

**The Haight & the Hierarchy:
Church, City, and Culture in San Francisco, 1967-2008**

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ABSTRACT

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Between the rise of the local counterculture in the 1950s and the Summer of Love in 1967, San Francisco gained a mostly deserved reputation as a bohemian haven for alternative lifestyles and political liberalism. By the 1980s, after the Castro District had emerged as the “Gay Mecca,” its signature progressivism had become recognized worldwide. Yet the Roman Catholic Church also had an influential presence before and after the city became part of U.S. territory in 1848. The network of Catholic parishes and schools nurtured Irish, Italian, German, and Portuguese migrants, and ecclesial leaders not only transformed the built environment between 1884 and 1924, but grew influential enough to enjoy civic clout until the 1960s. Focusing on the period when the Church began to lose its local influence, this thesis explores how three actors—San Francisco’s Archdiocese, municipal and civic governing bodies, and the distinct, often eccentric public culture—interacted between 1967 and 2008. Utilizing three illuminating case studies—the obscenity trial surrounding Beat poet Lenore Kandel’s “The Love Book” in 1967, Pope John Paul II’s visit to San Francisco in 1987, and Proposition 8, a 2008 California ballot initiative seeking to make same-sex marriage illegal throughout the state—I tell a complicated story of increasing divergence. Although the Catholic Church’s teachings on matters of economic justice and immigration mostly aligned with the cultural and political leaders’ progressive ethos, this accord was not enough to sustain the Church’s position as the city’s *de facto* cultural arbiter. Instead, as this thesis will show, contrary views on issues relating to gender and sexuality led to irreconcilable differences, as the Church gradually lost political and cultural influence over the course of those four decades. By 2008, when both Catholic and non-Catholic residents voted against the Archdiocese’s official stand on same-sex marriage, the Church no longer could claim to be a powerful cultural authority.

INTRODUCTION

Earlier that evening, his helicopter landed steps away from the Golden Gate Bridge. Pope John Paul II had arrived in San Francisco for the first time. He stood with faithful sympathizers in Mission Dolores, the city's oldest intact colonial Spanish building, while beyond its threshold stood the most boisterous and disapproving crowd of his tour of the United States. The world watched as the leader of the Catholic Church embraced sixty-two individuals suffering from AIDS (perceived to be a controversial encounter by some), and spoke on the matter. "God loves you all, without distinction, without limit," the Pope suggested. "He loves those of you who are sick, those who are suffering from AIDS and AIDS-Related Complex... He loves all with an unconditional and everlasting love."¹ As he blessed a four-year old boy who had contracted the disease from a blood transfusion and held him in his arms, many in the packed church wept at this display of compassion and love.

Not all were so moved. Outside the mission's doors, hundreds of protesters chanted, and their echoes were heard across the city. Just a few miles away, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of queer men founded to protest discrimination through satire and theatrical public performance, had organized their own "celebration" to welcome the pope. Congregated in the middle of downtown San Francisco's bustling Union Square, the Sisters—in full makeup and nun habit drag—conducted an exorcism of the Pope.² This irreverent display represented the

¹ Carl Nolte, "He Visits Bridge, Embraces AIDS Patients. Pope Tells AIDS Sufferers They Have God's Love," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 18, 1987.

² "A Sistory, Blow by Blow," *Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence*, <http://www.thesisters.org/sistory/64-a-sistory-blow-by-blow>, accessed November 3, 2015.

concerns of many within San Francisco's well-established gay community, as well as the general population, surrounding the Church's stance on homosexuality, abortion, and contraception.

The contrast between the affirmation inside Mission Dolores and the hostility outside revealed a great deal. Tensions between the Catholic Church and the broader culture of San Francisco had been building for some time. Though San Francisco traces its earliest European roots to Spanish Catholic ecclesiastics, and the Archdiocesan leaders of the immigrant church wielded public influence between the 1880s and the 1960s, converging forces during the second half of the twentieth century transformed the city in ways perhaps no one could have imagined. Many scholars have documented how the cultural and ecclesiastical shifts of the 1960s affected the American Catholic Church as a whole, but few have investigated the local intricacies of the Church in San Francisco.³ This relationship is worthy of attention, however, since the city of San Francisco was at the center of 1960s—often the birthplace of ideas and behaviors that would transform the nation—and continues to be one of the country's leading cultural pioneers.

As David Talbot notes in *Season of the Witch*, “The cultural revolution first came to North Beach, where cheap saloons and fleabag hotels and old Barbary Coast bohemianism beckoned the beats in the 1950s.”⁴ After the war, this traditionally Italian neighborhood began to draw artists, poets, and intellectuals, eventually establishing itself as the West Coast center of the Beat

³ Many respected histories of the United States Catholic Church recognize the importance of the 1960s. Jay Dolan, Patrick Carey, James Fisher, and John McGreevy all give considerable attention to the ways in which the Church was forever changed by Vatican II, as well as the countercultural revolutions of the era. Numerous other scholars of Catholics and American politics, including Richard Gelm, Timothy Byrnes, Mary Segers, Lawrence Kapp, Leslie Griffin, and Mary Hanna, also highlight this important time for the national Church. Finally, Mark Massa S.J. devotes an entire book, *The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever*, to the topic. Yet, none venture much beyond the national stage, and most studies focus on general trends within the American Catholic Church.

⁴ David Talbot, *Season of the Witch*. (New York: Free Press, 2012), 26.

movement.⁵ This Beat generation, united by its resistance to middle-America's post-WWII complacency, foreshadowed the hippies who would begin to migrate *en masse* by the mid-1960s. By May of 1967, Hunter S. Thompson's *New York Times Magazine* piece entitled "The Hashbury is the Capital of the Hippies," explained how the Haight Ashbury neighborhood had replaced neighboring Berkeley as the epicenter of the counterculture.⁶ Intensifying the distinctiveness of the local culture, San Francisco's LGBTQ population rose to prominence in the years following the Summer of Love. The city had long been a haven for alternative lifestyles, but the late '60s and early '70s gave rise to what became known as the "Gay Mecca," and by 1976 more than 140,000 gays were living in San Francisco.⁷ While the gay community was the only group of counterculture newcomers to become a permanent and powerful constituency, the cultural, social, and ideological legacies of the Sixties would change the identity of San Francisco forever.⁸

This thesis will explore the ways in which the relationship between three actors—San Francisco's Catholic Church, its municipal and civic governing bodies, and the robust, often eccentric public culture—changed over the course of four decades. As U.S. historian Lizabeth Cohen remarks in her essay entitled "Re-viewing the Twentieth Century through an American Catholic Lens:"

⁵ Clinton R. Starr, "Individual Resistance and Collective Action," in *Reconstructing the Beats* ed. Jennie Skirl. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 42.

⁶ Hunter S. Thompson, "The Hashbury is the Capital of the Hippies," *New York Times Magazine*, May 14, 1967.

⁷ Talbot, 234.

⁸ In using the phrase, "the Sixties," I refer to the period of great cultural shift and tumult within the United States, loosely defined as 1963-1974, rather than the 1960-1969 chronological definition of the decade. The former definition is justified and better fits the discussion at hand, especially as this paper investigates the implications of historian Patrick Carey's statement that, "The Catholic community, perhaps more than any other religious community in the United States, experienced the simultaneously stimulating and disintegrating hurricane winds of social and religious reforms and upheavals that blew across the country in the 1960s and early 1970s." Patrick W. Carey, *Catholics in America: A History*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 115.

I cannot think of a better historical subject that requires consideration from the top down as well as from the bottom up, one that shows as powerfully the interconnectedness between the international and the local, than Catholic history as it stretches from the global reach of the Roman Catholic Church to the daily lives of ordinary parishioners.⁹

In this spirit, I will use three local, diocesan-level case studies—the obscenity trial surrounding Beat poet Lenore Kandel’s “The Love Book” in 1967, Pope John Paul II’s 1987 visit to San Francisco, and 2008’s ballot initiative to ban same-sex marriage throughout California—to show that the Catholic Church saw its cultural clout sharply decline as San Francisco’s governmental structures became more closely aligned with the progressive ethos of countercultural movements. This transition was not linear or simple. While the church and the city eventually diverged on matters of gender and sexuality, the Catholic tradition of advocating justice for the poor and the marginalized not only coincided with many of the city’s policies and initiatives, but sometimes led the charge to achieve them. Mayors Jack Shelley and Joseph Alito, both practicing Catholics, worked closely with Church leaders throughout the ‘60s and ‘70s on issues highlighted in Pope Leo XIII’s “Rerum Novarum” and Catholic Social Teaching—including labor, civil rights, and homelessness.¹⁰ This tradition of collaboration for economic and racial justice has continued to the present day, but such accord was not enough to preserve the Church’s role as a dominant cultural arbiter. San Francisco’s story will show that John McGreevy is correct in saying that “Un-

⁹ Lizabeth Cohen, “Re-viewing the Twentieth Century through an American Catholic Lens,” in *Catholics in the American Century*, edited by R. Scott Appleby and Kathleen Sprows Cummings. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

¹⁰ Talbot, 33, 150.

derstandings of gender and sexuality would eventually become the central dividing line between Catholics and U.S. liberals, and divisive within Catholicism as well.”¹¹

Much of the conversation will surround San Francisco’s “political culture,” which Lucian Pye describes as “the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system.”¹² With this definition in mind, I will show that as time passed and San Francisco’s political culture continued to shift, many of the Church’s positions on gender and sexuality led to irreconcilable conflict—and at times hostility—with civic leaders and local residents.¹³ It is also important to note that this story’s major actors were those in positions of power: politicians, clergy, and community leaders. The experiences of “ordinary” citizens and parishioners provide additional layers of richness and complexity, and their accounts hold a most valuable place in the exploration of the Catholic Church in San Francisco. However, due to the project’s purview and limitations, this thesis remains largely at an institutional level.

¹¹ John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004).

¹² Richard Gelm, *Politics and Religious Authority: American Catholics Since the Second Vatican Council*. (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 46.

¹³ William Issel characterizes this sense of authority in his description of San Francisco in the late ‘60s, “A distinctive era of San Francisco history was coming to an end—an era that witnessed high degrees of influence of the Catholic notions that the common good derived from and must operate within the bounds of a God-given moral order, that individual rights must be balanced with duties and obligations given by Catholic tradition and values, and that local government should ensure that public policies are partial to and compatible with specific content of Catholic Christian moral values.” William Issel, *Church and State in the City: Catholics and Politics in Twentieth-Century San Francisco*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 3.

Methods and Sources

This project has personal significance. I come from a Catholic background, and my family has been rooted in San Francisco for five generations. I became interested in the history of Roman Catholicism in the city, and wanted to trace how culture, religion, and politics intermingled. As I learned more, it occurred to me that the context in which I had grown up was rather distinctive, and research questions began to emerge. What was the relationship between the Catholic Church, a conservative organization that emphasized centralized authority and valued tradition, and a progressive city with a worldwide reputation for transgression? Did it change over time? Did the countercultural movements of the Sixties change this relationship, I wondered? If so, how?

To find answers to those research questions I turned to textual analysis of printed and unpublished sources. I traveled to the San Francisco Bay Area to conduct historical research in two archives: the San Francisco History Center and the Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Both provided rich materials. At the History Center, I had access to the mayoral papers of Mayors Jack Shelley and Joseph Alioto, which included correspondence with other city officials, as well as other members and leaders of the community. The archive also preserved reports on matters like pornography, juvenile delinquency, and policing priorities during the period. In addition to the mayors' files, the History Center provided access to minutes from Board of Supervisors meetings and extensive archives of both the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the city's two major papers at the time. I was also able to access the archives of smaller, alternative publications including the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *SF Weekly*, and the *San Francisco Bay Times*. Finally, I perused two scrapbooks assembled by lead organizers of the

“No on Prop 8” campaign, which were full of news clippings, photographs, campaign documents, and personal memorabilia.

The Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco (AASF) also proved helpful. I found a host of documents describing local preparations for Pope John Paul II’s visit. These included letters between Archdiocese officials, including Archbishop John R. Quinn, drafts of homilies with comments from second and third readers, illustrated prayer cards, the Pope’s itinerary, and Archdiocesan publications distributed before the papal visit. Those publications were especially comprehensive and included hymns, prayers, readings, illustrations, and transcripts from each of the Pope’s San Francisco events. I also examined correspondence between Archbishop Quinn and the editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* that discussed controversial editorial cartoons depicting the Pope’s visit.

Beyond primary sources like these, the AASF provided the material to reconstruct the official Catholic interpretations of the three cases I focus on in this thesis. The 1966 and 1967 editions of *The Monitor*, the Bay Area Catholic weekly newspaper, provided coverage of “The Love Book” trial and proved invaluable for reconstructing the historical context. *The Monitor* was discontinued by 1987, but the AASF also archived its successor, *San Francisco Catholic*. This monthly magazine offered in-depth coverage of the Archdiocese’s preparation for Pope John Paul II’s visit, as well as the visit itself. That periodical also proved helpful for its 2008 coverage of the Catholic perspective on the debates over Proposition 8.

In my analysis and comparison of national Catholic trends and San Francisco Catholic trends, I rely on the *The Official Catholic Directory*, as well as data from CARA, “a national, non-profit, Georgetown University affiliated research center that conducts social scientific stud-

ies about the Catholic Church.” I also analyzed survey data available at The Association of Religion Data Archives and the Pew Research Center.

Finally, to establish the longer term context for the church leaders’ reaction in 2008, I make use of the 1986 *Homosexuality and Social Justice: Reissue of the Report of the Task Force on Gay/Lesbian Issues, San Francisco*. This original report from 1982 was released for a second time as a 232-page book, and features the findings of a task force commissioned by Archbishop John R. Quinn, as well as reflections and additional commentary on the Catholic Church’s teachings on homosexuality.

Literature Review

To frame my historical research I also read secondary sources. Much of the relevant scholarship included Catholic histories and San Francisco histories.¹⁴ In addition to historical work in these areas, I relied on theoretical and analytical scholarship on the relationship between

¹⁴ For the history of the Catholic Church I read some of the most authoritative and comprehensive accounts of American Catholicism, including *The American Catholic Experience* (1992) by Jay Dolan, *Catholics in America* (2004) by Patrick W. Carey, *In Search of An American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (2002) by Jay Dolan, *Catholicism and American Freedom* (2003) by John T. McGreevy, and the conclusion of *America’s Church* (2011) by Thomas A. Tweed. Regarding history of the city of San Francisco, I selected works that focused on the most relevant themes, including Josh Sides’ *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco*, Christopher Lowen Agee’s *The Streets of San Francisco: Policing and the Creation of a Cosmopolitan Liberal Politics, 1950-1972*, Howard Becker’s *Culture and Civility in San Francisco*, and Mick Sinclair’s *San Francisco: a Cultural and Literary History*.

religion, politics, and culture in the United States—particularly since Vatican II.¹⁵ These books and articles help situate my work within a Catholic Studies context, as well as contribute a Political Science perspective on religion, politics, and culture in the United States.¹⁶

These works contributed to my understanding of a longer historical perspective, and provided a framework for understanding post-Vatican II Catholicism in America. There is a clear consensus within the scholarship on the Sixties' importance, regarding both the Church and the United States. Scholars probed the larger enduring issue in the historiography—the relation between the Catholic Church and American culture. In *The American Catholic Experience*, Dolan asserts that “The challenge of the future still remains the timeless question that people have wrestled with for two hundred years: how to be both Catholic and American. How the new generation of Catholics solves this riddle will determine the shape that American Catholicism will take in the years ahead.”¹⁷ Carey addresses the difficulties the Church has had in answering this riddle, and in his final chapter, entitled “Troubled Times: 1990-2003,” he enumerates the

¹⁵ For political and cultural studies of the Catholic Church in the United States, I relied on a range of texts. Some, including Richard Gelm's *Politics and Religious Authority: American Catholics Since the Second Vatican Council*, *Religion and Politics in the American Milieu* edited by Leslie Griffin, *Church Polity and American Politics: Issues in Contemporary American Catholicism* edited by Mary Segers, Lawrence Kapp's *The Political Values and Voting Behavior of American Catholics*, and *Catholics in American Politics* focused on the electoral behaviors and attitudes of Catholics in the United States. Others, like *Politics, Power, and the Church: The Catholic Crisis and Its Challenge to American Pluralism* by Lawrence Lader and *Catholic Bishops in American Politics* by Timothy Byrnes explored how Church leaders and structures influenced politics. Other works like *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (2012) by Robert Putnam and David Campbell, Robert Wuthnow's *The Restructuring of American Religion*, and *The Churching of America* (2005) by Roger Finke and Rodney Stark help frame the ideological divides within and beyond Catholicism in the late twentieth century. Finally, *Catholics in the American Century* edited by R. Scott Appleby and Kathleen Sprows Cummings combined politics and culture to discuss the Church in the twentieth century.

¹⁶ *The Catholic Studies Reader* defines Catholic Studies as “an interdisciplinary program that includes, but is not limited to, theology, history, literature, political science, economics, sociology, fine arts, music, and social work.” This description fits the purview of this thesis. Additionally, my discussions of changing political landscapes and trends, religion's impact on politics and elections, and San Francisco's changing religious and political attitudes contribute to these conversations occurring within the field of Political Science.

¹⁷ Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), p. 454.

host of divisive issues facing the Church, including sexual abuse scandals, global poverty, terrorism and unrest abroad, and declining members on domestic soil.¹⁸ The themes of crisis and disconnection within the modern period (i.e., since Vatican II) are highlighted by each work. Simply the names of final chapters present an apparent but rather dubious consensus; in addition to Carey's "Troubled Times," Dolan ends *In Search of American Catholicism* with "An American Religion and a Roman Church," and McGreevy concludes with "A Consistent Ethic and Sexual Abuse."

These broad Catholic histories address two of the major themes of this thesis: a Church in the midst of cultural change during the mid-20th century, and post-Vatican II approaches to cultural and political issues like birth control and homosexuality. Although the discussion in both of these impressive works remains at a national level, I will show that many of the national tensions experienced by the Church between 1967-2008 were either intensified locally, or even mostly unique to the city of San Francisco. I will argue that a focus on San Francisco's Catholic Church further complicates the standard story. By approaching the post-Vatican II Catholic Church at a local level—a distinctive one at that—I am able to explore on a more local scale the tensions about which Dolan, Carey, McGreevy, and others write.

San Francisco historical accounts help to establish the setting for the story I tell about local tensions by focusing on the San Francisco Police Department, sexual liberation and revolution, and political and ideological liberalism. Yet those authors ignore or minimize the historical role of the Catholic Church. Agee's *Streets of San Francisco* does mention the Church's participation to a certain degree, and was especially helpful in its coverage of the Kandel trial, but most

¹⁸ Patrick W. Carey, *Catholics in America*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004).

of the scholarly literature does not address local religious history in any substantial way. I hope to remedy that historiographical pattern, by focusing more explicitly and substantially on the Catholic Church's relation to civic government and culture.

The relationship between the Church and the city has been explored by a few scholars. Leslie Woodcock Tentler provides an excellent framework for a local study in *Seasons of Grace: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit*, and John McGreevy utilizes the lens of the city to discuss Catholicism, race, and the urban north in *Parish Boundaries*. Jeffrey M. Burns is perhaps the most preeminent writer on the Catholic Church in San Francisco. He has written histories of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, edited and contributed to *Catholic San Francisco: Sesquicentennial Essays* (2005), and written a number of other books and articles about Bay Area Catholicism. These secondary sources have provided invaluable information. In particular, Burns' fine essay on the Lenore Kandel obscenity trial not only introduced me to that crucial event, but modeled a way to think about the interplay between church, culture, and power. William Issel's *Church and State in the City: Catholics and Politics in Twentieth-Century San Francisco* (2013) is also helpful. It provides in-depth analysis religious and political interactions in the city. Much of the book focuses on events that precede the Sixties, but it nonetheless offers a framework that situates my own work. Furthermore, it addresses many of the cultural tensions I discuss.

Significance of the Project

I hope my research makes a modest contribution to scholarly conversations about the history of the Catholic Church in San Francisco, as well as the study of religion, politics, and cul-

ture in America. By engaging the existing scholarship, I aim to contribute to the conversations in both Catholic Studies and Political Science. Historian Lizabeth Cohen notes that “although historians have paid increasing attention to religion as a crucial factor in shaping American politics and social relations, some critics lament the functionalism of that approach to religion and urge more attention to religious faith and practice in defining the cultural experiences of Americans.”¹⁹ I hope to address this concern, and produce a more complex portrait of Catholicism in San Francisco that properly includes the political and cultural aspects of the story.

What were once issues specific to San Francisco have now come to the national stage. Through a careful examination of the changing relationship between church and city, this paper seeks to gain not only a greater understanding of institutional dynamics, but perhaps unearth findings that can be applied to the study of the American Catholic Church as a whole. As national public opinion regarding issues of gender, sexuality, and religion continues to grow closer to the mores that San Francisco has maintained for decades, the story of the Church in San Francisco may provide some answers to what lies ahead for Catholics in the country.

Much of the work done on Catholics and American politics, like most of the histories, focuses on the national level. While that is understandable and valuable, these histories miss many nuances. Although San Francisco is more liberal, racially and ethnically diverse, affluent, and urban than most of the United States, there is still much to learn from the sharp decline in its Church-city relations over the past forty years—especially as national religious and political trends (abandonment of organized religion, favorable attitudes toward gay marriage, etc.) begin to mirror the historical context of the city.

¹⁹ Cohen, 50.

Yet it is equally important to recognize that San Francisco's Catholic Church is not the U.S. Catholic Church. This thesis will show that, because of a unique social and political landscape, the narrative of the Catholic Church in San Francisco is even more complicated than its national counterpart. In addition to providing necessary nuance to the general story, this thesis will begin to recover some San Francisco history that has been too often forgotten. While much has been written about the revolutionary "Sixties" and what followed, little notice has been paid to the major impact they had on the city's once-dominant Catholic Church. Mark Massa S.J. addresses this by noting that "it is one of the problems of American cultural history as a discipline that religious issues within American culture tend to be given a short shrift, if studied at all. But such a prejudice in fact *hides* important cultural, political, and social impulses by simply pretending they are not present at all."²⁰ Within this period, the Church fell from a position of immense power to one of strident resistance against waves of change. Despite this loss of authority, the Church has retained a certain degree of prominence with regard to schools, parishes, and population (particularly among immigrants).²¹ With this in mind, it is then necessary to properly understand how the Catholic Church fits into the broader history of San Francisco, as this thesis will strive to do.

In his essay on "The Love Book" trial, historian Jeffrey Burns suggested that San Francisco's "Catholic Century" had come to an end by 1967, and he concluded by encouraging other

²⁰ Mark Massa, S.J. *The American Catholic Revolution: How the Sixties Changed the Church Forever*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. xii.

²¹ According to a 2010 study by the USC Dornsife Center for Religion and Civic Culture, the Roman Catholic Church in San Francisco operates 50 churches, and claims 15.03% of the population as adherents. In second place is the United Methodist Church, which operates 12 churches and claims 4.88% of the population (<https://crcc.usc.edu/sanfrancisco/>). The disparity in these numbers alone is quite telling, and shows the Church's continued dominance among the religiously-affiliated. What is even more telling, however, is that according to the 2014 American Values Atlas, 33% of San Franciscans do not affiliate with any religion at all (<http://ava.publicreligion.org/#religious/2014/MetroAreas/religion/m/26>).

scholars to pick up the narrative after that historical turning point: “The complex story of the cultural transformation wrought by the 1960s in San Francisco is still to be written.”²² This thesis is an attempt to take a few tentative steps toward that fuller account of the Church and city in the wake of the 1960s.

²² Jeffrey M. Burns, “Lenore Kandel,” *The Argonaut*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1994.

[1]

1967 | UNITY The Trial of Lenore Kandel's "The Love Book"



Figure 1.1. Protesters gather in front of The Psychedelic Shop following the arrests of Jay Thelin, Allen Cohen, and Ron Muszalski for distributing Lenore Kandel's "The Love Book," November 1966. (Photo: Gordon Peters/Chronicle, 1966 <http://www1.hdnux.com/photos/07/74/42/2082992/7/628x471.jpg>)

"By 1967, San Francisco's year of love, the old Irish Catholic order was holding on by its fingertips. Tom Cahill was in charge of the police department, Jack Shelley occupied the mayor's office, and Judge Raymond O'Connor was responsible for juvenile justice—a key position in the bulwark against the youthful army that was besieging San Francisco" —David Talbot, Season of the Witch

Talk about San Francisco's sordid streak was not new when Mayor Jack Shelley took office in January of 1964. True to its location, the city's "wild-west" inclinations date back to the mid-nineteenth century when it became the urban center of California's Gold Rush. Situated near the boom towns in the foothills, San Francisco drew thousands of rowdy souls who hoped to get

rich quick, and who needed to ease their despair when they failed. The city's growth was rapid.²³ Before gold was discovered in 1848, it was a small mission town of only a few hundred residents.²⁴ As news of California's untapped riches traveled around the world, San Francisco's population grew to nearly 57,000 by 1860, and hit 150,000 by 1870.²⁵ This explosion drew a colorful cast of newcomers, including not only prospectors, but financiers, business owners, politicians, and laborers. The camps' entertainment industries also re-located to the city. This diverse cohort of prostitutes and burlesque dancers settled in the district that first became known as "The Barbary Coast," which journalist Harry Asbury described as a "unique criminal district that for almost seventy years was the scene of more viciousness and depravity, but which at the same time possessed more glamour, than any other area of vice and iniquity on the American continent."²⁶

As this unsavory neighborhood grew in both size and infamy, so did the city's ranks of elites. Many of the most influential Roman Catholics took issue with the Barbary Coast's industry of public sexuality as early as the 1890s. Driven by a desire to save the character of a city spiraling into sin, Irish-born priest Father Terrence Caraher led the charge. In a 1909 article, the *San Francisco Call* described his crusade:

The militant priest began the fight by calling to his aid the decent citizenship of the city. With Father Caraher in the forefront of the fray, while standing shoulder to shoulder

²³ Gunther Barth discusses this phenomenon at length in his book *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), in which he states, "San Francisco and Denver were instant cities. They came into existence suddenly and flourished immediately. Magic seemed to account for their rise, but it was the discovery of gold that touched off the urban explosions that led to their development. The lure of easy riches attracted the masses of humanity that made instant cities," p. xxi.

²⁴ Josh Sides, *Erotic City*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 18.

²⁵ United States Department of Commerce, Census Bureau. *Historic U.S. Census Populations of Places, Towns, and Cities in California, 1850-2000*. Accessed via San Francisco Public Library, December 7, 2015. <http://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=2000027601>.

²⁶ Sides, 18.

behind him ranged many ministers of other denominations, the lash of public opinion was wielded across the bare, backs of those responsible for the situation.²⁷

But public officials favored the financial perks of those businesses to continue and did little to address Caraher's concerns.²⁸ Shrugged shoulders and blind eyes remained the policies of the mayor and the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) until the 1906 Earthquake jolted the city into a period of restructuring and reform.

As the decades passed, San Francisco's licentiousness did not fade as much as it retreated into the corners of the cityscape. Though perhaps not as unbridled as the heyday of the Barbary Coast, North Beach's burlesque shows and gentlemen's clubs became landmarks of the neighborhood, and would remain as such when the Beat Generation came to town in the 1950s. During this same period, the power structures in San Francisco shifted. For the city's first fifty years, outsider mayors (including Civil War veterans, Protestant ministers, and East Coast aristocrats) ruled the city. Yet as it expanded, more locals and more Catholics occupied the office. Between 1850 and 1897, fourteen of eighteen mayors were Protestant, with two Catholics and two Jews rounding out the bunch (Appendix A). Between 1897 and 2016, however, half of the next eighteen mayors were Catholic. The other half included, four Protestants, a Greek Orthodox, a Jew, and three of unknown affiliation. This religious diversity signals San Francisco's overarching pluralistic character. But when we consider both the Catholic mayoral clout and the religious affiliation of members of the San Francisco Police Department of this era, the public power of Catholics is impossible to deny (Appendix B). Between 1920 and 1996, thirteen of fourteen

²⁷ "Father Caraher's War Against Vice: How the Militant Priest Waged His Battles in Historic Parish," *San Francisco Call*, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=SFC19090308.2.24>, March 8, 1909.

²⁸ Sides, 20-21.

Chiefs of Police were Catholic. Though, as religion's presence in the public sphere has faded, the religious affiliations of Police Chiefs are harder to identify in recent years. Political Scientist Lawrence Lader identifies this phenomenon of Catholic institutional power in urban centers through a New York City incident in which the Archbishop ordered police to shut down a town hall meeting discussing birth control. He comments that...

it raised the further question of who in the city government approved this alliance between the church and state and made the police carry it out. The Town Hall meeting, in fact, was the first open proof that power in New York City had been wrested from the old Protestant establishment and taken over by the Catholic church.²⁹

A similar bond between government officials, the police department, and Catholic leaders had emerged in San Francisco.

By 1967, Catholics had secured their hold on the city. With fifty parishes and fifty-five elementary and high schools in a forty-nine square mile radius—along with a Catholic Mayor and Police Chief—the Church had transformed the built environment and exerted a good deal of political and cultural influence. But the cultural renegades were gaining traction. The Beat Poets had set up shop in North Beach, alongside the topless bars and dark alleys that had plagued Church officials for over a century. Allen Ginsberg's poem "Howl" had been subject to criminal prosecution for its obscene material ten years prior, and together with Catholic "Clean-Culture" activists, Mayor Jack Shelley and Chief Thomas Cahill were about to seize the opportunity to challenge the counterculture again.

²⁹ Lawrence Lader, *Politics, Power, and the Church: The Catholic Crisis and Its Challenge to American Pluralism*. (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1987), p. 3-4.

City and Church Take on “The Love Book:” Institutions Join Forces

On a foggy November day in 1966, a small group of protesters, some barefoot, gathered outside of the Psychedelic Shop in the Haight Ashbury. They held signs reading “Fascist Police Not Wanted Here,” “1st Amendment Guarantee,” and “Cops Go Home.” One man interviewed by the local news station recounted the events:

About four policeman and a plainclothesman came in and said ‘Everybody get out! Everybody get out! The store is closed.’ They wouldn’t give a reason...When we asked them they started physically pushing people out of the store. Later we found out they said the issue was pornography. But nobody gave us any definite statements.³⁰

The policemen were Officers Peter Maloney and Sol Weiner—the two sole members of SFPD’s obscenity beat. Anti-obscenity and pornography had become major focus points for Mayor Shelley since taking office in 1964. A letter from Chief Thomas Cahill dated November 17, 1965, exactly one year before the Psychedelic Shop’s raid, informed the Mayor that he too was “concerned about this type of filth.”³¹ The collaboration extended beyond the perceived civic responsibilities of municipal government, as both Cahill and Shelley were devoted Catholics who maintained close relationships with the city’s clergy—particularly when it came to morally tinged issues. Richard McBrien aptly characterizes this phenomenon as clergy’s “personal association with political leaders, corporate executives, university presidents, newspaper editors, and the like, with the intention and hope of influencing their public behavior, directly or indirectly.”³²

Shelley’s association with Catholic leaders was no secret among those who knew and advised the

³⁰ “The Psychedelic Shop Gets Raided,” Young Broadcasting of San Francisco, Inc., Date aired: 11/15/1966 on KRON TV, <https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/210733>, accessed December 8, 2015.

³¹ Thomas Cahill, letter to Mayor Jack Shelley, November 17, 1965.

³² Richard McBrien, “The Future Role of the Church in American Society,” in *Religion and Politics in the American Milieu*, edited by Leslie Griffin. (Notre Dame, IN:Review of Politics, 1989), p. 97.

mayor. Earl Raab, a prominent Jewish community leader and friend of Shelley, prefaced an advisory note with, “Dear John, In all this talk about police and citizens committees (and I know the [Catholic] clergy is coming in tomorrow) - there’s one simple set of facts...”³³ It was clear to all that Shelley’s commitment to his Catholic faith was both personal and political.

Journalist David Talbot remarks that “Jack Shelley was typical of the old San Francisco breed. When it came to labor and civil rights, he was a man of progress. When it came to family and moral issues, he was a son of the Church.”³⁴ As the first of nine children, Shelley grew up in a Catholic household in the then-Irish heavy Mission District. He attended law school at the University of San Francisco, a Jesuit institution, before beginning a career with organized labor that led him to politics. During his tenure as Mayor he worked closely with the clergy on a number of issues ranging from civil rights to pornography. Additionally, he was an active parishioner at St. John the Evangelist Parish in the Outer Mission District/Bernal Heights neighborhood and supported *The Monitor*, San Francisco’s Catholic weekly newspaper—regularly through advertising space that read “This Page Sponsored by Mayor and Mrs. John F. Shelley and Family, Members of St. John the Evangelist Parish.”³⁵

Once Allen Cohen, Jay Thelin, and Ron Muszalski—owners of The Psychedelic Shop and City Lights Bookstore—were arrested for distributing Lenore Kandel’s purportedly obscene poetry entitled “The Love Book,” it took five months for the trial to get underway. In the interim, Kandel defiantly read her poem to a crowd of more than 15,000 people at the Human Be-In in

³³ Earl Raab, letter to Mayor Jack Shelley, May 5, 1969.

³⁴ Talbot, 33.

³⁵ *The Monitor*, July 1966.

Golden Gate Park, while the city's administration and Catholic activists prepared for a public battle.³⁶ By selecting the work of Lenore Kandel, the city's traditional coalition not only took on pornography, but challenged a figure who bridged the earlier North Beach Beat Movement and the growing hippie culture across town in the Haight. The poem was filled with "unabashed lyrics and defiant, uninhibited vernacular diction accord with the hippie emergence," and celebrated "sexually liberated women and taboo words in the literature of the new counterculture."³⁷ This public, female sexuality directly conflicted with official municipal and ecclesial ideas of morality, and city and archdiocesan officials felt it was their duty to put it to an end. Seven months before Kandel's poems were seized under Shelley's and Cahill's orders, Archbishop Joseph McGucken had made pornography a central issue of the annual Convention of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men.³⁸ In his address to over 500 attendees, he told the crowd to "put every judge on notice that the people were against pornography."³⁹

And so Judge Lawrence Mana was prepared when "The Love Book" trial was brought to him in April of 1967. Another devout Catholic who had been president of the Salesian Boys' Club for over five years, Mana would hear what would become San Francisco's longest running

³⁶ The Human Be-In was an historic gathering of the counterculture movement in which the politically-motivated, mostly-student activists from the East Bay in Berkeley joined hands with the psychedelically inclined "Love Generation" from San Francisco. The event featured dozens of prominent artists and figures of the Sixties including Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsberg, the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Janis Joplin. Lenore Kandel was the only woman poet to read her work onstage.

³⁷ Ronna C. Johnson, "Lenore Kandel's *The Love Book*: Psychedelic Poetics, Cosmic Erotica, and Sexual Politics in the Mid-Sixties Counterculture," in *Reconstructing the Beats*, ed. Jennie Skerl. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 90.

³⁸ Christopher Lowen-Engel Agee. "The Streets of San Francisco: Blacks, Beats, Homosexuals, and the San Francisco Police Department, 1950--1968." Order No. 3190796, University of California, Berkeley, 2005.

³⁹ *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 13, 1965. p 3.

Municipal Court trial in its history.⁴⁰ Defending Cohen, Thelin, and Muszalski were American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawyer Marshall Krause and his partner Vasilios Chouolos.⁴¹ As the Church and government had been fighting to quell the city's rambunctious ways for decades, so too had free speech activists been working to defend cultural dissent. Krause was a prominent ACLU trial lawyer who had previously defended a number of First Amendment cases, including one that involved an obscene sculpture that had been confiscated from a North Beach art gallery in 1964.⁴² The prosecutor was Assistant District Attorney Frank Shaw, who also had experience with obscenity.⁴³ Shaw's concern with obscenity directly aligned with the now clearly-established pattern, as he too was a devout Catholic and graduate of St. Ignatius High School and the University of San Francisco.⁴⁴ With Shaw organizing the case against the dissenters, local Catholic leaders and lay activists felt sure that explicit appeals to morality and "clean culture" would win the day.

The Trial: Defending Catholic Clean Culture

As court proceedings got underway, it quickly became clear that Shaw's strategy diverged from that in previous cases. Instead of employing tactics that set aside religious motivations, or

⁴⁰ Agee, 166-167.

⁴¹ Jeffrey M. Burns, "Lenore Kandel," *The Argonaut*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1994, http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=LENORE_KANDEL, accessed December 9, 2015.

⁴² Ephraim Margolin, "The Obscene Sculpture Trial in San Francisco," *The Champion*, <http://www.nacdl.org/Champion.aspx?id=4922>, September 2008.

⁴³ Earlier that year, Frank Shaw had prosecuted a shop on Haight Street for selling posters depicting sexual acts. Many elements of the case were foreshadows of what was to come when "The Love Book" went to trial, including talented, progressive opposition and Catholic witnesses testifying for the defense—a sign that began to hint the Church organization was not as cohesive as it might have been in earlier periods.

⁴⁴ Agee, 164.

at least muted them in the interest of appealing to broader audiences, Shaw made his case about protecting San Francisco's Catholic spirit. Although the prosecution's arguments centered around "the average person" and how Kandel's work might affect such an individual, the conceptual framework established was unapologetically Catholic. The state sought victory by convincing the jury that the entire culture was at stake if such graphic discussions of female sexuality made their way to San Francisco households. Each of Shaw's witnesses reinforced this notion of "San Francisco as a Catholic city" and argued that defending these spiritual mores was the best way to maintain the city's character.

Val King, the city's resident pop-culture Catholic, was the first witness called to the stand. He wrote a weekly column in *The Monitor*, hosted the Archdiocese's local television program, "Heritage Program," and had taught at St. Ignatius High School.⁴⁵ This background, in addition to his position at the city Assessor's Office, was enough to convince Judge Mana of his status as an "expert on community standards." On the stand, King reiterated the prosecution's faith-based concerns, as scholar Christopher Agee noted in his account of the trial:

Focusing in particular on a passage describing bisexual gods, the Catholic columnist testified that *The Love Book's* blend of sex, homosexuality, and religion was not only sexually obscene but also sacrilegious.⁴⁶

The sacrilegious nature of Kandel's poem was a common theme. Boyd Pucinelli, described by *The Monitor* as a "grandmother of five and a PTA leader" also commented that "it's not the words I object to although they offend me. I do object to the way they are used. The use of the

⁴⁵ Anne Marie Ferraris, "Local Testimony on 'Love Book' Trial," *The Monitor*, April 1967.

⁴⁶ Agee, 167.

words here is sacrilegious.”⁴⁷ But the poem’s sacrilegious nature did not fall under the purview of a public court, or so Krause tried to argue. Yet Judge Mana allowed both King’s and Pucinelli’s commentary, therefore sanctioning religion’s central role in the case.

Shaw’s remaining witnesses echoed the sentiments of King and Pucinelli, raising concerns of heresy, blasphemy, and insults to Catholicism as their main objection to Kandel’s words.⁴⁸ Of course, these concerns were closely tied to civil concerns over obscene phrases and offensive imagery; but the fact that they were not separated in the courtroom reveals the prosecution’s, judge’s, and jury’s implicit beliefs and values. However, the connection between Catholic morality and civil legality did not go unnoticed by all. Krause repeatedly protested Mana’s allowance of niche witnesses (like King) to represent all of the city’s “community standards,” and his frustration grew when his counterpart experts, like Arthur Hope, a secular “far more widely read columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*,” were rejected.⁴⁹ In an interview with *The Monitor*, Krause told reporter Anne Marie Ferraris, “I am distressed for the prosecution seems to have taken a religious emphasis with Catholics trying to apply their doctrine to the rest of the world.”⁵⁰ Scholar Richard Gelm affirms Krause’s analysis in his study of post-Vatican II Catholicism when he notes that “a primary objective of the Second Vatican Council was for the Church to find new ways to apply religion to culture.”⁵¹ The trial had become just that.

⁴⁷ Ferraris.

⁴⁸ In his witness testimony, Monsignor Peter Armstrong, another prominent Catholic leader who had been deemed an expert in social work, condemned the poem as “‘blasphemous’ because it debases other people’s beliefs in God.” Ferraris.

⁴⁹ Agee, 167.

⁵⁰ Ferraris.

⁵¹ Gelm, 46.

When it became evident that the trial would proceed along religious lines, the defense sought to approach church and state from alternative positions. It did this in two primary ways: illuminating Lenore Kandel's vastly different perspective of her own work, and revealing discord within the Church itself. When Kandel took the stand, the jury heard something entirely different from the narrative Shaw had constructed. Beautiful, exotic, and boldly dressed in "a brilliant orange turtleneck sweater, burgundy jacket, and vivid orange stockings," she read aloud selections from her poem to the jury. A reporter from *The San Francisco Chronicle* described her tone as "more reverent than passionate."⁵² The defense seized on this sense of reverence, and had Kandel elaborate on the spiritual inspirations of her poem. She testified:

I believe man is a divine animal, not just an animal and not just a spirit. This is a feeling expressed in Eastern religions and in Christian mysticism. I believe when humans can be so close together to become one flesh, one spirit, they transcend the human into the divine.⁵³

Media outlets, including both *The Chronicle* and *The Monitor*, described her in very different terms than in Shaw's account, describing Kandel as a "poet-housewife" with a voice "appropriate for bedtime stories."⁵⁴

This alternative point of view attempted to pivot perceptions of the poem from obscene and sinful to artistic and spiritual. The defense buttressed its case by inviting intellectuals and even health professionals to the stand in order to praise the poem's literary merits and celebrate its positive representation of female sexuality. But Krause's most important witness was Father Robert Brophy, a Jesuit priest and academic who interpreted the poem very differently from his

⁵² Donovan Bess, "Lenore Defends the Love Book," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 6, 1967.

⁵³ Ferraris.

⁵⁴ Ferraris, Bess.

religious peers. Although his superiors at the University of San Francisco (USF) and within the Archdiocese had instructed him not to testify, Brophy “felt morally obligated” to appear on the stand.⁵⁵ As a professor of English literature at USF, he framed his testimony from an academic standpoint and deemed it “an ecstatic hymn to the goodness of love.”⁵⁶ Ferraris reported further on his positive opinion of the poem in *The Monitor*:

He said the value of this book is its acknowledgement of the loving unity between man and woman and its exposition of the sacramentality of communicating with God through this experience.⁵⁷

Fr. Brophy’s interpretation, though controversial within Catholic circles, demonstrated dissent within the Church. This important display of defiance once again reinforces and connects to the broader national narrative: “The Church, which might have been a strong point of resistance to the sexual revolution in matters of law, was too internally divided by the mid-1960s to mount a concerted opposition.”⁵⁸ Not only was the Archdiocese battling outsiders, but struggling (and failing) to maintain a unified voice from within.

While Fr. Brophy’s comments caused a stir within the courtroom and the larger Catholic community, the prosecution found its answer to them in Father Herman Hauk. Fr. Hauk, another Jesuit academic, contested everything his fellow Jesuit had said. Hauk told the jury that he had a “nauseating experience” in reading “The Love Book,” and warned that “the book is very harmful

⁵⁵ Agee, 171.

⁵⁶ Anne Marie Ferraris, “Love Book Testimony,” *The Monitor*, May 1967.

⁵⁷ Ferraris.

⁵⁸ Patrick Allitt, “Catholic Conservative Intellectuals and the Politics of Sexuality,” in *Church Polity and American Politics: Issues in Contemporary American Catholicism*, edited by Mary Segers. (New York, NY: Garland, 1990), p. 209.

to the social, cultural, spiritual, and mental health of the people.”⁵⁹ This testimony, in addition to the other Catholic community experts Shaw had called, was enough to convince the jury. After ten hours of deliberation, they deemed the defendants guilty of distributing obscene material with “no redeeming social value.”⁶⁰

An Unnerving Future: Catholicism and the City after the Love Book Trial

Although the guilty verdict of “The Love Book Trial” appeared to be a victory for the old Catholic San Francisco establishment, the celebration was short lived. The verdict was overturned four years later in 1971, as the Archdiocese continued to watch its influence slip away. Religious historian Jeffrey Burns interprets the trial “as an attempt to assert the basic values of mainstream San Francisco; values that were increasingly and vigorously being called into question.”⁶¹ The power struggle over—and ultimate acceptance of—Kandel’s poetry showed that the growing counterculture had edged its way into common public discourse. No longer was the city’s vice contained in a few seedy streets in North Beach. It had become *celebrated* by a cultural figure whom media had dubbed a “poet-housewife.”

Furthermore, Fr. Brophy’s dissent—and the support he garnered—revealed cracks in what was supposed to be a united Catholic front. While he might have remained an outlier within the ranks of the clergy, progressive Catholics around the city rallied around him when the “Clean-Culture” activists demanded his excommunication. Those supporters included relatively prominent figures, “including State Senator George Moscone, USF Professors James Colwell

⁵⁹ “Love Book Criticized by Jesuit,” *The Argus* (Fremont newspaper), May 23, 1967; Ferraris.

⁶⁰ Burns.

⁶¹ Burns.

and Warren Coffey, and Clayton Barbeau, the managing editor of *Franciscan* magazine.”⁶² Although these men were not among the “ruling Catholic elite,” which included Mayor Shelley, Chief Cahill and his police department, and Archdiocesan leadership, they were prominent enough to cause the upper ranks great concern.

Following the jury’s initial guilty verdict in 1967, sales of “The Love Book” exceeded 20,000 copies. Before the trial, it had sold less than 100.⁶³ Yet this tangible effect of the trial pales in comparison of what was to come. Over the course of seven weeks in the spring of 1967, it had become clear that the Catholic Church’s position as *de facto* cultural arbiter was being challenged. The ultimately negative outcome of the Kandel trial was but one lost battle at the onset of decades-long, culturally rooted war. The widespread effects of the 1960s and Vatican II were emerging on a national level: “Many Catholics stopped attending Mass or left the Church altogether; others remained, but doubted or rejected the authority of the Church’s teachings, especially in the area of sexuality.”⁶⁴ With the trial behind them—deemed one of “Catholic San Francisco’s last stands against the onrushing cultural revolution”—the establishment looked anxiously to the future, wary of what was to come.⁶⁵

⁶² Agee, 175.

⁶³ Burns.

⁶⁴ Lawrence Kapp, *The Political Values and Voting Behavior of American Catholics*. (Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1999), 88.

⁶⁵ Talbot, 24.

[2]

1987 | TENSION Pope John Paul II Visits San Francisco



Figure 2.1. Protesters turned out in record-breaking numbers to demonstrate against Pope John Paul II and Vatican teachings on gender and sexuality, September 1987. (Photo: John O'Hara/Chronicle 1987, <http://blog.sfgate.com/parenting/2011/06/09/when-the-pope-visited-san-francisco-photos/>)

“The danger and terrorism represented by the Vatican’s new statement cannot be understated: it will unleash the flames of ignorance and violence more effectively than a bomb ever could.” —

Editorial Opinion, *Bay Area Reporter*

Twenty years after the symbolic but short-lived victory over Lenore Kandel’s smut, San Francisco’s Catholic Church found itself in a radically transformed city. Many changes were socioeconomic and demographic. As was occurring across the country, increasingly affluent Irish and Italian Catholic families left the city for nearby suburbs, and poorer Asian and Latino immigrants came to take their place. Many of these new immigrants were Catholics, and the Archdiocese welcomed them with open arms. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, parishes became central community spaces that helped immigrants adapt to their new environment; they also offered valuable opportunities to celebrate the cultural practices and faith traditions of their homelands. Beyond congregational hospitality, the Archdiocese was a major force in immigration advocacy,

and played a vital role in passing San Francisco's "Sanctuary City" legislation in 1985.⁶⁶ The pastor of St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Reverend Peter Sammon, was one of the most active organizers, and successfully brought together ecclesial and city leaders—a feat that had become increasingly rare over the years. In its coverage of the process, the *San Francisco Chronicle* remarked:

It has been in church organizations such as Sammon's that the sanctuary movement has been gaining ground and generating headlines. Groups such as Catholic Social Services, have played principal roles in bringing the resolution to the city's supervisors, including drafting the wording, lining up sponsors and lobbying board members for support.⁶⁷

Yet new immigration patterns were just one change in a city and an Archdiocese that had experienced many demographic and cultural shifts. While the Church's doctrine on human and immigrant rights made it easy for officials to lead the charge for some social justice initiatives, its teachings left little room for harmony on other issues facing 1980s San Francisco.

Majority without Authority: The Church Adjusts to Its New Status

By 1987, the Archdiocese had found itself in uncharted territory. Although its numbers had sharply declined in the twenty years since the Kandel trial, Catholicism remained the city's

⁶⁶ In December of 1985, Mayor Dianne Feinstein signed a resolution that made San Francisco a "Sanctuary City." The law declared that "City Departments shall not discriminate against Salvadorans and Guatemalan refugees because of their immigration status, and shall not jeopardize the safety and welfare of law-abiding refugees by acting in a way that may cause their deportation." Since then, with the addition of a solidifying amendment by Mayor Art Agnos in 1989, no city departments or officials have been permitted to question the status, or aid in the deportation of any undocumented citizens unless required by State or Federal regulation. "TIMELINE: How San Francisco Became A Sanctuary City For Undocumented Immigrants," *CBS Bay Area*, <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2015/07/08/timeline-how-san-francisco-became-a-sanctuary-city-for-undocumented-immigrants/>, July 8, 2015.

⁶⁷ Reginald Smith, "Move to Aid Central American Refugees Supervisors to Vote on S.F. as `Sanctuary,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 7, 1985.

dominant religion by every measure.⁶⁸ According to a 1990 survey conducted by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB), Catholics accounted for 62% of San Francisco's religiously affiliated population, and 27% of the city's entire body of 723,959.⁶⁹ While the Church was not immune to the broader patterns of post-1960s religious decline, it continued to hold overwhelming majorities among the religiously affiliated.⁷⁰ By 1990, San Francisco was 44% "unaffiliated" and 27% Catholic—both higher proportions than the national averages; the second largest faith was Judaism, claiming 6% of the population. With regard to the city's built environment, Catholics operated 58 parishes across the city, while Jews and Baptists tied for second with 22 congregations each.⁷¹

But these numbers offer an incomplete profile of the Church's standing. Not only had sheer numbers changed, but many aspects of the urban landscape and civic culture had become unrecognizable. San Francisco was not immune to the problems plaguing the national Church:

⁶⁸ "County Membership Report: San Francisco County, California - 1990 Report," Association of Religious Data Archives, http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/c/06/rcms2010_06075_county_cong_1990.asp, accessed January 25, 2015.

⁶⁹ One of the best measures of membership decline between 1967 and 1987 is a comparison of baptisms and marriages within the Archdiocese of San Francisco. In 1967, 18,780 children were baptized in the Church; in 1987, the number had dropped to 7,426. Similarly, there were 3,417 marriages within the Church in 1967, and only 1,719 in 1987. It is also important to note that these numbers refer to the Archdiocese as a whole, including San Mateo and Marin counties. Therefore, the number of baptisms and marriages within San Francisco county were even lower than the available data show. See Appendix C for additional data on San Francisco's dwindling Catholic presence.

⁷⁰ Scholars Robert Putnam and David Campbell theorize on the national religious trends following the 1960s in their book, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012). Following this decade of change (much of it centered in the Bay Area) Putnam and Campbell refer to "the shock of the '60s:" "If you go back to the 1950s, you find a high point of Americans' religiosity. In fact, some historians would argue that it was the most religious period of all of American history. And yet, in a very short period of time, by the time we hit the mid-'60s, America was in the throes of this huge societal transformation, what we refer to as the shock of the '60s. By 1966, TIME magazine is asking on its cover, famously, 'Is God Dead?'" Unsurprisingly, data from the Archdiocese of San Francisco between 1967-1987 confirms these trends on a local level.

⁷¹ "County Membership Report: San Francisco County, California - 1990 Report," Association of Religious Data Archives, http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/c/06/rcms2010_06075_county_cong_1990.asp, accessed January 25, 2016.

declining weekly mass attendance, faltering numbers of priests and women religious, and a widespread rejection of the contraception-banning 1968 papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. In fact, the Archdiocese of San Francisco experienced these crises at more dramatic rates than the country as a whole.⁷² Yet in addition to these general issues, San Francisco's Church faced a host of far more localized and complicated challenges.

The most tangible—and threatening—change between 1967 and 1987 was the transformation of the Castro district. This central neighborhood was known as Eureka Valley in its earliest days. Populated first by Lutheran Finnish immigrants, it soon became an ethnically diverse, mostly Catholic hub of working-class Irish, German, and Scandinavian families.⁷³ Josh Sides describes the environment as

...almost indistinguishable from its neighborhood church, Most Holy Redeemer, dedicated in 1902. Heavily Catholic, Eureka Valley was a neighborhood of second- and third-generation immigrants.⁷⁴

By the time the Sixties were underway, with the hippies just a few miles west of the Castro, the neighborhood began to change. As the Catholic families began vacating their Victorians and heading for the suburbs, displaced World War II veterans found a place to call home. These soldiers, who had been dishonorably discharged for their sexuality, succeeded in building what would become the largest, most culturally vibrant gay community in the United States.⁷⁵

As historian Jeffrey Burns notes:

⁷² Refer to Appendix C.

⁷³ “The History of the Castro,” *PBS KQED*, <http://www.kqed.org/w/hood/castro/castroHistory.html>, 2009.

⁷⁴ Sides, 108.

⁷⁵ “The History of the Castro.”

The growth of the gay community presented enormous pastoral problems for the Church in San Francisco. The gays could not be treated as any other minority...Whereas cultural pluralism could be used to greet the new immigrants, a 'moral pluralism' could not be adopted to accommodate the gay community.⁷⁶

The Archdiocese's mobilization for new immigrants was mirrored by its paralysis when it came to gays. By 1980, nearly one-fifth of San Francisco's population identified as gay or lesbian, and friction had become inevitable.⁷⁷ This new cohort, rich with political power and social capital, threatened whatever remained of the Church's cultural clout. San Francisco was no longer governed by pre-Sixties era coalitions of Catholic mayors, priests, judges, and cops—who all lived in the same neighborhoods, studied at the same schools, and prayed in the same pews. Rather, the city had become a patchwork quilt of newcomers and old-time San Franciscans, and the government reflected it. The Board of Supervisors included five women, two Black Supervisors, two Latinos, one Asian-American, and an openly gay man. The Mayor was a Jewish woman. Only the Police Chief, Frank Jordan, fit the white, Catholic, San Francisco-born, USF- educated mold of decades past.

By September of 1987, on the dawn of Pope John Paul II's visit, the church-city relationship had grown strained. While his two-day visit included much of the predictable fare—landmark blessings, Pope-mobile processions, and a mass celebrated by over 70,000 attendees—it also provided a public stage for simmering tensions. The city, which was led by a lukewarm Mayor and a hostile Board of Supervisors, ceremonially welcomed the Pontiff as the echoes of dissenters rang loudly nearby. Thousands of citizens concerned with the Church's stance on sex-

⁷⁶ Jeffrey M. Burns, "Beyond the Immigrant Church: Gays and Lesbians and the Catholic Church in San Francisco, 1977-1987," *U.S. Catholic Historian* Vol. 19, No. 1, Winter 2001.

⁷⁷ Burns.

uality and women's issues took to the streets to form the largest protests during the Pope's U.S. visit. The old-boy Catholic city of 1967 was no more.

Church & City Navigate New Waters: Episodic Discomfort

As the gay community's local influence grew in San Francisco, the Church proceeded with caution. One of the first public interactions occurred in 1973, when Dignity, a group of gay and lesbian Catholics, were discovered to be celebrating weekly mass at St. Peter's Parish. In response to protests from conservative congregants, *The Monitor* published an editorial that outlined "what would become the basic archdiocesan policy over the next fifteen years."⁷⁸ The message was careful and nuanced, firmly stating the Church's opposition to homosexual behavior while simultaneously reminding Catholics that "charity and love must be in our motives in our dialogue with homosexual Christians."⁷⁹

It was not until later in the decade that conflict between Catholics and gays grabbed national headlines with the assassinations of Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. Harvey Milk, the city's first openly gay politician, was shot five times in November of 1978 by Dan White, a former police officer and supervisor who had represented one of the city's last remaining Irish-Catholic strongholds. Milk and White had clashed often during their time on the Board, often over gay-rights issues.⁸⁰ In his biography of Milk, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, historian Randy Shilts quotes Dan White's campaign materials:

⁷⁸ Burns.

⁷⁹ "Editorial: Homosexuality," *The Monitor*, January 25, 1973.

⁸⁰ "Harvey Milk, Hero and Martyr," *PBS KQED*, <http://www.kqed.org/w/hood/castro/harveymilk.html>, accessed January 25, 2016.

“I am not going to be forced out of San Francisco by splinter groups of radicals, social deviates and incorrigibles.”⁸¹ This sentiment, though embraced by only a small minority of the city, aligns with Robert Putnam and David Campbell’s theory of “shocks and aftershocks” within twentieth-century American religion. Following the cultural tumult of the Sixties, many Americans were uncomfortable with the direction the country had taken, and returned to a more conservative and religious mindset.⁸² 1980s San Francisco remained far more liberal and far less evangelical than the rest of the nation during this “first aftershock,” but the parallel in those who longed for “the old days of San Francisco” is notable.

The tragic killings brought the simmering discomfort to a boil. Setting the stage for an even more tumultuous decade to come, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence founded their organization on Easter Sunday, 1979. Dressed in flamboyant nun costumes and colorful makeup, three of the founding “sisters:” Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch, Sister Missionary Position, and Baruch Golden marched through the streets to protest “Christian bigotry” until they reached the city’s signature nude beach.⁸³ This parade was first of many theatrical public stunts mocking the Catholic Church. The group’s first mission statement: “to promulgate universal joy and expiate stigmatic guilt,” eventually led to a more detailed vision:

The Sisters have devoted ourselves to community service, ministry and outreach to those on the edges, and to promoting human rights, respect for diversity and spiritual enlightenment. We believe all people have a right to express their unique joy and beauty and we use humor and irreverent wit to expose the forces of bigotry, complacency and

⁸¹ Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982), p. 162.

⁸² Putnam and Campbell, 245.

⁸³ “A Sistory: A Blow by Blow,” *The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence*, <http://thesisters.org/sistory/64-a-sistory-blow-by-blow>, accessed January 25, 2016.

guilt that chain the human spirit.⁸⁴

Although positive in tone, the group's public performances quickly gained a reputation for being irreverently anti-Catholic. Their theatrics spanned from "condom masses" to boisterously staged "Hunky Jesus contests" to receiving communion (in full drag) at actual Catholic services.⁸⁵ Although the extreme antics were not necessarily representative of the broader gay community, the Sisters and their stunts highlighted many of the divisions between the Church and San Francisco's growing gay population.

A year after the Sisters' debut, Archbishop John Quinn addressed the issue, which could no longer be ignored. Archbishop Quinn had served as bishop of Oklahoma City for the previous five years and "little had prepared him for the collision between the Catholic Church and the gay community he encountered in San Francisco."⁸⁶ Yet over time he would become a pivotal figure in the Church's delicate, sometimes awkward effort to navigate modern San Francisco. In 1980, three years into his tenure, Archbishop Quinn released the "Pastoral Letter on Homosexuality" to the city's Catholics. In it, he reiterated many of the points made by *The Monitor* seven years earlier. While he did not shy away from the Church's official stance against homosexual activity, he also stressed the dignity of "homosexual persons worthy of respect and having human rights."⁸⁷ The letter emphasized what would essentially become the Archdiocese's standard response:

⁸⁴ "Mission Statement," *The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence*, <http://thesisters.org/sistory/64-a-sistory-blow-by-blow>, accessed January 25, 2016.

⁸⁵ Don Lattin, "Archbishop Not Amused By 'Sisters', But Levada seeks talks to end rift with church," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 2, 1999.

⁸⁶ Burns.

⁸⁷ Archbishop John Quinn, "Pastoral Letter on Homosexuality," May 5, 1980.

while homosexual acts were not acceptable under Church teaching, gays and lesbians deserved the same rights, treatment, and love as any other human beings.

Responses to Quinn's letter varied. Though many were pleased by its gentle tone and focus on fair treatment, it also angered some on both sides. Conservatives disliked what they saw as "soft pedaling" the Church's opposition to homosexuality, while the city's gay newspaper published their interpretation in a headline that read "SF Catholics Condemn Homo-Sex."⁸⁸ This too would become a pattern that Quinn and Archdiocese officials would encounter throughout the Eighties. With the exception of a few hard-liners, most Catholics accepted the Church's handling of homosexuality, while the gay community and its allies said the complicated position fell short.⁸⁹ While not ideal, this divided reaction was unsurprising and manageable enough. However, declining Church membership and attendance, a growing sense of disillusion among Catholics, and an increasingly secular civic culture suggested that the balancing act might soon come to an end.

Task Force on Gay/Lesbian Issues & AIDS: Sustained Conflict

In the years leading up to the Pope's visit, the episodic displays of discomfort of the late Seventies and early Eighties gave way to sustained public conflict. Internal and external discord erupted, as the city watched closely. The first prolonged feud occurred among Catholics themselves, and it remains one of the highest profile intra-ecclesiastical discussions over homosexuality in history. Archbishop Quinn formed a "Task Force on Gay/Lesbian Issues" in 1981 to re-

⁸⁸ Burns.

⁸⁹ Many critics of the Church's position took issue with its particular condemnation of actions themselves. This sentiment was characterized in a June 1983 *Bay Area Reporter* headline that read: "Catholics Recognize Gay Love, However... No Sex!"

spond to rising violent crime toward gay citizens. Comprised of fourteen members, the committee included a diverse combination of religious and laity, men and women, and gay and straight Catholics.

The Task Force worked independently for over a year and a half. With autonomy from Archdiocesan control, the committee seized the opportunity to go much further than Archbishop Quinn had intended. In July 1982, they released their final report, *Homosexuality and Social Justice*, a 150 page document containing the most radically sympathetic reflections on homosexuality a Church sponsored group had ever produced. Although the authors emphasized that the report was “not an official document of the Archdiocese itself,” the fact that it had been initiated within the Church was noteworthy. In just twenty years, San Francisco’s Catholic Church had gone from censoring erotic poetry to sponsoring a group calling for “a new, positive sexual ethic” to “celebrate the gift of gay sexuality.”⁹⁰

Blindsided by the intensity of the committee’s publication, Archbishop Quinn declined to respond with a statement and instead allowed discussion. This course of action reflected the post-Vatican II period of the Seventies, in which dialogue and progressivism had replaced harsh hierarchies and authoritarianism.⁹¹ While gay leaders, media outlets, and progressive Catholics lauded *Homosexuality and Social Justice* (the *Bay Area Reporter* called it “revolutionary” and “remarkable”), the Archdiocese finally challenged the document after months of awkward silence. Back and forth between ecclesial leaders and Task Force members continued well into May

⁹⁰ *Homosexuality and Social Justice: Report of the Task Force on Gay/Lesbian Issues* (San Francisco: Commission on Social Justice, 1982).

⁹¹ Although Archbishop Quinn’s openness to discussion reflected the sentiments of Vatican II, scholars including Richard Gelm and Christine Gudorf rightly point out that Pope John Paul II would eventually curtail this attitude throughout the Church—especially when it came to controversial subjects.

1983, when the Archdiocese issued its own official report entitled “Ministry and Sexuality in the Archdiocese of San Francisco.” Though not nearly as accepting as the radical Task Force Report, the document was by far the most progressive statement on homosexuality ever produced by an official Church body.⁹²

Internal strife subsided as Archbishop Quinn distanced himself from the 1982 Task Force Report, and was all but forgotten when a much greater epidemiological and social disaster hit San Francisco. As Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) ravaged the city, disproportionately affecting gay men, the Church saw an opportunity to improve a turbulent relationship. Unlike some religious commentators, the Archdiocese vehemently opposed the notion that the disease was divine retribution and instead emphasized compassion and service. Archbishop Quinn established a full-time AIDS minister and converted an abandoned convent in the Castro district into one of the city’s first AIDS clinics. In conjunction with Most Holy Redeemer Parish, Catholic Charities grew to be the earliest and largest resource for AIDS sufferers—providing housing, medical care, and support without question or condemnation. Quinn issued “The AIDS Crisis: A Pastoral Response” in 1986, which garnered broad support, even from some of his harshest critics within the gay community.⁹³ However, others continued to criticize the Church’s willingness to “accept” gays only when they were sick and dying. Burns describes a cartoon in which “a young gay man is shown going to confession. The confessor says, ‘I’m sorry I can’t

⁹² Individual theologians, clergy members, and Church-related organizations (like the Task Force) had been discussing and challenging Church teachings on homosexuality well before 1983. Fr. Robert Carter, SJ, Rev. John McNeill, Fr. Robert Nugent, Sister Jeannine Grammick, and Charles Curran, among others, extensively organized, advocated, and wrote on alternative approaches to human sexuality within the Catholic Church. As a result, many were removed from teaching positions, rebuked, and banned from pastoral ministry for their work. However, no official Catholic organization had ever spoken on the topic as the Archdiocese of San Francisco did in its 1983 report.

⁹³ Adelaide Mena, “The ‘great secret’ of San Francisco’s AIDS response,” *Catholic News Agency*, <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/the-great-secret-of-san-franciscos-aids-response-25623/>, December 3, 2015.

help you. Come back when you are sick.”⁹⁴ Though these harsher critiques were less common, the firestorm was reignited with a letter. This single document would destroy much of the progress gained from the humanitarian response to the tragedy of the AIDS crisis.

In 1986, the Catholic bishops of the world received a letter entitled “On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons.” It had been written by the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith—Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI)—and it dramatically changed the discourse. Startlingly more stringent than any of Archbishop Quinn’s nuanced writings, which still had angered many, Ratzinger’s words were unwavering. In it, he declared that “[the homosexual condition] is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil, and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.” He scorned “the pro-homosexual movement” and its “deceitful propaganda,” and emphasized that “the proper reaction to crimes committed against homosexual persons should not be to claim that the homosexual condition is not disordered.”⁹⁵ As expected, the letter enraged the gay community, as well as many other San Francisco residents—including some Catholics. The sharp pivot from the Archdiocese’s gentle rhetoric shocked the grieving city, already suffering in the throes of AIDS, and prompted a follow-up from Quinn. Entitled “Toward an Understanding of the Letter on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons,” it qualified and softened parts of the Ratzinger letter. Yet serious, perhaps irrevocable, damage had been done. In the fall of 1986, hostilities were at an all time high when the Church announced an important visitor was coming to town.

⁹⁴ Burns.

⁹⁵ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons,” http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html, October 1, 1986.

Preparing for the Pope: Diplomacy Amidst Anger

In the wake of the Ratzinger Letter, preparations for Pope John Paul II's visit were diplomatic, but ultimately failed to quell the protest. Led by the Archbishop, Catholic leaders met with both city officials and representatives of the gay community in attempts to avoid excessive protests, or worse, violence. Dignity played a large role in such discussions, as it served as a connection between secular gay organizations and the Church. The meetings provided the groups opportunities to express their frustration and concerns; in one statement, a group of Most Holy Redeemer parishioners remarked that they would like the Pope to visit with representatives the gay community during his trip.⁹⁶ This idea prompted discussion of the possibility of the Pope visiting a Catholic Charities AIDS hospice in San Francisco. When that could not be worked into his itinerary, the visit organizers decided that he would meet and pray with AIDS patients at the Mission Dolores Basilica on his first day in the city.

The meetings between Catholic and gay leaders soothed some of the tensions. By September, nine days before the Pope arrived, Dignity and other gay organizations announced at a joint-press conference that there would be no violent protests; at the same press conference, the Archdiocese voiced its recognition and support of First Amendment rights.⁹⁷ But such meetings could only do so much. Throughout the summer that preceded the Pope's September visit, the city buzzed with antagonistic anticipation. *The San Francisco Chronicle* ran a series of articles preparing for the visit. It included stories on gay priests with AIDS, excerpts of messages to the Pope from San Francisco Catholics, critiques on women's limited roles in the Church, and an

⁹⁶ Donal Godrey, *Gays and Grays: The Story of the Inclusion of the Gay Community at Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Parish*. (New York: Lexington Publishers, 2008).

⁹⁷ Burns.

overview of papal history entitled “Papacy’s 2,000 Years of Righteous and Ribald History.”⁹⁸

Less conciliatory gay activist groups announced plans for large protests, and sponsored a petition that only read, “Pope, Go Home!” The Council on Religion and the Homosexual Inc. sued the city for allowing the Church to use Candlestick Park for the papal mass, claiming that the Church thereby violated nondiscrimination laws. In another dramatic shift from 1967, Judge Daniel Hanlon—a graduate of USF undergraduate and law school—ruled in favor of the gays, and ordered the city to add a nondiscrimination clause in its Candlestick contract with the Church.

Strains in the formerly fraternal relationship between the Church and city manifested in other ways during preparations as well. Supervisor Harry Britt publicly lambasted the Pope’s visit on numerous occasions, saying that:

To be told in the name of God that we should be ashamed of what we are is an abomination. The Pope has a lot to learn in San Francisco about humanness and trust and responding to people. We are not on trial. It is the church that must learn if they are going to be relevant in the century ahead.⁹⁹

Although Mayor Dianne Feinstein was receptive to the papal visit, and even held a supporting fundraiser at her own home, she too criticized the Vatican.¹⁰⁰ Together with two other mayors and eight members of Congress, Feinstein protested his controversial meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim and petitioned the Vatican to recognize Israel.¹⁰¹ Many within San Francisco’s Jewish population planned to organize their own protests, along with the gay and

⁹⁸ *San Francisco Chronicle* archives.

⁹⁹ Robert Reinhold, “The Papal Visit; Protest in San Francisco Is Largest of Pope’s Trip,” *New York Times*, September 18, 1987.

¹⁰⁰ Pope John Paul II’s meeting with President Waldheim caused controversy among some circles due to Waldheim’s suspected “complicity in Nazi war crimes while he was a German army officer.”

¹⁰¹ “Mayor Feinstein Keeps a Promise,” *Jewish Post Indianapolis*, July 22, 1987.

feminist groups, because of the papal attitude toward Jews. However, *the Chronicle* reported that “most Bay Area residents believed there was nothing wrong with Pope John Paul II’s meeting with President Waldheim.”¹⁰²

Perhaps the most biting exchange was the correspondence between Archbishop Quinn and *Chronicle* editor Richard Thieriot. In the month before the Pope’s arrival, Quinn penned a strongly worded letter regarding a cartoon the paper had published that “clearly ridiculed the pope,” according to the Archbishop.¹⁰³ He then criticized Mr. Thieriot and his newspaper for participating in “the mounting ridicule and contempt to which the Church has been subjected over the past several years in plays and movies, in newspaper articles, and in other public media.” Quinn voiced his frustration at how Catholics continuously experienced “public contempt and ridicule,” especially during the city’s papal visit preparations.¹⁰⁴ Thieriot promptly responded with “regret that you [Archbishop Quinn] feel *The Chronicle* would be party to any campaign of insult and ridicule of the Pope or of the Catholic Church.” He clarified the intentions of the cartoon (a commentary on the “tacky paraphernalia” being sold “in order to exploit the Pope’s visit,” rather than the Pope himself) and provided a list of eight editorials in which *Chronicle* coverage had been supportive of the Pope and the Church.¹⁰⁵ Quinn, while grateful for Thieriot’s response, reiterated his concerns over the public representation of Catholics in his response: “a proliferation of plays, movies, television and radio programs as well as newspaper articles and

¹⁰² Ramon G. McLeod, “Bay Area Survey Backs Pope on Issue of Waldheim Meeting,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 11, 1987.

¹⁰³ Archbishop John Quinn, letter to Mr. Richard Thieriot, August 11, 1987.

¹⁰⁴ Archbishop John Quinn, letter to Mr. Richard Thieriot, August 11, 1987.

¹⁰⁵ Mr. Richard Thieriot, letter to Archbishop John Quinn, August 11, 1987.

cartoons which do indeed ridicule priests, nuns, bishops, the Pope, Catholic beliefs and practices.”¹⁰⁶ The initially private exchange garnered a public article in *The Chronicle* in which the artist, a Catholic, discussed the cartoon’s intended meaning.¹⁰⁷

A City Holds Its Breath: Pope John Paul II Visits San Francisco

After months of preparation, and nearly a decade of building tension, the Archdiocese welcomed its global leader to the city. On the day of his arrival, *The Chronicle*’s headline read “‘We Are Ready’: S.F. Pope Planners Say a Little Prayer.”¹⁰⁸ Volunteers and event organizers braced for a whirlwind 20-hours, while the city commissioned all 1,270 uniformed police officers, as well as 200 sheriff’s deputies, 250 California Highway Patrol officers, and 200 Secret Service agents.¹⁰⁹ On the foggy September afternoon, Mayor Feinstein, Lieutenant Governor Leo McCarthy, Board of Supervisors President Nancy Walker, Representative Nancy Pelosi, and Assembly Speaker (and future mayor of San Francisco) Willie Brown joined the city’s Catholic leaders in greeting the Pope at Crissy Field—overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge that peeked through the grey sky.

The distinct and somewhat controversial items on the Pope’s San Francisco itinerary made this stop one of the most discussed of his entire U.S. trip, within Catholic circles and

¹⁰⁶ Archbishop John Quinn, letter to Mr. Richard Thieriot, August 13, 1987.

¹⁰⁷ “Chronicle Replies: Cartoon Criticized by S.F. Archbishop,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 12, 1987.

¹⁰⁸ Michael McCabe, “‘We Are Ready’: S.F. Pope Planners Say a Little Prayer,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 17, 1987.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Reinhold, “The Papal Visit; Protest in San Francisco is Largest of Pope’s Trip,” *New York Times*, September 18, 1987.

around the nation.¹¹⁰ While his schedule did not permit a visit to an AIDS hospice, as some had hoped, the Vatican invited one hundred AIDS patients to the opening prayer service at Mission Dolores Basilica, adjacent to San Francisco's oldest colonial Spanish building. These honored guests, along with their family and caregivers, included gay men, two priests, intravenous drug users, and most famously, four-year old Brendan O'Rourke, who had contracted the disease from a blood transfusion. During the service, the child reached out for the Pope and greeted him, "Hi, Viva Papa!" *The Chronicle* recounted that "the pontiff held and kissed the child, and blessed and talked to many others who suffer from the fatal disease."¹¹¹ It was a highly emotional moment that reverberated far beyond the church's packed hall. In his sermon, the Pope declared that "God loves you all, without distinction, without limit... He loves those of you who are sick, those who are suffering from AIDS... He loves all with an unconditional and everlasting love."¹¹² Many of the city's Catholics celebrated his historic comments, but for some progressive Catholics and many other San Franciscans, they were not enough.

Just outside the Basilica, chanting loudly enough to be heard within, roughly 2,000 protesters stood. Those gay activists, feminists (including former nuns), and a smattering of Jews

¹¹⁰ Newspapers around the nation specifically commented on the Pope's visit to San Francisco, largely because of its centrality to the AIDS crisis and large number of protesters. *The New York Times* noted how his "visit to San Francisco was the most problematic so far of his American tour," (Robert Reinhold, "The Papal Visit; Protest in San Francisco Is Largest of Pope's Trip," *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/18/us/the-papal-visit-protest-in-san-francisco-is-largest-of-pope-s-trip.html>, September 18, 1987); *The Chicago Tribune* discussed "the largest and most vigorous demonstrations against his policies" of his 10-day tour (Bruce Bursuma, "Pope Embraces Aids Victims, Faces Homosexual Protesters," *Chicago Tribune*, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1987-09-18/news/8703100915_1_aids-patients-mission-dolores-basilica-everlasting-love, September 18, 1987); and the *Philadelphia Daily News* highlighted how "the only large demonstration took place in San Francisco, where several thousand gays condemned his opposition to homosexuality," (Scott Flander, "Pope Was A Hit But Not A Star," *Philadelphia Daily News*, http://articles.philly.com/1987-09-21/news/26208847_1_pope-john-paul-ii-pope-t-shirts-ethnic-diversity, September 21, 1987).

¹¹¹ Carl Nolte, "He Visits Bridge, Embraces AIDS Patients: Pope Tells AIDS Sufferers They Have God's Love," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 18, 1987.

¹¹² Nolte.

held signs that read “Nazi Pope,” “Pope Go home,” “Catholic homophobia is bigotry,” “Popo go homo,” and “Curb your dogma.”¹¹³ Although it was by far the largest protest of the Pope’s tour, the crowd abstained from violence. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence led another performative protest downtown at Union Square, where hundreds of other papal opponents gathered to witness an “excommunication” of the Pope because of the Church’s opposition to contraception, which protesters saw as a crucial weapon in the fight against AIDS.

Although not as seismic as the Mission Dolores prayer service, the rest of the Pope’s San Francisco visit continued his engagement with the complexities of modern American Catholicism. His next stop was a meeting with 3,000 representatives from United States men’s and women’s religious communities—an opportunity for them to share their thoughts and concerns with the Holy Father. The next morning, he met with 3,000 representatives from the Catholic laity: six people from every San Francisco parish, and two from every other diocese in the United States.¹¹⁴ During both gatherings, the groups expressed concerns about the state of the Church in San Francisco, and the United States. The nuns, brothers, and priests spoke about declining vocations, AIDS ministry, and caring for the poor. The laity brought a similar, if more challenging, message, and discussed sexism toward women in ministry, and hostility regarding homosexuals, women, divorced Catholics, and people of color.¹¹⁵ Following this “strong but respectful challenge from lay Catholics,” as *The Chronicle* deemed it, the Pope concluded his visit with a mass at Candlestick Park. Amidst a celebratory air, and greeted by music, dancing, and “JOHN

¹¹³ Reinhold.

¹¹⁴ “Itinerary of Pope John Paul II: September 17-18 1987,” Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

¹¹⁵ Papal Visit file, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

PAUL II” displayed across the scoreboard, he preached to a crowd of 70,000. With the angry chants of protesters and somber messages of the religious and laity behind him—at least for the moment—Pope John Paul II departed from the park, returning the loving waves and smiles, and was gone from the city as quickly as he had arrived.

A Mixed Bag: San Francisco Catholics Reflect on a Symbolic Visit

In some ways, the Pope’s visit to San Francisco had been a success. There were no eruptions of violence or overwhelmingly embarrassing moments, and the protests that had occurred were kept to a manageable annoyance. The annual Gay Pride Parade had not been moved to coordinate with the Pope’s visit, as had been suggested by some, and a billboard at the airport reading “Pope Go Home” was never built. After a year and a half, the Archdiocese could finally breathe a sigh of relief. However, as leaders began to reflect further, deeper concerns emerged. In addition to the \$1 million debt the Archdiocese had incurred (\$400,000 more than any other diocese of the Pope’s nine-city tour), shockingly low turnout numbers stunned everyone. Despite good weather, Thursday evening’s Papal Parade down Geary Boulevard drew only 50,000, when organizers expected a crowd of one million.¹¹⁶ *The Chronicle* explored this issue of low attendance, causing additional embarrassment to the Archdiocese, with an article entitled “Experts Guess At Why Pope Drew So Few.”¹¹⁷ Some guessed supporters stayed home to watch it on television; others speculated that it was the burden of security. However, most assumed it was the ideological divisions. *The Chronicle* featured Catholic political consultant Clint Reilly’s analysis:

¹¹⁶ Reinhold.

¹¹⁷ Michael McCabe, “Experts Guess At Why Pope Drew So Few,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 19, 1987.

There are millions of Catholics who on one hand like the pope and are proud of the attention he garners and on the other hand recoil from the primitive nature of his teachings...While the church has been in the forefront advocating social justice, it has lagged far behind in sexual ethics.¹¹⁸

Sheriff's deputy Bill Stevens called it "kind of embarrassing. We stood here watching the people come up the street one at a time."¹¹⁹ Such lackluster attendance demonstrated an apathy that the Archdiocese attempted to brush off. A spokesperson claimed there was no issue and that "the Pope is not running for office."¹²⁰ However, the dismal numbers, combined with the largest protests of the Pope's U.S. visit, suggested that the problems ran much deeper than anyone wished to admit.

Three days before the Pope's arrival, *The Chronicle* published a survey detailing how "Bay Area Roman Catholics are deeply at odds with some of the major teachings of the Church."¹²¹ It showed that only 35% of the city's Catholics agreed with the Church's teaching on abortion, and just 28% agreed on its birth control stance. 63% approved of female priests, and 57% had no problem with in-vitro fertilization.¹²² In additional coverage, as part of a preparatory series on the Papal Visit, *The Chronicle* had explored the role of women within the Church. Interviews with former and current nuns, women leaders, and secular organizations showed that

¹¹⁸ McCabe.

¹¹⁹ Ramon G. McLeod, "Popemobile Was a Blur on Geary," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 18, 1987.

¹²⁰ McCabe.

¹²¹ Ramon G. McLeod, "Few Toe the Vatican Line: Bay Catholics Go Their Own Way," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 14, 1987.

¹²² McLeod.

many of the Church's stances on issues of abortion, birth control, and women's ordination simply did not align with the city's ethos. Sister Sharon McMillan encapsulated the views of many:

In the next generation, with consciousness being raised throughout the world, people will say to one another, and to church authority, 'We need women to serve us in this way.' In the meantime, we have to wait, as painful, oppressive, and unjust as that is.¹²³

On September 18, 1987, San Francisco waved goodbye to a charismatic but controversial Pope who refused to budge on issues that mattered to many in the community. Local Church leaders no longer sought the cultural or political domination they once took for granted; instead, they sought mutual ground and clung to vestiges of tradition. Local city leaders no longer sought ecclesiastical guidance and approval as they once felt compelled to do; instead, they worked with the Church only when necessary and compromised as long as the outcomes were in their favor.¹²⁴ And local Catholics no longer followed their Church leaders on all matters, and certainly not with the assent that had once come so naturally; instead, the self-identified Catholics who remained simply fashioned their own moralities, as the pews grew emptier each week.

¹²³ Katy Butler, "Women Want Larger Role in Catholic Church," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 28, 1987.

¹²⁴ An excellent example of the new era of Church-city politics can be found in the 1982 legislation over domestic partner benefits. Supervisor Harry Britt, a gay activist who replaced Harvey Milk on the board, introduced a bill to guarantee city benefits for domestic partners, as well as heterosexual married couples. However, "the religious community was outraged over the proposal, and that outrage culminated with Roman Catholic Archbishop John Quinn personally pleading with Mayor Dianne Feinstein to veto the measure." Feinstein initially granted Quinn's wishes and vetoed the bill, but a nearly identical bill was passed by the Board of Supervisors and by a city-wide ballot initiative less than a year later—demonstrating that the Church's influence was all but a formality at that point. (Rebecca J. Kipper, "Just a Matter of Fairness: What the Federal Recognition of California Registered Domestic Partners Means in the Fight for Tax Equity," *Chapman Law Review*. https://www.chapman.edu/law/_files/publications/CLR-15-rebecca-kipper.pdf, February 2012.)

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2008 | DIVISION Proposition 8 Tears Church and City Apart



Figure 3.1. “Prop H8 Niederauer Ratzinger Where is the Love?” — graffiti on Most Holy Redeemer church, January 2009. (Photo: Eric Smith, <http://ebar.com/news/article.php?sec=news&article=3624>)

“By bringing together Mormons and Catholics, Archbishop Niederauer would align the two most powerful religious institutions in the Prop. 8 battle. Ironically, it made San Francisco, center of the nation’s gay community, a nexus in the fight against the recently gained gay right to marry.”

— Matthai Kuruvila, *San Francisco Chronicle*

On November 25, 2008, Mayor Gavin Newsom delivered the keynote address at the eleventh Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast. Although the breakfast’s theme was “Feeding the Hungry: Honoring Congregations and the San Francisco Food Bank,” Mayor Newsom diverged from the topic in order to express his anger toward religious organizations’ role in the recent passage of Proposition 8, explicitly mentioning the Catholic Church. Following his remarks, he returned to his seat next to Archbishop George Niederauer, who turned his back on the Mayor for the duration of the breakfast. When it ended, the Archbishop remained sitting while the crowd stood to applaud the Mayor. Although the Interfaith Council issued a subsequent

apology for the mayor's bitter condemnation, Newsom never wavered from his public criticism toward the Church and the Archbishop.

This impromptu display of derision encapsulated what the relationship between the Catholic Church and the civic culture had become by 2008. Proposition 8, a successful statewide ballot initiative that sought to make same-sex marriage illegal in California, marked the end of a decades-long decline in political cooperation between the Catholic Church and San Francisco's government. Once the city's most influential institution—dominating the city's population, educational landscape, built environment, local government, and cultural standards—the Church watched its grasp slip away as the city transformed. Newsom's remarks confirmed what some observers had begun to sense after the Pope's 1987 visit—that the entwining of religious institution and civic culture had come apart.

An Uncomfortable Balance: Declining Numbers and Parish Closures

Following the mounting tumult of the Eighties, culminated by Pope John Paul II's 1987 visit, the Church and city settled into a new groove. Archdiocesan leaders realized they no longer ran the show; they rather played bit parts in a play staged by others. Archbishop John Quinn continued to lead San Francisco's church, and in 1993 commissioned "A Journey of Hope Toward the Third Millennium: A Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of San Francisco." Intended to assess the state of the Archdiocese and map its future, the plan was a result of parish self-studies, town hall meetings, and a survey of all parishioners. The Pastoral Planning Commission—which included men and women, religious and lay—presented their findings to the Archbishop on November 19, 1993. The report identified five primary challenges facing the Archdiocese: demo-

graphic change, increasing financial demands, diminishing participation in Church life, decreasing vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and challenges posed by the Second Vatican Council.¹²⁵ Although the Church's declining cultural status had been recognized before, this was the first formal admission of an institutional crisis.¹²⁶

Despite its candid assessment, the plan was ambitious and optimistic. It did not shy away from the startling facts: "The number of people attending Mass on a given Sunday in San Francisco was 123,000 in 1961; it is 47,000 today;" and "The growing number of alienated Catholics, including large numbers of the gay community and the young adult community, calls for new initiatives to heal the rifts which separate many of our people from the Church."¹²⁷ But the report sought to address such problems. "Through warm and inviting liturgies, double Mass attendance by the year 2005," it planned to "heighten sensitivity within the Archdiocese to diverse worshipping communities, e.g. young adults, the gay and lesbian communities, the homeless, youth, and the new immigrant communities."¹²⁸ Unfortunately for the Archdiocese, those goals would prove difficult—and ultimately impossible—to accomplish.

¹²⁵ "A Journey of Hope Toward the Third Millennium: A Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of San Francisco," November 19, 1993. It is also important to connect these five challenges to the experience of the national Catholic Church at the time. Catholic historians (Fisher, Dolan, etc.) have documented how these exact same issues were challenging the national Church during this same period; however, as Appendix C shows, the declining numbers in San Francisco were markedly more dramatic than the already troubling numbers across the country.

¹²⁶ Archbishop Quinn's letters to Richard Thierot, editor of the *Chronicle*, serve as relevant examples in the Archdiocese's own recognition of a troubled relationship with the city and its broader culture: "Recent years have witnessed a proliferation of plays, movies, television and radio programs as well as newspaper articles and cartoons which do indeed ridicule priests, nuns, bishops, the Pope, Catholic beliefs and practices."

¹²⁷ "A Journey of Hope Toward the Third Millennium: A Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of San Francisco," November 19, 1993. p. 6-7.

¹²⁸ "A Journey of Hope Toward the Third Millennium: A Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of San Francisco," November 19, 1993. p. 6-7.

The most controversial aspect of the Pastoral Plan was its recommendation of parish closures. Once again, the commission recognized how dramatically the city had changed, and sought to adjust:

The City of San Francisco is much changed from the days in which most of our parishes were built, and our plans for the future must reflect that fact. When Saint James and Star of the Sea were established, most Catholics walked to church, and the City was filled with large families. Now the church without adequate parking is hard-pressed to maintain attendance, and San Francisco constitutes the major American city with the lowest percentage of residents under the age of eighteen.¹²⁹

Because of these reasons, as well as safety concerns about old buildings that were not earthquake ready, the Plan suggested closing thirteen parishes. This drastic measure, affecting one out four San Francisco parishes, caused an uproar. *The Chronicle* reported that “extra church deacons were brought in to handle more than 100 calls received by midafternoon at the Church Street headquarters of the San Francisco Archdiocese.”¹³⁰ In an article entitled “Old-Timers Lament Future of S.F. Church,” the paper explored how the closures affected older San Francisco Catholics, many of whom had emigrated as young people and found homes in the city’s ethnic parishes.¹³¹ While the Archdiocese had been clear in its reasoning, providing “Criterion of Viability” that assessed financial status, attendance, and leadership, many associated with the doomed parishes were not satisfied. Members held fundraisers, circulated petitions, and orga-

¹²⁹ “A Journey of Hope Toward the Third Millennium: A Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of San Francisco,” November 19, 1993. p. 6-7.

¹³⁰ Don Lattin, “Angry Calls Over Plans to Close 13 S.F. Churches,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 16, 1993.

¹³¹ Don Lattin, “Old-Timers Lament Future of S.F. Church,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 18, 1993.

nized a march to Quinn's door—armed with signs reading “Quinn sold out for 30 pieces of silver.”¹³² Disquieted local Catholics even went as far as appealing to the Vatican, but to no avail.

Although he was supported by the Holy See and a great number of local Catholics, Quinn's parish closures tarnished his reputation among some. Less than two years following the Pastoral Plan's publication, he resigned his post as Archbishop of San Francisco. In a December 1995 article, *the Chronicle* reported:

San Francisco Archbishop John Quinn's tumultuous 18-year reign officially ended yesterday when Pope John Paul II accepted his resignation, turning control of the city's archdiocese over to Quinn's successor, William Levada. Quinn's departure marks the end of an era in the Bay Area's religious community, and Levada's ascension signals the rising conservative force in the U.S. Catholic hierarchy.¹³³

As Pope John Paul II had made clear during his 1987 visit to the United States, dissent was not an option for theologians or ecclesial leaders. Placing Levada, who had come from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in San Francisco was a clear reminder of these sentiments.¹³⁴ In his assessment of Pope John Paul II's politicking, Richard Gelm cites fellow scholar Richard McBrien who “suggests that the current pope [John Paul II] is attempting to curtail the liberal wing of the American hierarchy and slow down the reforms of Vatican II. Through the appointment of conservative bishops, John Paul II is attempting to reign in the American hierar-

¹³² Ken Hoover, “Demonstrators March to Home of Archbishop: They want plan to close 11 S.F. Churches repealed,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 1994.

¹³³ Kenneth J. Garcia, “Quinn Officially Ends 18 Years as Archbishop of S.F. Pope accepts prelate's resignation,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 28, 1995.

¹³⁴ The day before coming to San Francisco in 1987, Pope John Paul II privately addressed 320 American Catholic bishops in Los Angeles. Four bishops, including Archbishop Quinn, read statements to the Pope in which they expressed concerns over conflicts between modernity and official doctrine, including women's roles in the Church, birth control, and homosexuality. In response, the Pope condemned any dissent from official Church teaching as “a grave error,” and remarked that “dissent from church doctrine remains what it is: dissent; as such it may not be proposed or received on an equal footing with the church's authentic teaching.” Kevin Leary, “Pontiff Arrives in S.F. Today: No Dissent, Pope Tells U.S. Catholics, He Makes it Clear to Bishops,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 17, 1987.

chy.”¹³⁵ Archbishop Levada was distinctly more conservative than Quinn, but he was also more gregarious. During his first six months, the new Archbishop visited schools, parishes, and city events, making himself a well-known figure within the community. He quickly distinguished himself from his predecessor, first in style, then in ideology. Rev. John Hurley, pastor of Old St. Mary's Church in Chinatown, remarked that “Archbishop Quinn was an introvert who hated crowds. Archbishop Levada is very personal and outgoing.” Another source commented that “what's happening in the chancery is Levada had made it clear he is not going to delegate like Quinn. He's a micromanager. Quinn was a theologian, not a manager... Everyone is waiting for the other shoe to drop.”¹³⁶ A short five months later, it did.

Preludes to Prop 8: “The San Francisco Solution,” Scandal, and Adoption Policy

In November of 1996, less than a year into Archbishop Levada’s tenure, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed an historic law that would require the 8,000 companies who had city contracts to provide health benefits to domestic partners, just as they would with heterosexual spouses. The Archdiocese stridently opposed the bill and requested that Catholic Charities—which had roughly \$5.6 million in contracts with the city—be exempt from the law.¹³⁷ Mayor

¹³⁵ Gelm, 101.

¹³⁶ Don Lattin, “The Archbishop's Honeymoon: The marriage between San Francisco's liberal Catholic community and its conservative head, William Levada, is off to a promising start. But will it prove a match made in heaven,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 19, 1996.

¹³⁷ This type of opposition was not uncommon during this time, as the collective Church grew less interested in influencing individual elected officials (as it once did with figures like Mayor Jack Shelley), and transitioned toward “lobbying for or against specific legislation, local ordinances, and constitutional amendments.” Richard McBrien, “The Future Role of the Church in American Society,” in *Religion and Politics in the American Milieu*, edited by Leslie Griffin. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Review of Politics, 1989), 96. William Prendergast supports this analysis: “Although Church leaders have been loath to intervene in political campaigns to support or oppose specific candidates, they have been active participants in campaigns to promote or defeat public policy measures affecting their moral principles or interests.” *The Catholic Voter in American Politics: The Passing of the Democratic Monolith*, (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1999), 27.

Willie Brown, an African American Protestant, denied the request, while many Church opponents questioned why the Archdiocese could not solve its problem by simply not using city funds. Archbishop Levada responded at a press conference: “Excluding Catholic Charities from city contracts could directly affect its programs to house and feed the homeless, poor families, and people with AIDS and HIV.”¹³⁸ A few days later, following clandestine meetings between the Archbishop and city officials, *the Chronicle* reported that the two parties had found a compromise. Levada, Mayor Brown, and four members of the Board of Supervisors agreed to new language, which specifically excluded the term “domestic partners,” while the law achieved virtually the same measure. Instead of specifying “domestic partners” as health benefit recipients, the law would now read: “An employee may designate a *legally domiciled member of the employee's household* as being eligible for spousal equivalent benefits.”¹³⁹ Therefore, while the law would continue to include domestic partners, it could now also theoretically extend to a designated sibling, in-law, or roommate. This broadening of scope appeased both the Archdiocese and the Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Leslie Katz, co-author of the original legislation, remarked that the negotiating process was “an example of what happens when people sit down and try to work toward resolution.”¹⁴⁰ Yet the victory was not as mutual or enduring as it initially appeared.

Although the explicit phrase “domestic partner” had been removed, the bill’s original intention of extending health benefits to same-sex partners would still be accomplished. The Archdiocese, admittedly, would not be forced to formally equate domestic partners to heterosexual

¹³⁸ Don Lattin, “S.F. Archbishop Insists He's 'Not Anti-Gay' He seeks compromise on Catholic Charities' contract,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 4, 1997.

¹³⁹ Torri Minton, “S.F. Archbishop Agrees to Discuss Partners Policy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 7, 1997.

¹⁴⁰ Minton.

spouses—but would have to comply with the law, if only more tacitly than before. This did not escape anyone who was paying attention. While the Archdiocese was relieved and satisfied with the amended language, its critics—on both sides of the issue—were not. In the April 1997 edition of *Christianity Today*, Patricia Roberts questioned if the Archdiocese was “relinquishing too much.”¹⁴¹ Her article included critiques from James Hitchcock, a professor at Saint Louis University, who warned that “This agreement can set a very dangerous precedent.” California State Senator Tim Leslie also added, “It makes you wonder, if the church isn’t willing to stand up to this, who will?”¹⁴² On the other side, a local gay activist derided the Archdiocese’s agreement, claiming that it allowed

...opponents of domestic partnerships to avoid recognizing such unions altogether, leaving same-sex couples back where they started—in a society that does not give their relationship the same standing that married heterosexuals have.¹⁴³

By 1997, the Archdiocese was no stranger to this difficult middle position. It seemed as if no matter which action it chose, some segment of the local population would be upset. While the majority of the city approved of the measure, the city’s residual cluster of conservative Catholics felt betrayed by their Church.¹⁴⁴ One local Catholic condemned Levada’s solution for “compromising Catholic moral principles by ‘blurring the definition of spousal benefits, [recognizing] a

¹⁴¹ Patricia C. Roberts, “Critics Wary of Archdiocese Compromise in San Francisco,” *Christianity Today*, April 28, 1997.

¹⁴² Roberts.

¹⁴³ William J. Levada, “The San Francisco Solution,” *First Things*, August 1997.

¹⁴⁴ A 1997 Field Poll of 1,045 California adults found that “59% would grant financial dependence status to domestic partners, whereby partners would receive benefits such as pensions, health and dental care coverage, family leave and death benefits.” Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field, “Public Favors Gay/Lesbian Domestic Partnership Rights. Oppose Same-Sex Marriages,” *The Field Poll*, <http://www.field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/Release1832.pdf>, March 3, 1997. Though this poll encompassed the entire state of California, it is reasonable to assume that public opinion within the city of San Francisco would be equivalent (or more likely more favorable) to such results.

morally deviant relationship, and legitimizing domestic partnership by silently funding it.”¹⁴⁵ To address such concerns from the left and the right, Levada published an essay entitled “The San Francisco Solution,” in which he defended the compromise. He explained the course of actions, including his deliberations with city officials, and qualified their final agreement:

To those like my local Catholic critics who say that we implicitly give recognition to domestic partnerships by not excluding them from benefits, I must demur. Under our plan, an employee may indeed elect to designate another member of the household to receive benefits. We would know no more or no less about the employee’s relationship with that person than we typically know about a designated life insurance beneficiary. What we have done is to prohibit local government from forcing our Catholic agencies to create internal policies that recognize domestic partnerships as a category equivalent to marriage.¹⁴⁶

With all parties (relatively) satisfied, the city moved forward and passed the legislation. Though the charged political environment and local power dynamics would have been unrecognizable in the San Francisco of 1967, the compromising Church celebrated its small victory. Less than a decade later, however, the tone turned contentious.

San Francisco’s Catholic Church was not immune to the dramatic developments of the early twenty-first century. Soon after the clerical abuse scandal first broke in 2002, allegations of sexual abuse toward minors swept the Archdiocese, and names of beloved Catholic leaders splayed across headlines. Among the most notorious was Monsignor Patrick O’Shea, who had served as an archdiocesan priest for thirty-six years and was indicted on numerous charges of molestation and embezzlement.¹⁴⁷ In January 2004, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

¹⁴⁵ William J. Levada, “The San Francisco Solution,” *First Things*, August 1997.

¹⁴⁶ Levada.

¹⁴⁷ Steve Rubenstein, “S.F. archdiocese slapped with sex suit: Ex-parishioner says that former priest abused him as boy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 12, 2003.

commissioned an internal study of archdioceses across the country. It found that “the Archdiocese of San Francisco recorded 148 child-molestation cases involving more than 50 priests over a five-decade period,” with only five lacking sufficient evidence to support their claims.¹⁴⁸ Even Archbishop Levada was questioned about his time in Portland and the role he may have played in covering up abuse.¹⁴⁹ The Archdiocese would ultimately spend over \$63 million to settle over 84 lawsuits.¹⁵⁰ The Church’s financial burden, however, would pale in comparison to the hit its already-shaky reputation would suffer in the community and beyond.

Discord continued throughout the decade, with a brief respite in late 2005. Archbishop Levada had resigned his post to become the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in Rome and, in turn, the highest ranking American to ever serve in the Vatican’s history. Per Levada’s own recommendation, Pope Benedict XVI chose the Most Reverend George Niederauer to fill his vacancy. Though Niederauer would be coming from Salt Lake City, one of the country’s most conservative cultural enclaves, San Francisco looked forward to its new leader. Niederauer had gained a positive reputation leading the diocese of Salt Lake City, and was praised for his interfaith collaboration, advocacy for immigrants, and community-oriented leadership.¹⁵¹ Although there was no evidence of truly radical breaks with the Vatican, many liberal San Franciscans were encouraged by his opposition to a proposed same-sex marriage ban in

¹⁴⁸ “Archdiocese of San Francisco,” <http://www.bishop-accountability.org/usccb/natureandscope/dioceses/sanfranciscoca.htm>, January 30, 2004.

¹⁴⁹ Don Lattin, “Levada’s Oregon history surfaces: Lawyers question S.F. archbishop’s role in molest cases,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 10, 2004.

¹⁵⁰ Kevin Davis, “Utah bishop selected to lead SF Catholics,” *Bay Area Reporter*, December 22, 2005.

¹⁵¹ Jim Herron Zamora, “A New Archbishop For S.F. Background: Bishop draws widespread praise in Utah, ‘Missionary’ role in state dominated by Mormons,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 16, 2005.

Utah, as well as his comments regarding homosexuals and the priesthood.¹⁵² Commentators noted that “he is Central Casting's ideal type to be the Archbishop of San Francisco,” and that he would be “the perfect person to get Catholics a seat at the table in San Francisco.”¹⁵³ His relatively moderate views on the city’s touchiest topics combined with his progressive stances on the Iraq War, gun control, and immigration caused even the *Bay Area Reporter* to note that “cautious optimism” rippled through the Archdiocese.¹⁵⁴ Soon enough, however, the bond between the new Archbishop and the city would be tested.

Though he had relocated to Rome, now-Cardinal Levada did not forget about San Francisco. Just one month into Archbishop Niederauer’s tenure, Levada issued a directive that demanded Catholic Charities halt its adoptions to same-sex couples. In the statement, Levada remarked that “Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children.”¹⁵⁵ Many, including the director of Catholic Charities, were surprised and disturbed by the message, and immediately began searching for yet another

¹⁵² Although he opposed Utah’s proposed constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, Niederauer made it abundantly clear that he was not in favor of same-sex marriage. Rather, he was against the initiative because “there was already in place a Utah law strictly banning same-sex marriage, which I fully supported... and because it was a poorly drafted amendment.” Most Rev. George Niederauer, “Marriage and Homosexuality,” *First Things*, May 2006. Regarding homosexuals and the priesthood, Niederauer did adopt a markedly different tone than the Vatican. A 2005 document issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education, and approved by Pope Benedict XVI, declared that “the Church, while profoundly respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practise homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called “gay culture.” “Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders,” *Congregation For Catholic Education*, http://www.-vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20051104_istruzione_en.html, November 2005. In an interview, Niederauer responded to the document by saying that it was maturity and commitment to ministry and celibacy that should determine a man’s worthiness for the priesthood, not necessarily his sexuality. Richard John Neuhaus, “The Truce of 2005?” *First Things*, February 2006.

¹⁵³ Joe Garofoli, Wyatt Buchanan and Jim Herron Zamora, “New archbishop called a good fit Described as a moderate, prelate from Utah will take over in S.F.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 16, 2005.

¹⁵⁴ Kevin Davis, “Utah bishop selected to lead SF Catholics,” *Bay Area Reporter*, December 22, 2005.

¹⁵⁵ Matthew S. Bajko, “Catholic Charities reviews its gay adoption policy,” *Bay Area Reporter*, March 23, 2006.

compromise. As the city's more liberal Catholics scrambled to find a way to "resolve the issue without shutting down its adoption program," other community leaders seethed.¹⁵⁶ The Board of Supervisors swiftly issued a resolution "urging Cardinal Levada to withdraw his directive to Catholic Charities forbidding the placement of children in need of adoption with same-sex couples." The document, unanimously signed by all eleven supervisors and Mayor Gavin Newsom, called Levada's comments "an insult to all San Franciscans" and "unacceptable to the citizenry of San Francisco." It stated that "Cardinal Levada is a decidedly unqualified representative of his former home city, and of the people of San Francisco and the values they hold dear," and finally urged that "Archbishop Niederauer and the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese defy all discriminatory directives of Cardinal Levada."¹⁵⁷ This harshly worded, officially-issued act of defiance was especially significant, since five of the eleven Supervisors and the Mayor came from Catholic backgrounds. Unlike leaders of decades past, however, none balked at disobeying—even chastising—the Catholic Church for failure to accommodate San Francisco's cultural values. Mayor Newsom bluntly remarked, "I am shocked as a San Franciscan. I am shocked as a Catholic. I have talked to Catholics, people in the church hierarchy, who are stunned by what was said."¹⁵⁸

Once again, church leaders strove to find a way to reconcile the ways of the Bay Area with the laws of the Church. Under the leadership of Brian Cahill, and with the support of Archbishop Niederauer, Catholic Charities devised a solution to extinguish the incendiary problem.

¹⁵⁶ Bajko.

¹⁵⁷ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Resolution No. 168-06, March 14, 2006.

¹⁵⁸ Bajko.

As with the domestic partner benefits debacle, Cahill and his team capitalized on grey area. Catholic Charities would halt its own adoption program, but partner with Family Builders by Adoption, an LGBTQ-friendly organization characterized as “about the gayest adoption agency in the country,” by its director Jill Jacobs.¹⁵⁹ Through this new partnership, Catholic Charities would be able to continue funding and assisting children in need of adoption without explicitly acting against official ecclesiastical doctrine. Unfortunately, the 2006 adoption agreement would mark the end of Catholic San Francisco’s relatively successful era of compromise.

An Irreconcilable Initiative: Proposition 8 Introduced

In 2008, it had been over forty years since Lenore Kandel’s poem had been ripped from the shelves. It had been twenty years since Pope John Paul II had encountered shockingly small crowds and historically large protests. It had been fourteen years since Archbishop Quinn had closed a quarter of the Archdiocese’s parishes. Following decades of tension with city officials and local residents, San Francisco’s Catholic Church faced dismal numbers: there were half as many Catholic priests, elementary schools, and high schools as there had been four decades earlier, and the Archdiocese’s finances were still recovering from the millions of dollars spent on scandal settlements and legal fees. Worst of all, the future looked bleak: in 1967, 18,780 children were baptized; in 2008, the number had fallen to 302.¹⁶⁰

Despite these dramatic losses in both urban presence and ecclesiastical membership, the Church was far from obsolete. Catholicism still predominated among San Francisco's shrinking

¹⁵⁹ Zak Szymanski, “Catholic Charities revamps adoptions,” *Bay Area Reporter*, August 10, 2006.

¹⁶⁰ *The Official Catholic Directory: Anno Domini 1967, 1987, 2008*. Published annually by P.J. Kennedy & Sons.

religious populace, and vestiges of influence remained.¹⁶¹ For over a decade, the Archdiocese's fraying relationship with the city had been held together through compromises on domestic partner benefits and same-sex adoptions. Ecclesial leaders had seemed to accept that their influence had declined, but their willingness to work with the city had paid off in both social policy and local reputation. But with a 2008 ballot initiative, it all unraveled.

In May 2008, California's Supreme Court voted to mandate same-sex marriage throughout the state. Immediately following the decision, opponents drafted Proposition 8: a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage that would reverse the court's ruling and make same-sex marriage illegal in California. As the news circulated around the state, San Francisco Catholics braced themselves. Unlike domestic partner benefits, or even same-sex adoption policy, observers suspected there was simply no grey area when it came to marriage.

By August, Proposition 8 had engulfed the state. Although the most historic presidential election of the modern era was preoccupying most Americans' attention, Prop 8 had gained California voters' attention. Though San Francisco lacked a strong presence of many of the groups who strongly favored the initiative—including evangelical Christians and Mormons—its Catholic population (especially Catholic ethnic minorities) faced conflict. The Catholic Bishops of California had released a statement in favor of Proposition 8, which critiqued its attempt to “radically change California's public policy regarding marriage.”¹⁶² In keeping with Catholic doctrine, the document outlined the Church's teaching on marriage, which defined the sacrament

¹⁶¹ “County Membership Report: San Francisco County 2010 Report,” *Association of Religion Data Archives*, http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/c/06/rcms2010_06075_county_name_2010.asp, accessed February 11, 2016.

¹⁶² Catholic Bishops of California, “A Statement of the Catholic Bishops of California in Support of Proposition 8,” <http://www.cacatholic.org/news/california-bishops-statements/statement-catholic-bishops-california-support-proposition-8>, August 1, 2008.

as exclusively between one man and one woman. The statement concluded by urging Catholics “to provide both the financial support and the volunteer efforts needed for the passage of Proposition 8. And—please exercise your citizenship and vote in November.”¹⁶³ This official Catholic position surprised no one, including Catholic San Franciscans. One expert remarks how “the most obvious area of conflict between Americanism and Catholicism is sexuality issues which have moved from the private domestic realm to the public policy forum. Contraception, abortion, and homosexuality lead the roster.”¹⁶⁴ Over the past four decades, and documented through a 1987 survey of Catholics in San Francisco, residents had grown more comfortable departing from Church teaching when their personal convictions directed them to quietly ignore or openly oppose ecclesiastical prescriptions.¹⁶⁵ It was not until Archbishop Niederauer became involved that the Church and the city of San Francisco bitterly clashed once more, yet with no compromise in sight.

Little did anyone know how relevant Niederauer’s eleven years in Salt Lake City would become two years into his tenure in San Francisco. When news of Proposition 8 reached the California Catholic Conference of Bishops, Archbishop Niederauer’s personal connection to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints became of utmost importance. In June 2008, he wrote a letter to Mormon leaders asking for their institutional participation and financial support in passing Proposition 8. Mormons within and beyond California’s borders accepted Nieder-

¹⁶³Catholic Bishops of California, “A Statement of the Catholic Bishops of California in Support of Proposition 8,” <http://www.cacatholic.org/news/california-bishops-statements/statement-catholic-bishops-california-support-proposition-8>, August 1, 2008..

¹⁶⁴ Christine Gudorf, “The Situation of American Lay Catholics,” in *Religion and Politics in the American Milieu*, edited by Leslie Griffin, (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Review of Politics, 1989), 109.

¹⁶⁵ See the previous chapter for more a more in-depth discussion of this phenomenon throughout the ‘70s and ‘80s among San Francisco Catholics.

auer's charge and raised roughly \$20 million—more than half of the campaign's total—for Yes on 8.¹⁶⁶ *The Chronicle* reported that the letter

...proved to be a critical move in building a multi-religious coalition - the backbone of the fundraising, organizing, and voting support for the successful ballot measure. By bringing together Mormons and Catholics, Niederauer would align the two most powerful religious institutions in the Prop 8 battle.¹⁶⁷

This action surprised many San Francisco Catholics, who had previously applauded Niederauer for his pastoral sensitivity in engaging the city's cultural complexities. Many publicly rebuked the Archdiocese and its leader: "I don't think anyone was prepared for that. That was a total shock," reported the co-chair of Dignity, Paul Riofski.¹⁶⁸ According to Matt Dorsey, a parishioner at the Castro's Most Holy Redeemer parish, "It was really out of right field. I would expect this from Karl Rove, but not from the spiritual leader of several hundred thousand Catholics."¹⁶⁹ Finally, in an email to *the Chronicle*, Patrick Mulcahey stated, "When I saw the archbishop had a flyer on Proposition 8, I wasn't outraged or even surprised. Until I read that bit about how Prop. 8 secures parental rights to teach children about marriage. That was disappointing. No, saddening. No, a shock."¹⁷⁰ In taking an active role, Archbishop Niederauer severely damaged the relationships he had built with gay members of the Catholic community and their straight allies.

¹⁶⁶ Matthai Kuruvila, "S.F. archbishop defends role in Prop. 8 passage," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 4, 2008.

¹⁶⁷ Matthai Kuruvila, "To pass measure, Catholics and Mormons allied," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 10, 2008.

¹⁶⁸ Matthai Kuruvila, "Clergy's role a wedge for many Catholics," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 22, 2008.

¹⁶⁹ C.W. Nevius, "Castro Catholic church walks fine line on Prop. 8", *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 18, 2008.

¹⁷⁰ Nevius.

Church versus City: Enmity Established

Archbishop Niederauer's public advocacy caused rifts within some local Catholic circles and strained the Church's relationship with the city of San Francisco. The most prominent manifestation of the deteriorating ecclesial-municipal relationship was Mayor Gavin Newsom's staunch opposition to the initiative and active role in the campaign against it. Though he came from a Catholic background, Newsom had long been a proponent of LGBT rights, and often clashed with Church leaders because of it. In 2004, he began granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples throughout San Francisco and cancelled a trip to Rome for Cardinal Levada's installation following the 2006 adoption incident.¹⁷¹ Against warnings from many advisers, Newsom became heavily involved in the "No on 8" campaign—despite worries it could hurt his political future, making him seem even more liberal and condemnable to more conservative voters outside of San Francisco.¹⁷² On election day, 75% of San Franciscans voted against the measure—the highest percentage of "no" votes in the state.¹⁷³ The 25% of residents who did vote for Proposition 8 was largely comprised of ethnic and elderly minorities, who were more fervently religious and socially conservative than the city's general population. Neighborhoods with large Asian and African-American populations, including Chinatown, Bayview-Hunters Point, and the Tenderloin supported the initiative; according to *the Chronicle*, "many residents said they voted that

¹⁷¹ "Mayor of San Francisco Gavin Newsom to campaign against Prop. 8," *Catholic News Agency*, September 6, 2008.

¹⁷² Erin Allday, "Like it or not, Newsom has become the face of Prop. 8," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 14, 2008.

¹⁷³ "California results, Proposition 8 by County," *Los Angeles Times*, <http://www.latimes.com/local/la-2008election-california-results-htmlstory.html>, accessed February 12, 2016.

way for one of two reasons: their religious beliefs or fear that children would learn about gay marriage in school.”¹⁷⁴

Following the measure’s success, some Prop. 8 opponents focused their anger and disappointment toward the Church, despite the more complex voting patterns displayed throughout the city. The *Bay Area Reporter* quoted queer activist Tommi Avicolti Mecca, “To blame African Americans now is really problematic. Clearly, it was the Mormons and Catholics who did it.”¹⁷⁵ At the Thanksgiving interfaith prayer breakfast, Mayor Newsom’s confrontational comments regarding the Catholic Church and its role in passing Proposition 8 prompted Archbishop Niederauer to remain sitting while Newsom received a standing ovation for his words.¹⁷⁶ The Archdiocese would later call Newsom’s “unprepared remarks an intemperate attack on those religions and people of faith who supported Proposition 8.”¹⁷⁷

To quell the backlash surrounding Proposition 8, Archbishop Niederauer issued a statement to “clarify what was done and why it was done, and offer some thoughts about the way forward amid so many misunderstandings and hard feelings.”¹⁷⁸ He noted that Catholics and Mormons were among multiple religious organizations who had supported the measure in San Francisco, and refuted the accusation from “some voices in the wider community” who “declared that there could be only one motive [in the Church’s support]: hatred, prejudice and bigotry

¹⁷⁴ Heather Knight, “Prop. 8 Support in S.F.,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 14, 2008.

¹⁷⁵ Seth Hemmelgarn, “Some SF neighborhoods showed strong support for Prop 8,” *Bay Area Reporter*, November 20, 2008.

¹⁷⁶ Dan Aiello, “Newsom’s comments keep Catholics in their seats,” *Bay Area Reporter*, December 11, 2008.

¹⁷⁷ Aiello.

¹⁷⁸ Archbishop George Niederauer, <http://www.sanfranciscosentinel.com/?p=17788>, December 1, 2008.

against gays, along with a determination to discriminate against them and deny them their civil rights.”¹⁷⁹ Rather, he emphasized the distinction between traditional marriage and a same-sex partnership that Catholic doctrine demands be recognized. Most poignantly, Niederauer sought to mend what had been broken:

Even though we supporters of Proposition 8 did not intend to hurt or offend our opponents, still many of them, especially in the gay community, feel hurt and offended. What is to be done? Tolerance, respect, and trust are always two-way streets, and tolerance, respect and trust often do not include agreement, or even approval. We need to be able to disagree without being disagreeable. We need to stop hurling names like “bigot” and “pervert” at each other. And we need to stop it now.¹⁸⁰

Though the letter gained praise from some Catholics—especially those who had supported Proposition 8—many were not swayed:

Kevin Sullivan, a gay parishioner at St. Dominic's in the Fillmore district, found Niederauer's letter to be ‘very condescending’ and said the archdiocese deserves the moniker of being bigoted. ‘The actions of our archdiocese and this archbishop in no way spoke of tolerance, respect and trust toward gay Catholics. It will take the gay community a very long time to forgive our archdiocese for this.’¹⁸¹

As for the city’s non-Catholics, there is little evidence that anyone else paid much attention to Niederauer’s attempt at reconciliation. Two months following the passage of Prop. 8, Most Holy Redeemer Church in the Castro district was vandalized with graffiti that read: “Prop H8 Niederauer Ratzinger Where is the Love?” accompanied by a black swastika (Figure 3.1).¹⁸² Additional-

¹⁷⁹ Niederauer.

¹⁸⁰ Niederauer.

¹⁸¹ Matthai Kuruvila, “S.F. archbishop defends role in Prop. 8 passage,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 4, 2008.

¹⁸² “San Francisco Catholic Church Attacked by Pro-Homosexual Marriage Vandals,” *Catholic News Service*, January 12, 2009.

ly, “the Archdiocese of San Francisco’s Pastoral Center was also vandalized. Stenciled on the walls and windows was the phrase, ‘The Catholic Church is in no position to legislate my sexuality.’”¹⁸³ *The Chronicle*, in an opinion entitled “The Ugly Backlash over Proposition 8,” decried that “protesters have shouted insults at people headed to worship; temples and churches have been defaced.”¹⁸⁴ In June of the following year, Archbishop Niederauer was awarded with the Pink Brick by the San Francisco LGBT Pride Celebration Committee. The annual award is given before the San Francisco Pride Parade “to a person or institution that has caused significant harm to the LGBT community.”¹⁸⁵ 2009’s Pink Brick was originally intended for Miss California USA Carrie Prejean for her opposition to same-sex marriage, but the Committee instead granted it to Niederauer after significant feedback from the community.¹⁸⁶

Conclusion

Through the 1960s, “the Catholic Church in San Francisco exerted enormous influence in defining the contours of San Francisco culture and society.”¹⁸⁷ There were reasons to suggest that the City of Saint Francis truly was a Catholic city. Although it had always included rich diversity, San Francisco’s leaders, elites, and population throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

¹⁸³“San Francisco Catholic Church Attacked by Pro-Homosexual Marriage Vandals,” *Catholic News Service*, January 12, 2009.

¹⁸⁴ John Diaz, “The ugly backlash over Proposition 8,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 23, 2008.

¹⁸⁵ Seth Hemmelgarn, “Niederauer named Pink Brick runner-up,” *Bay Area Reporter*, June 18, 2009.

¹⁸⁶ Hemmelgarn.

¹⁸⁷ Jeffrey Burns, “Lenore Kandel,” *The Argonaut*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1994.

were among the most Catholic in the country.¹⁸⁸ Its neighborhoods were defined not only by ethnic enclaves, but also by parish boundaries. Its mayors, lawyers, and judges were educated by nuns, brothers, and priests. Its laws were influenced by Catholic clergy and enforced by Catholic cops.

But the city's newcomers began to change the governing elite and shared culture. After World War II, migrants came across state lines rather than oceans. From Kansas and Virginia rather than Ireland and Italy, in search of new lifestyles and fresh ideas, rather than economic opportunity and cultural continuity. San Francisco had always been at the forefront of the labor movement and Roosevelt-era progressivism—often with Catholic doctrine informing that ethos. But then the Beats, the hippies, the gays, and the feminists chipped away at the city's established social structures. San Francisco became a haven and playground for those seeking alternatives to American heteronormativity, and the Church's cultural dominance declined. It persisted through the '60s and '70s as a waning authority, bartered through the '80s and '90s as a demoted participant, and has battled since the 2000s as a cultural outsider and political minority.

In 1967, Assistant District Attorney Frank Shaw built his case around halting the immorality that was seeping into the city. In 1987, Archbishop Quinn grappled with a city that was leaving its traditional roots behind. By 2008, hostilities between America's most progressive city

¹⁸⁸ In conjunction with the documented institutional power of Catholics in San Francisco (see Appendices A and B), historian Douglas Firth Anderson discusses the unique relationship and power dynamics between Catholics and Protestants established from the city's earliest beginnings: "Irish emigrants in particular, as R. A. Burchell has shown, were in a position to exert significant social and cultural power from the 1860's on. This ethnic-group power included religion. In 1869, *the Monitor*, the paper of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco, claimed that "Catholicity has struck as firm a root in California as in any part of the United States." The Anglo-Protestant community, therefore, had to contend with a regional culture and society forged in a process of urbanization that was distinctive for its rapidity and its cosmopolitan character." Unlike the densely Catholic cities of Boston and New York in the east, power had been shared more equitably (if not in favor of Catholics) much earlier in San Francisco. Douglas Firth Anderson, "A True Revival of Religion": Protestants and the San Francisco Graft Prosecutions, 1906-1909," *Religion and American Culture* Volume 4, Issue 1. <http://home.nwciowa.edu/firth/sfgraft.htm>, Winter 1994.

and a Church struggling to maintain centuries-old tradition could be contained no longer. An organization that had once dominated San Francisco's political life and popular culture had become one of the city's biggest adversaries. Sensing its declining influence, Archbishop Niederauer pleaded for tolerance in a city that defined itself by its open-mindedness, though it seemed civic goodwill no longer extend to the Church and its teachings.

POSTSCRIPT

The declining relationship between the Catholic Church and the city of San Francisco—as told through the three events of this thesis—connects to the broader studies of both Catholicism in America and religion and American politics. In some ways, this complicated narrative of decline relates only to San Francisco, and seeks to better understand Catholicism’s important role in the city’s history, which has been too often forgotten. But, I hope, this case study may contribute to other scholarly conversations as well.

Catholic Studies

In some ways, the events between 1967 and 2008 are entirely representative of the larger American Catholic story told by Carey, Dolan, McGreevy, and others. Post-Vatican II changes transformed the Archdiocese, bringing not only adapted liturgies but a newfound sense of democracy and discourse. This new freedom to question what had previously been an unwavering hierarchy was at the heart of much of the Church’s internal conflict surrounding Lenore Kandel’s obscenity trial.

San Francisco was a major center of the post-1965 Asian-Latino immigration wave that swept the Church. As they did throughout the country, these newcomers replaced the previous cohort of Irish-Italian immigrants that preceded them the century before. In accordance with national trends, though on an even more dramatic level, San Francisco’s first-generation Catholics have been the saving grace of a Church whose native-born members have defected at rates much faster than the rest of the country. Though demographic data on the Archdiocese of San Francisco is unavailable, this conclusion can be reached when we consider the high immigration rates of

Latinos, Filipinos, and Koreans within San Francisco, the strong multicultural environment of the Archdiocese, and the comparison of trends between national and local data.

In other ways, however, the story of Catholicism in San Francisco veers from the general historical narrative. Patrick Carey notes that “four issues were particularly divisive” following Vatican II: “the nature and proper exercise of ecclesiastical authority, social justice, sexual morality and abortion, and the role of religion in politics.”¹⁸⁹ As this thesis has shown, San Francisco’s Catholic Church was involved in all four of these elements, but in ways unlike any other city in the country—particularly when it came to sexual morality. Scholars widely recognize the impact the Sixties had on gender and sexuality within the Church, but few have examined just how deeply they affected Catholicism in San Francisco. The United States’ “changing cultural values,” as Dolan puts it, was barely the tip of the iceberg in San Francisco. As the national Church dealt with America’s growing acceptance of “taboo” practices like birth control and pre-marital sex, the Archdiocese of San Francisco was at ground zero of the Sexual Revolution, grappling with burgeoning communities of free love, open homosexuality, and “radically experimental sex radicals” who “foisted their vision of a sexually liberated, creatively driven, and highly tolerant society onto San Francisco.”¹⁹⁰ This intense transformation of a formerly traditional, overwhelmingly Catholic city would define much of the conflict between San Francisco’s municipal bodies, the Catholic Church, and the city’s ever evolving public culture. Debates about erotic art, AIDS, women’s liberation, and same-sex marriage would affect the Catholic Church in San Francisco far more than they would the broader, national body.

¹⁸⁹ Patrick Carey, *Catholics in America*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004).

¹⁹⁰ Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace*. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2010). Josh Sides, *Erotic City*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

John McGreevy, among others, presents the Church's modern dilemma:

On the one hand, an institution enrolling more active members than any other in American society, including prominent leaders in government, the professions, the universities, the trade unions, and all branches of American industry. On the other hand, a wounded, fractious church, ripped apart by disputes over sex, gender, and ministry, and incapable of sustaining the loyalty of many of its communicants.¹⁹¹

While this conclusion perhaps characterizes the Church's national status, only its latter part applies to San Francisco. As we have seen through the increasingly factious and tense events throughout the past five decades, the Catholic Church and the city of San Francisco have not been able to reconcile their differences.

Although San Francisco has been out of the mainstream since the Sixties, and will probably remain far more politically liberal and culturally distinct, national trends continue to move in its direction. Over the past decade, Americans have become dramatically more accepting of same-sex marriage, while becoming increasingly disinterested in organized religion.¹⁹² The numbers become even more dramatic among young people. At the conclusion of 2000's *Catholics in America*, Jay Dolan pondered the question: "How will the local bishop preside over these many parish communities that seem to take on a life quite removed from what goes on in the bureaucratic church?" San Francisco's story provides only one example of an answer, and a largely disheartening one at that. But as the country's views continue to inch closer to those that have long reigned supreme in San Francisco, it is an answer worth noting.

¹⁹¹ John McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004).

¹⁹² Michael Lipka, "Religious 'nones' are not only growing, they're becoming more secular," *Pew Research*, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/11/religious-nones-are-not-only-growing-theyre-becoming-more-secular/>, November 11, 2015. "Changing Attitudes on Gay Marriage," *Pew Research*, <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/07/29/graphics-slideshow-changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>, July 29, 2015.

Religion, Politics, and Culture

“Unaffiliated” is San Francisco’s largest “religion.” With 37% of residents claiming no religious tradition, it is the second least religious city in the United States.¹⁹³ As those who do not affiliate with any organized religion—or “nones,” as they have been dubbed—continue to rise rapidly throughout the country, San Francisco once again proves valuable as an example of foreshadowing trends. However, it is also once again imperative to note San Francisco’s past, present, and what are sure to be future differences from “mainstream American culture,” when using it as a barometer of what may come. San Francisco is more liberal, racially and ethnically diverse, affluent, and urban than most of the United States. It has the highest LGBTQ population in the country, and has stood apart from the norm since the tumultuous Sixties. With this distinction in mind, there is still much to learn from the sharp decline in Church-city relations over the course of forty years, especially as religious and some political trends begin to mirror the historical context of the city.

Political scientists Robert Putnam and David Campbell discuss their theory of a “shock and two aftershocks,” in their 2010 book *American Grace*. Religion in the United States, they posit, sharply declined during the countercultural revolution of the Sixties. They illuminate a number of factors that severely disrupted both political and religious institutions across the country, including...

the bulge in the youngest age cohorts as the boomers moved through adolescence and into college, the combination of unprecedented affluence and the rapid expansion of higher education, “the Pill,” the abating of Cold War anxieties, Vatican II, the assassinations, the Vietnam War, Watergate, pot and LSD, the civil rights movement and

¹⁹³ “The American Values Atlas,” <http://ava.publicreligion.org/home#religious/2015/MetroAreas/religion>, accessed February 22, 2016.

the other movements that followed in its wake—the antiwar movement, the women’s liberation movement, and later the environmental and gay rights movements.¹⁹⁴

This list is especially important to the Church’s experience in San Francisco, since the city was at the heart of so many of its items. The San Francisco Bay Area was, in many ways, the center of the Sixties, and carries its legacies through today. The implications for the Catholic Church were significant and lasting, as this thesis has explored. Putnam and Campbell, among others, attribute much of the religious decline to the Sixties’ general rejection of institutions. But they also discover an important link between changing sexual norms and the abandonment of religion.¹⁹⁵ Yet again, when the specifics of San Francisco are considered, this theory becomes intensified, as the city’s sexual dynamics and attitudes far surpassed what was occurring throughout the country. If Putnam and Campbell are correct in their assessment, it would only make sense that the backlash and tension experienced in San Francisco was as grating as it was—especially when the issues surrounded gender and sexuality, as they so often did.

The Catholic Church in San Francisco did not experience the “first aftershock” outlined in Putnam and Campbell’s theory nearly to the extent that others did in the United States. This is in line with the applied “shift to the left” surrounding the events of the Sixties. The first aftershock, which occurred throughout the Seventies and Eighties, encapsulated the national discomfort toward what happened in the Sixties and the resulting uptick in religiosity: “It was a seismic

¹⁹⁴ Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace*. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2010). Josh Sides, *Erotic City*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁹⁵ Specifically, the authors focus on the rapidly changed views on premarital sex and the acceptability of birth control. These dramatic national trends, compounded by Vatican II and *Humanae Vitae*, made the Sixties even more dramatic for Catholics than it did for Protestants or Jews. While “the number of self-identified Catholics did not decline much, the attendance at Mass among American Catholics (especially young Catholics) fell so dramatically that Catholics alone accounted for much of the aggregate decline in religious attendance during the long Sixties.” Putnam and Campbell.

warning sign that America’s religious landscape was beginning to shift again, this time in a more religious (and conservative) direction.”¹⁹⁶ As large swaths of the country fell in love with Billy Graham, and began to flock to evangelical megachurches, San Francisco’s “aftershock” was far more muted. While the city lacked any sizable evangelical population, conservative Catholics continued their efforts in reclaiming their once-traditional, Catholic city. This cohort had been resisting San Francisco’s colorful newcomers long before this first aftershock, as was evident in the “Clean-Culture” movement discussed in Chapter 1. However, Supervisor Dan White and his platform best embodied the San Francisco-version of this aftershock phenomenon. As is discussed in Chapter 2, the sentiments of the first aftershock were largely overshadowed by the gay rights movement, and the Church (along with whatever conservative Catholics remained in the city) ultimately gained very little from it.

Finally, San Francisco’s religious and political dynamic aligns with—but once more to the left of—Putnam and Campbell’s “second aftershock.” Following the surge in religiosity throughout the Seventies and Eighties, the Nineties and Two-Thousands echoed the decline of the Sixties. Nowhere was this more evident than in San Francisco. As this thesis has explored, San Franciscans began abandoning religion (namely Catholicism) many years before the Nineties. The conclusion that “Americans came to view religion, according to one survey, as judgmental, homophobic, hypocritical, and too political” was evident in Marshall Krause’s defense of Lenore Kandel in 1967, papal protestors’ signs in 1987, and in the rhetoric of the No on 8 campaign in 2008.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Putnam and Campbell.

¹⁹⁷ Putnam and Campbell.

The trends of this second aftershock appear to be continuing—at an increasing pace. In only six years since the publication of *American Grace*, “nones” have increased from roughly 17% of the general population to 23%.¹⁹⁸ Daniel Cox explores this growing phenomenon in his dissertation “And Then There Were Nones: An Examination of the Rising Rate of Religious Non-affiliation among Millennials.” He examines young Americans’ historic and unprecedented rates of ambivalence toward religion, and offers a number of compelling explanations. Most relevant is his analysis of Millennials’ attitudes toward homosexuality and religion. He first reveals that “no religious tradition is viewed as more hostile to gay and lesbian people than the Catholic Church. Two-thirds (67%) of Millennials say the Catholic Church is unfriendly to gay and lesbian people, while about six and ten say Mormon Church (60%) and evangelical Protestant Churches (57%) are also hostile.”¹⁹⁹ Cox then remarks that:

Roughly two-thirds (69%) of Millennials believe that religious groups are alienating young people by being too judgmental on the issue of homosexuality (Jones, Cox, Navarro-Rivera 2014). Jones et al. (2014) also found that about one-third (34%) of Millennials who left their childhood religion said that negative treatment of gay and lesbian people was an important factor in their decision.²⁰⁰

The story of the Catholic Church in San Francisco provides historic evidence that supports this data. While San Francisco’s patterns emerged decades earlier, their connection to contemporary attitudes on religion and culture are valuable in extending the conversation beyond simple survey data. To better understand contemporary trends, the experiences of the Church,

¹⁹⁸ Michael Lipka, “Religious ‘nones’ are not only growing, they’re becoming more secular,” *Pew Research*, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/11/religious-nones-are-not-only-growing-theyre-becoming-more-secular/>, November 11, 2015.

¹⁹⁹ Daniel Cox, *And then there were Nones: An examination of the rising rate of religious non--affiliation among Millennials*. Georgetown University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2015.

²⁰⁰ Cox.

San Francisco's city government, and its broader culture illuminate how religion and politics interplay on a local level.

Since the painful experience of Proposition 8, Church-city relations have only become more wrought with conflict. In 2010, Archbishop Niederauer was replaced by Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, one of Proposition 8's core organizers. Described as "a hard-liner," the current Archbishop has butted heads with the city on matters of gay marriage, morality clauses for teachers in Catholic schools, and appointments of ultra-conservative clergy throughout the Archdiocese.²⁰¹ Yet the story is far from over. Despite the conflict explored in this study, and despite the institutional disintegration, Pope Francis continues to shift the tone and focus of the Church—infusing a burst of energy into Catholics and observers alike. Catholicism's return to power is unlikely in San Francisco, especially as its population grows younger and more secular. But reconciliation, coexistence, and collaboration between the city's Catholics and non-Catholics are worthy of pursuit by all.

²⁰¹ Phil Matier and Andy Ross, "Prominent Catholics call on pope to oust S.F. archbishop," *San Francisco Chronicle*, <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/matier-ross/article/Prominent-Catholics-call-on-pope-to-oust-S-F-6202539.php>, April 20, 2015.

APPENDIX A

Religious faith of San Francisco Mayors, 1850-present

Name	Religion	Name	Religion
John W. Geary (1850-1851)	Protestant	James D. Phelan (1897-1902)	Catholic
Charles J. Brenham (1851-1853)	Catholic	Eugene Schmitz (1902-1907)	Catholic
Stephen P. Webb (1854-1855)	Protestant	Charles Boxton (1907-1907)	Unknown
James Van Ness (1855-1856)	Protestant	P.H. McCarthy (1910-1912)	Catholic
Ephraim Willard Burr (1856-1859)	Protestant	James Rolph (1912-1931)	Protestant
Henry Perrin Coon (1863-1867)	Protestant	Angelo Rossi (1931-1944)	Catholic
Frank McCoppin (1867-1869)	Catholic	Roger Lapham (1944-1948)	Protestant
Thomas Henry Selby (1869-1871)	Protestant	Elmer Robinson (1948-1956)	Protestant
William Alvord (1871-1873)	Protestant	George Christopher (1956-1964)	Greek Orthodox
James Otis (1873-1875)	Protestant	John Shelley (1964-1968)	Catholic
Andrew Jackson Bryant (1875-1879)	Protestant	Joseph Alioto (1968-1976)	Catholic
Isaac Smith Kalloch (1879-1881)	Protestant	George Moscone (1976-1978)	Catholic
Maurice Carey Blake (1881-1883)	Protestant	Dianne Feinstein (1978-1988)	Jewish
Washington Bartlett (1883-1887)	Jewish	Art Agnos (1988-1992)	Unknown
Edward B. Pond (1887-1891)	Protestant	Frank Jordan (1992-1996)	Catholic
George H. Sanderson (1891-1893)	Protestant	Willie Brown (1996-2004)	Protestant
Levi Richard Ellert (1893-1895)	Protestant	Gavin Newsom (2004-2011)	Catholic
Adolph Sutro (1895-1897)	Jewish	Edwin Lee (2011-present)	Unknown

APPENDIX B

Religious faith of San Francisco Police Chiefs, 1920-present

Name	Religion	Name	Religion
Daniel J. O'Brien (1920-1928)	Catholic	Corneilius Murphy (1980-1986)	Catholic
William J. Quinn (1929-1940)	Catholic	Frank Jordan (1986-1990)	Catholic
Charles Dullea (1940-1947)	Catholic	Willis Casey (1990-1992)	Catholic
Michael Riordan (1947)	Catholic	Richard Hongisto (1992)	Catholic
Michael Mitchell (1947-1950)	Catholic	Anthony Ribera (1992-1996)	Catholic
Michael Gaffey (1951-1955)	Catholic	Fred H. Lau (1996-2002)	Unknown
George Healy (1955-1956)	Catholic	Prentice Sanders (2002-2003)	Unknown
Francis Ahern (1956-1958)	Catholic	Alex Fagan (2003-2004)	Unknown
Thomas Cahill (1958-1970)	Catholic	Heather Fong (2004-2009)	Unknown
Alfred J. Nelder (1970-1971)	Catholic	George Gascon (2009-2011)	Catholic
Donald M. Scott (1971-1975)	Catholic	Greg Suhr (2011-present)	Unknown
Charles Gain (1975-1980)	Unknown		

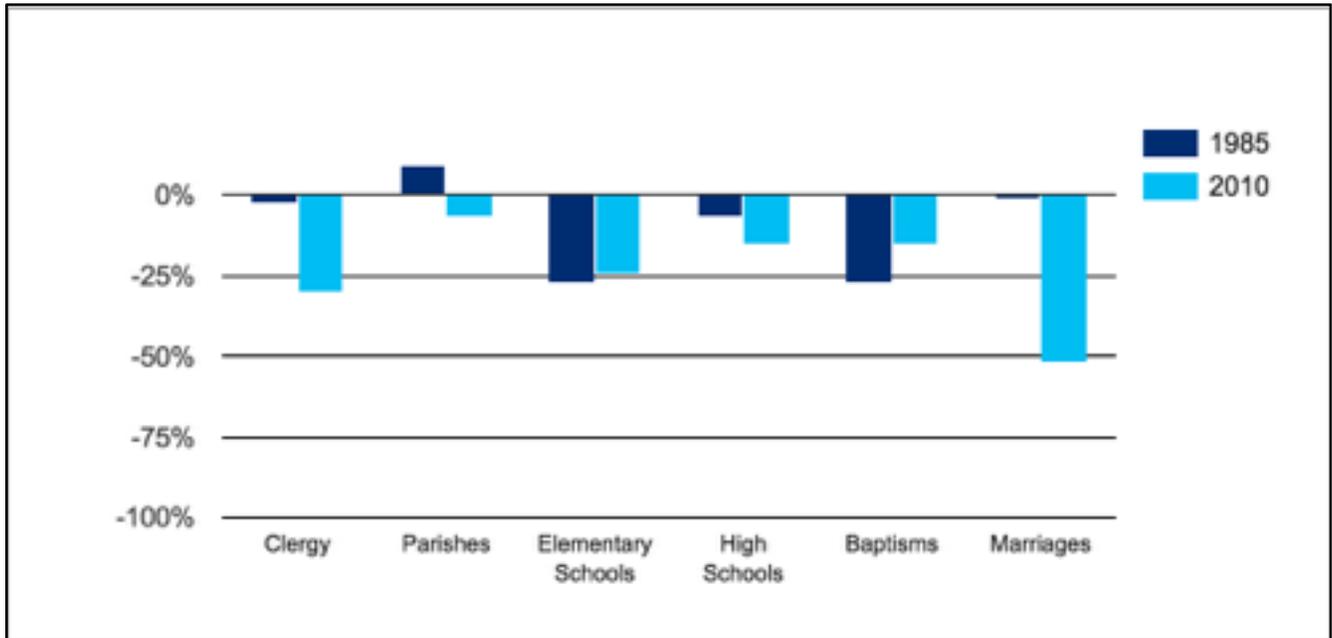
APPENDIX C

Catholicism by the Numbers: Comparing National Patterns and San Francisco Trends

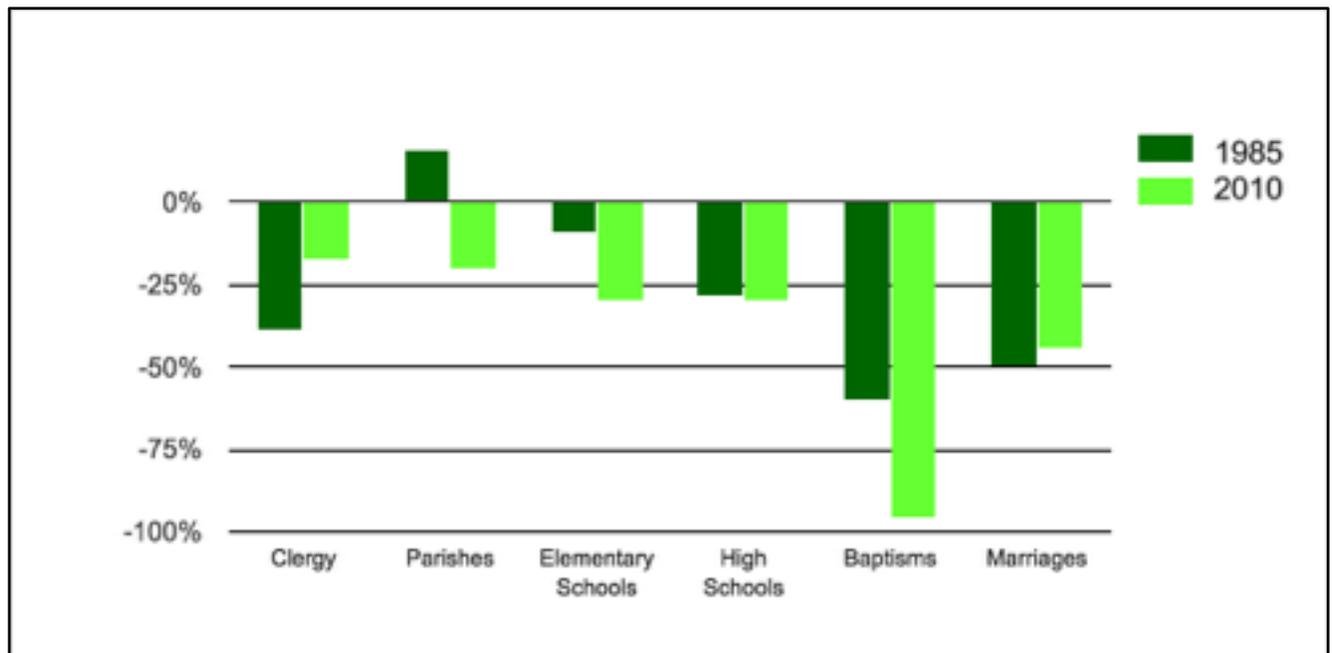
U.S. Versus S.F. Trends			
	1965	1985	2010
Clergy (U.S.)	58,632	57,317 (-2%)	39,993 (-30%)
<i>Clergy (S.F.)</i>	801	487 (-39%)	400 (-18%)
Parishes (U.S.)	17,637	19,244 (9%)	17,958 (-7%)
Parishes (S.F.)	50	58 (16%)	46 (-21%)
Elementary Schools (U.S.)	10,667	7,764 (-27%)	5,889 (-24%)
Elementary Schools (S.F.)	41	37 (-10%)	26 (-30%)
High Schools (U.S.)	1,527	1,425 (-7%)	1,205 (-15%)
High Schools (S.F.)	14	10 (-29%)	7 (-30%)
Baptisms (U.S.)	1,310,000	953,323 (-27%)	806,138 (-15%)
<i>Baptisms (S.F.)</i>	18,780	7,426 (-60%)	302 (-96%)
Marriages (U.S.)	352,458	348,300 (-1%)	168,400 (-52%)
<i>Marriages (S.F.)</i>	3,417	1,719 (-50%)	959 (-52%)

National numbers compared to San Francisco numbers, accompanied by decrease in percentage between data points.

Percentage Changes between 1965-1985 and 1985-2010 in the United States



Percentage Changes between 1965-1985 and 1985-2010 in San Francisco



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