

traditions, your history, you live them. To be a good human being, in the Jewish way, to believe in life, to believe in humanity, to follow the Ten Commandments, that is enough to be a good Jew." For the Center Jews, that means to do in retirement and old age what they've always done. Their belief in life, in humanity emerges in the continuation in their materially narrowed lives of the rituals and traditions that tie them to God, to their own dead and to "all the Jews who are doing these same things even if I can't see them." It emerges in the philanthropy that is more important to them than anything the money might buy; and in the continuing sense of obligation to the world around them and to the generations to follow. Rebekah, Shmuel's wife, continues the labor movement activities of her working years in efforts on behalf of Chicano migrant laborers. When Professor Myerhoff asks her, "Do you enjoy that work?" Rebekah answers, "Who could enjoy standing in a parking lot on a cold day, arguing with strangers? You don't do these things to enjoy. It has to be done, that's all."

It is in that tradition of humanity and responsibility to others that Myerhoff gives us the book. Shmuel dies, but he has told his story to Professor Myerhoff, and because of her it is not lost.

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JAY P. DOLAN. *THE IMMIGRANT CHURCH, NEW YORK'S IRISH AND GERMAN CATHOLICS, 1815-1865*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975. 221 pp. \$12.50, \$3.95 paper.

Jay Dolan confines this study on immigrant Catholicism in New York City largely to the half-century between 1815 and 1865. He does, however, briefly note significant ties among events occurring in the secular world of Europe and America which influenced the nature of the migrations and the attitudes of the immigrants. (For example, the Germans of '48 brought with them political leanings that their predecessors had had). It is important to keep in mind that it was the era *following* the American Civil War when the great waves of immigrants, including large numbers of Catholics from southern and eastern Europe, poured into the United States. The half-century of which Dolan writes was the time when Catholicism survived early nativist attacks and when it became firmly established particularly in the eastern United States of which New York was a prime example.

As the title suggests, Dolan devotes this study to Irish and German Catholics. Early on, he discusses the transfer of loyalty

to the church from the homeland to the new country, and he makes appropriate note of the importance of language especially to the Germans in this transfer. He notes, too, that while there was considerable poverty among the parishioners of the "ethnic villages," there was still considerable mobility among the immigrants within the broader community. This was not a mobility out of the city but rather from street to street or from one location to another on the same street.

Poverty was among the experiences shared by the Irish and Germans with the Irish having the largest number of poor. Tenement living was a reflection of this destitution characteristic of the area between the Bowery and Second Avenue, for example. The financial problems which the parish churches constantly confronted resulted in part from the impecunious status of their membership, the majority of whom were skilled and semi-skilled laborers. Beyond that was the fact that probably fifty percent of the Catholic immigrants to the city were not churchgoers and not contributors to the churches' coffers.

Churchmen depended on pew rentals, an unfamiliar practice to the Irish, the usual charges for special occasions such as weddings, loans from well-to-do parishioners, and gifts from such as Swiss restaurateur John Delmonico, until Archbishop John Hughes, with help from several Catholic orders, brought relative order into the fiscal condition of the church. With the orders came lay orphans asylums, schools, aid to the poor--in short, good works, fundamental duties of Catholics in the work-a-day world.

The author chronicles well the church's position on temperance, the Irish wake, and social reforms. Intemperance bore much of the blame for the poverty of some immigrants. Particularly churchmen harangued the Irish on the evils of pub-hopping. Father Felix Varela, founder of Transfiguration Church which served Sixth Ward Irish, also organized the New York Catholic Temperance Association in 1840. Varela and traveling temperance leader Father Theobald Mathew received thousands of "pledges" from parishioners. Apparently many a pledger relapsed, for the neighborhood saloons continued to flourish. The Germans were not about to give up their Biergartens. They found both spiritual and temporal values in guaffing their special nectars. Beer and wine contributed to "Christian discourse" and beer was described as being "healthy and nourishing." Unable to change the custom of the Irish wake, the church joined what became an elongated funeral ceremony, and the parish priest became a regular participant.

The church, as represented by the archbishop, opposed Catholics taking part in American reform movements of the time. It was Archbishop John Hughes' position that those movements flew in the face of God's plans for the salvation of souls. But that did not relieve Catholics of the responsibility of being aware of the poor and the meek. Indeed, if all of them did good works as they should do, the poor would no longer suffer, and at best there might be no poor at all. Not all clergy shared the view of opposing reform movements.

An important adaptation to the American scene was the use of "missions." Missions, something akin to Protestant "revivals," took the sacraments to those who either did not attend church or were infrequent communicants. They also aimed at conversions. Missions featured much singing, candlelight processions, and sometimes rousing preaching. The author relates that the stentorian voice of Redemptorist Father Henri Eiesen describing Hell-fire penetrated a nearby firehouse and brought the engine crew to the church to put out the conflagration. Protestant revivals measured success by the numbers who went forward to be received and baptized. Catholics looked to the numbers who took communion and who went to confessionals, often especially provided at the mission's location.

If there are heroes in this volume, they are Father Felix Varela, Cuban exile and minister to the Irish poor, and Archbishop John Hughes, Irish prelate who sometimes preached on the good life to be found in living on the land rather than in sin city. They were opposites, these two. Father Varela would literally give the shirt off his back to the poor. A hero of Cuban resistance against Spanish rule, he is scarcely known in his adopted land where he labored in behalf of the down-trodden throughout his life. The archbishop believed in centralized church authority, did not believe in lay boards, and strongly supported Pope Pius IX against the liberal upsurge of the mid-century. He displayed indifference toward the plight of Italian Catholics, reportedly disliked blacks, and staunchly opposed reform movements. Still, the Catholic church in New York was much of his making. And the battles he lost, such as the one to get public aid for parochial schools, took second place to the victories he won.

The Immigrant Church is a most readable book. Dolan's prose is clear and concise. Occasionally, a jumble of street numbers, population figures, and the prices of horse-drawn carriage tickets, as on pages eighteen and nineteen, interrupts the flow of words. But generally the story moves smoothly, the summary statements at the end of each chapter are well-drawn, and the Becker transitions from paragraph to paragraph throughout the volume surely will make Dolan's English composition instructor proud of him.

Jay Dolan writes with sympathy and understanding for both the immigrants and the church. The immigrants, though often as poor and beset with tribulations as in the lands of their provenance, nonetheless became staunch Americans. Inevitable they changed somewhat while clinging to many customs of their past. The church here is not quite the same as the staid 1900-year-old lady of Europe. Her clergy faced and responded to new world challenges and those of people on the move. Anyone interested in immigration and church history should read this neatly-drawn volume especially as background to the study of the immigrant flood which came to America in the generation after 1865.

The foreword by Professor Martin E. Marty, the concluding essay on sources, footnotes, and an index add to the virtues of this study.

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PAUL WROBEL. *OUR WAY: FAMILY, PARISH AND NEIGHBORHOOD IN A POLISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979. 207 pp. \$12.95.

Paul Wrobel's study of a Polish-American community provides valuable insight into one of America's largest white ethnic groups. Recent studies of Polish-Americans, such as Neil Sandberg's *Ethnic Identity and Assimilation: the Polish American Community in Los Angeles* (New York: Praeger, 1974), have been few and often lacking in insight, even if providing some information. Wrobel provides a window for outsiders to look at St. Thaddeus parish on the north-east side of Detroit, a neighborhood reflecting "the cultural attitudes and values of its residents, especially their need for order and cleanliness." (p. 46.) He takes care to emphasize that his study is only a start, describing and analyzing one particular community to provide the basis for future comparisons. Wrobel, a third generation Polish-American, with the assistance of his wife Kathleen, used participant-observer techniques for the study during the three years they and their children lived and worked in the neighborhood. This was supplemented with semi-formal interviews, census materials, parish records and city directories to gain an overview of the area.

He studied a Catholic parish because, for urban working-class Polish-Americans, life is focused on family, parish and neighborhood, with the parish and neighborhood viewed by residents as forming a unit. Since a proper Catholic education is considered essential for their children, the parish school provides the key to a viable community, stemming the flow of people to the suburbs and attracting new residents.

In his discussion of St. Thaddeus' people, Wrobel makes an important point regarding assimilation of white ethnic groups. He notes that the focus of most studies of groups, such as Polish-Americans, have looked at them in terms of the remnants of their European culture and how much of this has been abandoned in favor of American cultural traits. Instead Wrobel emphasizes that white ethnic groups need to be studied in their own right, so he looks at Polish-American culture as distinct with its own norms, life-style, value system, attitudes and behavior. Further, the Polish-American culture is not dying out but is being transmitted through