship House practiced a valuable lesson. Northern racism, which was hidden behind talk of non-racist property values and a community's right to build parks, required more than education to overcome. Education did important work, changing the rhetoric of what was acceptable. But white people would not change by appeals to their consciences alone. Instead, power, hidden as it might be, must be confronted by power.

Progress purchased land to build 51 houses in Deerfield and began construction with the intention of selling ten to twelve of the homes to black families in what would become the Floral Park subdivision. With the average cost of a home in Deerfield at \$23,000, the \$30,000 projected sale price of the properties stood a cut above the average. Clearly black families purchasing homes in the subdivision would be wealthy. They planned to follow Milgram's controlled occupancy model in order to maintain the interracial character of the development, lest it become all-black because of the lack of comparable housing for African Americans elsewhere. Homeowners had to agree to let Progress act as their agent, so that the development would remain interracial over time. The group did not make their plan public, but after they began construction on the two model homes, confidentially told a few key people in the village

⁵³ Deerfield quickly became national news. Some Southerners responded with disgust. An *Atlanta Journal* editorial surmised that if Deerfield was located in the South, "we'd be hearing a lot about ignorance and prejudice and some editor would write a piece about us playing into the hands of the Russian propagandists. But as long as it's happening where it is, we guess the causes will be explained in terms of economics" (Quoted in *Daily News*, December 2, 1959). The *New York Times Magazine* said Deerfield was "the South in the North," pointing out that housing segregation was the key to Northern segregation (Rosen, *But Not Next Door*, 23.).

and a few clergy of their plans. This secrecy would make many white Deerfield residents furious.

In November, 1959, just a few weeks before Deerfield residents celebrated Thanksgiving, news of Progress's plan to sell homes to black people became public. The Progress Development Board shared their plans with Rev. Jack D. Parker, rector of St. Gregory Episcopal Church, which was located next to the development. Members of the board hoped Deerfield's clergy could help them ease tensions and gradually build support for Deerfield's integration. But Parker did not remain silent and promptly told his elder board and the village board about Progress's plan.⁵⁴ Word quickly spread that Progress planned to integrate Deerfield, and two days after the leak, the building commissioner stopped work on the model homes because of building violations.

As soon as the Deerfield situation broke, the CIC and Friendship House rallied to the side of the integrationists. But because of the fear of outsiders, the Catholic interracialists worked behind the scenes as much as possible, offering strategic on-the-ground support and quietly trying to shape public opinion. Friendship House sent staff worker Mary Dolan up to Deerfield, which was close to suburban Skokie where her brother lived. Dolan used her brother's residence as her home base. The CIC deployed Matt Ahmann, who was working as the CIC's field worker. Ahmann, born in St. Cloud, MN, went to college at St. John's University, where Dom Virgil Michel had worked. He came to Chicago to do a Master of Arts degree in sociology, but when he started working for Sargent Shriver at the Merchandise Mart, became caught up in Chicago's thriving lay scene.

Deerfield residents' responses were polarized. Some were furious that "outsiders," presumably bent on making money planned to "destroy" their town. Others said they were not

⁵⁴ "High Cost of Democracy," *TIME* December 7, 1959.

prejudiced, but, as one resident, oblivious of the irony of her statement, put it, “if we would have wanted to live in an integrated neighborhood, we wouldn’t have moved here in the first place.”⁵⁵

A small minority embraced the advent of black neighbors, and openly welcomed them. Some, who seemed to favor integration in theory, were upset by the secrecy of the builders. Parker, for instance, argued that discrimination was wrong, but so were the builders’ techniques. He told Progress leadership, that “love under compulsion is not love in the Divine sphere, nor can it ever be in the human sphere,” and urged them to “give up compulsion, however legal, and work towards your desirable ends through example and persuasion, uplifted and tempered by love.” Deerfield citizens, he said, “are concerned primarily with economic loss, not with depriving the Negro of his just due.”⁵⁶

Within days, Deerfield area citizens had established two camps. Harold Lewis, a young executive who lived outside the Deerfield limits in Riverwoods, IL, led the North Shore Residents Association, which stood adamantly against integration. The *Defender* called Lewis an “executive racist,” but Lewis argued that he was just opposed to having integration thrust on the area by builders.⁵⁷ He told *TIME* magazine that the issue was black people moving into Deerfield: “in essence they are trying to force integration down the throats of the people of Deerfield, and we are resentful. We have an obligation to other communities to fight.” Property values stood at the core of his concern over integration. But he and others had learned from earlier efforts to combat integration: they must hide, as much as possible, their fear of black neighbors and speak of the situation in race-neutral terms. The violence of Cicero would not do, nor would the overt racism of Western Springs. Instead, they must work to keep the discussion

⁵⁵ Quoted in *Chicago’s American*, December 3, 1959.

⁵⁶ Quoted in “What Do You Do,” *Community* February, 1960.

⁵⁷ *Defender*, December 7, 1959.

focused on non-racial issues. And what was more race-neutral than parks? As Harold Lewis told *TIME* magazine, “we don't want to be lured into the position of debating integration.”⁵⁸

To counter the anti-integration forces, a handful of Deerfield citizens created the Deerfield Citizens for Human Rights, which Friendship House and the CIC helped. Dolan labored furiously, behind the scenes, to get the Deerfield Citizens for Human Rights off the ground. She went to meetings, set up an office space, got out mailings, and made contacts for the organization. Dolan and the CIC also blanketed Deerfield with literature on Catholic teaching on race relations. Dolan was used to this type of work; Friendship House had prepared her to approach it as service to God in mundane tasks. Her work, Dolan reflected, was, “in large part, undramatic drudgery. But of such are these efforts made.”⁵⁹

Catholic response was mixed in the majority-Protestant Deerfield. The Holy Cross parish priest, Father O'Mara, left an unsurprising void of leadership. He made only one public statement, saying “this is an issue which should be decided on the principles of Christian justice.” Otherwise, O'Mara remained silent and refused to make a stand in favor of integration.⁶⁰ Dolan reported that he thought it was best to remain aloof until the tension blew over.⁶¹ But the CIC and a handful of O'Mara's parishioners in favor of the development were making slow headway among their fellow laity. According to CIC staff member Mathew Ahmann, Mary Sabato of Holy Cross had recruited supporters at a recent alter and rosary society meeting, and the Knights of Columbus included five paragraphs from a recent statement by Chicago's new archbishop on integrated housing in their bulletin. In all, Ahmann thought there were “at least nine or ten strong Catholic families supporting the development,” and that there

⁵⁸ Report to Staff, n.d., Box 33, Folder December 1-26, CIC.

⁵⁹ Ahmann to Cantwell, n.d., Box 33, Folder December 27-31, 1959, CIC.

⁶⁰ *Sun-Times*, November 20, 1959.

⁶¹ Mary Dolan, Report to Staff, 11 December 1959, folder December 1-26, 1959, box 33, CIC.

were a smaller number of families who supported it, but did not want their names to be used in any public way. Ahmann thought there was hope for Holy Cross Parish. “In addition,” he wrote, “there are eight discussion groups of about 10 persons each . . . all slowly coming to good conclusions on the race question.”⁶² Some Catholics, who had friends in Deerfield, contacted the CIC and asked how to help their Catholic friends in Deerfield be open to integration. But the task was large, especially with accusations of the builders’ treachery and conspiracy echoing across town hall meetings and whispering through the quiet, concerned conversations of neighbors.

Despite these accusations, the Progress leadership refused to repent. When charged with deceit, Falls responded, “I don’t see why we had to tell people that the project was to be integrated . . . We were within the law. We conformed to the usual practices.” They knew, he said, that they would face opposition in any suburb: “Chicago is reputed to be the most segregated area in the U.S. So it wouldn’t have made any difference where we built. We would have met the same thing.”⁶³ The group, furthermore, planned to build more integrated housing projects once their development in Deerfield was completed. Falls was confident Progress would prevail. He had, after all, already integrated Western Springs.

On December 5, two hundred volunteers for the North Shore Residents Association fanned out across Deerfield conducting a poll to determine what Deerfield’s residents thought about a Progress’s plan to build an integrated housing development in their town. They hoped that if they showed the village government the overwhelming opposition to integration, the government would keep black people out of Deerfield. Of the 4045 ballots they gathered, 22 were deemed “spoiled” and subsequently discarded and 56 were of no opinion. Of the remaining ballots, an

⁶² Ahmann to Cantwell, n.d., folder December 27-31, 1959, box 33, CIC.

⁶³ *Sun-Times*, December 14, 1959.

astonishing 3507 Deerfield citizens voted against the Floral Park subdivision and only 460 said they supported it. The ratio was eight to one, and the white citizens of Deerfield had expressed themselves as decidedly against integration.⁶⁴

The CIC scrambled to put a different spin on the event. In a move that reflected a concern for reason and sensibility, Ahmann and the CIC brought together a team of 13 experts, including Dr. Charles O'Reilly, a Loyola professor and CIC board member, to denounce the poll. At a meeting at Loyola, Ahmann asked the sociologists if they could condemn the poll's procedure because it had been conducted in a sloppy manner. The group decided that move would be unwise because the results would not be very different even if the poll had been conducted more competently. Overwhelmingly, Deerfield citizens did not want black families as their neighbors. The sociologists decided they did not want to dignify the poll, or imply that polling could be a strategy to determine who to let into a community.⁶⁵ Instead, the group signed a statement the CIC put together insisting that polling should be used only to determine what people think, not to determine questions of human rights: the poll was "an attempt to use a poll to boost what amounts to a stand against human rights"⁶⁶

The CIC did try to educate Deerfield's citizens about the errors in the poll. In its press release, the CIC also reported a list of errors in the polling process. Poll takers, who were clearly against the integrated subdivision, argued with citizens before they indicated their choice on the ballot, several people known to be in favor of integration had not been polled, some families were given extra ballots or polled twice, and some people who were favored integration voted against the subdivision, but said they would have changed their vote if they knew it would be

⁶⁴ Box 33, Folder December 1-26, CIC.

⁶⁵ Rosen, *But Not Next Door*, 86.

⁶⁶ Quoted in *Defender*, December 14, 1959. See Satter to Ahmann, September 14, 1959 in box 33, Sept 1-15, 1959, CIC.

interpreted as against integration. Perhaps if residents knew how slipshod the pollsters had been, they would see that more people favored integration and feel more comfortable taking that stand.

Nonetheless, the Park Board moved forward to keep Deerfield white, and Falls's recent court battle in Western Springs loomed over the situation. Careful to keep discussions about integration off the public record so they would not receive a verdict that was similar to the Western Springs case, the Park Board proposed a referendum asking for a \$550,000 bond to be issued to purchase or condemn land for more parks, and to build, maintain, and improve their present and new parks. The Park Board insisted that the referendum had nothing to do with integration. It was just about parks, they claimed.

Opponents of the referendum, however, made the connection between it, integration, and Western Springs. Falls wryly commented that the referendum "theoretically" had nothing to do with integration.⁶⁷ But he, Deerfield's residents, and the entire nation, knew that was not the case. Twice that year – in May and August – taxpayers had refused to spend more money for parks. The referendum was, essentially, a vote on integration. The Deerfield Citizens for Human Rights wanted to make it clear that that was the case. Dolan and the AFSC sent out information to Deerfield residents, including a piece talking about Western Springs's failure to condemn the Fallses and Regina Merritt's land. Notably, the material comparing Western Springs to Deerfield never mentioned an important link between the two situations: Arthur Falls. Perhaps that would have touched a little too close to home.

Despite these efforts, the referendum for park money passed, two to one. Eighty-six percent of eligible voters turned out to vote on their parks.⁶⁸ The village would attempt to buy the land from the corporation and convert it into parks. Falls expressed disappointment with the

⁶⁷ *Chicago Tribune*, December 23, 1959.

⁶⁸ *Chicago Drivers Journal*, December 23, 1959, box 11, Illinois Human Relations Commission Papers.

referendum, but noted that “the clergy of Deerfield took a firm stand in accordance with its beliefs and democratic principles.”⁶⁹ In what Harold Lewis later claimed was an innocent move, the park board then dispatched three members of the North Shore Residents Association to Progress Development Corporation, offering to pay \$169,999.11 for the land. After the referendum, Dolan moved back to her full time work on Chicago’s South Side.

Progress responded to the referendum by suing 21 members of Deerfield’s park district board, the Deerfield Citizens Committee (which had also been opposed to integration), and the officers of the North Shore Residents Association for \$750,000 in damages and a permanent injunction restraining the village from preventing home construction. Progress claimed that the defendants’ efforts to block construction of the subdivision had affected the value and sale of the stock of Modern Community Developers, Progress’s parent company. “We have no alternative but to take the proper legal steps to protect our interests,” Falls commented.⁷⁰

The defendants continued to argue that their efforts to block the integrated subdivision had nothing to do with race. James C. Mitchell, the park board president said that “the park board never said it wanted to acquire the land to prevent integration.”⁷¹ Lewis commented, “We have all worked to keep the racial question out of it.”⁷² Lewis’s and Mitchell’s statements were revealing; they had been careful to make sure that in public, official proceedings, integration stayed off the table. They knew how quickly things would turn against them if they brought race into the picture. In classic northern style racism, they denied race as an issue. In the end, the Court dismissed Progress’s suit. Deerfield would remain a white suburb, an example of the

⁶⁹ *Chicago American*, December 22, 1959.

⁷⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, December 23, 1959.

⁷¹ *Chicago’s American*, December 12, 1959.

⁷² *Chicago Tribune*, December 23, 1959.

entrenchment of housing and racial discrimination in the North, and the herculean strength it took to overcome it.

E. From Tempered Prudence to Increased Militancy

At the same time the CIC was dealing with the drama in Deerfield, it was increasing its focus on housing more generally. In January, 1959, the CIC created a housing committee whose first task was to understand the nuts and bolts of how and why the dual housing market functioned. Maurice Fischer, an editor at the *Daily News*, one of the only papers to treat race and housing seriously, chaired the committee.⁷³ Mark Satter, a Jewish lawyer who would literally work himself to death trying to fight against contract buying, was another member.⁷⁴ Satter, who had begun his battle in 1957, more than anyone else, pushed the housing committee in this new direction. He argued that Negroes did not cause housing deterioration, but were the victims of it in part because of the “unbelievable deception, exploitation, and deterioration in the professional relationship between the professions of attorney, real estate broker and mortgage banker with the minority people.”⁷⁵ Satter’s strong words offended some members. At one point, Cliff Campbell, who was now the deputy commissioner of the Department of City Planning, and Cantwell both thought they might need to ask Satter to temper his remarks or withdraw from the discussions.⁷⁶ But because of Satter and the other conversations the committee had, members developed a clear picture of how housing in Chicago and the suburbs worked. The question, then, was how to make a change.

⁷³ The *Daily News* ran a panic peddler series in the fall of 1959, detailing how panic peddlers worked and encouraging white people to not give in to fear.

⁷⁴ Mark Satter is the protagonist in the first part of Satter, *Family Properties*. See also Cantwell to Sarge, October 8, 1959, box 32, Folder Oct 1-19, 1959, CIC.

⁷⁵ Box 38, folder September 21 - 30, 1960, CIC.

⁷⁶ Ahmann to Peters, July 20, 1960, Box 37, Folder July 1960, CIC.

The Housing Committee proposed to adopt a two-pronged strategy. First, they would partner with the Chicago Bar Association and teach a generation of young lawyers about the illicit ways speculators worked so the lawyers could, in turn, educate black and white homeowners and buyers on property rights. This strategy relied not only on the good will of white people invested in their neighborhoods enough that they would leave, but also on black and white people exercising their rights once they knew what they were. Satter wanted to have lawyers partner with existing community organizations to help educate black men, especially, about their rights when it came to home buying. He listed Catholic organizations like Friendship House, Young Catholic Workers, and cells of the CFM, and he also suggested community organizations like Kenwood-Ellis community center, Greater Lawndale Conservation Commission and Association of Community Councils. Getting lawyers out into the community would have another effect. It would help buyers and sellers form relationships with lawyers, so they would be more comfortable approaching one. Satter, no doubt, had another interest at heart: he wanted more lawyers to join him in his quest.

Second, they would practice “direct action.” This meant they would help black people move into all the metropolitan areas by partnering with community members willing to support black neighbors and organizations like HOME Inc., which Lillian Falls was a member of and which Cantwell had helped to found, to help African Americans find housing in areas previously closed to them. HOME Inc. worked to connect black buyers who wanted to move to white neighborhoods with white homeowners who were willing to sell. In an era in which Realtors hesitated to be the first one to “break” a block, HOME Inc. provided an important service.

The Chicago Bar, after much prodding and several meetings with members of the CIC, finally, after seven months, addressed the CIC’s proposal. The results were mixed, and Satter

would not have the broad education program he envisioned. The group agreed to have lawyers educate Chicagoans, but “because of the emotional content of the problem,” they did not want to encourage lawyers “to call meetings for this purpose either in the neighborhoods themselves or elsewhere.”⁷⁷ The Bar refused to supply the personal face and personal contact Satter knew was important to the success of the program. Instead, the lawyers agreed to help from radio and television studios, not out in community centers and settlement houses.

When the CIC’s other board members heard about the Housing Committee’s proposal, tremors ran through the membership of the CIC as it shifted to the left. To mitigate the effects of attempted integration once it was in progress was one thing, but to intentionally cause strife in a community by facilitating black people moving in was another. The decision was costly. In 1960, Joseph Merrion, who chaired the Citizens’ Committee charged with raising money for the CIC’s operational budget, resigned his chairmanship. He told Shriver that the CIC, which by that point was becoming more militant in its stance on integration, was inconsistent with his position on housing.⁷⁸ Merrion was a big contributor; in 1959, shortly before he resigned from the CIC, he donated \$1000 to the organization. A Jew, Nathan Schwartz, took over Merrion’s position. He reflected that he believed “deeply in the Council and its work. I think that it is in a better position than almost any other agency in Chicago to bring about real progress on our many difficult racial problems.”⁷⁹

The housing committee, however, forged ahead. They began to draft a letter which they planned to send to all the village and town governments about housing integration. They would follow it up with education and then help a Negro family move into the previously all-white suburb. They also encouraged Board members to join Freedom of Residence (FOR), a group

⁷⁷ "Archbishop's Statement a Reading Must."

⁷⁸ Merrion to Shriver, March 29, 1960, Box 37, Folder March 25-31, 1960, CIC.

⁷⁹ Letter Draft, Box 39, Folder November 22-30, 1960, CIC.

dedicated to working for open occupancy legislation.⁸⁰ FOR was an example of institutional partnerships across religious and racial lines, with representatives not only from the CIC, but also the ADL, AFSC, NCCJ, and the Chicago Urban League. Many Catholic interracialists, including Cantwell, Hillenbrand, Crowley, Shriver, Marciniak, and Yancey, participated.

Within its own staff, the CIC continued to increase its interracial housing efforts. In 1960, Lloyd Davis offered the Board of Directors his resignation, a decision that split the Board. Cantwell had wrung it out of him, and had offended many Board members in the process. While the reasons for this are unclear, Cantwell seemed to think that Davis was not suited temperamentally for the job because he could be too brash at times. For the interim, the Board asked Ahmann to run the CIC. After an extensive search, the CIC board hired John McDermott. McDermott's hiring suggested how central the CIC believed housing to be.

At only 34 years old, McDermott was an expert in the housing industry, having worked on housing for Philadelphia's Commission on Human Relations, the NCCJ, and the federal government. His advent into Catholic interracialist circles followed a similar trajectory to many others active in Catholic interracialism. While at Georgetown University, he had visited Friendship House's branch in Washington D.C., and they drew him into the world of inter-group relations as a way to live out his Catholic faith. McDermott was particularly attracted to Chicago and accepted the job in part because he wanted to be a part of such a vibrant lay movement. He later described Chicago as "such a different, such a breath of fresh air compared to Philadelphia. [It was] a more confident Catholic community, a more outgoing Catholic community, a more liberal Catholic community."⁸¹ McDermott, too, had connections with the Kennedy family. He came to Chicago after spending the summer in Nigeria. While there, he had helped the Joseph P.

⁸⁰ The CIC could not officially affiliate because its charter said it could not work directly for legislation.

⁸¹ John McDermott, Oral History Interview, conducted by Martin Zielinski, AAC.

Kennedy Foundation airlift African students to U.S. colleges. When McDermott came into office, he asked the CIC's Housing Committee to put a hold on its efforts to promote direct action. He wanted to survey the tricky field of Chicago's racial geography before letting the CIC make a radical departure from its more conservative stances.

McDermott had a big task in front of him. The Civil Rights Commission labeled Chicago the most segregated city with a population of more than 500,000, and it was not a recognition many residents wanted.⁸² McDermott came to an organization that had, for many years, waged a relatively conservative battle on the housing front for integrated housing. The CIC lost members as it shifted from a strategy of caution and prudence to increased zeal, but it had also significantly increased the spread of Catholic interracialist ideals and cultivated the seeds planted in the archdiocese in the 1930s. In the coming years, with the support of their bishop, the men and women of the CIC would taste the fruit of the many years of Catholic interracialist labor. McDermott's leadership as executive director of the CIC brought the group even farther to the left, and landed them right in the middle of major civil rights struggles. His hiring also freed up Ahmann for another task which make Chicago the hub of Catholic interracialism in the North and help make the Catholic interracialist message the official policy of the archdiocese. Ahmann, McDermott, and their comrades would be aided by Meyer, whose testimony to the Civil Rights Commission represented a shift in the hierarchy's explicit attention to interracial justice.

⁸² *Sun Times*, September 9, 1959.

XI: FROM THE FRINGES TO THE CENTER: CATHOLIC INTERRACIALISM'S RHETORICAL TRIUMPH

In 1964, a few months before President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Cantwell reflected on his early involvement in the Catholic interracial movement. In the 1940s, he had worked hard, in the minority of priests, serving the laypeople of Friendship House and recruiting laymen to join him in founding the Catholic Interracial Council. "At the time," he said, "you couldn't even get agreement in the religious community on what the goal should be, much less how to reach it. Now we've finally recognized what the only Christian and democratic goal can be. The movement for freedom, for integration."¹ Ten years earlier, Cantwell would never have been able to make such a statement. But in the late 1950s, the American hierarchy finally explicitly supported interracial justice and Chicago's new archbishop, Albert Cardinal Meyer, took a much stronger stance than his predecessor, Samuel Cardinal Stritch. This shift opened up new possibilities for the expression of interracial justice in Chicago's Catholic institutions.

In 1958, America's bishops provided Catholic interracialists with "Discrimination and the Christian Conscience," their first clear statement in favor of Catholic interracialism and interracial justice. America's bishops received pressure from both the papacy above them and the laity below them.² Notably, the bishops asserted that racial discrimination was immoral and, in a statement that interracialists would quote repeatedly, the bishops justified religion's concern

¹ *Chicago Tribune*, April 19, 1964.

² Faye Botham's narrative on the Catholic hierarchy's growing support of interracialism focuses on the top-down influence, rather than the pressures bubbling from the bottom up. Botham, *Almighty God Created the Races: Christianity, Interracial Marriage, and American Law*.

with racial justice by declaring that “the heart of the race question is moral and religious.”³ With this statement, racial justice became the public policy of the Church, but Catholics had a long way to go in implementing the policy.

The following year, Chicago’s new archbishop made a public statement in favor of integrated housing. Meyer, who had come to Chicago in 1958 after Stritch’s death and was created a cardinal in 1959, provided much more active support than Stritch on racial justice. When the Civil Rights Commission, under the leadership of Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame and sometimes visitor to Friendship House, came to Chicago to collect testimonies on the status of civil rights, Meyer offered a statement. Father Jack Egan, CISCA alum and newly appointed to the Archdiocesan Conservation Commission, gave Meyer’s testimony.

The statement was a clear reflection of the priorities of the Catholic interracialists on housing. Meyer spoke the language of respectability, arguing that middle-class black people should be able to choose where they lived, as European migrants who joined the middle class could. He was concerned with ending segregation in all classes of society, but believed that the most plausible gain could be made in enabling the black middle class to have residential mobility. Meyer blamed black “takeovers” of neighborhoods on the white people who fled, saying the “forebodings of the white population came true in a number of instances because they made them come true. By predicting the worst, the worst came to pass.” In addition, he blamed “irresponsible real estate speculation and discriminatory financing.” Meyer argued that housing shortages for black Americans must be limited and supported community organizations

³ Discrimination and the Christian Conscience, Box 1, Folder 8, Roach Papers.

(implicitly like the CIC), which would make sure African Americans gained access to “our” communities.⁴

Chicago’s archbishop had finally supported the Catholic interracialist agenda. Catholic interracialists had convinced the hierarchy in Chicago that integration was a moral good that ought not only be preached, but publically pursued. Meyer’s statement reflected the traits of the Catholic interracialism of the 1950s: emphasizing that integration was respectable, practiced in partnership with Protestants and Jews, and focused on middle-class integration as its primary goal. Meyer stronger stance on interracial justice led him to willingly partner with the lay Catholic interracialists that had been, for so many years, holding the line for the Church on interracial justice. At last, the Catholic interracialists could be more confident that their archbishop would support them.

Because of the power structure of the Catholic Church and the importance of priests in shaping their parishioners, the die-hard Catholic interracialists finally had a shot at making Chicago’s Church more just. With the hierarchy’s increasing support of Catholic interracialism, Catholic interracialism became more and more a respectable position to hold. In addition, people who held Catholic interracialist positions shifted from being outsiders in the Church, trying to get the hierarchy to change its position, to being more closely aligned with official policy. Not only did their role in the archdiocese change, they sought to increase their professionalization and to draw the Cardinal into more activist positions. Catholic interracialists gained access to halls of power, but in doing so, the fissures within the community over how to achieve their goals continued to be a source of conflict.

⁴ Albert Meyer, statement to the President’s Commission on Civil Rights, May 6, 1959, box 4, folder 8, Roach Papers. For more on the block-by-block changing in Chicago, see Amanda Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago’s West Side*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Inconsistencies, opposition, and discord plagued the implementation of the bishops' statement on interracial justice. Those who shared a common concern for interracial justice disagreed on how the hierarchy should proceed, while many priests and lay Catholics, convinced of the rightness of their position or painfully aware of the cost of implementing interracial justice, resisted Meyer's leadership. In Chicago as the hierarchy did move forward, it did so always challenged by the racism embedded in the Church's, and the city's, institutions. The results of these internally-focused late-1950s and early 1960s efforts were, at best, mixed.

As a first step toward implementing this statement, and in a long-awaited move, Chicago's archbishop laid out a policy of interracialism for his priests that focused on Negro conversions. For many Catholics, this was a crucial step in implementing interracialism because of the influence of the priests on their parishioners. In 1960, spurred on by the Catholic Interracial Council through Cantwell, Meyer held a conference for his priests that addressed the place of black people in the Archdiocese of Chicago. His message focused on developing the "Negro Apostolate," or the number of black Catholics, by welcoming black Catholics into the many institutions of the Church, from the parish schools to the hospitals. This chapter explores the reluctant interracialism of the clergy and the strategies interracialists used to try to integrate Catholic institutions, now that the hierarchy was on their side.

The hierarchy was, clearly, a latecomer to the black freedom struggle, which has larger implications for how we understand religious people's role in the modern civil rights movement. First, it suggests a difference between white Protestant participation in supporting equality and Catholic participation. Protestant ministers often led the way in participation in the civil rights movement.⁵ The Catholic laity, on the other hand, led Catholic participation with priests acting

⁵ Findlay, *Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement, 1950-1970*; Friedland, *Lift up Your Voice Like a Trumpet: White Clergy and the Civil Rights and Antiwar*

in a supporting role. This narrative challenges the notion that the clergy set the theological and practical agenda for the Church, while acknowledging their importance. Second, it suggests the diversity of the members of the Catholic Church. Throughout the history of Catholic interracialism, non-Catholics sometimes struggled to make sense of what they thought was a monolithic church that had a variety of expressions on race. Meyer's directives to his priests were, in part, an empty victory. They may have had to support integration, but their parishioners did not. Parishioners expressed their views with their feet and Chicago's parishes remained largely segregated.

Thus despite the triumph of Catholic interracialism within the Catholic Church, its victory remained limited. Although a small group of Catholic laity helped convince the hierarchy to support interracialism, the practice of interracialism failed to thrive in the lives of the vast majority of Catholics. Priests, reluctant or not, could not change the attitude and behaviors of the majority of their parishioners, and the other side of the Catholic encounter with race – parochialism – fought hard against this new-found liberalism.

A. Conflict among Friends: Egan and the Archdiocesan Conservation Committee

In 1958, Cardinal Stritch made a major change to the Archdiocesan Conservation Council, and organization dedicated to helping pastors navigate racial change by appointing Jack Egan head of the committee. Cantwell had long suspected the ACC, founded in 1952, of being a front for neighborhood protective associations desiring to keep African Americans out of their neighborhoods.⁶ Egan was not so certain about the committee's nefarious intentions; he

Movements, 1954-1973; Paul Harvey, *Freedom's Coming : Religious Culture and the Shaping of the South from the Civil War through the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Newman, *Getting Right with God : Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945-1995*; K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*.

⁶ Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*, 214.

commented that the pastors were “very fine men who were trying to determine how best they could prepare their people so that neighborhoods could be integrated when blacks moved in.”⁷ But when Stritch appointed Cantwell’s close friend and colleague Jack Egan, the tone of the ACC changed.

Egan, like Cantwell, was an activist priest. He was a CISCA alum who learned about interracialism at his first CISCA event in 1933, while in his third year at DePaul Academy. He later went to St. Mary of the Lake for seminary under Hillenbrand’s leadership and, after graduation, became one of Hilly’s boys, meeting regularly with Hillenbrand, Cantwell, and others to sustain their social action.

With Meyer’s approval, Egan led the committee to take a more activist stance on urban affairs that included crossing religious boundaries and wading into debates on urban planning. In 1960, the committee became the Office of Urban Affairs, a name that reflected Egan’s more activist stance. He had helped to write Meyer’s testimony before the Hesburgh’s civil rights commission in 1959. With Egan’s influence, the archdiocese officially began to become more involved across religious lines on issues related to the city and race. In 1960, Egan’s committee sponsored a tri-faith conference on housing, religion, and community along with the Church Federation of Chicago and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.⁸ While Protestants, Catholics, and Jews had been working together for some time on housing, this was the first public conference they had co-sponsored, and they billed this as the first time leaders of the three major faiths had come together around housing. This would be the first of many public, tri-faith conferences, culminating in a national one sponsored by Chicago’s Catholics that drew the attention of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews across the country.

⁷ Frisbie, *An Alley in Chicago: The Life and Legacy of Monsignor John Egan.*, 88.

⁸ A Study Program on "Religion, Community Life and Chicago's Housing, box 37, folder April 1960, CIC.

Egan, influenced by his friend and teacher Saul Alinsky, also encouraged Meyer to support community organizing. By the late 1950s, Alinsky was arguing that white neighborhoods should establish quotas of African American residents as a way to shape integration. In 1959, Meyer directed his pastors on the Southwest side to support the formation of community organization that became the Organization of Southwest Communities (OSC) in September, 1959. The OSC used Alinsky-style tactics to try to manage racial change.

As much as Egan supported integration, members of the CIC disagreed with him at times because he proposed tactics for interracialism with which they did not agree. When the *Sun-Times* compared Alinsky's statement before the civil rights commission with Meyer's, the CIC made a point to distinguish between the two. They denied Meyer was advocating quotas, but was, rather "discussing moral principles and moral goals."⁹ The CIC faced even more controversy when Egan testified against Hyde Park's proposed urban renewal plan.

Since the Supreme Court declared restrictive covenants unconstitutional in 1948, Hyde Park and the University of Chicago had struggled to figure out how to prevent their area from becoming a slum. They feared that as more black people moved in, property values would drop and their area would become unlivable for them. While the motives of the Hyde Parkers were mixed, and most considered themselves good liberals who supported integrated living, members of two community organizations wanted to protect the neighborhood. They planned to use federal funding, in the first of its type, to tear down areas that might become blighted in order to preserve the neighborhood.¹⁰

⁹ Undated Memo, Box 8, Folder 2: Meyer - Clergy Conference on Negro Apostolate, DC. See also McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*, 118.

¹⁰ Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 135-170

In 1958, Egan drew the ire of many – including many supporters of the CIC – when he testified before City Council that the Archdiocese of Chicago did not support Hyde Park’s plan. He reported that the archdiocese supported urban renewal in principle, but questioned the “city-wide effects of isolated community planning which carries within it population displacement to other communities with consequent creation of new or worse slums.”¹¹ The archdiocese would only support the plan, Egan said, if its supporters committed to only clearing land as it was needed which would prevent the displacement of a large number of people all at once, included at least 200 units of public housing scattered throughout Hyde Park, made the provisions on rehabilitation clear and precise so property owners knew what improvements they had to make on their properties before they were in danger of being torn down, and guarded the housing supply because 40 percent of the buildings slated for demolition were not substandard.

Egan’s statement thrust the CIC into a difficult position. Jerome Kerwin, a lay Catholic, professor at the University of Chicago, supporter of the plan, and active member of the CIC, condemned Egan’s statement. Speaking on behalf of supporters of the plan, Kerwin argued that “Many people of my own faith are greatly incensed over the attitude of the New World (archdiocesan newspaper) conceived and put forward in a way the late cardinal (Stritch) would never have sanctioned.” Kerwin defended the plan, noting “The charge that the Hyde Park program is careless of the needs of the poor and depressed is wholly unjustified.”¹²

Some of Egan’s closest friends, men committed to Catholic interracialism and justice for poor people, strongly disagreed with Egan. Cantwell disliked Egan’s actions for reasons relating to the proper roles of priests and laity in the Mystical Body of Christ. Cantwell, who met

¹¹ Statement by the Cardinal’s Conservation Committee on the Hyde Park-Kenwood Urban Renewal Plan, June 11, 1958, Box 20, Folder 4, June - Dec, 1958, Undated 1958, DC.

¹² Ibid., Archbishop in Middle of Housing Fight. The parentheses are in the newspaper quotation.

frequently with Egan, thought Egan was overstepping his bounds as a priest. He reminded his friend of their common goal

to build up an image of the Church in human life differing from what went before us and from what still generally prevails. We deliberately abandoned the notion that the Church gets its work done by pushing its weight and using secular power. We deliberately delimited the area of a priest's competence when speaking in the name of the Church. We recognized that when the Church enters the secular arena, it usurps the responsibility of laymen, frustrates them, and robs them of their freedom. Why, I ask myself, were all these positions set aside when The New World and the Cardinal's Committee began the campaign about Hyde Park?¹³

For Cantwell, who wanted to empower laypeople, Egan was disrupting the relationship between the laity and the priesthood. As Cantwell told Shriver, he thought the Church had made a "grave blunder."¹⁴ At the weekly meeting of Hilly's boys following Egan's testimony, Hillenbrand skewered his devotee, saying Egan should not have testified because he was a priest, not a layman, and that Egan knew nothing about urban renewal. As Egan recalled, Hillenbrand said, "You're a disgrace to the Roman Catholic Church and the priesthood. You should be in favor of that plan just because the University of Chicago is there." Egan was devastated: "Criticism hurts more when it comes from a mentor. Monsignor Hillenbrand's approval meant everything to me. It was so hurtful to attack me before my peers without letting me give my case. I was overwhelmed."¹⁵ Clearly, conflict plagued Egan's stance.

When necessary, the CIC disavowed its relationship with Egan's committee. One CIC supporter wrote Shriver a note with a donation check that expressed his disappointment with the Catholic Church. Shriver thanked him for the money, and said "I'd like to once again reassure you that the Catholic Interracial Council has no connection with Monsignor Egan's statements or

¹³ Cantwell to Egan, May 26, 1958, Box 20, Folder 3, Housing, January - May 1958, DC.

¹⁴ Cantwell to Shriver, June 19, 1958, Box 20, Folder 4, June - Dec, 1958, Undated 1958, DC.

¹⁵ Frisbie, *An Alley in Chicago*, 105.

opinions.”¹⁶ Thus as versions of Catholic interracialism became the archdiocese’s policy, it also caused conflict among interracialists.

B. Reluctant Catholic Interracialism: Getting Priests on Board

Catholic interracialists would never succeed in reaching Catholics across the archdiocese if they did not have the explicit support of parish priests. Priests were the gatekeepers of the local parish and the widespread institutions of the Catholic Church. They could set the tone in their parish, regarding admission to parish schools to the integration of parish clubs. Yet prior to 1960, Chicago’s archdiocese had not addressed the problem of racial turnover in neighborhoods explicitly. By 1960, though, the archbishop could no longer ignore the fact that Chicago’s population was shifting. Meyer decided to set a consistent policy for his priests that was in line with the message of Catholic interracialism, which he presented at the Clergy Conference on the Negro Apostolate in September, 1960. Cantwell and other priest interracialists helped plan the conference. In calling a conference on the “Negro Apostolate,” Meyer indicated his desire that his priests concern themselves more with the expansion of Catholicism among African Americans. The conference speakers reflected the mixed approach to interracial justice of the different priests and suggested the reluctance of the institutional Church in embracing interracialism.

The conference opened with an argument for its very existence that suggested that the Catholic Church could no longer ignore Negroes, not because their human dignity required justice, but because they were on the Church’s doorstep and could no longer be disregarded. The majority of parishes covered racially changing neighborhoods, and so, like it or not, the influence of the city’s black population on the Church was growing. Reverend Joseph Richards of Holy

¹⁶ Ibid., Shriver to Heiman, June 13, 1958.

Angels parish made a case to the priests on the importance of even addressing the black population by pointing to the demographic change. In 1893, eight years before Falls was born, there were only 30,152 black people living in Chicago. By 1930, two years before Chicago's FCC's defected from Turner, 233, 903 black people lived in Chicago mostly within the boundaries of five parishes. Over the next ten years, the number of parishes with significant black residents doubled to ten, although the total population only increased by about 40,000. During the war years and the 1950s, black migration to the city resumed its pre-Depression pace, and by 1957, the priests learned, each year 15,000 white people were fleeing to the suburbs, while the black population grew at a rate of 31,000 a year. By 1960, the black population stood at 750,000 and seventy-six parishes were in the midst of dealing with racial change. Thirty six of those parishes had a population that was more than fifty percent black, while twenty five of the parishes were still majority white. Questions about race, Richards suggested, were no longer something that only those priests in black parishes needed to concern themselves about; instead all must focus on black conversion.¹⁷ Doing so was a matter of survival for the Church in the city.

The tone of the first half of the conference, however, reflected little of the thriving, passionate, interracialist mantra. One speaker seemed to suggest that the priests must gird their loins for the unpleasant, but necessary task, of adjusting how they dealt with changing parishes. Reverend Patrick T. Curran of St. Francis de Paula pointed out that the "great, practical question in the Archdiocese today is: 'What can you do when Negroes move into your parish?' Do you fight it, do you ignore it, or do you try to live with it?" Calling black people's movement into white Catholic parishes "infiltration," he pointed to the "score of Negro parishes which are now

¹⁷ Rev. Joseph Richards, "Growth and Spread of Negro Population," Box 3, Folder 5, Roach Papers.

doing rather poorly,” because of the priests’ indecision. Curran’s solution held none of the hope of successful interracial living of the CIC leadership.

The Church’s goal, Curran suggested, should be to make black converts. In the face of the inevitability of racial turnover, the priests must abandon hope of stemming the tide of white flight, and instead view the parish as a mission field, Curran argued. Curran’s perspective on this may have been influenced by Meyer’s predecessor, Stritch, whose priority concerning black people was conversion, not interracial justice.¹⁸ Curran then laid out a number of strategies for making black converts, including sending priests and the laity out to conduct censuses, welcome black children to the parochial school, and presenting the Church as a basis of social life for the new residents. He concluded, “we have not made great strides in [the Negro] apostolate because we have so often acted indecisively . . . with the help of God, and a determination to face the changing city as an apostolic challenge, we can make great strides in the Negro apostolate in the years ahead.”¹⁹ Theologically, increasing the number of black Catholics mattered because the Church offered salvation. But there was another, more earthly consideration: without increasing the Negro Apostolate, the Church would have no one to keep up its buildings.

The Catholic Church, however, had largely failed to increase its presence among African Americans. Despite the fact that black migrants came to a city with a strong Church, the percentage of black people who were Catholic remained at the 1910 levels: about six percent. Richards noted that “the thousands of Negro converts each year do not measurably increase the Catholic percentage. This is due to the greater immigration and the regrettable leakage of some Negro Catholics as they move to other parishes in the city.”²⁰ This “regrettable leakage” referred

¹⁸ Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*, 283-289

¹⁹ A Report on Our Program and Our Progress in the Negro Convert-Apostolate, Rev Patrick T. Curran, Box 3, Folder 5, Roach Papers.

²⁰ Ibid, Growth and Spread of Negro Population, Rev. Joseph Richards

to something Falls and his fellow Negro Catholics had been pointing out for years: when black Catholics moved out of the black parishes and encountered white Catholic racism, they left the Church.

Since few priests took the time to find out what black people thought about the Catholic Church, Father Rollins Lambert lectured on “The Attitude of the Negro Toward the Church.” His talk was one of the few that drew on the ideals of interracial justice. Lambert, one of the city’s few black priests, was a good friend of Cantwell’s and worked at St. Dorothy’s parish in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood, which had recently gone through racial change. Lambert preached a message of individual respectability for African Americans, saying, “being an American, the Negro wants to be judged, not as a group, but like other Americans, for what he is personally.” Points of judgment could include “how he lives, works, raises his family, keeps his home, participates in civic affairs, pays his bills, conducts himself in public and in private, as a neighbor, friend, human being – these are the important things, and on these the Negro wishes to be judged individually.”²¹

Lambert argued that the possibilities for black conversion were great if the Church practiced interracial justice. Since most African Americans could not flee the ghetto, they were attracted to Catholic schools because they wanted to “preserve” their children “from moral corruption which so often accompanies life in the ghetto.” Notably, black people found the Catholic Church appealing because, at least at a theological level, it claimed the equality of all people. This universal claim, Lambert said, “is in harmony with the urgent need of the Negro for acceptance by the society in which he lives.” However, Lambert reminded his audience, “the Church and its members . . . must practice what they preach. Otherwise this becomes just

²¹ Rev. Rollins Lambert, *The Attitude of the Negro Toward the Church*, box 3, folder 5, Roach Papers.

another disappointing mirage in the Negro's struggle."²² Bishops, priests, and sisters must not only say they understand "the Negro's" problems, but "prove by their actions that they are sincerely on his side and not just reluctantly assuming that position when it is too late to do anything else."²³ Lambert's words implicitly challenged the priests' reluctance to embrace interracial justice.

Meyer concluded the conference by merging a call for interracial justice with one of black evangelization. Borrowing a phrase from the 1958 bishops' statement, he proclaimed that his priests must "seize the mantle of leadership from the agitator and the racist" in their dealings with Negroes; the Church would provide the rational, moral answer to the problem of interracial justice. Reflecting on, but never passing judgment on, Mundelein's decision to assign missionary priests to serve African Americans, Mundelein praised the "pioneering priests of the Negro Apostolate in our own Archdiocese." But times had changed, Meyer suggested, and missionary priests could no longer do the work of caring for black people's souls alone: "the pastoral care, and the evangelization, of the Negro in our city is becoming more and more an apostolate of the entire clergy of the Archdiocese." Meyer proclaimed that "as the Body of Christ she [the Church] exists to unite all men without exception, regardless of difference of race, class or culture; that she makes her inner life and her institutions open and accessible to all; that all groups are equal in her life, and enjoy equal rights and privileges; that for her the bonds forged in Baptism and in the Holy Eucharist between the members of Christ constitute links stronger than race, stronger than culture, stronger even than family ties."²⁴

Meyer pointed to several ways that his priests could work toward the dual goals of black conversion supported by interracial justice. He encouraged them to work for integration in

²² Ibid., Rev. Rollins Lambert, *The Attitude of the Negro Toward the Church*.

²³ Ibid., Rollins Lambert, *The Attitude of the Negro Toward the Church*

²⁴ Ibid., Meyer, "The Mantle of Leadership."

housing, Catholic schools, and Catholic hospitals. In addition, as a step toward bring racial justice fully into the Church, in late 1961, Meyer sent out a series of sermon outlines that included 3 sermons dealing specifically with race relations.

C. Sermons

Members of the CIC were delighted with this new turn of events because it represented a departure from the more hands-off approach of past archbishops. The sermon outline stated that “no one may say ‘This is not my problem.’ There are converts to be won in interracial justice in every parish . . . Racial prejudice has deep roots and is spread everywhere.”²⁵ McDermott commented that “the significance of the new sermons are their specificity; they do not need interpretation.”²⁶ Calling Meyer’s move an “unprecedented special series of sermons on race,” the CIC mailed copies of the 1958 statement to every priest in the archdiocese prior to the scheduled date of the first sermon.²⁷ Meyer did not want his priests to avoid the race relations sermons and told his priests that “under no circumstances should these sermons be omitted in any parish of the Archdiocese.”²⁸

But while the majority of priests obeyed Meyer and preached the sermons, not all were willing to follow their leader. In December 1962, the CIC asked its members to conduct a brief survey to see determine if priests were following the sermon guide on race relations. Members of the CIC reported on 72 parishes on a Sunday in which priests should have been preaching on race relations, and their sample represented sixteen percent of the parishes in the archdiocese. Parishioners in fifty nine of the parishes, representing eighty two percent of those surveyed a

²⁵ “Challenge,” April 1962, Series 10, Box 6, Chicago Cic Documents, 1956-1959, in NCCIJ, MUA (Milwaukee, WI).

²⁶ McDermott Memo, n.d , Series 10, Box6, Folders 1-6, NCCIJ.

²⁷ “Challenge,” April 1962, Series 10, Box 6, 1956-1959, NCCIJ.

²⁸ McDermott Memo, n.d , Series 10, Box 6, NCCIJ.

sermon on race. Eighteen percent of churches did not preach on race. Of the eighty seven masses surveyed in the parishes that did have sermons on race, eighty-seven percent of masses had a sermon on race.²⁹ According to this unofficial survey, the priests' implementation of Meyer's directives was strong, but limited.

D. School Integration

On schools, Meyer gave his priests strong, explicit instruction. At the 1960 conference, he told his priests "I absolutely forbid any pastor in this Archdiocese to reject from his school any Catholic Negro child, whose parents, be they Catholic or non-Catholic, are domiciled within the parish boundaries." If their parish school was full, which was an oft-cited reason to not admit black children who had recently moved to a parish, Meyer instructed the priests to adopt double sessions. Meyer ordered the priests of national parishes, which targeted specific ethnic groups, to submit a written report to him for any African American child they refused to admit. High schools, Meyer announced, must accept applicants without regard to color and proceed with extreme sensitivity and caution on their admission and transfer policies. Because the transfer of black students from integrated schools to all-black schools is "subject to misinterpretation of being discriminatory against Negroes, I urge pastors and principles to do their best to make room for all Negro applicants and to refrain from transferring their applications."³⁰ Thus Meyer's clear directives meant that pastors and principals could no longer hide behind claims that their school was full in order to limit black students. Despite Meyer's clear leadership, his priests reluctantly and incompletely implemented his charges.

²⁹ Meeting of CIC Board of Directors, Feb 13, 1962, Series 10, Box 6, Documents 1962, NCCIJ.

³⁰ Box 8, Folder 2: Meyer - Clergy Conference on Negro Apostolate, DC.

Schools represented a pillar of Catholic interracialist concern for good reason. Meyer and the Catholic interracialists believed that integration “has taught and will teach our young people lasting lessons of justice and charity, the two virtues which are the very heart of our leadership in this whole area of race relations.”³¹ For black Catholics more generally, access to Catholic schools represented inclusion in the Catholic faith and the parish, and participation in a spiritual good. Schools were also a source of African American conversion. On the other hand, many white Catholics thought that keeping parish schools racially homogenous would protect their children from the possibility of interracial marriage and to keep their parish to themselves.³² Some priests believed that if they limited black enrollment at their parish schools, it would help keep their white parishioners from fleeing the neighborhood, which would actually help integrate the parish.

Many of Meyer’s priests, therefore, were ambivalent at best about opening their enrollment. Meyer pointed to Father Molloy of St. Leo’s parish as a shining example his other priests should follow. That Molloy’s journey toward integrating St. Leo’s schools was forced, however, suggests the reluctance of many priests.

St. Leo’s was one of five Catholic parishes in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood, which was about 44 percent Catholic by 1930. The parish maintained a high school that was designated a central high school for boys living on the south side. The other big Catholic parish in the neighborhood was St. Sabina’s, whose pastor was much more open to integration. In the late 1950s, African Americans began to move into the neighborhood at a higher rate.³³ By 1970, the

³¹ Quoted in McDermott to McManus, copy, Series 10, Box 6, Folder Documents 1964, NCCIJ.

³² Kevin Ryan, ““My Children Feel Rejected by Their Church”: The Conflict between Integration and Racial Justice at St. Philip Neri School in Chicago,” paper given at annual meeting of the American Historical Association, January 2013 (New Orleans).

³³ Eileen M. McMahon, “Auburn Gresham,” in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating Janice L. Reiff, James R. Grossman (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 2005). McMahon, *What Parish Are You From? A Chicago Irish Community and Race Relations*.

neighborhood would be 69 percent black. Molloy was appointed to St. Leo's in 1950 and in 1957, Stritch named him a Monsignor.

Molloy and St. Leo's had a long, somewhat contentious, relationship with the CIC and its form of Catholic interracialism. In 1952, when Dave McNamara, CIC's then-executive secretary, found out that St. Leo's was holding a minstrel show, he wrote a letter to Molloy. McNamara politely suggested that Molloy not permit minstrelsy in his parish because it was disrespectful to African Americans, limited black converts, and prevented white people from seeing Negroes as human beings. McNamara later reported to Cantwell that when he called Molloy, Molloy was belligerent.³⁴ The following year, when the CIC began to host its high school study days, St. Leo's was one of three Catholic high schools that did not participate.³⁵

But St. Leo's was not able to avoid dealing with questions of race. In 1953, Mrs. Rosina Guyder and Mrs. J. Benford met with Lloyd Davis, then the head of the CIC. Guyder and Benford reported that Mendel High School, St. Aquinas High School, St. Rita High School, and St. Leo High School refused to admit black children. Guyder, a member of St. Columbanus parish, had not been able to register her son at St. Leo High School. It is unclear from the sources whether or not she was able to after her protest. But in 1959, the issue of integrating St. Leo's came up again, this time at the elementary school level. Archibald LeCesne, a black board member of the CIC, reported that Molloy had refused to admit a black student to the second grade. Mrs. Grant, the child's mother, felt humiliated by the hostile attitude of the priest and nun she spoke with. LeCesne went to interview the parish leaders, but to no avail. He reported to Ahmann, who was, at the time, the CIC's acting director, that he "would consider it a matter

³⁴ McNamara to Cantwell, n.d., box 2, folder 1952 Undated Items, CIC.

³⁵ Meeting of Board of Directors, December 7, 1953, Box 5, Folder December 1953, CIC. The others were St. Rita and Visitation.

which should be called to the attention of the Archbishop for such action as he may consider necessary.”³⁶ Ahmann wrote to Molloy asking for a meeting to hear his side of the story.

Molloy’s position was ambiguous. On the one hand, he supported an organization committed to integration using racial quotas. By this point, St. Leo’s black population was rapidly increasing and Molloy was helping to lead the Provisional Organization of the Southwest Community, which became the Organization of Southwest Communities (OSC). Founded in 1959, because of Egan’s influence on Meyer, the OSC used community organizer Saul Alinsky’s strategies to try to prevent to maintain property values, stop blockbusting, dispel racial stereotypes and promote peaceful integration.³⁷ Noting Molloy’s leadership with the budding OSC, Ahmann noted that “it may be that this effort on your part, and on the part of others in your community, will demonstrate to the whole city and nation a solid and realistic way of handling problems of community decay and neighborhood transition.” He hoped the Church would lead the way in “facing squarely our city problems, including their racial aspects.”³⁸

On the other hand, despite Molloy’s growing efforts for peaceful integration with the OSC, Molloy had, as McGreevy put it, “a well-deserved reputation for bigotry.”³⁹ He was not willing to admit black children to his school. Many of his parishioners supported his views and were adamantly opposed to integrating the parish school. For instance, when another black family tried to register their child at St. Leo’s, they found a smoke bomb on their doorstep. When Ahmann met with Molloy, Molloy reiterated that only families who were registered members of the parish could register their children with the school. While the Grant family intended to register, they had not yet done so.

³⁶ LeCesne to Ahmann, September 11, 1959, box 33, folder September 1-15, 1959, CIC.

³⁷ “Auburn-Gresham,” in *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/88.html>, accessed 10 December 2012).

³⁸ Ahmann to Molloy, September 21, 1959, box 33, folder September 16-30, 1959, CIC.

³⁹ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*, 121.

Ahmann emphasized Grant family's respectability and suggested they were excellent candidates for integrating the parish. He pointed out that St. Leo's parishioners and the Grant family shared middle-class values, and suggested that the Grant family's respectability might help the parishioners accept integrated living more readily. It was to St. Leo's advantage, Ahmann said, "if the first Negro families registering at a parish are stable and upright families," since "this kind of family is as eager to get out of slum conditions as anyone, and should be eager to help maintain the good condition of housing and neighborhood life."⁴⁰ Eventually, the CIC won out.

In January 1960, Molloy begrudgingly told his parishioners that he would have to integrate the school. In the parish weekly bulletin, Molloy relayed how he had recently been called to "the government building" and asked why there was no integration in the parish's elementary school or high school. He responded, as he had with the Grants, that they had no registered black parishioners. Integration, the bulletin said, "is now the law of the country – the law of the land and the Church must accept it." That he described this publically suggests how little he – and his parishioners – embraced the message of interracialism. "You may be assured," the bulletin continued, "your pastor is looking out for your welfare, but he too must accept the law of the land."⁴¹ The following summer, Ahmann wrote a letter to LeCesne saying "Good news!!! A Negro Catholic has successfully registered at St. Leo's parish and stands some chance of sending his kids to school there in the fall."⁴² Two months later, Meyer held up Molloy and St. Leo's integration as an example his other priests should follow. Apparently, Meyer would

⁴⁰ Ahmann to Molloy, September 24, 1959, box 33, folder September 16-30, 1959, CIC.

⁴¹ From "Church of St. Leo Weekly," Feast of the Holy Family (Jan 10, 1960), Box 36, Folder January 1-15, 1960, CIC.

⁴² Ahmann to LeCesne, July 20, 1960, Box 37, Folder July 1960, CIC. Molloy's white parishioners apparently did not believe he could keep his promises. They moved away and between 1960 and 1964, enrollment in the school declined from 1151 to 66 (*A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*, ed. Harry C. Koenig (Chicago: The Catholic Bishop of Chicago, 1980), 545-46).

accept, and even praise, his priests' support of integration, even if they did not do it with a cheerful heart.

Meyer's concern that Catholic schools' discrimination against black students would hurt the cause of the Church was well founded. A few months into the 1960 school year, the *New Crusader*, a black paper, ran a story on how St. Leo's refused to admit black students. Ahmann defended the parish and said, "We [the CIC] know of at least four or five families who have their children in this school, and there may be more." Reiterating the CIC's commitment to racial justice, Ahmann wrote "when any trace of racial injustice is found in our Church or in any other, every effort must be made to erase it immediately. There is no room for racial discrimination in the Brotherhood of Christ." While publically Ahmann might defend the Church, he knew that Molloy's was not alone in resisting integration. He encouraged black families experiencing discrimination to call the CIC so they could help end it: "if there are families who have difficulty being accepted at a Catholic institution, we would certainly appreciate hearing from them, and would work with them to eliminate the problem."⁴³

But despite Meyer's leadership, school integration progressed in only limited ways. This pattern was due largely to the continued housing segregation. But by 1964, CIC leadership also thought Meyer and the School Board could lead more forcefully. That year, on behalf of the CIC's board, McDermott wrote the Archdiocesan School Superintendent Monsignor William McManus a letter which suggested four changes the Archdiocesan School Board should make. First, he wanted the School Board to make a clear, public statement on integration, suggesting that previous directives had been too confined. McDermott recommended that McManus "adopt and make public a formal policy stating that racial integration is considered desirable in the Catholic schools" from a religious and educational standpoint. Second, the CIC recommended

⁴³ Ahmann to Leavell, October 3, 1960, Box 38, Folder October 1-20, CIC.

that the School Board conduct a racial headcount, including a census of all the vacant seats, in order to be able to devise a clear plan for integration. Third, the CIC recommended that Catholic schools make it a priority to integrate school faculties, so even if white children lived apart from black children, they would be able to know a black person as their teacher. Fourth, the CIC recommended that McManus hire CIC staff to conduct a program of human relations education and consulting for the teachers and administrators of Catholic schools.

McManus was concerned with racial integration in the schools, and said he could meet two of the CIC's requests. He would conduct a racial headcount, although he was somewhat surprised, at first, that the CIC wanted him to acknowledge, not try to disregard race. He also reported that the school board was working on a fair employment policy for lay teachers, but they were limited in faculty integration by the small number of black religious and clergy. But to their request that he make a formal statement on integration, he responded that only the Cardinal could do that. In addition, the Archdiocese was already working on an educational program, going over textbooks for racial content, committee working on handbook to principals of secondary schools stressing responsibility for promoting interracial justice and love and including proposals for curriculum revision. They hoped to utilize the resources of the CIC.⁴⁴ McManus and Meyer did keep their promises, sending a letter to all priests setting forth a fair employment policy and notifying priests that the Archdiocese would conduct a racial headcount.⁴⁵

Integrating the Archdiocese's schools was complicated, and conducted often in word, but not in deed. Just because Meyer informed all his priests of his policy of open school admission for Catholics did not mean his priests would do, or even agree with, what he said. Meyer had

⁴⁴ Board of Directors meeting, Feb 13, 1964, Series 10, Box 6, Documents 1964, NCCIJ.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Memo, April 21, 1964

limited control of the priests and nuns who ran the school. The local schools' leadership, for their part, feared dropping enrollment and the racial turnover of the parish if they integrated the schools. Thus Meyer may have deemed school integration mandatory and the true "Catholic" path, but in practice, its implementation was limited.

E. Hospital Integration

Catholic hospitals were like schools, in that they acted as Catholicism's public face to non-Catholics, and particularly to African Americans. Since its inception, the CIC had worked to integrate hospitals. But even with Cardinal Stritch's quiet support of hospital integration, many Catholic hospitals continued to discriminate by refusing to admit or segregating black patients and not hiring black doctors. At the 1960 conference, though, Meyer informed his priests that they would soon read a notice that every Catholic hospital in the Archdiocese was required to solicit qualified Negro doctors for staff positions.⁴⁶ For the archbishop and the CIC, the image of the Church in the eyes of African Americans drove their work for integration in the medical field.

The CIC made some progress. In 1952, the CIC partnered with Arthur Falls, who was helping to spearhead a new organization in Chicago, the Committee to End Discrimination in Medical Institutions. Mable Knight of Friendship House told McNamara about the group.⁴⁷ The CIC's Committee on Hospitals worked with Falls, but only on a limited basis, and through education.⁴⁸ The CIC determined which Catholic nursing schools refused to admit black students and sent a letter to those schools, urging them to change their admissions policy. In addition to suggesting that by integrating their schools, the hospitals would become more

⁴⁶ Notes for the Cardinal's Clergy Conference, Box 8, Folder 2: Meyer - Clergy Conference on Negro Apostolate, DC.

⁴⁷ McNamara Memo, March 5, Box 2, Folder 1952 Undated Items, CIC.

⁴⁸ Ibid, Feb 4 Board minute meetings.

Catholic, the letter emphasized the connection between admitting black students and the success of black evangelization efforts.

But as in the schools, the difficulty of promoting interracialism in hospitals pointed to the nuanced lines of authority in the Catholic Church. The archbishop might have Catholic hospitals in his Archdiocese, but he did not control the religious orders that ran them. The nuns who administered the hospitals, for their part, may have supported integration, but they often found themselves limited in their ability to enforce a policy of non-discrimination by white doctors and staff who refused to work interracially. Throughout the 1950s, Chicago's archbishop, whether it was Stritch or Meyer, supported hospital integration, but the CIC and the women religious who ran the hospitals struggled to implement these ideals.

When Stritch came to Chicago as archbishop, he discretely promoted the integration of Catholic hospitals. In 1955, Stritch told Cantwell that "when I came to Chicago I was a bit shocked at the attitude of some of our hospitals." He worked behind the scenes and saw some improvement. Ultimately, Stritch blamed the doctors, who the administrators had to appease, for discrimination. He commented that "I have found a polite, courteous, unyielding opposition in many of our hospital staffs."⁴⁹

In 1955, Stritch made a clear statement promoting integration in Catholic hospitals, but he acknowledged the difficulty hospitals faced in implementing integration. Stritch emphasized that Catholic doctrine forbid prejudice, saying "if there is one thing that is clear in Catholic doctrine, it is that there can be no distinction of color, no distinction of race or nationality." Focusing on the lack of black doctors and staff in most of the hospitals, Stritch situated the problem as one of private institutions serving a public good, the hospital "exists for a public purpose. It exists for a public charity." Therefore, "where a staff refuses to admit a qualified

⁴⁹ Stritch to Cantwell, October 26, 1955, Box 9, Folder 3, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, DC.

man, because of color, that staff is not envisioning its responsibility in the community and certainly is not envisioning the principle upon which we are basing these discussions today.” As far as admitting the sick went, Stritch said that “charity embraces all.”⁵⁰ In word, the Archdiocese’s policy was clear. But in deed, the hospitals fell short.

In 1959, the CIC tried to address the practical question of how to integrate hospital staffs. The group sponsored a trip to St. Catherine’s, an integrated hospital just south of the city in East Chicago, Indiana. CIC leadership hoped that seeing St. Catherine’s, talking with its staff, and talking with one another would help administrators begin to integrate their own hospitals. The turnout was great; forty-three people represented eighty-five percent of the Archdiocese’s Catholic hospitals.⁵¹ For many participants, the trip was their first opportunity they had to see a functioning, interracial hospital and to openly discuss race.

St. Catherine’s administrators frankly addressed their history as an interracial hospital and some of the challenges they faced. Founded in 1922, the hospital began to integrate in 1940 when it hired a black nurse. Clearly speaking to an audience of white administrators who might have prejudicial views about black people’s abilities, the nuns at St. Catherine’s informed their guests that “we have found the Negro nurses to be very loyal and with the same pattern of ability as the white nurses.” By the 1959 tour, the staff was much more diverse. In addition to the black and white people employed at St. Catherine’s, people of Mexican ancestry and displaced persons from Europe worked there as well. The hospital prided itself on hiring without accounting for race, creed, or color. Most of the time, the hospital integrated its rooms. In 1959, their most common problem was white or black patients “who object to being in a room with someone of another race.” The nuns would explain the hospital’s policy and “try to make them

⁵⁰ Ibid., Stritch, “Interracial Justice in Hospitals.” See also Stritch, “Interracial Justice in Hospitals,” Series 10, Box 6, Chicago CIC Documents, 1956-1959.

⁵¹ Unknown to George Wickster; Davis to Board Members, Box 32, Folder October 26-31, 1959, CIC.

understand.” If the patient still complained, the nuns informed them they could seek care somewhere else.⁵²

The discussion between the nuns during the tour was open and honest and addressed the tangled lines of authority in hospitals. Many of the visiting nuns said they were not personally prejudiced, but had to deal with doctors who refused to work on integrated staffs. Sister Vitusa, St. Catherine’s administrator admonished the other nuns, saying “we sisters must lay the law and our doctors will come in line. We must work with our doctors. And we must work from the top down. You must be the leaders and the doctors will come your way.”⁵³ Some of the nuns gave the excuse that they would integrate their hospitals later, after their staff had more education. A priest from the Archdiocese responded that time and education “are valuable for seeking integration, but too often they are excuses for maintaining the status quo.” Time would only be on their side if the hospitals began to integrate immediately, and education could only be successful if it was practical and experiential, not theoretical, he suggested.⁵⁴

Overall, the tour was a success. Davis reported to Shriver that it was a “most successful tour,” and that “the discussion became so intense and interesting that the tour itself was limited to ½ hour.”⁵⁵ Clearly, the administrators needed the opportunity to talk. Davis commented that the conference was the first time he had seen such “frank and earnest discussion” among administrators and doctors about race and hospitals.⁵⁶ But the personal progress of women religious toward integrating hospitals happened in a larger context in which hospital discrimination hurt the Church’s image.

⁵² Summary Notes, Box 32, Folder Oct 1-19, 1959, CIC.

⁵³ Ibid., Summary Notes.

⁵⁴ Summary notes on the CIC’s Conference on Hospital Integration, Oct 7, St. Catherine’s, East Chicago, Indiana, Ibid.,.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Davis to Shriver, October 7, 1959.

⁵⁶ Davis quoted Unknown to Wickster, October 30, 1959, Box 32, Folder October 26-31, 1959, CIC. The author of the letter is likely a secretary and the “boss” she refers to making the above comment is likely Davis.

In 1960, Meyer had a right to be concerned about the consequences of discrimination in Catholic hospitals. Two months after the clergy conference, fifteen year old Harold Henderson was struck by a car. The ambulance that came to the scene took Henderson, his father, and grandmother, Mrs. Spencer, to St. Bernard's Hospital, which was the nearest hospital. The staff at St. Bernard's examined Henderson, determined he should be admitted to a hospital because of internal bleeding. The doctor determined Henderson could travel and transferred him to Cook County because St. Bernard's apparently they had no beds available. Henderson died two weeks later.

The case was complicated by the fact that Henderson was black. His grandmother sued St. Bernard's for inadequate treatment of her grandson and the NAACP issued a statement accusing St. Bernard of racial discrimination. Soon, the case led to marches protesting St. Bernard's at City Hall. The CIC conducted an inquiry and found out that St. Bernard's actually did employ a black doctor and admitted black patients. The sisters reported that they placed admitted black patients in separate rooms because the hospital's white doctors complained that their white patients did not want to share rooms with African Americans. Nonetheless, the administrators at St. Bernard's "vigorously denied" the charges made by Spencer and the NAACP and said the decision had nothing to do with Henderson's race.

McDermott's response to the situation demonstrates the public relations concerns of the CIC. He wrote to Cantwell after conducting the inquiry. The "terrific furor" surrounding the St. Bernard's situation "highlights the seriousness of the problem which practices of racial discrimination have created for most Chicago hospitals, including, we must admit, most of our Catholic hospitals." McDermott's main concern was what incidents like the one at St. Bernard's did for public relations for the Catholic Church: "the community impact of incidents . . . are [*sic*]

the most important consequence of this whole problem. These incidents affect the reputation of the whole Church as well as St. Bernard's. They harm the missionary work of so many of our parishes in the Negro Community."⁵⁷ Clearly, the hospitals had a long way to go.

Catholic interracialism had won a tremendous triumph: it had become the rhetorical policy of the Archdiocese and finally, Catholic interracialists had the clear support of their spiritual leader. Emboldened Meyer's for interracial justice, nuns, priests and laypeople continued to work to end discrimination in schools and hospitals. But even with Meyer's support, the Church's institutions were slow to adopt interracialist policies.

Nonetheless, Meyer's support for Catholic interracialism opened up new possibilities within, and also outside, the Catholic Church for interracial justice. With their archbishop behind them and in the context of the growing momentum of the civil rights movement, Chicago's Catholic interracialists began to explore new strategies for working for interracial justice not only in their Church, but also in the world. Using these new strategies, they embraced more militant, organized action. At crucial moments in Chicago's Catholic interracialist history, New York's Catholic interracialists, whether it was John LaFarge shaping the FCC and the CIC or Friendship House providing a spark and institutional space to nurture Catholic interracialism, had been sources of inspiration for Chicago. Now, the tide would shift. Chicago's Catholic interracialist movement stood on its own, a proud lay movement actively supported by the hierarchy. Buoyed by that confidence, Chicago's Catholic interracialists made plans to influence other Catholics – and non-Catholics – across the nation.

⁵⁷ McDermott to Cantwell, "Some Suggestions on How CIC Might Help the Diocese to Make Further Progress Against the Problem of Racial Discrimination in Catholic Hospitals," Box 35, Folder 1959 Undated Items, CIC.

XII: LEAVENNG SOCIETY: CHICAGO'S CATHOLIC INTERRACIALISM IN THE WORLD

Chicago's Catholics spearheaded a national organization to coordinate local efforts for interracialism, combining inter-parish organizing with intra-parish efforts. Catholics concerned about interracial justice had not participated in a formal, viable, grassroots organization like that since the decline of the Federated Colored Catholics in the early 1930s. With the archbishop's support, Chicago's CIC had been able to host a gathering of CIC representatives from across the country in 1958. Participants aimed to form a national organization of people working for Catholic interracialism. They called their group the National Catholic Council for Interracial Justice (NCCIJ), and Matt Ahmann, who had served as the CIC's interim director until McDermott came on board, devoted his capable hands to the task of running the organization. In addition, the Friendship House movement adopted the Chicago house's model of interracialism and the CIC convinced the National Federation of Catholic College Students to assume interracial justice as one of its official program planks.

Chicago became the center of the Catholic interracial movement because of the exceptional climate of lay activism in the Archdiocese. Many historians and authors have pointed to the extraordinary nature of Chicago Catholicism in the 1940s and 1950s.¹ Chicago emergence as *the* hub for Catholic interracialism meant that the city's increasingly strident, lay-led, and consistently ecumenical form of interracialism shaped Catholics across the country.

With the backing of Catholics across the nation, Ahmann thrust Chicago onto a national, interreligious stage in 1963. That year, as a celebration of the centennial of the Emancipation

¹ See, for instance, Skerrett, Kantowicz, and Avella, *Catholicism, Chicago Style.*, Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965.*, William Droel, *Church, Chicago-Style* (Skokie: Acta Publishing, 2008).

Proclamation, Ahmann, Chicago's CIC, and the NCCIJ put together a conference of prominent Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders called the National Conference on Race and Religion. Chicago's lay Catholics worked behind the scenes and gave credit to the National Catholic Welfare Conference and Chicago's new archbishop, Albert Meyer, for the conference. Finally, the nation's religious leaders took a public, coordinated stand on racial justice.

As Chicago led the way in Catholic interracialism's triumph, how Catholics began to practice their interracialism changed to reflect the evolving context of the civil rights movement. Initially, in fits and starts, they began to participate in forms of direct action as they sought to leaven society, in addition to Catholic institutions, with interracial justice. They wrote about direct action as a religious experience, which suggests the centrality of religion for civil rights participants.² Then, emboldened by the support of the hierarchy, lay Catholics thrust themselves into a national legislative battle to support civil rights legislation.

A. Chicago's Influence through Friendship House and College Students

By the early 1950s, Friendship House had become a national movement. In addition to the Chicago and New York, Friendship House received invitations to open houses in four other locations. In 1947, de Hueck Doherty moved to Canada and opened Madonna House which, for several years remained connected with the Friendship House movement in the United States; in early 1949 a Friendship House launched in Washington, D.C.; in 1951 Friendship House expanded to Portland; and in 1953, Friendship House sojourned south to Shreveport.³ As the movement expanded, it faced internal issues over the nature of Friendship House that influenced

² David Chappell argues that we ought to consider the civil rights movement a religious experience, first and foremost. Chappell writes about southern black participants. See David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope : Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

³ Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement," 181-218.

the practice of Catholic interracialism that culminated in Chicago's Friendship House, supported by New York's, pushing the other houses to shift their focus to middle-class integration.

The Friendship Houses agreed to consolidate the locus of power for the Friendship House movement in Chicago in a new national office, which would enable them to more closely coordinate their activities for interracial justice. But shortly after the new office opened, the Friendship Houses in Portland and Washington D.C. staffs chose not to affiliate. Portland joined de Hueck's Madonna House and Washington D.C. decided to remain independent. In 1960, the New York house closed because of a lack of staff workers. But while the internal drama wreaked havoc on Friendship House's staff members, their focus on a more bourgeois interracialism, with less of a focus on direct care, freed them to adopt a more professional stance and pursue innovative strategies to achieve interracial justice.

Friendship House continued to develop and expand its home visit program so that it gained national attention. From 1955 to 1963, the number of participants in home visit programs Friendship House conducted rose from 50 participants the first year to 5000 in 1963. In 1959, Friendship House established a National Home Visit Center in Chicago in order to help others across the country establish their own home visit programs. In 1962, Friendship House arranged home visits for 300 students from the National Federation of Catholic College Students (NFCCS), which the organization planned to implement across the country. When John F. Kennedy commented that home visits were "very helpful," since "all groups, it seems to me, can afford not only to concern themselves as they do with Birmingham but also to look into their own lives," Friendship House's staff felt encouraged.⁴

The home visits were often successful in changing white people's perceptions of African Americans. *Ebony* magazine quoted one participant as saying "It certainly was educational to

⁴ Mary Dolan, Interracial Home Visit Day, Box 1, Folder 5," Roach Papers.

have a frank discussion on race, but the most valuable lesson we learned today – and needed to learn badly – was that Negroes are people with everyday problems and cares exactly like our own.” Another guest revealed that “he had accepted the invitation to visit merely out of charity; he thought that he would be coming into an environment of abject poverty. Instead, the comfortable come he was ushered into shocked him and he was ‘amazed to discover that the P—s were normal people.’”⁵

Friendship House staff branched out further and focused on educating white people and working for legislative change. They increased the number of study weeks they offered, targeting specific lay groups, religious orders, priests, and seminarians. They participated actively in pursuing open occupancy legislation with FOR and devoted a staff member to help organize integrationists in Deerfield. They worked for legislation ending wage garnishment. Finally, they built community relations groups to provide support for individuals throughout the region who were trying to promote human relations in their neighborhoods. In the long run, this shift limited the Friendship House movement as it contracted to only Chicago. But in the short run it advanced the cause of interracialism.

As some of Chicago’s interracialists were consolidating their power in the Friendship House movement, others began to increase Chicago’s influence on college students nationally. In 1954, Al Nellum, who headed up the schools division of the CIC, invited the Chicago region of the National Federation of Catholic College Students to participate in a national conference for college students on interracial justice the CIC was planning. A lay student organization founded in 1937 to promote social justice, the NFCCS had dropped their interracial commission, so students concerned with interracialism had no outlet for their energies. The president of the Chicago region agreed to participate, but pointed out that the “NFCCS has for some time carried

⁵ Ibid.

on almost no activity in Interracial fields.”⁶ Within a few months, members of the CIC’s college division had helped to place a resolution on interracial justice on the NFCCS’s platform, which the group soon adopted.

Michael Fenner, of Chicago’s Archdiocese, further propelled NFCCS forward in race relations.⁷ Fenner was a graduate of St. George’s High School in Evanston, where Cantwell’s brother, Brother Jude Aloysius, F.S.C. (James Cantwell) served as principal. Brother Cantwell was an advocate of CIC High School Study Days and on the CIC’s schools committee, and Fenner had been an active participant in St. George’s CIC program. After Fenner went to Notre Dame for college, he joined Notre Dame’s Human Relations Club, which affiliated with the Chicago CIC in 1957. His sophomore year, he became the vice president of the NFCCS’s Social Action Affairs and helped to coordinate a close relationship between the NFCCS and CIC’s around the country.⁸

Chicago Catholic interracialists’ influence at Friendship House and among Catholic College students foreshadowed the city’s increasing influence on the tone and structures of Catholic interracialism. This influence would be displayed most prominently with the development of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice.

B. NCCIJ: Inter-City Unity

In August, 1958, over 400 representatives from CIC’s across the country met in Chicago at Loyola University and Mundelein College in a meeting called by John LaFarge and Sargent Shriver, who was serving as the Chicago CIC’s president. Cardinal Stritch, who died before the

⁶ Bayer to Davis, July 28, 1954, Box 6, Folder June - July 1954, CIC. See also Nellum Memo, September 1, 1959, Box 33, September 1-15, 1959, CIC, for Nellum’s account of the history.

⁷ Dear member of the executive committee, Box 6, Folder October 1954, CIC.

⁸ The CIC awarded Fenner the Thomas J. Crowe Interracial Justice Award in 1959 and said he was “responsible for NFCCS’s ‘re-birth’ of interest in the race problem.” 1959 Nominations for the Thomas J. Crowe Interracial Justice Award, 10-25-59, Box 32, Folder October 20-25, 1959, CIC.

conference occurred, endorsed it. The first meeting drew Catholic, as well as Protestant and Jewish, attendees, and the CIC reported that there were “hundreds of experts in the field of human relations from scores of Protestant and Jewish agencies,” in addition to the Catholic leaders at the meeting.⁹ Delegates named the organization the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice (NCCIJ) and appointed Ahmann its head. LaFarge and Shriver represented a merging of New York and Chicago, and of the clergy and the laity. But in the new organization that emerged from the meeting, Chicago-style, lay-led Catholic interracialism dominated.

Members of the NCCIJ knew the importance of national unity. Since at least the early 1950s, members of Chicago’s CIC had discussed founding a national organization that would help all the local CIC’s communicate, learn from one another, and coordinate their efforts.¹⁰ In many ways, the NCCIJ and the national unity it represented was a return to the model of the FCC Turner created more than three decades earlier because the concerns of the members were national as well as local. Still present was a tension between the laity and the hierarchy, but in 1958, the laity succeeded in developing its own program while maintaining hierarchical approval. Context made all the difference; the NCCIJ was able to succeed because Catholic interracialism was now the policy of the hierarchy and the civil rights movement was placing pressure on American institutions to change.

Chicago’s CIC demonstrated its investment in the NCCIJ by providing the initial funding for the NCCIJ. CIC members recruited financial sponsorship from the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation, the Field Foundation, and the Emil Schwarzhaupt Foundation. When Ahmann was appointed the NCCIJ’s director, the Chicago CIC agreed to pay his salary and share office space until Ahmann could advance the organization to self-sufficiency.

⁹ Ibid., Memo on Communion Mass and Thomas Crowe Award.

¹⁰ Joseph Francis SVD to Miss Collins, Box 2, Folder 1952 Undated Items, CIC.

The situation surrounding the first meeting must have only further made plain to its organizers the need for a national conference. Chicago's CIC wanted to obtain housing for the women-attendees of the conference in the area immediately adjacent to Mundelein's and Loyola's campuses. Ahmann tried to find a place for the attendees to stay, but he ran up against polite, apologetic, and firm racism. Again and again, hotel owners were at first willing to rent out blocks of rooms to the CIC, but when they discovered that some of the patrons might be Negroes, changed their minds. They did not want to offend their regular patrons, the hotel owners said.¹¹ Clearly, the new organization would have work to do, but they wanted to do it as lay people in cooperation with, but not subject to, the hierarchy.

The NCCIJ walked a delicate line between lay control and hierarchical support, but with the increasing acceptance of Catholic interracialism among the hierarchy, the laity was able to maintain control over the organization. To create this balance, the new organization had to persuade the hierarchy of its importance. As LaFarge said in a planning meeting for the conference, they needed to convince the hierarchy that "we are literally 'coming to the rescue' of the Church. We must infuse into the members of our movement everywhere that they are the custodians of that great contribution, which rests on solid principles."¹² But as much as they wanted to garner the support of the hierarchy, Ahmann especially wanted to keep control of the organization in the hands of the laity.

To keep the NCCIJ under lay control rather than the authority of a bishop, the NCCIJ did not affiliate with the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC).¹³ But recognizing the importance of the hierarchy's approval, the NCCIJ required an affiliating CIC to have the

¹¹ Ahmann, Report on Hotel Discrimination, Series 10, Box 6, Chicago CIC Documents, 1956-1959, NCCIJ.

¹² Conference held at America office, Dec 31, 1957, Series 10, Box 7 - Illinois and Chicago, CIC Documents Undated, NCCIJ.

¹³ Ahmann to Clark, September 4, 1959, Box 33, September 1-15, 1959, CIC.

approval of the diocese in which it was located. It did not, however, have to be an official arm of the local diocese. Ahmann later reflected, “We have managed to found the first nation-wide Catholic lay agency with a staff to receive the approval of the bishops and yet run its own program.”¹⁴

The balance between the laity and the hierarchy played out on a local level as well, which required the CIC to negotiate complicated expectations. In Chicago, for instance, Cantwell and the lay members of the CIC’s board, operated under lay leadership. With McDermott at the helm of the CIC, the organization distinguished itself from the hierarchy even more. But Meyer and his staff treated Cantwell as the director of the CIC and rarely communicated with McDermott, although he had more authority in the organization than Cantwell. To McDermott’s dismay, the Chancery assumed that if it relayed its wishes to Cantwell, Cantwell would implement them. The CIC also had to tread carefully with local pastors. If the CIC endorsed something the pastor might not agree with, that pastor might refuse the CIC’s consultation for parish education.

While being a lay-led organization strengthened the NCCIJ’s independence and may have increased their effectiveness, the decision also led to drawbacks that were indicative of the larger struggle facing Catholic interracialists: how to convert the vast majority of lay Catholics to their position. First, even if laypeople supported interracialism, they were not used to giving money to a lay-led organization. More daunting was the fact that the vast majority of white Catholic laypeople were not interracialists. For the board members of the CIC, their troubled situation was most obvious when they looked at who donated money to the CIC. In 1960, for instance, the year of Meyer’s meeting with priests, the CIC only counted 332 paid members that collectively contributed just under \$3000. That the Board considered this amount “meager,” was

¹⁴ Ahmann, Report of Executive director and program goals and budget, 1963-4, Think Piece, Series 1, Box 2, Reports, General, 1963-64, 1966-67, 1969-70, NCCIJ.

not surprising given the fact that the 1960 budget proposed over \$36,000 in expenditures. The Council operated mostly on money from large individual gifts. “Obviously this is an unhealthy situation,” the board noted. “Most other religiously-oriented human relations agencies receive substantial support – usually at least one-half of their budget – from their ‘home’ community.”¹⁵ Catholic interracialists had to change the other members of the white laity, most of whom were indifferent about or hostile to Negroes and the cause of interracialism. Nonetheless, Catholic interracialists finally had the hierarchy on their side, and they proceeded to sponsor what would be, in retrospect, the most stunning aspect of their interracialist activity.

C. National Conference on Race and Religion

The triumph of the hierarchy’s support of Chicago’s version of Catholic interracialism came in January, 1963, at a conference called the National Conference on Race and Religion that met at the Edgewater Hotel, on the shore of Chicago’s chilly Lake Michigan. Although officially sponsored by the National Council of Churches, the Synagogue Council of America, and the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Ahmann and the NCCIJ spearheaded the conference. From January 3-6, representatives from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations descended on the city to confess their sins in supporting racial injustice and to plan a new way forward. The diversity of religions represented the culmination of the Chicago Catholic interracialists’ many years of working with Protestant and Jewish organizations; the presence and active participation of Cardinal Meyer made clear interracialism’s triumph in Chicago and across the nation; the content of the conference suggested the fusion of religion and civil rights; but, the rhetoric of the conference suggested the limits of Catholic interracialism.

¹⁵ Operation Membership, 1961, Series 10, Box 6, Chicago CIC Documents, 1956-1959, NCCIJ; Ibid., 1960 Budget.

Matt Ahmann conceived the idea for the conference, but his support staff helped him bring it to fruition. Ahmann wanted the conference to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and to be a catalyst for uniting the three major religious faiths for social justice. Shortly into the planning, Ahmann would have given up had it not been for the help of Peggy Roach. Roach, who had become a Catholic interracialist through the influence of Sister Cecilia and CISCA at St. Scholastica and the women of Friendship House, had joined the staff of Chicago's CIC in April, 1962 as McDermott's assistant.¹⁶ When Ahmann told Roach he was going to cancel the conference, she convinced him otherwise. As she recalled, "My response was utter dismay. It was the best idea to come down the pike in years, and I felt Matt could not abandon it. . . . We took an overall look at the conference plan."¹⁷ Then, Roach sprang into action. She and Delores Coleman, Ahmann's administrative assistant, did the detail work of organizing the conference. They, along with Ahmann, must have been delighted when 669 delegates from Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant organizations came to Chicago for the conference.

Ten years earlier, no one would have predicted that the Catholic Church would spearhead an interreligious conference. When the World Council of Churches met in Evanston in August 1954, Stritch said that no Catholics could "attend this Assembly in any capacity, even as observers."¹⁸ Stritch also regularly forbade priests from participating in the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and discouraged members of religious orders from doing so as well. But in 1963, Meyer, Stritch's successor, not only permitted Catholic participation in a prominent tri-faith endeavor, but was a sponsor and Catholics had taken the lead in organizing the conference.

¹⁶ Resume, Box 1, Folder 1, Roach Papers.

¹⁷ Box 20, Folder 8, Roach Papers, Addendum III.

¹⁸ Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*. 84-5.

Not only did Meyer co-sponsor the conference, he actively supported it. Cantwell drafted a letter for Meyer to send to other bishops that invited them to the conference and emphasized its religious nature. To Ahmann's delight, and to the surprise of the Protestant and Jewish attendees, Meyer actively participated in the conference's workshop sessions as well. He was not simply a figure-head. After the conference, Ahmann told Meyer that at least one hundred participants had suggested that Meyer's and Chicago's bishops' "deep participation . . . have already become a symbol of a genuine renewal of the spirit and form of the religious community we share."¹⁹

Conference participants believed the theme of the meeting was action: what could they do as religious people and bodies to end racial injustice? They listened to eleven speakers, including Martin Luther King Jr., Sargent Shriver, and Abraham Heschel, but participants believed the thirty-two workgroups in which lay and religious leaders strategized about "concrete problems" constituted the core of the meeting. Conference participants concluded that they should pursue three main courses of action. First, they needed to shape the consciences of individual members of each religious group through education, because racism was contrary to God's call to love. Second, religious institutions needed to "correct their own abuses," and establish specific policies that prohibited segregation and discrimination. Third, religious institutions needed to engage the broader society, because "the life of a synagogue or a church in a local community shapes the response of that community to interracial challenge."²⁰ Conference members compiled the conclusions of their discussions and also produced "An Appeal to the Conscience of the American People," which Cantwell framed.²¹

¹⁹ Ahmann to Meyer, Jan 24, 1963, Series 10, Box 6, Chicago CIC Documents, 1956-1959, NCCIJ.

²⁰ M. H. Ahmann, *Race: Challenge to Religion, Original Essays and an Appeal to the Conscience from the National Conference on Religion and Race* (H. Regnery Co., 1963), v-xi.

²¹ Zielinski, "Working for Interracial Justice," 257.

The Appeal included a lament that, ironically, excluded black people from its authorship.

It said,

We Americans of all religious faiths have been slow to recognize that racial discrimination and segregation are an insult to God, the Giver of human dignity and human rights. Even worse, we all have participated in perpetuating racial discrimination and segregation in civil, political, industrial, social, and private life. And worse still, in our houses of worship, our religious schools, hospitals, welfare institutions, and fraternal organizations we have often failed our own religious commitments. With few exceptions we have evaded the mandates and rejected the promises of the faiths we represent. We repent our failures and ask the forgiveness of God. We also ask the forgiveness of our brothers, whose rights we have ignored and whose dignity we have offended. We call for a renewed religious conscience on this basically moral evil.²²

The strong white voice of the Appeal that did not acknowledge black church goers in the “we Americans of all religious faiths” unintentionally perpetuated the idea that “American” meant white, and that Negroes were somehow less American. The group would have benefitted from more black participants, but white people dominated the conference.

Nonetheless, Arthur Falls must have been delighted with the language of repentance, which was a departure from the bishops’ 1958 “Discrimination and the Christian Conscience.” Finally the Catholic Church – not to mention significant representatives of other faiths – was publically repenting. The bishops’ statement had not acknowledged the Catholic Church’s participation in the oppression of African Americans. Instead, pointing to the social and economic progress made by black people since World War II, it said only that “because the method of quiet conciliation produced such excellent results, we have preferred the path of action to that of exhortation.”²³ Members of the National Conference on Race and Religion, on the other hand, admitted their sins.

²² "An Appeal to the Conscience of the American People," in *Race: Challenge to Religion*, ed. Mathew Ahmann (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1963).

²³ Discrimination and the Christian Conscience, Box 1, Folder 8, Roach Papers.

The Conference's resolutions reflected the strategies Chicago's Catholic interracialists had developed on integrated housing. The suggestions for handling racial integration in a neighborhood were practical, and represented the sharing of knowledge gleaned from painful experiences. The document emphasized prioritizing clergy-lay partnership to promote neighborhood stabilization and giving a human face to the question of racial change by working with a "single known family that is moving in rather than dealing in generalities." When a black family moved into a new area, the document emphasized, face-to-face contact was crucial: "the opportunity for whites to meet Negroes face to face is usually the best way to break down resistance." This appeal echoed Friendship House's focus on personal relationships. In addition, the appeal argued that religious lay and clerical leaders must educate white suburbanites about black people "long before actual racial change." Reflecting Egan's arguments against Hyde Park's urban renewal a few years earlier, the document argued that suburban and urban churches needed to view the metropolitan area as a unified region and not separate the city from the suburb. Finally, the document encouraged home visits, pioneered by Friendship House, as a way to educate white people. Many participants had an opportunity to experience a home visit during the conference. Friendship House coordinated a massive home visit day on January 6, the last day of the conference. Three thousand visitors and 500 host families participated.²⁴

Conference talks also incorporated concern for economic equality, not just middle class integration. In the mouth of Jack Egan, Catholic interracialism took a turn back to an earlier form that included a concern for the impoverished, rooted in the ideology of Dorothy Day and Catherine de Hueck and related to Egan's commitment to labor organizing. Egan spoke on poverty in one of the eleven main speeches. Egan argued that "an essential element of love, of charity, of almsgiving, of the giving of comfort, is an empathy that can come only from

²⁴ Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement," 498-500.

involvement and identification.” This involvement and identification required action, Egan declared: “We have had sufficient conversation about the dignity of man; what is required of us is to become involved with the man whose dignity we preach.” And for Egan, to be taken seriously on the question of race relations required being taken seriously on the question of poverty. “The point is that we will never be successful in eliminating the cancer of racial intolerance from our society until we also eliminate the cancer of intolerance of the poor,” he argued, suggesting a return to the social justice concerns of the 1930s and 1940s.²⁵ Thus economic justice for the poorest Americans remained a component, if more submerged, of the Catholic interracialist agenda.

While focusing on relationships between black and white people, the conference also acknowledged that interracial justice would look differently in distinct contexts. “Other groups, such as Puerto Ricans” they said, “should be included where pertinent. In certain areas Orientals, other persons of Spanish-speaking background, and Indian Americans should be included.”²⁶ This suggested the gradual expansion of the idea of interracialism from a focus on race as a problem between black and white people to one that encompassed more groups.

Conference participants were sure they had just participated in a historic event. As Peggy Roach remembered, “It was an historic moment – I could feel it. I thought – we can change the world! Others felt it too. Many delegates returned to their home areas and set up local conferences on religion and race in their communities modeled on the 1963 national meeting.” LaFarge wrote, “We never before had anything like it in this country. Never before, on a national scale, have most of the major religious bodies of the United States – including the Greek Orthodox . . . united thus to perform a single task. This task was to implement the moral

²⁵ Jack Egan, “Race and Poverty,” from Race: Challenge to Religion, Box 1, Folder 7, Roach Papers.

²⁶ National Conference on Race and Religion Conference Recommendations, Box 1, Folder 9, Roach Papers.

principles handed down to both Jews and Christians for the brotherhood of man, and thereby effectively combat the monstrous evil of racism.”²⁷ Participants left feeling rejuvenated and excited, and began to implement the principles and strategies they had discussed, often in concert with representatives of other organizations at the conference.

On a national level, the momentum continued. Attendees decided that they would form a National Conference on Religion and Race to coordinate their activities. Once again, Chicago’s Catholic interracialists helped provide the seed money. Chicago’s CIC gave staff and money to getting the National Conference on Religion and Race off the ground.²⁸ After the conference, some of the American bishops took stronger leadership roles. Ahmann reported that in the half a year following the conference, at least 30 bishops had issued pastoral letters on interracial justice, many “announcing new programs and commitments for the Church in the racial field.”²⁹ Many of the participants brought memories of powerful home visits to their home towns. Thus, when Friendship House decided to sponsor a National Home Visit Day on October 27, 1964, it was a phenomenal success; 115,000 people participated in home visits in 119 cities, thirty of which were in the South.³⁰

Participants in the conference also formed local, interreligious conferences on religion and race. Chicagoans, for instance, formed the Chicago Conference on Religion and Race (CCR), which Meyer, privately reluctant, co-sponsored. Meyer did not want an on-going interreligious committee to speak on his behalf, but he agreed to support it with appropriate restraints in place. The Catholic members of the CCR, which included Mary Dolan of Friendship House, Arthur Falls, and other members of Chicago’s Catholic interracialist circles, knew they

²⁷ LaFarge quoted in Editorial, *America*, 2 February, 1963, 159, Box 20, Folder 8, Roach Papers, Addendum III.

²⁸ Program Goals, 10/1/62-9/30-63, Series 1, Box 2, Folder Reports, General, 1963-64, 1966-67, 1969-70, NCCIJ.

²⁹ Press release, July 29, 1963, Box 4, Folder 8, Roach Papers .

³⁰ Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement," 508

faced a mountain of work to overcome segregation and racism in their own Church. They pointed out that the Knights of Columbus was not integrated and the Serra Club was only integrated at a token level.³¹ Jointly, tri-faith members of the CCR faced a city racked by segregation.

Clearly, interracialists of all religions had a lot of work to do. But in 1963, they faced that task with excitement. With the National Conference on Race and Religion, Chicago's Catholic interracialists had successfully made racial justice a religious concern and had spurred on interreligious cooperation for racial justice across the country. With the hierarchy behind them and a national movement supporting them, Chicago's Catholic interracialists began to venture into different ways of practicing interracialism.

D. Public Protest: Catholic Interracialism Embraces Direct Action

The first shift was toward public protest, or what they called direct action. For most of its existence, the CIC had worked behind the scenes to try to achieve racial justice through education. By the end of the 1950s with housing, the CIC had become more open to direct action, and by the early 1960s, members were increasingly engaging in public protest. The shift, however, happened in fits and starts. They did not initiate the protests, but rather joined in with what others were already doing. Initially, members of the CIC went to great lengths to justify their decisions to protest because many thought that protests were dangerous, imprudent, and forcing violence. But as the hierarchy increased its support for Catholic interracialism, Catholic interracialists felt freer to explore practices that had been, only recently, nearly off limits for them. Their participation in protests led Catholic interracialists squarely into the modern civil rights movement with its sit-ins and marches, and the Catholic participants viewed their

³¹ Untitled, Box 14, Folder 7: CCR - Meetings of Catholic Members, DC.

experiences as religious.³² It also made clear the fragile relationship between the lay Catholic interracialists and the hierarchy.

Once again, Chicago led the way in pushing interracialism in the new direction. To affiliate with the NCCIJ, local CIC's needed to be involved in more than education; they had to have a program of "education and activity in intergroup relations."³³ Thus affiliation with the NCCIJ, along with the maturing civil rights movement and the resolutions of the National Conference on Race, encouraged CIC's around the country to reorganize and move beyond just educational programs.³⁴ But the question of what a Catholic Interracial Council was – strictly an educational institution or also a protest group – came to a head indirectly in 1964. That year, McDermott saw an article that quoted Arthur Wright of the New York CIC suggesting that the New York CIC was the leader of all the CIC's, and that their main strategy for interracial justice was education. Wright's statement disgusted McDermott, which McDermott made clear in a frank letter to Wright. The Chicago CIC, McDermott informed Wright, was committed to the direct action movement, had participated in it, and felt compelled to "strongly object" to a portrayal of the Catholic Interracial Council movement as dealing with education alone.³⁵ But Chicago's CIC came to this position slowly and cautiously.

The group's first major foray into direct action began in the summer of 1961 at Rainbow Beach, one of the last "white" beaches in the city. Situated between 75th and 79th streets, Rainbow Beach had increasingly become a contested area since the initial integration of Trumbull Park. The beach, which boasted a park and a picnic area, was within the ambit of

³² Their experience was similar to those David Chappell discusses in Chappell, *A Stone of Hope : Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow*, and supports Chappell's argument for considering the civil rights movement a religious experience.

³³ Series 1, Box 1, Folder Affiliation Criteria for 1960, NCCIJ.

³⁴ Minutes of Delegate Meeting, Sept 7, 1961, Series 1, Box 1, Mailings to Councils and Commissions, 1961-1969, NCCIJ.

³⁵ McDermott to Wright, June 17, 1964, Series 10, Box 5, Folder IL Chicago CIC Correspondence, 1958-1964, NCCIJ.

several mostly African American parishes, including St. Dorothy, St. Clotilde, St. Laurence, St. Francis De Paula, and St. Columanus.³⁶ Rainbow Beach was also near the South Shore neighborhood, which remained all-white. The CIC's initial concern with Rainbow Beach stemmed from reports from black members who lived in the area saying that they felt unsafe going to the beach during the summer.³⁷ In June, 1961, the CIC was forced to make a decision about what to do. On Saturday, June 24, about fifteen black bathers coordinated by the NAACP visited the Rainbow Beach, stayed for about an hour, and left without incident.

That peace, however, would not prevail. The following Saturday, about ten black swimmers again visited the beach. After about an hour and a half, white people began to form a crowd around the black bathers. The crowd began to verbally assault the bathers and increased in number and anger. When police failed to control the crowd, it grew to more than a thousand people. Fearing they might be stoned, the black bathers left the beach. Undaunted, the NAACP continued to press forward to integrate Rainbow Beach and announced that the following week it would bring another group of black bathers to the beach. The tension around the city was palpable, and many feared Rainbow Beach would become a site of racial violence.

Faced with this drama, the CIC debated how to support the beach's integration and chose to offer interreligious support to the protest. Recognizing the moral and symbolic power of religion, McDermott and the board decided to join the protest in conjunction with the Protestant Church Federation of Greater Chicago and the Chicago Board of Rabbis to offer a symbolic presence of ministerial leadership to situation. With Cantwell out of town visiting Africa on an

³⁶ St. Laurence had only recently, and quickly, experienced racial turnover. In 1959, the neighborhood of which it was a part was 75% white and about 60% Catholic. By 1962, it was 75% black and only about 15% Catholic. In those three years, as many as 100-150 families a month left the parish Koenig, *A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago*., 539-543.

³⁷ Report on Rainbow Beach, September 1, 1961, Series 10, Box 6, Folder Chicago CIC Documents, 1956-1959, NCCIJ.

extended trip, McDermott turned to Egan, who was working at the Office of Urban Affairs, for a clerical presence.

The tri-faith group took two initial steps. First, members decided to help use their voice as religious people to address what they saw were the moral implications of the situation. The CIC, along with the Church Federation of Greater Chicago and the Chicago Board of Rabbis, sent a telegram to Orlando Wilson, the police superintendent. The telegram urged Wilson to “take all steps necessary to guarantee the right of every Chicago citizen to use public beaches without interference or intimidation,” and pledged the religious leaders’ full support. Second, they decided to send a delegation of clergymen to the beach to support the NAACP group. Observers noted the ecumenical nature of the group. The *Daily News*, which CIC member Maurice Fisher worked for, commented that “it was the first time, in the recollection of those involved, that Protestants, Roman Catholics and Jews representing citywide groups took direct, joint action against Chicago’s festering racial problem.”³⁸

The CIC’s group of priests was interracial and many came from the neighboring parishes. Robed in their clerical garb, Egan, Fathers William Hogan and James Mollohan of Holy Angels, Father Daniel Mallette of St. Agatha’s, Father Gerard Weber of St. Carthage, Father Patrick McPolin who worked as the police chaplain, and Fr. George H. Cullin of St. Bride’s, went to the beach. If black bathers from local parishes doubted their decision, they could be assured the support of some local priests. On the other hand, if the police questioned their orders to protect the bathers, they would see Cullin, and if white Catholics from the area questioned, or decided to attack, the black bathers, they would have to stand against the moral witness of the priests. The event was more peaceful this time, with over 200 police on hand to maintain order. Because

³⁸ *Daily News*, August 5, 1961.

they thought the priests' presence helped calm the situation and stood as a moral witness, CIC leadership arranged to have at least two priests present at the beach for the rest of the summer.

Not convinced that their work integrating the beach was complete, the CIC took the unprecedented step of initiating its own direct action. The following weekend, July 15, the CIC leadership coordinated an interracial group of 35 young Catholics to go to Rainbow Beach for a Catholic wade-in. Twenty-five of the youth were black and from local parishes. The remaining 10 were white YCS leaders. Six adults joined the group: two priests wearing their cassocks, and four laymen. Each participant wore a religious medal to identify himself or herself as Catholic and passed out statements that described their desire for peaceful, democratic usage of the beach by all people. The statements concluded, "as Catholics we deeply believe that the human dignity and equal rights of all persons must be respected because we are creatures of God and equally precious in his sight."³⁹

The CIC's actions at Rainbow Beach provoked some negative reactions from the press and fellow Catholics, and forced the group to articulate its reasons for supporting direct action. McDermott defended the group's decision as respectable and prudent. To those who argued that direct action was too radical he argued that in recent years direct action had led to positive changes that would not have been achieved without it. To those who claimed the CIC was wrong to protest because it was just an educational group, McDermott pointed out "today no race relations agency which restricts itself to purely educational efforts can long retain the respect of the Negro community."⁴⁰ The CIC's course was set; it would support public protest. But it still faced constraints to its actions, including Meyer's desire that his priests not infringe on another bishop's jurisdiction.

³⁹ Report on Rainbow Beach, September 1, 1961, Series 10, Box 6, Chicago CIC Documents, 1956-1959, NCCIJ.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Report on Rainbow Beach, September 1, 1961.

In 1962, when the CIC had an opportunity to participate in direct action outside the Archdiocese of Chicago, the hierarchy's limits shaped its response. In the summer of 1962, Martin Luther King, Jr. sent a telegram to ministers in New York asking for help in the Albany Movement. McDermott soon heard about King's request and began to recruit a group of five priests and five laypeople, including himself, to join King in Albany. That the CIC and NCCIJ were in the initial stages of planning the National Conference on Race and Religion with the Church Federation of Greater Chicago for the following year gave McDermott increased impetus. Quickly, however, Meyer forbade his priests' participation, saying that the priests would be out of their jurisdiction, and encouraged the CIC to not be involved officially, although he was sympathetic to the Albany Movement. Because of Meyer's disapproval and the delicate relationship between the CIC and the hierarchy, McDermott changed his own plans and decided to remain in Chicago. He thought that even if he went to Albany as an individual, and not in his capacity as the CIC's director, others would see him as representing the CIC. Since many saw the CIC as Meyer's representative on race issues, McDermott wanted to respect Meyer's wishes and remain in his good graces.⁴¹ Nonetheless, McDermott and the CIC pressed on in their support of the Albany Movement, although in a more restricted way.

McDermott worked behind the scenes, putting out the word to Catholics across the city to recruit laypeople who wanted to join an interracial, ecumenical group going to Albany. The group's intention was to join encourage members of the Albany Movement, to participate in peaceful demonstrations, and to risk the likelihood of being arrested. While McDermott and the CIC remained officially removed from the delegation, members used their networks to support the movement personally, although not officially. Peggy Roach coordinated the CIC's action as a clearinghouse to raise the inevitable bail money, and the CIC hosted going-away parties, and

⁴¹ Report on Albany GA, Series 10, Box 6, Folder Documents 1962, NCCIJ.

kept families informed. In the end, nine lay Catholics – six men and three women – volunteered to join Chicago's Albany delegation. Forty seven people composed the group, thirty six were Protestant, two were Jewish, and the remainder was Catholic. Of the forty-seven participants, fourteen were black and thirty three were white; eight were women and twenty nine were men. McDermott noted that the Catholic contingent was "the largest group of American Catholics that has participated in the non-violent movement," and supported the group's decision, saying "real race relations progress is not always peaceful, sweet, or quiet."⁴²

Every Catholic who wrote about his or her time in Albany emphasized that it was a religious experience. Most members of the group were arrested after praying together in front of Albany's city hall and several fasted after their arrest. Ruby Carter, a white woman, called her trip to Albany a "second confirmation." John Hatch, a black Marquette student, referred to his "pilgrimage to Albany" the "most meaningful drama of my life." Eighteen-year-old Marian Kuzela prayed her rosary several times en route to Albany, afraid of what was coming. While praying and singing on the steps of the city hall, Kuzela felt "a sense of the spirit of love, unity and determination" engulf her. Reflecting on the group's involvement, Kuzela said "By being physically present we identified ourselves with the people of Albany in their struggle for human rights. As Christians we opposed an un-Christian situation." While in jail, Roland Sibrie recalled, "We were happy and serene while in jail, singing, praying, and having good conversation: we developed real fellowship." He saw himself as an emissary from his community, and commented that he felt like he did so little compared to St. Carthage, the CIC, and the Lake Meadows Council. "I know that God will repay you," Sibrie wrote. CIC member Paul Twine called his Albany trip his "most rewarding days," and said "the experience of having taken part in this great effort will continue to exhort me and all who participated, to hasten the

⁴² Ibid., McDermott, "Introduction," in "Why We Went to Albany, Georgia, September 1962."

day when God's greatest commandment, '... to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves,' will be a living reality. It would be hypocrisy to claim that we stand for Christian civilization if we ignore the last half of this commandment." George Murphy, a black member of the Christian Family Movement, initially did not want to leave his family and the safety of Chicago, but, he recalled, "somehow I knew that, as a Catholic, and as a man, I would have to go and bear witness against the shame the plagues America. So, I went. Somehow I felt that I was sharing a little in Our Lord's agony and decision in the Garden of Gethsemini."⁴³

By pointing to their actions in Albany as religious experiences, driven by a love for God and sustained by God, the Catholic participants connected their Catholic faith with protest. This move justified their involvement in the movement, making direct action an appropriate response to injustice. For the CIC, which had to walk the line of respectability, this shift was important. The NCCIJ, for its part, cited Chicago's interracialists' actions that summer as a model for other Catholics to follow. The organization argued that direct action was a morally legitimate form of protest if it was peaceful. "We urge the coupling of direct action techniques and religious motivation. And we urge Catholics to participate in the direct action movement."⁴⁴ The summer of 1963 would provide ample opportunities for Catholics to join in the movement.

In July, 1963, the CIC supported one of the most controversial protests yet. That summer, they protested a Catholic institution, Loyola University, and a Catholic club.⁴⁵ Loyola and the Illinois Club for Catholic Women shared space in Lewis Towers. Julia Lewis was the

⁴³ Ibid., "Why We Went to Albany, A Report of the Catholic members of the Chicago Interreligious Delegation to Albany, GA, September 1962."

⁴⁴ Statement at the Meeting of the Board of Directors, February 23, 1963, Series 18, Box 2, Folder Direct Action, 1962-64, NCCIJ.

⁴⁵ For more on the Illinois Club for Catholic Women protest, see Ellen Skerrett, "Taking the Plunge into Civil Rights," *Chicago History* (Winter, 2010)., Hoy, *Good Hearts : Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past.*, 125-163, McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries : The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North.*, 143-145. For more on the context of the nuns, see Suellen Hoy, *Good Hearts: Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 125-53.

president of the club, and she and her husband Frank Lewis were tremendous donors to Loyola University. Before his death, Frank Lewis gave Lewis Towers to Loyola on the condition that Loyola reserve the top nine floors, which included a swimming pool, for his wife's club. When a black Loyola student tried to swim in the pool during May, 1963 and was turned away, students at Loyola began to organize a protest. They demanded that the pool be integrated and that Mrs. Lewis change the club's admission policy to include African Americans.

The CIC and other Catholic interracialists went to work in the background, trying to help mediate the decision. Members of the women's club who were also members of the CIC tried to talk with Lewis; the CIC contacted her son who reported that she would not change her mind. Tom Cook, a staff member of Friendship House contacted Sister Angelica Seng, OSF, who was at Loyola attending summer school. Seng and several other Franciscans had worked with Friendship House, and Seng tried to convince Mrs. Lewis to change her policy. In the meantime, news of the protests spread nationally.

Mrs. Lewis, however, refused to change her position because she did not see anything wrong with it. Without any hint of irony, she pointed out that African Americans were the largest beneficiaries of the club's philanthropy, but she had the right to determine who could join. Lewis remained convinced that she was correct in her position, saying "We as a private club have every right to decide who shall be our members and only through this method can we continue to raise funds to carry out our program of welfare."⁴⁶

Loyola, for its part, was in a pinch. It proudly observed that it had never discriminated in admitting African Americans, and had recently won an NAACP basketball championship with a controversial, integrated team. But it also did not want to upset one of its biggest donors.

⁴⁶ Quoted in *The Catholic Reporter*, July 5, 1963, Sisters Picket Segregated Club, Series 18, Box 2, Folder Direct Action, 1962-64."

After several months of mediation, the CIC publically criticized the club for its policy and Loyola for its evasion of the issue. It commented that the university “came close to condoning immorality by refusing to speak out on the problem of racism.”⁴⁷ Then, CIC members and supporters took to the streets.

On July 1, Father Daniel Mallette wearing his collar, seven Franciscan nuns dressed in their habits (including Seng), and lay interracialists joined Loyola’s students on the picket line. This was the first time that nuns had joined a picket line. Mrs. Lewis was shocked, particularly by the presence of the nuns, and within a week, she changed her position. As her son recalled, “I don’t recall a single incident, other than the death of my father that hurt my mother as much as having the religious turn on her by picketing.”⁴⁸

The Catholic interracialist position on direct protest was clear. That July, the CIC Board adopted a resolution supporting specific types of protest. It said that peaceful demonstrations against racial injustice “can be an effective and proper means for Catholics to give witness to the principles of their faith.” When direct action was “carefully and prayerfully conceived,” the CIC’s Board of Directors thought that it could “sometimes achieve reforms where ordinary methods of persuasion fail.” Mindful always of the need for prudence, the Board said that “CIC will use direct action methods only after serious consideration and as a last resort after ordinary methods of persuasion have been tried and found wanting.”⁴⁹

The following month, in August, 1963, over 200 of Chicago’s Catholic interracialists journeyed to the March on Washington, which Ahmann had helped to organize. Travelling

⁴⁷ Quoted in New York Times, July 3, 1963, “Catholic Club Picketed by Nuns in Protest Over Discrimination” in *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Quoted in Skerrett, “Taking the Plunge into Civil Rights,” 16-17.

⁴⁹ 1963 Sum-up, Series 10, Box 6, Folders 1-6, NCCIJ.

under the banner of Chicago's CIC, they joined over 10,000 white Catholics.⁵⁰ Ahmann had helped recruit widespread Catholic support for the March. Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle of Washington, D.C. and six other archbishops and bishops participated. The Archbishop's Committee on Human Relations provided help to the March on Washington Committee and to Catholics who marched. Outside sources gave a special contribution of \$15,000 to the March on Washington Office in the name of the NCCIJ and its member CIC's, and the Knights of Columbus offered \$25,000 to help feed and house marchers.⁵¹

Once again, Catholic participants found their participation in the March to be a religious experience. Cantwell, for instance, suggested that the march surpassed some of his most important religious experiences. Writing to two friends, he reflected, "the spirit of friendliness and courtesy in the crowd surpassed even what you find in Eucharistic Congresses or even in Soldier Field." He noted the religious representation and, to those who would argue that religion did not belong in the public sphere, he commented, "no one can say that the drive for human and civil rights in the United States is simply a political effort. At this stage it is a deeply religious movement and the March on Washington was also a religious occasion."⁵²

E. Catholic Interracialism Works for Legislation

The March on Washington connected direct action to the second development in Catholic interracialism: work for national civil rights legislation. Chicago's Catholics joined the March on Washington in order to pressure Congress to pass pending civil rights legislation. While in Washington, D.C., many met up with a dear friend, Peggy Roach, who had only recently left her job with the CIC and moved to the nation's capital to be closer to civil rights action at the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1963 Sum-up

⁵¹ Report of Executive director and program goals and budget, 1963-4, Series 1, Box 2, Reports, General, 1963-64, 1966-67, 1969-70, NCCIJ.

⁵² Cantwell to Bob and Ruth, September 11, 1963, Box 6, Folder 5, July - September 1963, DC.

national level. She was working as the social action secretary for the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW), and her job consisted of working in Washington D.C. and traveling around the country educating women. Catholic interracialists worked hard through their organizations and by partnering with groups like the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) and the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) to promote Catholic support of national civil rights legislation. In doing so, they helped fulfill Ellen Tarry's earlier desire that Catholic interracialists engage more directly in politics. They also moved beyond Cardinal Stritch's earlier hesitancy to use legislation to achieve justice; Stritch had not supported *Brown vs. Board of Education*. But it was a new era, and the NCCW had a direct link to Washington, D.C. through Peggy Roach.

When Peggy Roach returned from the National Conference on Race and Religion in 1963, she led the NCCW in being the first Catholic organization to begin to institute follow-up meetings from the conference. That fall, Roach traveled to the NCCW's series of regional meetings across the country and introduced the women to a digest of information from the NCRR they called "Race: Challenge to Justice and Love."

Roach always kept in mind the lesson she had learned at Friendship House in the 1940s: relationships were the heart of racial justice. She encouraged the women to build relational bridges to facilitate the acceptance of integrated neighborhoods and civil rights legislation. Roach also set up sessions in which white women could learn about racial injustice and, equally important, have an "emotional experience which comes through meeting, talking with and getting to know Negroes."⁵³ They reached over 800 Catholic women leaders, representing 83 dioceses and 37 states plus Washington, D.C. Roach noted that, "for most women, the program opened their eyes, their minds, their hearts to a close look at the evils of racial discrimination."

⁵³ Peggy Roach, 12/10/63 Report, folder 6, box 1, Roach Papers.

After Kennedy sent his civil rights proposal to Congress in June, 1963, Roach and other Catholic interracialists began to work for the passage of a civil rights bill. Roach formally represented the NCCW and informally represented the NCCIJ at the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights meetings to promote the passage of the bill. Roach convinced Margaret Mealy, the head of the NCCW, to send out mailings to all their affiliates. "I pleaded my case," she recalled, "we need Catholic women across the country to be properly informed and supportive of the legislation."⁵⁴ To expand their reaches, Ahmann and Roach exchanged mailing lists. Roach, in conjunction with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, arranged to fill the Senate gallery with observers during congressional sessions. Ahmann and the NCCIJ also worked to promote the passage of the bills. In addition to mailings, the NCWC covered the travel expenses of an NCCIJ man to visit key regions and coordinated follow-up phone calls.

Throughout her push for legislative reform, Roach kept in mind the problem of how to change women's attitudes toward integration. "I didn't think it was possible for women living in America today **not** to know about discrimination against Negroes," Roach commented. "But I've discovered that there are hundreds of them – well-meaning, sincere, often educated women who just don't know about it. For them the riots in Birmingham are less important than the local altar boys' benefit. While they regret the riots, they never see a relevance between them in their own circumscribed lives." Roach used the NCCW's conferences to try to make "Catholic leaders to respond **as persons** to the fact of racial injustices, and then to convert their personal convictions into action."⁵⁵ But as Roach argued, even when the legislation passes, "more and more effort will be needed to build toward a real open society. NCCW will have to be ready to

⁵⁴ Roach, "Reflections on a Journey," 42.

⁵⁵ Quoted in "Peggy Roach, Her Apostolate Spans a Nation," *BVM Vista*, June 1964, Box 1, Folder 6, Roach Papers. Emphasis in original.

speak and act more often and more forcefully in the future.”⁵⁶ Legislation, she believed, must be coupled with heart work. As she reflected in 1964, “how do you measure success when you’re working with human attitudes?”⁵⁷

Closer to home in Chicago, Catholic interracialists also supported the national legislation by merging, as Friendship House had, support for civil rights with a person’s salvation. Mother Laura, the head of the St. Scholastica Convent where Sister Cecilia still lived and where Roach had gone to school, sent out letters supporting the 1964 bill to about 10,000 alumni and friends. The letter drew on the Mystical Body of Christ doctrine that St. Scholastica had helped to spread throughout Chicago. It began with a reference to Father Furfey’s pamphlet “How to Go to Hell,” and reminded recipients that “one wouldn’t have to do anything to Christ’s Negro brethren to go to Hell – just continue not doing what should and could be done. Go on treating them as if they weren’t there. A sure way to Hell, and the Lord’s own word for it.” It continued by urging recipients to support the civil rights legislation as a way to save their souls.

The responses to St. Scholastica’s letter suggested the polarized opinions of Catholics on race. Some supported the letter and thanked Mother Laura for sending it out. Others were upset. One alum suggested Mother Laura was bordering on Communist propaganda: “I was very upset to read that you had included the threat of Hell, in your letter. A club is a sure way to make someone do something, but not to make him believe it. It speaks slightly of Russia. . . . Please don’t be blindly led down the path towards the destruction of the United States.”⁵⁸ Mother Laura responded, “Father Furfey’s essay was no threat, and our Lord’s account of man’s judgment is no threat. It is a description of each man’s realization of his final choice of moral good or evil, in

⁵⁶ Ibid., 12/10/63 Report: Peggy Roach, Committee Secretary, NCCW Board of Directors

⁵⁷ Ibid., quoted in Peggy Roach, *Her Apostolate Spans a Nation*, BVM Vista, June 1964

⁵⁸ Catharine Schwab to Mother Laura, May 18, 1964, Series 18, Box 2, Folder Civil Rights Correspondence, 1963-64, NCCIJ.

which his choice of God's will, or good, is made real in his relationships of love for his fellow man."⁵⁹ The nuns, therefore, had spoken out as a community because the bill was a moral, not just political issue.

When Johnson signed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Catholic interracialists were elated. Roach and her friend Jane O'Grady listened to the live broadcast of the signing session and "wept in joy when we knew the bill was finally the law of the land." Later that day, when Roach saw Monsignor Hurley of the Bishops Conference office, who had been present at the signing, Hurley pulled out a small brown box and gave it to Roach. The box held one of the pens President Johnson had used to sign the bill. Hurley said, "You really worked on this effort – I think you deserve this pen." Roach was "astounded." She carried the pen in her purse for the next ten years.⁶⁰ For Roach and others, Cantwell's observation was right: it was Christian and democratic to support the movement for integration and freedom.

Catholic interracialists could celebrate many triumphs, from the support of the hierarchy for Catholic interracialism, to the unity of interracialists across the country, to ecumenical efforts for racial justice, to successful protests, to national civil rights legislation. In 1961, there were only 35 Catholic human relations organizations, and over the next five years, the number would increase to 120.⁶¹ A small group of the laity had helped convince the hierarchy to support the interracialist ideal. Their victory was this: no person could doubt that the official Catholic position favored racial justice, even if one disagreed with the Church's stance.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Mother Laura to Catherine, May 19, 1964.

⁶⁰ Roach, "Reflections on a Journey.", 45-46, 51. When President Nixon fired Theodore Hesburgh from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights ten years later, Roach sent the pen to Hesburgh to honor his 15 years of service.

⁶¹ Mathew Ahmann, "The Church's New Civil Rights Challenge," *Extension* March, 1966, Box 4, Folder 4, Roach Papers.

Now, however, the hierarchy and the Catholic interracialists faced the more challenging task: convincing the vast majority of white Catholics to embrace interracial justice. In 1963, Ahmann commented that “while significant new trends” leading to racial integration had begun in the Catholic Church, “there are still few signs of voluntary efforts by the Catholic population to secure extensive desegregation, or meet the legitimate grievances of the Negro community.” Assessing the Church, Ahmann concluded that it was unlikely that the Catholic Church would take a leadership role in working for black civil rights. Instead, he thought a “more reasonable expectation” was that the Church, with its mostly white population, would play a supporting role, by taking “larger and more significant steps in meeting the just demands and needs of Negroes, by desegregation, providing leadership in the mediation of conflict which will produce advance to interracial justice, and by increased use of the moral force of Catholic leadership to pressure concessions from the white community of the country.”⁶²

⁶² Report of Executive Director and Program Goals and Budget, 1963-4, Series 1, Box 2, Folder Reports, General, 1963-64, 1966-67, 1969-70, NCCIJ.

XIII: CONCLUSION

In the end, Catholic interracialism shaped the lives of many people. Those who embodied it did so in ways meaningful to them and found within it a new way to be Catholic, to love God and to love one another. Many experienced profound personal transformations and the exhilaration that came from sacrificing for a greater purpose in which they believed. For many, practicing Catholic interracialism was the outgrowth of a deeper and broader desire to truly love God.

Those who embodied Catholic interracialism also changed the Catholic Church, the city, and the nation. They forged a distinctive connection between their Catholic faith, rooted in the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, and merged it with the black freedom struggle. Catholic interracialism first took root among black Catholics living in northern cities who wanted to hold their Church to its universal theology and make the Church a beacon of light and unity in the segregated city. They came together to counter the leadership of America's bishops, who, likely believing their strategy was best for the care of Negro souls, promoted segregation between black and white Catholics. But members of the black laity used their Catholicism toward another end, to achieve integration in the Catholic Church. To achieve this goal, they submitted to the leadership of white priests, who held religious and racial power. While the decision cost the black Catholics their autonomy, the white priests gave them access to the Church's power structures, religious legitimacy, and the opportunity to practice their end goal: interracial partnership.

White priests played an important supporting role in Catholic interracialism, but white Catholic laypeople became black Catholics' greatest allies. As Catholic interracialism became enmeshed with Catholic action and social justice, a generation of white Catholics educated in parochial schools by nuns and priests came of age emboldened by the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. Through CISCA, the Catholic Worker, and St. Mary of the Lake Seminary under Hillenbrand's leadership, these young people believed they could change the world and their Church, and saw African Americans with new eyes, as fellow members of Christ's Mystical Body. But they still had to overcome the segregated city, which had few institutional, religious, interracial spaces. Friendship House provided the opportunity for Catholic interracialism to move from theory to practice, offering white and black Catholics a chance to build friendships with one another.

These personal relationships often became the foundation of a variety of expressions of Catholic interracialism that gradually became more mainstream within Catholicism, from study days, to efforts to integrate the suburbs, to legislative efforts, to direct action. In order for the ideals of Catholic interracialism to become conventional, it took the path of least resistance. Catholic interracialists decided to focus on integrating middle-class people, believing that if they could achieve interracial living among that sector of society, they would be able to turn their gaze back to justice for lower-class people as well.

By the late 1950s, Catholic interracialists had achieved their first goal: convincing American Catholics and the American hierarchy that interracial justice was the best expression of Catholicism on the issue of race. Targeting the minds of American Catholics through education and eventually public protest, Catholic interracialists fought a battle for what constituted the "right" stance of American Catholics on integration and racial justice. Finally,

Chicago's archbishop insisted that Catholic schools integrate, that hospital administrators hire staff and admit patients regardless of race, that white Catholics' support black Americans' right to live where they pleased, and that priests administer the sacraments without discrimination. While Catholics' implementation of these ideals was varied, the Church's policy was clear, and the black Catholic vision of interracialism from the 1930s had won. But as the coming decade would reveal, while valuable changes had occurred, Catholic interracialism won only in theory.

At first, Catholic interracialists continued to push forward the momentum of the civil rights movement. In 1965, Catholic interracialists joined one of the most memorable moments of the national civil rights movement: the March from Selma to Montgomery for voting rights. Jack Egan heard about Selma's Bloody Sunday, when state troopers attacked marchers on the Edmund Pettis Bridge, when he was vacationing in Georgia with a Chicago family. Putting his rest on hold, Egan rushed to Selma and met up with Ahmann at Edmundite priest Father Maurice Oullet's Rectory in Selma's St. Elizabeth's parish. The pair began to make phone calls to Catholics across the country, recruiting hundreds of priests, nuns, and laypeople to Selma. The NCCIJ ultimately devoted three staff members to stay in Selma full time to coordinate the Catholics who came from over 50 dioceses.¹ Across the country, Catholics also participated in sympathy marches. Seminarians from Detroit, who had participated in home visits with Friendship House, joined solidarity marches with Selma on Detroit's federal building. Later, they formed a human relations group at their seminary, organized lectures on civil rights, participated in seminars on black history, supported voter registration drives, and helped foster educational programs on race in Catholic high schools, and became active in social action.²

¹ Year of Decision, Year of Service, Box 7, Folder 3, Roach Papers. A few months later, Mobile's Archbishop order Oullet out of the diocese because of his support for the marchers. See also box 20, folder 8, Roach Papers.

² Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement", 521-23.

As the idea of Catholic interracialism spread in the years following its triumph, it regained elements of its class critique. The NCCIJ began a program called Project Equality, through which Archdioceses would ensure equal employment in all their hiring decisions, including general and contract purchasing. They ran Project Equality's pilot project in Detroit. As the civil rights movement reshaped Catholic sisterhood by pushing nuns from their exclusively Catholic spheres into activism in the broader world, nuns began to respond creatively to the needs of poor black people and to spread the message of interracialism.³ In Chicago, the NCCIJ, the CIC, and Franciscan sisters from Rochester, Minnesota developed an innovative program called Project Cabrini. Nuns came to Chicago to teach at Cabrini Green, one of Chicago's public housing sites, starting in the summer of 1965. The nuns taught whatever students – children and their parents – wanted to learn. By the second year of the program, the nuns were teaching an average of 1200 students a day. The NCCIJ also sponsored Traveling Workshops to teach human relations to nuns, lay teachers, nurses, and community leaders. Five nuns – with doctorates in history, sociology, psychology, economics, and community planning – piled into a station wagon and covered 10,000 miles, conducting workshops in six cities their first year.

Catholic interracialists did find limited success when they pursued a model of ecumenical, middle-class integration. Reynold Hillenbrand, for instance, who served as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish on Chicago's wealthy North Shore integrated his parish school's faculty, which exposed the white parochial students to a black teacher. Just west of Chicago in Oak Park, Cicero's wealthy neighbor, Catholic interracialists joined with Protestants and Jews to stop the white flight that was coming their way from the east, block by block in the 1970s. Instead of fighting black neighbors, the village embraced diversity in an effort to maintain Oak Park's

³ Koehlinger, *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s*.

property values and white residents. Oak Park banned panic peddling, for-sale signs, developed an equity assurance program, expanded the police force, and relocated the village hall to Oak Park's eastern border, closest to the racial change.⁴ In 2000, sixty-nine percent of the village was white and twenty-two percent was black.

But despite the moments of triumph, the rhetorical victory, and the real changes the Catholic interracialists brought to the Church and the city, they ultimately failed. The majority of white Catholics – and perhaps the majority of white Americans – did not make the ideals of Catholic interracialism a reality in their personal lives. Catholic interracialists remained a minority among most lay Catholics and in the years immediately following Catholic interracialism's rhetorical triumph, it faced two main obstacles.

In Chicago, the first main issue had to do with authority in the Church. Although pushed forward by the laity, Catholic interracialism had only been able to really flourish under the benign neglect of Archbishops Stritch and Meyer. Both men had given Chicago's laity, and the priests who supported lay action, a relatively free reign. But after Meyer died of a brain tumor in April, 1965, his successor, John Patrick Cody, consolidated power and limited Chicago's lay activity.

Cody was not opposed to the civil rights movement. In fact, he became known as a friend of the movement when, as archbishop of New Orleans, he had engineered the excommunication of racist Leander Perez.⁵ Cody's decision to centralize power in his hands, however, hurt Catholic involvement in the civil rights movement in Chicago. His authoritarian governing style was a far cry from the permissiveness of Meyer and Stritch before him, and

⁴ Vaile Scott Interview, conducted by author, September 2011, Carole Goodwin, *The Oak Park Strategy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Tina Reighmaier and Camille Henderson Zorich, "Oak Park," in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago Historical Society, 2005).

⁵ Avella, *This Confident Church : Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940-1965*, 344.

under his tight grip, the vibrant lay movement, supported by priests, began to wither. Cody dispersed the priests who had been the main liaisons between the interracialist laity and the hierarchy, severing their lines of communication. He removed Cantwell and Egan from their positions of power and placed them as pastors of black parishes where they would have to devote their time to parish life rather than the lay interracialist movement. Cody sent Cantwell to St. Clotilde's on the South Side in the Chatham neighborhood and Egan to Presentation on the West Side in the Lawndale neighborhood.

Both men served their parishes well and continued to work for interracial justice from their new positions, but their position in the parishes made them prioritize parish issues and gave them less leverage to engage the broad swath of Chicago's Catholics. Cantwell focused on building parish life in St. Clotilde's. He commented "it is my hope and dream that our school in Chatham will attain an excellence which will attract white families to integrate in reverse and to come back for the sake of the education of their children."⁶ Egan brought his Alinsky-style community organizing to Presentation and empowered his parishioners to found the Contract Buyer's League, which challenged discriminatory lending practices in Chicago.⁷ Peggy Roach worked with Egan for the rest of her career, first bringing her organizational capacities to the Contract Buyer's League as a volunteer and then working with Egan at Notre Dame when he went there to recover from Cody.⁸

Despite Cody's efforts, however, Chicago's lay Catholic interracialists continued to assert themselves. The conflict between the lay interracialists and Cody came out into the open during the summer of 1966 when Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership

⁶ Edward Labre, "Our Country's Number One Problem," *Extension*, April 1968, Box 1, Folder 1, Roach Papers.

⁷ Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*.

⁸ Frisbie, *An Alley in Chicago: The Life and Legacy of Monsignor John Egan*. 237-244.

Conference came to Chicago to partner with Chicago's civil rights activists.⁹ Chicago's CIC, an active member of Chicago's Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCCO) which coordinated Chicago's civil rights activists, was actively involved in the Chicago Freedom Movement. The groups planned marches across the city to help open the housing market in Chicago to black city dwellers. At first, Cody supported King and the marchers.

But as the marches became increasingly violent, with white Catholics attacking the marchers, who included priests and nuns, the CIC took its first public stand against the archbishop. On August 10, Cody asked the marchers to stop marching but the CIC refused to fall in line. The CIC praised Cody's leadership in civil rights, but replied that calling off the marches would be like calling off a strike before an agreement was reached.¹⁰ The decision reflected McDermott's conviction not only in the rightness of the marches, but also that the CIC must maintain a role of "genuine freedom for a lay organization within the Church, a role worthy of educated, adult laymen who wish to serve the Church but who do not confuse love of the Church with taking orders from the Chancery Office."¹¹

The fissure between Cody and the Catholic interracialists reflected not only the strength of the lay Catholic interracialists, but extent to which the goals of the civil rights movement and the ideals of Catholic interracialism had become normative. As the summer progressed, Chicago's Catholic interracialists continued to stand up against their new archbishop because they believed they were right. By August, as civil rights advocates negotiated with Chicago's Mayor Daley to reach the Summit Agreement, the CIC's McDermott sat on King's side of the

⁹ For more on the Chicago Freedom Movement, see Ralph, *Northern Protest : Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement*; Anderson and Pickering, *Confronting the Color Line : The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago*.

¹⁰ *Sun Times*, August 12, 1966, "Laymen's Group Disagrees with Cody."

¹¹ McDermott to Members and Friends, October 14, 1967, Box 6, Documents 1967-1971, NCCIJ.

negotiating table across from Cody, who sat with Daley.¹² But Catholic interracialists still faced the vast majority of lay Catholics, who disagreed with their actions. That fall, McDermott called the Chicago Archdiocese's liberalism a "veneer: racial justice hasn't penetrated deeply into the rank and file."¹³ As much as the Catholic Church's institutional issues affected Catholic interracialism, external issues shaped its contours as well.

As black power became increasingly predominant in the civil rights struggle, it complicated the role of interracialism. For many black Catholics, their commitment to black power grew out of their Catholic convictions.¹⁴ But Catholic interracialists struggled, on the one hand, to convince white people that black power did not threaten them, and on the other, to remain relevant to black people who were becoming fed up with the slow march toward justice. Interracial organizations grappled to negotiate these new tensions well, with disappointing results. In the early 1970s, Chicago's Friendship House sold its property to the Black Panther Party and the CIC faced internal division with black members accusing white members of racism.¹⁵

Black Catholics, for their part, began to move back to the focus on black advancement of the earlier FCC. In 1968, Father Herman Porter, a black priest in Rockford, IL, invited black clergy to assemble together prior to the opening of the meeting of the Catholic Clergy Conference on the Interracial Apostolate. After King's death earlier that year, mass riots broke out in Chicago's black neighborhoods. Mayor Daley issued a "shoot-to-kill" order to his police, which targeted rioting African Americans. The priests discussed this turn of events and used the

¹² Box 20, Folder 8, Roach Papers, Addendum III.

¹³ John McDermott, "A Chicago Catholic Asks: Where Does My Church Stand on Racial Justice?" reprinted from Nov 1, 1966 *LOOK*, Series 10, Box 6, Chicago CIC Documents, 1956-1959, NCCIJ.

¹⁴ Matthew John Cressler, "Black Catholics and Black Power: Racial Justice and the Question of Catholic Distinctiveness in Chicago, 1968," paper given at the American Historical Association, January, 2013 (New Orleans).

¹⁵ Sharum, "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement," 569 ; Christine Leak to Board members and membership, November 15, 1971, series 10, box 6, folder documents 1967-1971, NCCIJ.

meeting to create the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. They commented that “the Catholic Church in the United States, primarily a white racist institution, has addressed itself primarily to white society and is definitely a part of that society.”¹⁶

Today, the Catholic Church, Chicago, Chicago’s surrounding suburbs, and the nation remain largely segregated and unequal. Race continues to shape black and white American’s access to wealth, income and employment, health, education, housing, and experience of religion. While Catholic interracialists may have been able to overcome some racial boundaries, particularly with middle- and upper-class African Americans, they were unable to achieve the more radical aspects of Catholic interracialism, including equalizing power relations between white Americans and poor black Americans. In the twenty-first century, Chicago remains a segregated city that demographers have crowned with the designation of “hyper-segregated” to indicate how infrequently black and white people live on the same block. In 2002, Chicago’s archbishop, Francis George, admonished his priests, nuns, and laypeople for not welcoming even Catholic African Americans into their parishes.¹⁷

The citizens of Chicago and its surrounding suburbs, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, continue to live lives and practice their religion profoundly shaped by racial inequality and division. As a resident of the region, my own life has been shaped by those factors. I grew up on the North Shore of Chicago and went to an all-white church in Deerfield. Less than half of one percent of Deerfield’s residents identified as Black or African American in the 2010 census.¹⁸ My all-white experience at church was, no doubt, shaped by Deerfield’s racial history. I now live in Chicago’s Austin community, which sits directly to the east of Oak Park. Austin is

¹⁶ Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*. 258-259.

¹⁷ “Chicago, Black and White,” in *New York Times*, March 16, 2002. See also Neary, “Crossing Parochial Boundaries: African Americans and Interracial Catholic Social Action in Chicago, 1914-1954,” Introduction.

¹⁸ http://www.deerfield.il.us/assets/1/community_development/July_2011_Demographic_Profile.pdf. Accessed 25 January 2013.

90 percent African American with a median income of just under \$34,000, which is ten thousand dollars less than Chicago's average and just over a third of Oak Park's median family income, which is about \$90,000.¹⁹ A quarter of Austin's residents live in poverty, and ninety percent of the students attending Austin's public schools are from poor families; six percent are from working poor families and four percent are from lower-middle income families. Most of Austin's residents attend black churches, which, except for a few rare exceptions, are just as segregated as the one I grew up in.

Despite the challenges left to overcome, the history of Catholic interracialism can offer wisdom to those attempting to overcome the segregated city with the hope of the universal church.

¹⁹ <http://www.uicni.org/page.php?section=neighborhoods&subsection=austin>, accessed 25 January 2013.
<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2006/snapshots/PL1754885.html>, accessed 25 January 2013.

XIV. CITED LITERATURE

A. Manuscript Collections and Newspapers

- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
 Illinois Commission on Human Relations
- Archives of the Archdiocese of Chicago (AAC)
 Cardinal George Mundelein Papers
 Madaj Papers
 Sheil Papers
 Zielinski Oral History
 Madaj Collection
- Chicago History Museum (CHM)
 Catholic Interracial Council Papers (CIC)
 Daniel Cantwell Papers (DC)
 Friendship House Papers (FH)
- Newspapers
WORK
Harlem Friendship House News (Community)
- Loyola University Archives (LUA)
 CISCA Papers
- Madonna House Archive (MHA)
- Marquette University Archives (MUA)
 Falls papers (?)
 Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker New York Catholic Worker Records (DD-CW)
- Mooreland-Spingarn Research Center (MSRC)
 Thomas Wyatt Turner Papers (Tuner Papers)
- Notre Dame University Archives
 Ann Harrigan Makletzoff Papers (MAK)
 Reynold Hillenbrand Papers (MRH)
 Edward V. Cardinal Papers (CRD)
- Schomburg
 Ellen Tarry Papers
 Arthur Falls Unpublished Autobiography
- University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA)
 Edward V. Cardinal Papers (CRD)
 Ann Harrigan Makletzoff Papers (MAK)
- Women in Leadership Archives (WLA)
 Peggy (Margaret) Roach Papers (Roach Papers)

B. Newspapers

Catholic Worker

Harlem Friendship House News (Community)

St. Elizabeth's Chronicle (Interracial Review)

WORK

America

Commonweal

C. Articles and Essays

Allitt, Patrick. "Catholic Anti-Communism." *Catholicity* (2009).

Avella. "'Reynold Hillenbrand and Chicago Catholicism'." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 9, no. 4 (Fall, 1990): 353-70.

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D. Books

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- Wuthnow, Robert. *The Restructuring of American Religion : Society and Faith since World War II*, Studies in Church and State. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.

E. Unpublished Works

- Hawkins, Rusty. "Religion, Race, and Resistance: White Evangelicals and the Dilemma of Integration in South Carolina, 1950-1975." Ph.D. Diss., Rice University, 2010.
- Neary, Timothy B. "Crossing Parochial Boundaries: African Americans and Interracial Catholic Social Action in Chicago, 1914-1954." Ph.D. Diss., Loyola University, 2004.
- Rice, Lincoln. "Toward a Renewed Theological Framework of Catholic Racial Justice: A Vision Inspired by the Life and Writings of Dr. Arthur Grand Pré Falls." Ph.D. Diss., Marquette University, 2013.
- Ryan, Kevin. "'My Children Feel Rejected by Their Church': The Conflict between Integration and Racial Justice at St. Philip Neri School in Chicago." Paper Given at Annual Meeting of American Historical Association, New Orleans, January 2013.
- Sharum, Elizabeth Louis. "A Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement." Ph.D. Diss., Texas Tech University, 1977.

XV. VITA

EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Chicago. Chicago, IL

Ph.D. in History, 2007 – 2013

Major/Minor Fields: American History, Global and American Church History, & Mexican History

Concentrations: Teaching of History & Work, Race, and Gender in the Urban World

Dissertation: “The Universal Church in the Segregated City: Catholic Interracialism in Chicago, 1928-1968,” defended March 11, 2013.

Advisors: Kevin Schultz (chair), Susan Levine, Cynthia Blair, John McGreevy (Notre Dame), Michael Emerson (Rice)

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Deerfield, IL

M.A. in Christian Thought (magna cum laude), 2006

Major/Minor Fields: Church History & Systematic Theology

Thesis: “Urban Churches’ Responses to HIV/AIDS in Their Communities: An Exploration of Histories and Theologies”

Advisors: Doug Sweeney, Peter Cha

Carleton College. Northfield, MN.

B.A. in History (magna cum laude), 2003

Major/Minor Fields: American History, Modern European History & Latin American History

PUBLICATIONS

Johnson, Karen J. “Healing the Mystical Body: Catholic Attempts to Overcome the Racial Divide in the Depression and World War II,” in *Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion after Divided by Faith*, ed. J. Russell Hawkins and Philip Luke Sintiére (forthcoming, August 2013, Oxford University Press).

Johnson, Karen J. “Beyond Parish Boundaries: Black Catholics and the Quest for Racial Justice,” under review at *Religion and American Culture*.

Johnson, Karen J. “African Americans” and “Religion” in *American Centuries: The Ideas, Issues, and Trends that Made U.S. History: Volume 5, The Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert D. Johnston, (New York: Facts on File, 2011).

Johnson, Karen J. “African Americans,” in *Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History, Volume 4, 1878-1920*, ed. Robert D. Johnston (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2010).

Johnson, Karen J. “Women and AIDS,” in *American Women’s History: An Encyclopedia* edited by Hasia Diner (New York: Facts on File, 2012).

FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS & SELECTIVE SEMINARS

Marion Miller Award. 2012-2013 (UIC).

Fellowship for dissertation completion.

History Doctoral Award. 2007-2012 (UIC).

Liberal Arts and Sciences Endowed Scholarship (UIC). 2012.

American Society of Church History Graduate Student Award. 2011.

King V. Hostick Award, Illinois State Historical Society. 2011.

Loyola University Women in Leadership Archives Research Fellowship. 2011.

University of Notre Dame, Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism's Research Travel Grant. 2011.

The Power of Race in American Religion Seminar Participant. 2010.

An interdisciplinary seminar directed by Dr. Michael Emerson of Rice University, sponsored by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, and funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. I was one of two graduate students who participated; the other participants were Ph.D. 's.

Catholic Studies Research Grant, Summer, 2011; Winter, 2011; Summer, 2010 (UIC). *Awarded to help defray cost of research trips.*

Graduate Student Council Travel Award. 2009 (UIC). *Awarded to support travel costs for presentations.*

Student Presenter Award, Fall, 2009; Fall 2010 (UIC). *Awarded to support travel costs for presentations.*

Ian Kraabel Award, 2003 (Carleton College). *Given to the student with the most passion for the field of history.*

Phi Beta Kappa. 2003.

CONFERENCES AND INVITED TALKS

John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation: National Symposium, Catholic and Protestant Approaches to Reconciliation: Creating Spaces of Reconciliation in a Structurally Segregated Society, May, 2013. *This paper bridges my historical research with my living experience in an inner-city community.*

Valparaiso University: Catholics, Race, and Civil Rights, February 2013.

UIC's Brown Bag Seminar: Catholics, Race, and Civil Rights, February, 2013.

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting: "Race, Religion and Civil Rights: Catholic Youth and the Push for Interracial Justice in 1930s Chicago," November 2012.

Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting: "Catholic Pioneers of the Civil Rights Movement: Lay Women, Race, and Interracial Justice," April 2012.

Loyola University's Women in Leadership Archives Lecture Series: "Catholic Women and the Civil Rights Movement," January 2012.

Windy City History Graduate Conference, Conference Panel Commentator: "The Black Freedom Struggle and the Law," Chicago, IL, November 2011.

American Society of Church History Annual Spring Conference: "Arthur Falls, the Mystical Body of Christ, and the Origins of Chicago's Long Civil Rights Movement," April, 2011.
(*Winner of ASCH Graduate Student Award*)

Conference on Faith and History Biennial Fall Conference: "Catholics and Interracialism in Chicago's Long Civil Rights Movement," October, 2010.

Newberry Library Seminar on Women and Gender: "The Long Civil Rights Movement in Chicago: Ann Harrigan and Catholic Interracialism, 1933-1948," February, 2010.

52nd Annual Missouri Valley Historical Society: "'Keep Your Date with Christ in the Negro': Ann Harrigan and Catholic Interracialism, 1933-1948," March, 2009.

History Graduate Society, University of Illinois at Chicago: "People Looked at You Funny: Two Chicago Black Churches' Involvement with HIV/AIDS," April, 2008.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Phi Beta Kappa (2003), American Historical Association, American Society of Church History, Conference on Faith and History, Organization of American Historians, & American Academy of Religion

TEACHING AND OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

U.S. History Advanced Placement Grader, Educational Testing Service (June 2012, June 2013).

Teaching Assistant, University of Illinois at Chicago (2007 – 2012)

- American Civilization, Colonial Era to the Late Nineteenth Century, Corey Capers, Fall 2007, Spring 2012.
- History of Chicago, Perry Duis, Spring 2008, Summer 2008, Spring 2009
- World History, Kirk Hoppe, Fall 2008.

- American Civilization, Civil War to the Present, Joshua Salzmman, Fall 2009.
- American Civilization, Civil War to the Present, Richard Fried, Spring 2010.
- World History, Corrine Louw, Fall 2010.
- Revolutionary Civilization: Explaining Western Power and Influence in the Modern World, Jonathan Daly, Spring 2011.
- Catholic Thought: An Introduction, Ralph Keen, Fall 2011.

Supervisor in Management Development Program, McMaster-Carr Supply Company, Chicago, IL (2003-2005)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Monthly Contributor, Religion in American History Blog (<http://usreligion.blogspot.com/>). The blog has over 500 hits/day, 1200 Facebook friends, and 800 followers on Twitter.
- Organizer, Panel on Job Interviews, UIC History Department, Fall 2012.
- Regional History Fair Judge, Spring, 2011.
- History Graduate Society Graduate Student Conference Committee, 2010.
- Accepted Students Weekend Committee, 2008.
- Graduate Student Council Representative, 2007-2008.

CIVIC SERVICE

- Leader, Rock Church Youth Ministry, 2012-present. Rock Church is an inner-city, interracial church.
- Teacher, Rock Church New Believers' Class, 2012.
- Mentor, Circle Urban Mentoring Program, 2009 – present. Circle Urban serves under-served inner-city youth.
- Member of Austin Green Team, 2011-present. This group works in community gardens to beautify Chicago's Austin neighborhood, an under-resourced community where I live.
- Assistant High School Girls Basketball Coach, Chicago Hope Academy, 2010-2011. CHA serves urban youth.
- Staff, Inter-Varsity's Chicago Urban Program, 2007. I was the co-site director of a program that brings college students to an inner-city neighborhood to volunteer and learn about justice from the community.
- Varsity Basketball Player, Carleton College, 1999-2003.