

POETRY, PRAYER, AND PEDAGOGY: WRITINGS BY AND FOR  
THE ENGLISH CATHOLIC COMMUNITY, 1547-1650

A Dissertation

by

PATRICIA MARIE GARCIA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2006

Major Subject: English

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## ABSTRACT

Poetry, Prayer, and Pedagogy: Writings by and for  
the English Catholic Community, 1547-1650. (December 2006)

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This study examines the role of religious poetry and pedagogy in maintaining the English Catholic community during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. English Catholics faced legal sanctions, social isolation, and physical harm for practicing their faith, and the Catholic church began a campaign to maintain, educate, and minister to the community covertly through the use of Jesuit missionaries and published pedagogical texts. The influence of such experiences can be seen in the literary works of John Donne, Robert Southwell, Richard Crashaw, and Elizabeth Cary, as well as in the instructional works by lesser-known Catholic writers including John Fowler, Thomas Wright, John Bucke, Henry Garnet, Gaspar Loarte, John Mush, Jeanne de Cambray, and Agnes More. These texts also show a stylistic influence upon one another wherein pedagogical texts utilize poetic language, and poetic texts instruct the reader in religious practice through modeling and example. Through a careful reading of these works, I examine the early modern literary landscape of England in its Catholic context. Finally, I argue that the question of Protestant/Catholic identity led to the development of a religious poetics that

emphasized the role of the individual within this crisis and, more importantly, in his or her relationship with God.

## DEDICATION

To my nephews and nieces—those yet to be born and those already in my life:

Lynn Peter Ashby

Pierce Francis Ashby

Lillian Leslie Ashby

Pablo Abiel González

Always remember that your family's greatest legacy is a dedication to education. *¡Sí se puede!*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	.iii
DEDICATION .....	.v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	.vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	.viii
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION .....	1
Catholic History in England, 1547-1650.....	5
Defining the Community: The Laity's and Clergy's Response .....	19
Current Scholarship.....	21
Goals of Dissertation and Overview.....	25
Notes .....	31
II SUBJECTS AND SACRAMENTS .....	32
Confessional Practice.....	36
Eucharistic Practice.....	42
Robert Southwell and the Poetics of Confession .....	53
John Donne and Eucharistic Poetics.....	68
Notes .....	82
III ROSARY AND RITUAL .....	84
Private Devotion and Instruction .....	87
<i>The Society of the Rosary: Public Concerns</i> .....	100
Ritual and Devotion in Poetic Sequences on Mary and the Birth of Jesus .....	107
Conclusions: Rosary Doctrine and Devotion .....	120
Notes .....	122
IV CATHOLIC MARTYRS, MOTHERS, AND WIVES .....	123
Clitherow and Her Confessor .....	128
Elizabeth Cary's Life and Biography .....	137
Cary's <i>The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry:</i> Questions of Loyalty, Piety, and Subject Positions .....	155

CHAPTER	Page
Richard Crashaw and the Teresa Poems: Salvation through Acts of Reading .....	165
Notes .....	178
V CONCLUSIONS .....	179
The Survival of the English Catholic Community and Their Texts .....	190
Notes .....	193
REFERENCES .....	194
APPENDIX A .....	201
VITA .....	206

## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In 1591, ten years after Jesuit missionaries arrived in England and around the same time as the death of the English Catholic martyr and saint Edmund Campion, Grace More, the great-great granddaughter of the earlier English Catholic martyr and saint Sir Thomas More, was born. Very little of her early life and education is known, but as Dorothy Latz argues in her modern edition of More's work (1992), her decision in 1625 to be professed at the English Benedictine Abbey of Our Lady of Consolation in Cambrai, France, offers convincing evidence that she was raised as a recusant Catholic, that is a practicing Catholic in both the private and public spheres. As the daughter of a well-known noble Catholic family who, like other English Catholics, continued to practice their faith privately in their homes and publicly in their refusal to participate in Protestant services, Grace More learned her early catechism not in schools or mass services, but through private, secret instruction within the domestic space. Her education most likely would have reflected her great-great grandfather's emphasis on a humanist education. Accordingly, she entered an abbey whose nuns were known for its "intense literary activity inspired by the desire to preserve their spiritual heritage" (Latz ix). Like other abbeys and monasteries, the nuns at Our Lady of Consolation "preserved, transcribed, translated, and wrote books and poetry when faced with the possible extinction of their tradition" (Latz ix).

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This dissertation follows the style of *Literature Compass*.

Now known in the abbey as Dame Agnes More, this English recusant undertook the task of translating the French mystic Jeanne de Cambray's *The Ruin of Proper Love and Building of Divine Love* into her native tongue. Although the manuscript is dated 1691, years after her death in 1656, the title page of this manuscript that is now housed in the Archives Départementales du Nord at Lille, France, attributes the translation to Dame Agnes. De Cambray's work is both a "mystical theology" and a "literary work"; Dame Agnes's decision (whether her own or that of a superior) to translate the explication of the Canticle of Canticles shows the "convergence of the English medieval mystical tradition of the recusants with the Continental mystical traditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (Latz xi). Those recusants who worked as preservers and translators of Catholic histories, doctrines, and catechisms had options as to their methods and choice of texts. First, they could concentrate on the past to help reaffirm Catholicism's place as the rightful religion, especially in England. A second option would be to translate the works of more contemporary Continental Catholic writers such as St. Teresa of Avila's *Autobiography* or St. Frances de Sales' *Instructions*. In both cases, the purpose and audience were clear. These works should not only help establish Catholic heritage and doctrine, but also help instruct and console the English Catholic community, which had little access to spiritual guidance in the face of isolation and, in some instances, persecution.

Jeanne de Cambray's text offered Dame Agnes and other recusant followers a type of prayer manual, much in the steps of other spiritual treatises

on prayer based on the Ignatian model in which the penitent moved “cautiously step-by-step through the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways” (Latz xv). A mystic, De Cambray was born in Douai, France, in 1581, and according to her spiritual director had “visions of God, of the Virgin Mary, and of St. John when she was about ten years old” (Latz xxiii). Professed as a nun in 1604, she continued to have mystical visions which upon the guidance of her superiors led her to begin writing. Her long, devotional work begins with *The Ruin of Proper Love* in which the soul exists in a state of sin. In the second book, entitled *The Building of Divine Love*, the soul finds redemption through prayer. De Cambray also included an explication of the Cantic of Canticles, an exercise popular with both Catholic and Protestant devotional writers, as the critic Barbara Lewalski notes. After becoming well known as a devotional writer, reformer, and spiritual recluse, De Cambray died in 1639 (Latz xxiv-xxv). Exactly how Dame Agnes and her abbey came into contact with the text is unknown, but based on the textual comparisons Latz conducted as well as a note on the manuscript itself, Dame Agnes’s translation draws from a second edition of De Cambray’s work completed in 1627 (xxii). Latz also notes that a number of different “hands participated either in the translation, or more likely, in the copying of the manuscript in preparation for its publication” (xxi), but that ultimately, the title page of the completed manuscript, dated 1691, attributes it to Dame Agnes More. The translation begins with the second book, deleting De Cambray’s description of the soul in sin, and instead focusing on the soul’s restorative path.

Dame Agnes's translation was never published. Latz argues that the changing sentiment towards mysticism in the late seventeenth century, when the manuscript was finally prepared, is "undoubtedly . . . the reason for the manuscript's failure to be published despite the care evidently lavished upon the manuscript by the English Benedictines of Cambray for so many years since the death of Dame Agnes More in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century" (xx). But the choice of text by Dame Agnes is significant if we are to examine the life, works, and education of seventeenth-century English Catholics. A Catholic in Protestant England and descendent to perhaps the first and most famous English Catholic martyr of the Reformation period, Dame Agnes was trained not only to practice the Catholic faith, but to remember it as the national religion with a rich heritage. An intellect in the humanist school of thought and a reader and follower of Continental mystics, Dame Agnes learned her faith through pedagogical works that, as a nun, she helped to create for other Catholics. Moreover, her choice of text is both pedagogical and poetical: a prose passage rich in allusion and sacred symbols that reflect some of the key doctrinal issues of the Counter-Reformation. Like other poetical devotional works, Dame Agnes' translation of *The Building of Divine Love* shows the influences of her Catholic upbringing and of England's Catholic heritage, an experience that is key to understanding the themes and controversies of the religious literature of the early modern period. From the proper perspective, Dame Agnes' life and writings can be seen as representative of the English Catholic community and of

the importance of the experiences of this religious sect to the devotional works of the period.

By analyzing other pedagogical texts used for religious instruction, including rosary manuals, devotional treatises, and sacramental catechisms, this dissertation will demonstrate how the practice of the Catholic faith defines it as a “true” religion in contrast to Protestant works and practices. Catholic writers utilized this attitude and these teachings in spiritual narratives, devotional poetry, drama, and domestic and political treatises. In doing so, they sought to define English Catholicism in the midst of a changing political and religious landscape.

#### Catholic History in England, 1547-1650

The time span covered in this study runs through the reigns of Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I. This is the time of the most dramatic challenges and changes for English Catholics in both the private and public expression of their faith. John Coffey, author of *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1659*, notes that while Henry VIII denied papal authority, he did not completely adapt the Protestant viewpoint in the continuation of religious practices. Masses, prayers, and sacraments maintained much of their Catholic expression. With Edward’s ascension in 1547, Protestant leaders were able to enact changes in these religious practices, developing “a new liturgy for the church, embodied in the Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 and produc[ing] the Forty-Two Articles, defining the church’s new doctrinal stance” (Coffey 79). These works eventually became incorporated into the Book of

Common Prayer (1563), and the enforcement of these prayers and practices became codified in the Acts of Uniformity. In the first Act of Uniformity in 1549, clergy was to follow the new liturgy or risk fines, loss of incomes, and possible imprisonment. Latin services were abolished and the Book of Common Prayer formally adopted. According to the historian Christopher Haigh, the response from parishes and parishioners was hostile, from defiance to rioting. In some churches, “priests tried to make the Prayer Book communion as much like a mass as they could, repeating the old rituals and chanting the English as if it were Latin,” even as altars were being removed and replaced by communion tables (Haigh 176).

In response, Edward and the Protestant clergy leaders maintained and helped increase the Protestant stronghold by placing more Protestant clergy members in the position of bishops. This group helped develop and secure the second Act of Uniformity of 1552 and the revision of the Book of Common Prayer. According to Haigh, the new Book of Common Prayer “broke decisively with the past.” He notes that:

Most of the ceremonies which had been condemned by Protestants . . . were removed: baptism, confirmation, and burial services were rewritten; and in the communion service, the structure of the mass was abandoned and many of the prayers omitted. The old vestments were forbidden, singing was restricted, and ordinary bread was to be used and given into the communicants’ hand. (179-180)



The Act also addressed the laity, imposing “ecclesiastical punishments” for non-attendance of services and imprisonment for “anyone who attended other forms of service” (Coffey 79). The Forty-Two Articles of Religion, published in 1553, gave this “reformed liturgy” a “reformed theology” in which “Catholic doctrines on transubstantiation, purgatory, invocation of the saints, and the efficacy of good works” were condemned and Protestant debates over predestination and the role and meaning of Eucharist were resolved with “theological compromise and determined ambiguity” (Haigh 180-81). While the doctrinal infrastructure of the Protestant faith was secured through these acts, the practice of the faith was not. Unfortunately for Edward and for the Protestant movement, English parishes suffered massive financial losses as the government took over parish resources which led to even less public support of the reformation movement. After Edward’s death in July 1553, this poor economic state as well as the unsuccessful and publicly unpopular attempt by Protestant leaders to crown Jane Gray as queen ensured not only Mary’s ascension, but also a revival of the Catholic faith.

A devout Catholic, Mary’s strongest supporters were the Catholic gentry, but most observers, including Protestants fearful of her plans to return England to the Catholic faith, recognized her claim to the throne as well as rising popular support of her and her Catholic traditions in reaction to Edward’s reforms. Catholic worship was soon restored, including the rebuilding of altars, the returns of the chalices, and the restoration of Latin prayers even though such actions technically broke the current laws. In August of 1553, “Mary gave a

cautious lead” by attending “an illegal requiem for Edward” and issuing “an ambiguous royal proclamation declar[ing] that the queen hoped others would follow her religion, and forbade contention” (Haigh 206). However, the return of such practices was not always peaceful or popular. One example that Haigh shares particularly demonstrates the positions of English Catholics throughout the early modern period who found themselves trapped between public and private duties, a situation that leads to the rise of the church papist, a Catholic privately but publically, seemingly Protestant. At Crowland (Lincolnshire), the Protestant minister Thomas Hancock refused to give in to the demands of his Catholic parishioners as well as the local bailiff to celebrate the mass. The Catholics then

set up the altar, and hired an immigrant French priest to celebrate, but the altar was pulled down at night by Hancock’s supporters. So the Catholics erected an altar in a house, and for a while there were masses there, and, at church, Prayer Book services, until Hancock preached against the mass and fled abroad. (Haigh 207)

Other Protestants soon followed Hancock’s example and fled to the continent as well, a pattern that Catholics would repeat when Elizabeth was crowned. In England, Mary and the church leaders began the re-education of Catholics. Religious plays and church celebrations such as the Corpus Christi plays that had ceased under Edward were again celebrated, but perhaps in response to the “adjustment of Catholic emphasis” parishes and parish leaders focused more on mass services and devotion than on the more ceremonial

aspects such as the invocation of saints and the prayers for the dead (Haigh 215). In 1555, three books on Catholic teaching were produced to address various audiences. *An Honest Godly Instruction for the Bringing Up of Children* instructed teachers and students in basic literacy and elements of the faith. *Homilies Set Forth* provided a set of sermons for clergy member to preach at mass. The audience was the uneducated laity, and the sermons offered basic explanations of religious doctrine and applications to everyday matters, especially on the issues of the Eucharist and papal authority. Finally, *A Profitable and Necessary Doctrine*, addressed to clergy and the literate laity or gentry and “a heavily revised and expanded version of the 1543 King’s Book,” directed readers on the duties and responsibilities of a Catholic through explications and analyses of the major documents and tenets of the faith, including “the Creed, seven sacraments, Ten Commandments, Lord’s Prayer, *Ave Maria*, seven deadly sins, and eight beatitudes” (Haigh 216). During Mary’s reign, over thirty editions of various religious primers were printed, and many of these were written in both English and Latin (Haigh 217).

Politically, Catholic leaders were also concerned with the need to re-establish the Catholic Church as the national church of England. Many more priests were ordained during Mary’s reign, and their training took place in England rather than in Catholic colleges on the Continent. These priests would become especially important during Elizabeth’s reign as they worked with and, at times, against the Jesuits who arrived as part of the English mission. The Marian clergy members saw themselves as loyalists to both England and the

church, an attitude that reflected Mary's and her advisors' reluctance to ally themselves directly with Rome. While papal authority was asserted, it was rarely used in the polemic debates of the period or in the printed materials (Haigh 223). As Mary and church leaders such as Cardinal Reginald Pole continued to consolidate the authority of the Catholic Church, they also became more concerned with Protestant protests. In 1554, Mary and Parliament passed heresy laws that soon led to the persecution, exodus, and, unfortunately, execution of many Protestants. Coffey reports that almost 800 Protestants fled to the continent during this time period, and that almost 300 Protestants were executed (80). These persecutions, Haigh argues, "were produced by the determination of ordinary Protestants to witness for the truth, and the determination of ordinary Catholics to destroy error—both mixed, no doubts, with less worthy motives" (231). Catholics and Catholic martyrs under Elizabeth would act in a similar manner with the same effect: public sympathy for the cause but little outrage. Coffey places such persecution within the context of the time period where "early modern governments shared few of our modern inhibitions about capital punishment, and the death penalty was regularly meted out for a wide range of crimes" (80). Mary's "ferocity" in her persecutions as compared to Edward and Elizabeth is a valid point, but Coffey notes that "all Tudor governments were committed to a policy of religious uniformity, and few had qualms about employing some form of coercion against those who stepped out of line" (81). More importantly, those Protestants sentenced to death under Mary's reign were charged with heresy. In contrast,

for Catholics sentenced under Elizabeth the charge became treason: a crime against the sovereign rather than the church.

Like her brother Edward, Mary faced the same political and economic difficulties that had undermined his reign. And, just as Edward's Protestant reformation was limited by his death, Mary's poor health, inability to produce an heir, and untimely death in 1558 cut short the brief period of Catholic restoration. Elizabeth was crowned on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1559. Raised a Protestant, Elizabeth most likely lacked training in Catholic traditions (Morey 23) but nevertheless had followed the laws of Mary and conformed to the faith, even assuring Mary and her religious and political leaders that she would continue Mary's policies once she was queen (Pollen, *English Catholics* 17). However, in her coronation mass, originally designed as a Catholic ceremony, the elevation of the Eucharist was omitted and the consecration was said in English rather than Latin (Pollen, *English Catholics* 23-25). This ceremonial preference soon became a formal and legal stance with the passing of the Act of Supremacy and Act of Conformity in 1558. For English Catholics, these two acts brought the conflict between religious and temporal duties to a crisis. The Act of Supremacy reaffirmed Elizabeth as the head of state and as head of church. Additionally, "all ecclesiastics, judges, mayors and officers of state, and . . . men taking clerical Order or university degrees" were required to take a supremacy oath or risk losing their positions, their properties, or their freedom. Similarly, the Act of Conformity called for adoption of the Prayer Book of 1552 in all services, for all clergy to follow the Protestant order of mass and for all subjects to attend

Protestant services (including the instruction to laity not to kneel in adoration of the Eucharist during communion) (Morey 25). In 1563, Parliament also passed the "Thirty-Nine Articles," a revision of the previous Forty-Two Articles that required all clergy to follow the prayer book. The Thirty-Nine Articles also

expressly repudiated the Catholic doctrine of the sacraments, and the differences between Elizabeth's Church and the old religion were reinforced by a *Book of Homilies* issued in 1562 to be read at services throughout the year if no sermon was preached. This work attacked the Mass as a horrible blasphemy and aimed shafts at the papacy: "We boldly and with safe conscience pronounce of the bishops of Rome, namely that they have forsaken, and do daily forsake, the commandments of God." (Morey 35)

The 1560's became for English Catholics a time of "deprivation rather than persecution" (Morey 51). But events that occurred at the end of this decade shifted the status of the faith and the situation for the followers quite dramatically. In 1567, the arrival of Mary, Queen of Scots, a Catholic and apparent heir to the throne renewed Catholic hopes. Her supporters, the Catholic gentry in the north, concerned Elizabeth and her government, especially as plans were made to annul Mary's marriage in order for her to marry the Duke of Norfolk and help assure her right of succession. When Elizabeth summoned the northern earls to explain their participation in these matters, she precipitated rebellion by the northern counties who claimed religious intolerance as the cause. The rebellion was suppressed by December of

1569. Elizabeth ordered the execution of those involved, numbering almost 700, but few were actually executed. She also seized property and ordered that no pardons would be given until the prisoner swore the oath of supremacy (Morey 52-54). A few months later in February, 1570, Pope Pius V issued *Regans in Excelsis* which formally excommunicated Elizabeth, accusing her of “having seized the crown and monstrously usurped the place of the supreme head of the Church in all England,” and then absolving all English subjects from swearing loyalty to Elizabeth or risk excommunication themselves (Morey 56). Thus, by the end of Elizabeth’s first decade as queen, English Catholics found themselves more than ever balancing the acts of being a good Catholic and a good English subject.

The government’s reaction to these events was swift. In 1571, Parliament passed three acts: the Treason Act, making it a crime of high treason to question Elizabeth’s right to the crown or “to describe her as an heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel, or usurper”; an act prohibiting the “introduction” of papal bulls into the country and declaring any act recognizing the authority of the pope by following the directions of such bulls treasonous; and finally an act addressing the growing numbers of Catholic exiles (Morey 60). In the midst of these political and religious upheavals in England, the Catholic church on the Continent was preparing for what would be called the “English mission,” the sending of priests, many of them recusant English Catholics educated in seminaries on the continent, to England to work for the establishment of an English Catholic community. English seminary schools opened in Douai,

France, in 1570, and in Rome in 1575. Run primarily by Jesuit orders, these seminaries and colleges trained priests to return secretly to England and to live, teach, and preach in the confines of Catholic households. William Allen, one of the leaders of this movement, wrote in his account of the founding of the Douai school that he hoped to attract the “best wittes out of England,” both “Catholicky bent”<sup>1</sup> and those who were disillusioned by the English church and the state of declining intellectual and religious freedom (qtd. in Bossy, *English Catholic Community* 14).

The first Jesuit missionaries arrived in England in 1580, but rather than a large force of Jesuits, the mission actually consisted of three people: the priests Edmund Campion and Robert Persons and a lay brother (Morey 62). These leaders, however, helped organize the Catholic clergy in England and set the groundwork for the mission. In July of 1580, these groups met in Southwark in a gathering that came to be known as the Synod of Southwark. Here, these English missionaries set out their goals for the mission: to involve themselves only in religious matters, not political affairs; to train Catholics to be recusants by refusing to attend Protestant masses; to help re-establish Catholic rites and traditions such as the mass services and fasting rites; and to establish leadership for the clergy in England in order to deal with pragmatic matters such as the distribution of priests among the congregations (Pollen, *English Catholics* 334-337).

Ironically, what tolerance was shown for English Catholics became even more compromised by the English mission. Their actions were perceived as



threats to the realm, and the reaction by Elizabeth's government was swift. In July 1580, Elizabeth issued a proclamation declaring that traitors abroad, especially in Rome, were acting in malice against her and England, and that her subjects should continue their duties to her and to the church or else risk being accused of sedition (Pollen, *English Catholics* 340). Catholics, especially recusants, found themselves more and more isolated from social and political interactions. However, as Alexandra Walsham and other historians are quick to point out, Catholics willing to act as "church papists" (a Catholic who practiced his faith privately while publicly participating in Protestant services) maintained a presence within and a degree of acceptance by the larger community. Enforcement of laws against Catholics varied by region, and recusants who were relatively quiet in their actions were usually only fined rather than imprisoned.

For the Catholic laity involved in the mission as well as the missionary priests, the situation grew worse. Priests moved secretly and frequently, and of 471 sent to England after 1574, 285 were captured and imprisoned. Catholics caught harboring priests, possessing Catholic materials and books, baptizing and educating their children as Catholics, or refusing to attend Protestant services were also imprisoned (Coffey 88). Prison conditions varied, and many Catholics were tortured in prison and eventually died there. As her sister Mary had done to those Protestants she saw as heretics, Elizabeth also ordered the execution of Catholics. From 1570 to 1603, approximately 189 Catholics, both priests and lay members, were executed (Coffey 90). The shift, however slight, is that Elizabeth and her court carried out these sentences as punishment for

treasonous acts rather than heretical. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, Catholics were even more conflicted and confused by the loyalty crisis as a religious community following their pope and as subjects following their queen.

The English mission and its goals led to conflict between the Jesuits, associated both fairly and unfairly with plots to overthrow the government, and groups such as the Appellants, clergy members who hoped to find a compromise with Elizabeth. This conflict came to an important crisis near the end of Elizabeth's reign as Catholic leaders in Rome prepared to appoint a new archpriest, the head of the system of church government in England. The Appellants appealed to Rome for approval of their goals and for an appointment of an archpriest who would share their concerns. In 1598, the pope appointed George Blackwell to the position and established a policy where the archpriest maintained authority over secular priests in training and seminary priests but "not over the Marian priests or members of religious orders, of whom the Jesuits were the only ones on the mission" (Pritchard 122). Furthermore, Blackwell "was to consult with the superior of the Jesuits [Henry Garnet] on all important matters, while Garnet was placed under no corresponding obligation to consult Blackwell" (Pritchard 122).

Not surprisingly, the Appellants were angered, and they used this issue to press their goals more firmly with Elizabeth's government who saw this conflict as evidence of "dissension in Catholic ranks" and a chance to "appeal to Rome" for the "withdrawal of the Jesuits from England, the lessening of their influence at the English seminaries on the Continent, and a prohibition of

political activity by English clergy—all items in the Appellant program” (Pritchard 126). In return, the Appellants hoped to be granted tolerance in exchange for their display of loyalty. The end result of this conflict was not as beneficial as either party hoped: the Jesuits were to remain in England and in the seminaries, although Blackwell was no longer allowed to consult with Garnet and had to appoint more Appellant members to his staff of assistants (Pritchard 128). This was a small victory for the Appellants, but ultimately, Elizabeth and the government decided to withdraw their support by issuing a proclamation in November 1602, denying “in strongest terms that the queen had ever considered allowing the toleration of any but the established religion” (Pritchard 128-129). Even though some Appellants continued to swear their allegiance to Elizabeth and hoped for reciprocity and tolerance, the overall movement to establish a firmer place for Catholics in Elizabeth’s England and in the reign of her successor James I failed.

Elizabeth died in 1603, and James succeeded. While in Scotland, he had reached out to English Catholics with promises of toleration in exchange for their support, but soon realized that their support was not necessary. In the early years of his reign, he relaxed the persecution of the late 1580’s and 1590’s, but was soon pressured by the growing Puritan movement for stricter control. By 1605, a group of lay Catholics, mostly members of the Catholic gentry, led by Robert Catesby begin to plan what was to be known as the “Gunpowder Plot.” Their plan was to lay gunpowder in the cellar of the House of Lords, and destroy Parliament. On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1605, one of the conspirators, Francis

Tresham, wrote to his cousin Lord Monteagle warning him to avoid Parliament that day. Monteagle shared this letter with the government. The plot and the gunpowder were discovered and Guy Fawkes, another conspirator, was arrested on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Within the next few days, the other conspirators were attacked; Catesby and three others were killed and the rest arrested (Pollen, "The Gunpowder Plot").

The trials occurred the following January, and the remaining members of the conspirators were executed on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1606. Even though the conspiracy had been led by lay Catholics, the church, especially the Jesuits, were incriminated as well. Henry Garnet and two other priests, John Gerard and Oswald Greenway, were named by Parliament as co-conspirators. Garnet was arrested and admitted his knowledge of the plot but denied any involvement other than attempting to dissuade Catesby. Garnet was tried and convicted; his execution occurred on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1606 (Pollen, "The Gunpowder Plot"). As martyrs, Garnet and the other conspirators became Catholic heroes, but they also became traitors to the crown and thus provoked a strong reaction by the government. James and Parliament passed stricter anti-Catholic measures, giving Catholics little hope for toleration, compromise, or an official place in the Stuart court. The English Catholic community gradually realized that it would have to survive in the background and within the growing rift between Protestants and Puritans, especially in the later years of James's reign and during the reign of Charles I and his Catholic wife Henrietta Maria.

### Defining the Community: The Laity's and Clergy's Response

This dissertation examines the works of writers who came of age during the Counter-Reformation and within recent memory of the old Catholic ways and Reformation history. The pedagogical works of the period serve the purpose of maintaining a Catholic community in the changing religious landscape. The literary works show the influence of such training and of these memories. This study will discuss the English Catholic community's response to the events described above, especially how it transforms itself into a secondary community, always lurking just below the surface of the public view and in the domestic space.

Historians and critics discuss the development of the English Catholic community in the early modern period from two vantage points: that of the laity, especially the gentry, and of the clergy, especially the missionaries. Most agree on the importance of the laity's contribution to the English Catholic community, noting that without their financial, seminary students, and, most significantly, a congregation, it would not have survived. The laity was especially concerned with the ways in which private devotions were perceived and performed publicly. An English Catholic could choose to be recusant, thus privately and publicly known as a practicing Catholic. This position grew riskier as laws known as recusancy acts were enacted against Catholic practices. Or, in attempting to mediate these concerns, he or she could become a church papist, perhaps hearing masses or teaching his or her children Catholicism at home, but attending Protestant services. However, the term "church papist"

was derogatory; both recusant Catholics and Protestants perceived the church papist as disloyal. The loyalty question became even more important in the English Catholic's life as he or she struggled to be a good subject and a religious servant. Could an English Catholic still be loyal to the crown, or should he or she work for the restoration of Catholicism at all costs?

In one respect, this question is a consequence of the goals of the English mission, the second perspective from which we can examine the English Catholic community. The clergy sent to England after 1580 were mostly associated with the Jesuit order and came from the colleges established on the continent for the training of missionary priests. The mission had arguably two goals: the maintenance of Catholicism in England until it was restored to a national religion and, to varying extents, the active pursuit of this restoration. Many studies about the Jesuit orders during this period examines this balance. Conflicts also arose between the Jesuits and the secular clergy over the control of the congregation. Moreover, with the arrival of the Benedictine missionaries and their emphasis on private, contemplative practices, the English mission had to re-examine their goals.

This dissertation will examine the domestic space of the English Catholic household as the intersection of these two perspectives. The clergy's entry into these homes to guide, teach, and catechize the laity helps set the foundation for the community's development. The links between these devotional tools and the response of the congregation, especially in their own spiritual writings and

experiences, will also be examined as further evidence of the influence of pedagogical practice on identity formation.

### Current Scholarship

In this study, I will first review the work of historians and critics who have examined the role of the household in the establishment of religious practices in England during the early modern period. Whether Protestant or Catholic, the English gentry household at this time grew in importance as a model of order and harmony that, theoretically, reflected the larger commonwealth. As such, it continued the teachings of the church in practical matters as well as in private devotions. The devotional poets of this period, raised in such traditions, used this early training as the basis for their own explorations into their faith.

In *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850*, John Bossy argues that the English Catholic community maintained itself with the strong influence of the gentry. He begins his study of the community in the year 1570, the establishment of the Catholic university at Douai. The seminarians trained there would return to England and move the community from its pre-Reformation medieval traditions to a more modern church, one that would concern itself with spiritual and temporal issues of the time. Bossy sees the Catholic Church in the early modern period beginning as a mission, but growing into an established church. As such, the church became “a body which had some right to claim continuity with the past but was nevertheless in most respects a new creation which had come to some sort of *modus vivendi* within itself and with the

overwhelmingly Protestant society it lived in . . ." (Bossy, *English Catholic Community* 11). Within the Catholic home, religious behaviors taught and practiced by the family demonstrated their separation from the larger Protestant community and into a community of faith.

While Bossy does recognize the position of the church papists within the English Catholic community, he works under the assumption that recusancy had more of a guiding hand in forming a Catholic identity. In her study, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity, and Confessional Polemics in Early Modern England*, Alexandra Walsham analyzes the threat the existence of the church papist had on both Catholic and Protestant identities. This threat resulted from the "politics of religious identity" which became "no less a politics of language and labeling . . ." (Walsham 113). In doctrine and in polemic arguments, Catholics and Protestants condemned papistry, yet in practice, it was tolerated and even condoned. The tracts written against papistry relied upon sermon techniques to instruct Catholics how to properly represent and reflect their faith. Furthermore, some tracts written to defend conformity acknowledged the temporal difficulties faced by the community, thus forcing the issue of Catholic identity to move beyond spiritual matters and consider the glaring reality of the situation in England. Walsham notes that while the church papist threatened the image of a solidly formed religious identity, he or she forced those teachers of the faith to clarify the Catholic church's position, and as a result, its ways of viewing itself.



Works and methods used to teach Catholics about their faith inform C. F. Beale's study *Education Under Penalty*. He notes especially the growth of Catholic universities on the continent and their emphasis on a humanist education. The universities also established a practical theological base that would aid missionary priests in instructing English Catholics on both spiritual and temporal issues, a practice known as casuistry. According to the *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, casuistry is the "application of general principles of morality to definite and concrete cases of human activity, for the purpose, primarily, of determining what one ought to do, or ought not to do." This need to prepare priests to address the real and specific crises of their congregation (which perhaps was no more than one Catholic household) is part of this casuistry. The consequence of this method was an increased awareness that priests were training English Catholics to teach themselves and others. Helen White examines this trend in private devotion in two essential works: *Tudor Books of Private Devotion* and *English Devotional Prose 1600-1640*. These studies of both Catholic and Protestant works consider style and audience. Both practical and spiritual, the devotional works examined demonstrate a "certain . . . strenuousness, a constant and unremitting earnestness" balanced with "an all-pervasive sense of God's presence in each moment" (White, *English Devotional Prose* 222-223). Primers, psalters, and domestic guides used an appropriate tone in addressing a laity that might be either well educated or illiterate, versed in doctrinal and political issues or otherwise unaware.

White's arguments provide a logical transition to the study of devotional literature as developed by Louis Martz and Barbara Lewalski. Since this dissertation will examine the links between pedagogical works and devotional literature, these critics' analyses of influence, theme, form, and style of the major metaphysical poets can be used as a framework for discussion. In *The Poetry of Meditation [:] A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, Martz insists that the metaphysical movement did not grow solely from Donne's work as poet and preacher, but instead grows from the meditative tradition established in the Ignatian model. Martz's definition of meditation as "not simply diligent thinking but thinking deliberately directed" (16) is especially helpful in bridging the themes of pedagogical and literary works. Lewalski's *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric* presents the various Protestant literary genres popular in this period (meditation tracts, emblem books, preacher's manuals, and devotional poetry) as the foundation and form for the works of the religious lyricist. The Protestant emphasis on the word, whether it is the word of the Bible or the word as a synonym for truth, elevates the act of writing and reading devotional literature to a method of individual salvation.

This dissertation will examine Catholic works along the lines advanced by Martz and Lewalski, encompassing both pedagogical works and literary forms as means of personal redemption and public proclamation of Catholic identity. Three recent studies have begun this process, moving away from the assumption of a strictly Calvinist/Anglican influence on devotional writers in

the early modern period. In *Whores of Babylon [:] Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture*, Francis E. Dolan sees a paradox in defining Catholic identity in the period. Forced to act and to practice their faith covertly, the Catholics' "discursive presence" (Dolan 7) is nonetheless still integral in the formation of English national identity. As editor of *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern Texts*, Arthur Marotti brings together numerous scholars who argue a point similar to Dolan's: fear, tolerance, and accommodation of Catholicism shaped the character of England and texts of the period. R. V. Young's *Doctrine and Devotion in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Poetry* most directly proposes a re-examination of devotional literature in the context of Catholic doctrine. He notes that arguing the doctrine behind such works is, in one sense, arguing for the "true" meaning of them—an unlikely goal from a postmodern perspective. A richer understanding and appreciation of early modern devotional literature can be had if we include Catholic traditions in our discussions of the doctrinal influences behind them.

#### Goals of Dissertation and Overview

The key issues that I address in this dissertation are the challenges the English Catholics faced in defining themselves as a community and their response, and the ways that they structured their textual responses to address various audiences. The English Catholic community struggled to answer the larger doctrinal questions of the Reformation, especially related to the public role of ritual in relationship to individual salvation. This is the larger theoretical issue underlying questions about the ceremonial practice of sacraments, the

worship of Mary, and the dichotomy between faith and works as means of salvation. The pedagogical works that make up the context of this study offer practical responses to these questions as a way of aiding the laity privately to address these concerns. Moreover, aware that these works may also be read by non-Catholics as well, Catholic writers used their texts to defend and to define their faith publicly. These pedagogical works also addressed, at various levels, the most immediate threat to the English Catholic community: a divided loyalty to the crown and to the church. At least in the written teachings of the Catholic faith (if not necessarily in the actions of missionary priests), these loyalties could be balanced so long as the English Catholic church cast itself as protector of the “true” faith of England. By placing itself in this historical light, the English Catholic community could re-establish itself as heroic, and, more importantly, as patriotic.

Acting in lieu of a priest or spiritual guide, these pedagogical works helped to comfort the English Catholic community as well as to inspire them. Once instructed in the Catholic religion, the English Catholic had to maintain his or her faith through spiritual exercises. Devotional writings, such as religious poetry, translations of mystical works, and biographies and hagiographies incorporated the pedagogical methods of their training with a shared emphasis on sacraments and ritual. Even works not considered especially religious, such as dramatic works, show the influence of these methods in the ways in which they use ceremonial themes. The final goal of this dissertation will thus be to examine how these literary works, heavily influenced by the religious pedagogy

of the early modern period, become pedagogical themselves. As with most devotional literature, the works that make up this study help define the faith that guides them by reiterating doctrine and practice.

I will first examine this intersection of pedagogy and devotional works, private and public concerns by analyzing works on the sacraments. Chapter II, "Subjects and Sacraments" is especially relevant to the spiritual and temporal conflicts of the period because the practice of receiving the sacraments (or not, as in the case of refusing to accept the Eucharist at a Protestant service) is both a private and public proclamation of faith. John Fowler, writer, scholar, and printer of Catholic works, addresses *A Brief Fourme of Confession* especially to those living in the "great corruption of Faith" (279). Although only a priest can absolve sins, the penitent person can do much to prepare himself or herself by reading Fowler's explications and practical analysis of the commandments and seven deadly sins. Fowler concludes with a treatise on receiving the Eucharist, a theme further explored in Father Thomas Wright's *The Disposition or Garnishment of the Soule*. Wright describes the highly personal relationship between communicant and God by using metaphors that are practical and mystical. For example, the communicant is described "as a scholer, to his master" or "as a garden after winter withered, and dryed, to demaunde the dewe of heaven" (Wright 82).

The emphasis on the speaker as active penitent or communicant continues in devotional literature that incorporates these sacramental themes. In the poetic work *St. Peter's Complaint*, the Jesuit Robert Southwell focuses on a

penitent speaker. St. Peter begs for forgiveness in denying Jesus and prays for worthiness to lead his church--an especially apt example for English Catholics to follow. One such family of English Catholics would be John Donne's--a fact that has led recent scholars to re-examine his devotional poetry in the context of his Catholic background. In two of Donne's poems, "Upon the Annunciation and Passion Falling upon One Day" and "Good Friday, 1613 Riding Westward," the speaker actively imagines himself as witness to Gabriel's annunciation to Mary and to Christ's passion in an Ignatian-type spiritual exercise. As in Southwell's poems, the language follows similar modes and techniques found in the sacramental guides, most especially the speaker's active role in his salvation.

After examining these sacramental works, I will then move to one of the more controversial doctrinal questions that faced the Catholic community: Marian devotion and the feminized nature of such devotion. Chapter III, "Rosary and Ritual" will examine three rosary guides: John Fen's translation of Gaspar Loarte's *Instructions and Advertisements, How To Meditate the Misteries of the Rosarie of the most holy Virgin Mary*, John Bucke's *Instructions for the Use of the Beades*, and Father Henry Garnet's *The Society of the Rosary*. As in the sacramental works, these guides stress the agency of the participant in both meditating on and reciting the rosary mysteries. But beginning with the long dedicatory letters to patrons and readers of these works, the authors stress even more the need for formalized, ritual study of the Catholic faith and traditions as part of the devotional life. Therefore, the language and tone of these works alternate between highly feminized, passionate retellings of the rosary mysteries

and rigid, legalistic explanations of church doctrine. Marian devotion and ritual will then be examined in the works of Donne and Robert Southwell. As in the earlier discussion of sacramental language in Donne's poems, the Catholic sensibilities inherent in Donne's *La Corona* poems will be related to techniques taught in the rosary guides. Southwell's "The Sequence on the Virgin Mary and Christ" also works to balance the renderings of biblical mysteries and miracles with the more pedagogical act of incorporating these experiences into ritual prayer.

The acts of devotion practiced in the sacraments and in the saying of the rosary are only small steps an English Catholic would take in his or her spiritual development. Chapter IV, "Catholic Martyrs, Mothers, and Wives" will discuss two religious biographies that serve as models of Catholic piety, inspiration, and imitation: John Mush's *Life of Margaret Clitherow*, a martyrology on the first female English Catholic martyr, and *The Lady Falkland, Her Life*, a biography of Elizabeth Cary written by one of her daughters. As narratives of holy persons, they bridge the private and public spheres of domesticity and devotion. Then I will examine Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Although not the same genre as the devotional poetry that makes up this study, I believe its origins and themes are appropriate to this discussion. As a closet drama by a converted Catholic and confidant of Queen Henrietta Maria, Cary's work bridges the domestic and political spheres. In her struggle over public and private speech, Mariam, a Jewish queen, faces the same dilemma as the English Catholic dramatist who chose to retell her story. Finally, the last literary works I will

discuss are the Teresa poems of Richard Crashaw. A Catholic convert like Cary, Crashaw is the most well known of the Catholic writers discussed in this dissertation because of his association with the devotional poets of the seventeenth century. His poems on the Counter-Reformation saint Teresa of Avila help define Catholic identity through the descriptions of the mystical experiences that led to the writing of her own spiritual guide.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I will return to Dame Agnes More's translation of *The Building of Divine Love*. As descendant of one of England's most famous Catholic saints and as one who lived in a very different political and domestic landscape, Dame Agnes' experience mirrors those of the changing English Catholic community. Her contribution to the formation of Catholic identity, the translation of Jeanne de Cambrey's devotional treatise, argues for the development of the soul in spite of the body's concerns. Ideally, the English Catholic community could follow this same advice, but the individual needs of the congregation could be served only by meeting the temporal challenges they faced as a group. Priests arrived in England. New pedagogical works were published, and the training of Catholics moved into the homes. The English mission to educate Catholics and secure the congregation had begun. By identifying and analyzing the effects of this mission, especially as they are revealed by the devotional literature of the period, I want to develop a more precise definition of the English Catholic community. In doing so, this dissertation hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the religious, domestic, and political concerns of the early modern period.



### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Throughout this dissertation, I will strive to use the early modern spelling from the texts that I quote, as this first quotation indicates. I will, however, modernize the long “s” character (ſ) by transcribing it as “s.” Also, to avoid a potential misreading, I will clarify the use of “u” or “v” in a word if necessary.

## CHAPTER II

### SUBJECTS AND SACRAMENTS

In the late medieval church, the mass, especially the Eucharistic celebration, had been a way for the congregation to participate both as a community and as individuals in the practice of their faith. In his study, *The Stripping of the Altars, Traditional Religion in England c. 1400 – c. 1580*, Eamon Duffy carefully describes the importance of the mass services in the formation of communities. While full participation in the sacraments or in the mass was limited to annual celebrations, members attended weekly for both private and communal needs. Likewise, while consuming the Eucharist was not a common practice, witnessing the elevation of it during the mass each week allowed individuals to witness their own salvation in the recreation of the Last Supper and Christ's sacrifice. Moreover, Duffy argues that this witnessing of such an event as a congregation and as a community demonstrates that "The Host . . . was far more than an object of individual devotion, a means of forgiveness and sanctification: it was the source of human community" (93). Under kings Henry and Edward, mass elements changed to reflect the Protestant move away from ritual practices that Protestant reformers argued isolated the individual from the act. Moreover, the doctrinal controversy over faith or works as means and signs of salvation and over the transubstantiation of the Eucharist contributed to the changing church environment. As church ornamentation, saints' pictures, and vestments were removed or simplified, so was the celebration of the mass. Most

importantly, the second Book of Common Prayer established by Edward in 1552, and adopted with modification by Elizabeth,

eliminated almost everything that had till then been central to Eucharistic piety. The parish procession, the elevating at the sacrificing, the pax, the sharing of holy bread, were all swept away. (Duffy 465)

The prayers themselves reflected this shift in belief with the words of administration now stating, "Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving" (Duffy 567). Even under Elizabeth when this was amended to include "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life," an arguably more Catholic understanding of the Real Presence of the Body in the Eucharist, the sacrament of receiving the Eucharist, and at another level participating in the mass, came to reflect a changing world for the English Catholic.

The most significant effect of such a shift in the political position of English Catholicism was the movement of the practice of the Catholic faith from the public sphere to the domestic space. The previous venues for teaching and learning about Catholicism—monasteries, schools, Catholic clergy, and especially the Catholic mass—were gone or inaccessible. Without this education, how could a Catholic community survive in a changing culture? The response was obvious: Catholic education would begin and continue within the household. To accomplish this, the laity relied upon printed works that allowed

for private, even secret, instruction in the tenets and practices of their faith. Written, printed, and distributed secretly by English Catholic writers and priests, these texts serve as a record of the English Catholic community's attempt to sustain itself in the early modern period. These works, described by John R. Roberts in his anthology of English recusant prose, were devotional in nature, designed to act in place of a Catholic preacher as "guides to the spiritual life, sustaining, supporting, and comforting [Catholics] in their religious convictions" (6-7).

As devotional works, these guides incorporated characteristics of controversial literature in defending and defining the faith in response to Protestant challenges. In this respect, these devotional guides addressed two other audiences beyond the faithful Catholic: Protestants and church papists. In effect an address to a Protestant audience, these guides were printed and distributed, and thus became public responses in the doctrinal debate. In exhorting the readers, Catholics or Protestants, to "give themselves to God," these devotional writers "had no doubt that men of good will would be led by God to accept the Catholic faith once they began to live a virtuous life of prayer and penance" (Roberts 5). Another audience was comprised of lapsed Catholics, the "church papists" who publicly embraced Protestantism but privately considered themselves Catholics. To this group, these devotional "books served as grave reminders of the faith which they had relinquished or were ashamed to espouse openly" (Roberts 7). By negotiating three audiences, the

writers of these pedagogical works recognized their use in both private and public setting.

A favorite subject of these religious primers was the proper method of participating in the sacraments, especially the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist whose purposes were much debated by Protestants and Catholics. In these guides, much emphasis is placed on the behavior of the individual in preparation to receive the sacrament. At one level, this emphasis suggests a more intimate and direct means of salvation even though the administration of these sacraments could only be performed by a priest. Receiving the sacrament became a private act, one that might even be hidden as necessary from the eyes of Protestant neighbors or government officials. But, this separation also becomes a marker for the English Catholic community's separation from the Protestant majority. John Bossy, in his seminal work *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850*, argues that such religious behavior worked as both a private and public marker of faith. He writes that the shift in Catholic religious behavior

involved a process of separation: a severance of bonds of collective behaviour which would once have united them to other Englishmen; a movement from the habit of performing religious and sacramental acts as members of a uniform society, to that of performing them as members of a small, nonconforming community . . . .(108)

Two of these sacramental guides, John Fowler's *A Brief Form of Confession* (1576) and Father Thomas Wright's *The Disposition or Garnishment of the Soule To Receive the Blessed Sacrament* (1596), exemplify the response of Catholic writers to the English Catholic community's most pressing needs: the lack of individual instruction in both the sacraments and in devotion, and, as Bossy and Duffy argue, the loss of communal practices that created a stable, unified identity.

### Confessional Practice

In 1576, John Fowler, a scholar, writer, and printer of Catholic works, translated a Spanish text as *A Brief Fourme of Confession, Instructing all Christian folke how to confess their sinnes, and so to dispose themselves, that they may enjoy the benefit of true Penance, dooing the woorthy frutes thereof, according to th' use of Christes Catholique Church*.<sup>1</sup> This translation honored the recently deceased Count of Feria, a Catholic supporter who harbored many English monks and nuns on the Continent during the first years of Elizabeth's reign. In his dedicatory letter to the Count's widow, the Duchess of Feria, Fowler describes his admiration for the Count's piety, a quality inherent in his position as a nobleman as well as a result of his personal strengths and public actions. Fowler then offers this translation of a sacramental guide, along with other treatises and prayers, to the Duchess and to her son. His hope is that this guide will be an aid to the religious education and training of the Count's son, noting also that doctrines such as this "hath seemed to the learned and vertuous of our Nation here a thing very necessarie and profitable, specially at this time in so great corruption both of true faith, and good life" (A4v)<sup>2</sup>.

Fowler himself might be considered one of these “learned men” as he received a B.A. (1557) and M.A. (1560) at Oxford, and then from 1553-1559 served as a fellow at New College. Perhaps it was his position as a fellow that convinced him to renounce his Catholic faith and take the Oath of Supremacy in 1559, but he soon departed for France to be reinstated in his Catholic faith (Roberts 278). As a printer, he prepared Catholic works to be distributed as part of the English mission. His life and printed works show the political and personal risks that an English Catholic would have been forced to take under Elizabeth’s reign. Like earlier forms of confession, this work is addressed to penitents and exhorted them to prepare for confession through an examination of the seven deadly sins, the Ten Commandments, and other church laws and guidelines. Throughout the guide, however, Fowler attempts to balance practical considerations in preparing to go to the confessional with spiritual direction, a trait common in later confessional guides that demonstrates a realistic awareness of the political situation (Duffy 60).

The opening chapter of the work most clearly addresses spiritual direction, thus examining the role of confession in the Catholic’s private life. He must first understand his sin and then act appropriately before he met with a priest. Fowler advises:

let him not go the fete of his ghostly father, trusting only upon that which he shal aske or enquire of him. For a thing of such importance, as is for a man to reconcile himself unto God, oughte not to be done leightly, . . . but of sad and set purpose, and upon

good advise taken before, entering first into particular accompt with God, and with a mans own conscience in his secret chamber and closest place, considering, that there he goeth to give accompt of his life unto God, and unto the priest in his name. (A6v)

While the need for the priest as intermediary is clearly stated in these opening comments, the guide emphasizes private meditation on sins as a way of accounting for one's life and salvation. This is followed by a discussion of the type of sins to be considered, both venial and mortal. Venial sins, those less serious that result from neglect, range from "jesting, laughing overmuch" to "anger over a trifle" (A7v); a penitent has remedies and penance already set up by the Church to practice everyday, "byside the Sacrament of Penance" (A8r) so that confessing these sins in the confessional is not necessary. For example, some of these remedies would be "often much prayer, especially the prayer of the Pater noster" or "to heare masse devoutly" (A8v). These directives aided the Catholic reader in private preparation and spiritual direction when, for all practical purposes, a priest or spiritual advisor was not available.

Forgiveness of mortal sins, however, "required that particular mention and rehearsal be made in the Confession" (A11r). Mortal sins are defined as those which shows a "notable contempt of God . . . or of self or our neighbour" such as when "any of the ten commandements are broken or els when wee doe any thing against [God] which our own conscience doth teache us" (A9r-v). Fowler stresses the importance of confessing any such sins to the "Ghostly Father" (A9v), even if there were doubt as to the severity of the sin. In addition



to naming the sin aloud, the penitent was also required to describe the circumstances of the sin such as who it involved, in what place it occurred, and how often, in order for the priest to judge the severity of the sin. These legalistic explanations, designed to clarify sin for the lay person, accompany more passionate expressions of the duty of the penitent within the same chapter. For example, after the penitent reviewed the circumstances of his sin, he should also begin the sacrament of Penance with a Contrition in which he join the “repentance of his sinnes . . . with five things”:

1. with faith, by which we believe both the threattes, and the promises of God, and the virtue of this Sacrament,
2. with humilitie and submission of ourselves [ . . . ]
3. with hope of God’s mercy that he may obtaine pardon.
4. with trust and confidence in the merites of Christ Jesus, by and through whom all pardon is obtained.
5. with the love of God . . . that all sorrowe and abhorring of sinne be principally for the honoure of God, and for to accomplish the obedience that is due to him. (A10v – A11v)

Passion and objectivity are thus partnered in the style, tone, and topic of Fowler’s guide. This pattern repeats itself throughout the work, mixing private, devotional expressions of faith with more public, logical demonstration of faith in the sacramental act.

After Contrition, the penitent moves through Confession and then Satisfaction. In this discussion, Fowler emphasizes more and more the

intentions behind each act rather than the act itself. The confession must be “whole,” “plaine,” “faithful,” “discrete,” and “humble” (B2r). Satisfaction involves both forgiveness and actual penance in order that one “kepe himself effectually from deadly sinne, and . . . to make recompense to suche persons as he hath offended” (B3r). Duffy points out in his discussion of confessional practices that most penitents did not see the sacrament as a time for serious spiritual devotion. Rather, it was

a time for practical reassessment, reconciliation with neighbors, and settling of accounts. It was, moreover, an exercise carried out with queues of waiting fellow-parishioners looming close behind, the mutter of their rosaries or their chatter plainly audible.

Pastoral realism therefore demanded that the confession be kept within manageable dimensions; in a time-honoured formula the penitent was to be brief, be brutal, be gone. (60)

While the guide’s instructions do seem to consider confession as an opportunity for both personal and public reconciliation, the careful division of the act into these three parts (contrition, confession, and satisfaction) directs the reader to more deliberate, direct, and meditative contemplation of the sacrament beyond the confessional.

It is only after this discussion that Fowler returns to more practical aspects of the confessional act such as choosing an appropriate confessor, reciting the appropriate prayers in Latin, and understanding their meaning in English. In choosing a confessor, the penitent should be sure the priest is in

good standing with the Church; the “surest way” to do so would be “to submitte themselves, both therein, and in al other like things, to [the] appointment of their Bishops . . .” (B10v). In asking the penitent to trust the decisions and appointments of church hierarchy, the guide reminds him that the Mother Church had not abandoned the English Catholics, a reasonable fear among the community. Furthermore, presenting the prayers both in Latin and English as well as narrating the order of the confession was a practical reassurance of what to expect in the confessional. The confessional guide concludes in the clear explanations of faith and ritual, analyzing in detail the Ten Commandments, the Six Commandments of the Church, and the seven deadly sins. In these discussions, Fowler clarifies what church law commanded Catholics to do and to avoid, thus working as pedagogy in place of what could be learned and reviewed in a Catholic service or school. Some arguments also work as advice to English Catholics, aiding them in the question of loyalty. For example, in the critique of the fourth commandment instructing the faithful to honor their fathers and mothers, Fowler again reminds them of their duty to the larger church and hierarchy. Not only are they to honor their parents, but also their “spiritual prelates, Bishops, pastrouers, preachers, Doctors, Scholemasters, and al such as have charge of soules, and al temporal Governours, and generally all that are in Godes Stede . . .” (C6v).

So how then is a Catholic supposed to follow a government policy that would go against his or her faith? In the section analyzing what is forbidden by the commandment, Fowler reminds “parents also and superiors” that they “do

offend” when they do not care for their children or “subjects” by refusing to give them “that thing which is due unto them, as is good admonition, counsel, [and] teaching” (C7r). This argument will manifest itself in other tracts as the Catholic community becomes more persecuted and forced to choose between spiritual and temporal duties. Fowler’s guide, written relatively early in the segregation of the Catholic community within English nationalism, confirms the penitent’s understanding of his faith and the larger religious community that supports it. Acting, then, as both a private devotional guide and public explication of the Catholic Church’s understanding of the sacrament, this *Brief Forme of Confession* is especially fitting for Fowler’s audience: the fragmented English Catholic community in need of unifying structures and personal reassurances.

### Eucharistic Practice

Following his *Brief Form of Confession*, Fowler includes a treatise on the Eucharist written by Sir Thomas More during his imprisonment for defying Henry VIII. This treatise, especially since it is attributed to the man whose martyrdom symbolized the English Catholic struggle, demonstrated that for more than any of the other sacraments, the receiving of the Eucharist called for English Catholics to participate in both the spiritual and secular controversies of their time. Because of the unresolved differences on the doctrinal question of Transubstantiation of the Eucharist, recusant English Catholics either did not attend Protestant services, or, if they did so, refused to receive the Eucharist. Because it was so essential that English Catholics recognize and follow the

teachings of the Eucharist, sacramental guides in preparing for, receiving, and reaping the benefits of this sacrament became necessary. Thomas Wright (1561-1623), the son of a recusant Catholic family in York, studied and trained on the continent for the English mission and prepared such a guide in 1596 entitled *The Dispositions or Garnishment of the Soule*<sup>3</sup>. A Jesuit who became keenly interested in the split political and religious loyalties of the English Catholic community, he broke with the Society of Jesus in 1595, but continued to work in London for the Catholic cause rather openly. Eventually, he was arrested and jailed as a spy (Stroud 197). As a native Englishman and missionary priest, Wright's experiences and works reflect the experience of English Catholics as both a lay person who grew up in the shadow of this controversy as well as a priest who became politically involved in the establishment of the English Catholic community. Among his writings is this polemical tract about the Eucharist which reflects the experiences of Catholics by its focus on recusancy as an integral part of Catholic identity. Wright's purposes were to instruct Catholics in the proper method of contemplating and taking the Eucharist—known as communicating--and, secondly, to use the sacramental nature of the Eucharist to unify his Catholic audience.

The dedicatory letter to this tract is addressed “to the vertuous and zealous Matrone Mistris S. H. and her Religious and servant Sonne M. R. H.,” as yet unidentified, and begins with an emotional description of the precarious state for Catholics in England:

In the depth of winter, when light lacketh, heat fayleth, Rivers are

congealed; a hoarie froste coverth the face of the earth; . . . the light of true Faith and Religion, is banished oute of Englande, the heate of Charitie exiled, the floods of almes and hospitalitie (which in former ages ranne a maine) are frozen with imputative Justice, . . . while all the churches are hoary white without Image, Taper, Alter, priest, sacrifice, piety or devotion. (A1r)<sup>4</sup>

Recusants, like Wright's dedicatees, harbored priests and ran Catholic households, and their "faith shyneth more bright" in this time of persecution (A2v). They also spent time in "good conference or study of spirituall bookes," and served as a model for others (A2v), including Wright. This letter gives some insight into the sharing of information by recusant communities who make up part of Wright's audience. And, like Fowler's dedication, the letter acknowledges the need for such pedagogical works for a Catholic audience. But as his opening letter to the reader states, Wright also was aware of other audiences: the "protestantes and demi-catholicks, or catholique-like protestantes, or externall protestantes, and internal catholikes: some call them Church-papistes, others Scismatiques" (A3v). His letter to each type of reader demonstrates his negotiations of audience and persuasive techniques to accomplish a variety of goals: the instruction of Catholics in private devotions and public practices as well as the defense of the Catholic faith against all who might question it.

The letter addressed to the Catholic reader follows the ideas of the dedication and describes a small community of recusants who communicated

with one another in a type of coterie relationship. By speaking to them as one of their group, he unifies his audience through a familiar tone. For example, he mentions his earlier book on the theoretical background of the Eucharist, assuming that the reader is aware of it, and how after its publication, an “especiall friend” encouraged him to write this tract “for practise: the other for deeper judgments, this for meaner capacities, the other tended to inform the understandinge, this to move affections” (A4r). Wright knows that once a Catholic reader “will peruse the second treatise, if, as he readeth, he weight the matter maturely, pondering it with the balance of catholicke judgment, he shall not neede much more to induce him . . . to communicate devoutly and religiously” (A5v-A6r). Appropriate to an audience already comfortable in these discussions of spiritual matters, the calm, logical tone of this letter indicates his didactic purpose.

Wright’s attitude continues in his address to the Protestant reader. He responds to the Protestant stance on faith which “roote owt of mennes hartes all christian devotion and pietie” since men are saved by faith, not good works (A7r). He understands good works to be the result of our free will to be saved, thus emphasizing “the role that man plays in his own salvation” (Roberts 13). As in the temporal world where “in civill actions, . . . men have free will” to obey (B3r), we also have free will in religion. After a lengthy discussion, Wright ends this letter hoping that Protestants “ponder these reasons with the balance of indifferent judgment, and daily to goe forwardes in good workes for which they shall receive their judgment” (C8r). By again using a well-reasoned

argument and deferring to the good judgment of the reader (even if a Protestant), Wright engages his Protestant audience in religious discourse with what seems to be a unified, Catholic position on these issues.

In his final letter to the “Catholique-lyke Protestantes,” Wright moves to a more passionate and critical style in analyzing the papist position. Their error is in weighing worldly goods over spiritual, and he begins his letter with this declaration: “Your case, as it is most miserable, so is it most compassionable, for it seemeth, you in hart desire to serve god, and yet this desyre is overweyed, with the desyre to enjoy the worlde” (C8v). Loyalist Catholics may support the government, but unlike papists, their spiritual position is not compromised because this loyalty is limited to political views. Papists err in not only attending Protestant services but in participating in their mass by taking the Eucharist. Wright takes this opportunity to advance a harsh critique of Protestantism--something he avoided in his earlier letter. Walsham explains that

tracts inveighing against outward conformity allegedly constituted a “devotional” literature written to reclaim “Catholics in mind.” Yet this propaganda destined for a public stage equally deserves consideration as a polemic directed against a second, Protestant audience” (44).

Wright’s comments appear to be speaking to both groups, as in the following remarks:



What can the protestantes Churches afforde you? Ah infected sermons, corrupted with heresies. What prayers? Alas, howe will god heare them who will not hear him? The Communion, o poysoned cuppe, better it were for you to eate so must ratsbane, then that polluted breade, and to drinke so much dragons gall, or vypers blood, then that sacrilegious wyne. Noe doubt, but after that bread, enterth in Satan, and after that cuppe, some of the infernall crew. This you know and in youre hartes confess, and therefore your sinne is questionles the greater. (D1r)

Wright shows the least amount of sympathy for these readers because they knowingly do not support the Catholic church and thus “delineated an audience that was far from uniformly recusant” (Walsham 49). Their presence threatens the image of a unified Catholic church which Wright hopes to create through his tract. In order to survive, the Catholic community must demonstrate its spiritual sincerity. Participating in Eucharistic celebrations thus becomes both a personal and public act.

The tract itself is almost three hundred pages long, a length that even Wright himself worries is daunting. He divides the instructions into three sections: the preparation to receive the sacraments, the presentation of the sacrament, and the entertainment of the sacrament which includes the eating of the Eucharist and the reflective prayer that follows. The tract moves from the practical, public debate of religious differences and doctrinal issues surrounding the Eucharist to a more passionate account of the meditative and redemptive

powers of the sacrament. Roberts sees books such as this as “more than merely instructional guides in the proper use of the sacraments; they intend to arouse in the reader a love and need for these traditional aides to salvation” (33). Each of the three sections of the tract works to balance these concerns as well as the more pressing, temporal concerns of English Catholics.

In the first section of the tract, “Of Preparation,” the opening chapter addresses the humility of the communicant. The reader using this tract might easily relate to Wright’s cry for aid: “Alas, what proportion can we make betwixt God and our soules? His majestie, and our miserie? His greatnes, and our weaknes? His goodnes, and our wickednes?” (2). Like Fowler’s guide, the preparation section recognizes humility as the first stage of the communicant’s participation in the sacrament. The doubts and fears that Wright elaborately describes span heaven and earth, from God’s overwhelming immensity to the unworthiness of even His angels in comparison to Him. How then, can the communicant, as a sinful and imperfect human, hope to receive God in the consumption of the sacrament? Wright, in the voice of the reader, uses the metaphor of a “maze” (4) to describe this condition and to lead to his pedagogical argument. By following his teachings on preparation, the reader can work through this maze logically and thoughtfully.

Two “sortes” of preparation are necessary (Wright 17). The first sort is from “necessity” and involves formal confession as recommended by the Church, especially the Council of Trent. Since this requires the formal services of a priest, this may be especially difficult, as Wright notes, for “Catholickes in

Englande,” especially those who might be in prison and have little access to a priest. Interestingly, Wright calls this a “case of conscience” (21), a term he will later use in his political tracts on Catholic loyalism in England<sup>5</sup>. Others might recommend that the communicant write out his or her confession and send it to a priest. Wright disagrees with this method for two reasons. First, the intent and circumstance may be unclear in the letter, so as a priest, he would be unsure of what absolution to give. Second, writing out one’s sins may be especially dangerous if the letter were “intercepted by protestants” (22). Wright’s solution is practical and reasonable; he advises:

. . . that such a person after that he haith endeoured for his possibilitie, with praiers to god with greife of sinnes, with a firme purpose never to fall againe; that he may receive the blessed sacramente with contrition, although he can not come to confession: because the precept of confession, beinge appoynted by the Churche, we are to suppose, that she never intended thereby, to hinder such good soules from the blood of Christ, who stand prepared to offer their blood for Christ. And it seemeth not agreable to the bowelles of pietye, to depryve her children, in such extreame conflictes, of all spirituall armour, against the adversaries of her faith. (22-23)

While other sections of the tract are heavily annotated with references to biblical passages, this paragraph has no such documentation. By offering no church doctrine or biblical proof to support this adaptation of the sacramental practice, Wright relies instead on the necessity of such a dire situation. The

reality of this experience makes his role as teacher and priest more relevant to the lives of English Catholics, thus helping to further unify the community.

The second sort of "preparation" Wright argues comes from "decency" and involves six acts that will guide the communicant to living a decent and holy life. He offers a clever, if not haunting, acronym to organize his lesson: "Feare." Fear is the first act, and is a "Feare of it selfe" (29) that the communicant first recognizes as part of his or her humility. What follows are five virtues. The "F" in "fear" stands for the first letter in the phrase "faith, hope, and charity" which are the next three acts. The "r" in "fear," the "second Consonate" stands for "Repentance" which he then divides into two parts: repentance for past sins and a resolution "not to fall againe" (Wright 29), thus completing the six acts (i. e. fear, faith, hope, charity, repentance, and resolution). The practicality of this mnemonic advice becomes poetic when Wright then compares these six stages to "sixe wings which the Seraphims, that are inflammed with love," "six gates, through which all courteours muste passe," and "sixe harbingers whoe prepare the lodging of the holy Ghoste" (29-30). The section then concludes by explicating each of these stages in terms poetic as well as practical. For example, hope is comprised of "two actes or operations; one to expect and desyre of God, lyfe everlasting, and the means of atchive it; an other to love God as good and beneficiall unto us" (Wright 41). After this careful dissection, Wright moves to more prayerful discourse, knowing that "such sweete speaches, thy soule may most affectuously utter by the vertue of Hope" (42). In this manner, the "Preparation" section helps calm

the fears and apprehension of the reader by offering practical, if not formulaic, solutions to the “maze” of doubts an isolated Catholic might feel.

The second section of the tract on the “Presentation” of the Eucharist moves to a more pedagogical, reasoned, and authoritative argument. Like any good teacher, Wright uses examples to instruct. The large number of biblical examples throughout gives authority to his argument, but his use of analogies that draw on the temporal world is especially effective. Using a technique from the Ignatian method of meditation, Wright sets up a series of analogies that place the communicant in a metaphorical relationship. In Ignatian mediation, the opening preludes to prayer reconstruct “abstract” or “historical” religious events in which the petitioner can imagine himself within the scene and in the presence of God (Roberts 23-24). Wright describes the presentation of the Eucharist by imagining such scenes as “a soldier to his captain,” “a scholar to his maister,” “a garden for him to enter in,” “an infant to his mother,” “the three kings who came to honor Christe,” and “a pilgrim.” In each, a reciprocal relationship is established where both parties care for one another. In “a son to his father,” God’s spiritual adoption of us “in this holy Euchariste, . . . powreth into us all his substance, . . . admitteth us in his kingdom, . . . openeth the gates of heaven, for soule and body” (106). In gratitude, we “voluntarily accept him for our Father” and honor Him through prayers such as the “Pater noster” (106-107). By using examples such as this, Wright elevates everyday experiences to the spiritual realm as an illustration of God’s benevolence towards mankind.

In the final section of the tract on the “entertainment” of the sacrament, Wright moves to “what we ought to do after receiving of the blessed Sacrament” (239). By far, this is the most important part since “the other two prepared the wood, layed it together, blew the fyre: but here the flame must issue forthe” (239-240). The language of this section grows in passion and emotion as Wright moves his reader towards a spiritual renewal and away from the temporal world. In chapter five, he describes the thoughts of the communicant after taking the Eucharist:

Although I receiving my Saviour in my mouthe, my tonge kepe silence, yet my hart shall crye, and revive all those fervent thoughts that kindle the flame of myne affects. Sometimes I will conceive the Eucharist, . . . as a ball of heavenly fyre brought down by Christ, to inflame the hartes of all men to love God. . . . Our God is a consuming fyre. Sometime as a moste glisteringe sunne, mucche more beutifull and shyning, more pure and bright, then this we daily vew; to illuminate my soule and shake of all fogs and mistes, that sinn and Satan had darkened it withall. And though it be veiled with a corporall clowde, yet that impeacheth nothing the spirtuall glory and brightnes thereof. (271-272)

The use of “I” in this chapter helps to unify the audience who can now clearly see themselves in this instruction. Moreover, the promised rewards surpass any earthly goods and add to Wright’s call for Catholics to participate in the Eucharist. Wright

reminds the reader of this in the concluding lines of the tract which ask God “to grante to all those that desyre to taiste it in this lyfe, and possesse it in the other” (293). This call also serves to unify Catholics through the Eucharist, as “there is noe nation haith their Godds so near them, as the catholick Church, sweet Jesus, haith thee” (274). By imaging such a community who shares in this sacrament, Wright teaches his readers, many of whom were most likely already recusant Catholics, that, despite persecution, their devotion and faith will be rewarded.

### Robert Southwell and the Poetics of Confession

Both Fowler and Wright addressed their sacramental guides to audiences that lacked both spiritual guidance and inspiration. In their need to inspire these pedagogical tools utilized literary tropes and techniques, thus becoming poetic. Can the reverse be said for poetic works written to inspire the religious community? In some cases, this shift from poetry to pedagogy is logical especially when considering the motives of the author. For example, Robert Southwell, poet, priest, and Catholic martyr, instructs his readers and congregation through the religious teachings of one of his most famous and most moving works, *St. Peter's Complaint* (1595). This long narrative poem describes St. Peter's sorrow and confession of his sin of denying Christ, illustrating the steps that make up the sacramental practice. Just as Fowler argues that this practice involves the three steps of contrition, confession, and satisfaction, Southwell constructs St. Peter's lament in a similar pattern. St.

Peter's voice becomes the voice of the petitioner in preparation as well as the voice of the priest in instruction. In the middle of the poem, St. Peter laments:

Come sorrowing teares, the offspring of my grieffe,  
 Scant not your parent of a needfull aide:  
 In you I rest, the hope of wished relief,  
 By you my sinfull debts must be defraide.  
 Your power prevailes, your sacrifice is gratefull,  
 By love obtayning life, to men most hatefull. (Southwell 463-468)

The tears show his sorrow (contrition) and testify to his sin (confession). They also act as penance that will lead to satisfaction, the final step. But the language of this passage also illustrates the argument that the poem is both inspirational and instructional. The stanza concludes Southwell's development of the "eyes of Christ" conceit that is at the center of the poem and perhaps the most passionate section. The tears themselves act much like a priest would, offering absolution for the "sinfull debts" of the petitioner and having the "power" to redeem men (Southwell 466-467). *St. Peter's Complaint*, through its negotiation of pedagogy and prayer, offers the priestly guidance that a sacramental guide would for an English Catholic community in need.

Robert Southwell is himself a product of this English Catholic community. Born in 1561 in Horsham St. Fairth, Norfolk, Southwell was raised in the Catholic faith of his ancestors who were, until this time, prominent and wealthy Catholics. Like other young English Catholic sons, Southwell was sent to the English College at Douai when he was fourteen-years-old in order to



continue his education. At seventeen, he chose to enter the Jesuits' Roman College rather than return to England. According to F. W. Brownlow, young Catholic men raised under England's repression viewed their faith with "an aura of romantic adventure" which may have influenced Southwell's decision (3). At first, Southwell did not gain admission into the novitiate. In response, he wrote his *Querimonia* or "Complaint" which resembles the process with which he will examine religious practices in both his poetry and his prose works. Brownlow describes Southwell's complaint as a "verbose expression of the author's intense disappointment" which then moves to "an extremely idealized description of the joys of life within the order as a member of a privileged cadre, united against the world, secure in the service of a perfect master" (3). This need for companionship and purpose reflects a longing for a community which may have arisen from his early years as an isolated Catholic in England.

Trained in the strict *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius that the Jesuits followed and in the precepts of a Renaissance humanist education, Southwell became a model Jesuit, described by the Jesuit priest John Gerard as "wise and good, gentle and lovable" (qtd. in Brownlow 5). He continued his education and became a teacher and administrator at the English College, completing his own studies for ordination in 1584. He chronicled the activities of the college in newsletters and began writing verse. In 1585, he requested and gained permission to join the Jesuit mission and return to England. He arrived with his fellow Jesuit Henry Garnet in July of 1586. Brownlow describes their mission as twofold: "to administer the sacraments to enclaves of isolated Catholics" and,

more importantly, to create “an organization for doing so” (9). Southwell was stationed first outside of London in the Catholic household of William, third baron Vaux of Harrowden, where he was almost caught, then in London in the home of the Countess of Arundel whose husband, Philip Howard, was himself imprisoned in the Tower of London. Through her patronage, he obtained and ran a printing press for Catholic works, and it is possible that she helped him to secure a second lodging in London (Brownlow 9-10).

As a contact for other new arrivals, Southwell gained an important place within the mission. He appealed for more priests who could preach, but then made the rational decision, as did other Jesuits involved in the mission, that the best way to reach the community would be through the printed word. His published “pastoral letters” were mostly letters of religious advice to various personages that could be used as a religious primer, much like the sacramental guides. These include *An Epistle of Comfort* (1587), *The Triumphs Over Death* (1591), *An Epistle of Robert Southwell unto His Father* (1589), *Mary Magdalen’s Funeral Tears* (1591), and *A Short Rule of Good Life* (1591) (Brownlow 12). He maintained correspondence with colleagues and religious superiors on the Continent, often writing about the status of the mission and the treatment of Catholics in England. On June 25, 1592, after surviving six years on the mission without being caught, Southwell was arrested by the infamous Catholic hunter Richard Topcliffe. According to newsletters by Richard Verstegan and Henry Garnet, Topcliffe interrogated and tortured Southwell for forty hours before turning him over to the queen’s Privy Council (Brownlow 13). After refusing to

confess, Southwell was jailed in the Tower of London until his trial on February 20, 1595. He was charged with being a Catholic priest in England which been outlawed under the statutes of 1585.

During the course of the trial, Southwell maintained his innocence by insisting that his duties as a Catholic priest were not treasonous, and that he only intended “to administer the sacraments to those willing to receive them” (Brownlow 17). He was found guilty and sentenced to death in the following manner:

he should be carried to Newgate whence he came, and from thence to be drawn to Tybrun upon a hurdle, and there to be hanged and cut down alive; his bowels to be burned before his face; his head to be stricken off; his body to be quartered and disposed at her majesty’s pleasure. (qtd. in Brownlow 20)

The execution occurred on February 21, 1595, one day after his trial and sentencing. Southwell was allowed to speak beforehand. He prayed for forgiveness of his sins and for the queen and England and concluded by saying “that he died a Catholic priest in the Roman faith, and asking all Catholics present to pray for him” (Brownlow 22). Most accounts of the execution state that those watching were silenced and humbled by Southwell’s poise. Within the same year, other Catholic printers and pamphleteers begin publishing Southwell’s works, including *St. Peter’s Complaint*, as the work of the recently martyred young Englishman and Jesuit.

*St. Peter's Complaint* and a collection of twelve shorter lyric poems were published in November of 1595, and its popularity ensured a second edition that same year as well as one in 1602. The date of the actual composition of the poem is unknown, but most likely Southwell composed the English poems while in England before his imprisonment, since he had little access to writing materials in the Tower (Brownlow 73). According to Brownlow and other textual scholars, although Southwell's name does not appear on the title page, his authorship was well known. The poem also circulated widely in manuscripts, both in collections of Southwell's work and in a "commonplace book" compiled by the Catholic copyist Peter Mowle (Brownlow 74). Brownlow argues that this suggests two ways of reading the poem. First, the distribution of such works could be both private and public and thus for two audiences: a smaller, secretive Catholic audience and a wider public audience, including Protestants. Nancy Pollard Brown argues in her influential study "The Structure of 'St. Peter's Complaint,'" the poem is didactic especially as an "expression of Catholic doctrine as laid down by the Ecumenical Council of the Church" at the Council of Trent (3). According to her reading, the "study of the weeping Peter is in fact the exposition of the way of forgiveness of sins according to the Catholic dogma defined anew" at the council (4). The second reading is more literary as the poem is an example of the Baroque style, one appropriate for the spiritual and inspirational purposes of religious poetry. If we consider *St. Peter's Complaint* as serving both poetical and pedagogical purposes, we may also consider that, like Wright's open letters to Catholic,

Protestant, and “church papist” audiences, the work ultimately acts as a defense of Catholicism and a statement of Catholic identity.

The poem, which survives in two undated manuscript copies, was based loosely upon the Italian poem *Le Lagrima San Pietro* by Luigi Tansillo (1510-1568). Southwell’s extant manuscripts include a translation of Tansillo’s work, another poem on the same subject entitled “Peter Playnt,” and two shorter versions of *St. Peter’s Complaint*, all which may indicate the gradual development of the final version (McDonald and Brown lxxxvi). Brownlow argues that Southwell clearly organizes the 132 stanza poem in a symbolic order (87). The number 132 is a multiple of 11 and 12, both numbers significant in numberological lore since “11 was the number of sin, being deficient by one of the number of grace and salvation, 12” (87). The center of the poem, a “20-stanza apostrophe to the eyes of Christ,” also divides the poem by themes, the first half describes St. Peter’s sin and guilt in denying Christ and the second half illustrating his “contrition” (87). The six-line stanzas, formally structured by a quatrain and a concluding couplet, move quite freely from narrative episode to contemplation to biblical allusions, held together more by the chaotic and troubled mind of the sinner, St. Peter, than by a logical argument.

The poem opens with the image of a stormy sea, an apt choice considering St. Peter’s association with water, sailing, and fishing. The metaphor is that of a lost soul:

Launche foorth my Soule into a maine of teares,  
Full fraught with grief the traffick of thy mind:

Torne sailes will serve, thoughtes rent with guilty feares:

Give care, the sterne: use sighes in lieu of wind

Remorse, the Pilot: thy misdeed, the Carde:

Torment, thy Haven: Shipwracke, thy best reward. (1-6)

In comparing this extended metaphor to the confessional and contrition stages described by Fowler, Southwell has St. Peter begin with this sort of examination. The sin has been committed, but now he must reflect on the circumstances and reasons for it in order to prepare for full confession. The sorrow is evident in the strong imagery, the “maine of teares” and the “torne sailes” ripped by “guilty feares” (1-3). But the ways in which he must navigate the soul show more careful thought. “Care” and “Remorse” as “sterne” and “Pilot” will guide the ship (4-6). However, St. Peter cannot ultimately be the one to gain his own forgiveness; that can only be satisfied, to use Fowler’s terms, by God’s absolution. Thus, the individual can only guide himself, whether alone or, in the case of a Catholic reader of the poem, with the help of a priest, through the first stages of the confession: the remorseful “Torment” that will act as confession and contrition.

After St. Peter’s recognition of his sin, Southwell follows the opening stanzas with images that develop the metaphor of a sea of tears that illustrate St. Peter’s confession: “I fear’d with life, to die; by death, to live: / I left my guide, now left, and leaving God” (49-50). The sin is Peter’s choice of the temporal life over spiritual salvation. In the Passion narrative, when asked on three separate

occasions whether or not he was a disciple of Jesus, Peter denied it, as Jesus had predicted at the Last Supper. Brownlow argues that

for Southwell, the fact at the heart of this narrative is that for no acceptable reason at all Peter has betrayed the person he loves most. His sin is a brief act of violence committed in the name of “life” against the one person who stands for an absolute beauty and virtue in his world, who is everything he believes in, and as such is part of himself. In a real way, consequently, the *Complaint* is a poem about defeated or betrayed love. (89)

Southwell also elaborates on the weight of Peter’s sin, comparing it to Judas’s betrayal, Caiphas’s anger, and the “Jewish tyrannies” (127). Peter berates himself for not speaking in Christ’s name, the failure of his “tounge, that didst his praise and Godhead sound” (133). In each of these comparisons, the sin is his temporal choice, a choice that would be familiar to a persecuted Catholic community.

In these last stanzas leading up to the middle section of the poem, Southwell links Peter’s failure to the woman servant who questioned him in the courtyard. Peter is ashamed that a “puff of womans wind bred all my feare” (150). The woman servant is called a “silly Eve” (179) and compared to the temptresses who were the cause of “Davids, Salomons, and Sampsons fals” (301). Peter concludes this argument by crying out:

O women, woe to men: traps for their falls,  
Still actors in all tragicall mischaunces:

Earthes necessarie evils, captivating thralles,  
 Now murdering with your tongs, now with your glances,  
 Parents of life, and love spoylers of both,  
 The theefes of Harts false do you love or loth. (319-324)

This argument fits well with Brownlow's reading of the poem as a betrayal of love and adds the element of paradox in that the true lover is God and not a woman. Moreover, women are seen as false, offering temporal pleasures that drive men away from God. While Southwell does not make overt references to Queen Elizabeth in the poem nor does he cast her as a temptress in his other works, he does conclude the analysis and self-examination of Peter's sin with this argument that may speak to the Catholic community torn between religion and country. Women's eyes are thus set in opposition to Christ's eyes that offer salvation. Their "tongs," a symbol of voice, set up the denial, a voicing of one's identity or, in Peter's case, a betrayal of it. Like Catholics in England, Peter must admit his identity as a follower of Jesus.

The central theme of the poem begins at stanza fifty-seven by addressing the "sacred eyes" of Christ:

O sacred eyes, the springs of living light,  
 The earthly heavens, where Angels joy to dwell:  
 How could you deigne to view my deathfull plight,  
 Or let your heavenly beames looke on my hell?  
 But those unspotted eyes encountred mine,  
 As spotless Sunne doth on the dounghill shine. (331-336)



The use of the apostrophe, paradox, and imagery in this section contributes to the reading of Southwell's style as Baroque or mannerist. Pierre Janelle argues in his study *Robert Southwell the Writer* that Southwell utilized some of the descriptive images and conceits in Tansillo's work (215), but he developed more fully those more baroque and "artificial" elements into a more lyrical poem in the tradition of courtly poets (224). By returning to both the theme and the imagery of remorse, his eyes full of tears, Christ's eyes full of love and forgiveness, Southwell's "purpose may be musical or structural . . . offer[ing] the same sort of semi-intellectual enjoyment that is supplied by the reappearance of the theme in a fugue" (Janelle 221). For example, Peter addresses the eyes in the opening stanza as the "Sunne" (an obvious pun) and continues the theme and image by referring to them as "flames devine that sparkle out your heats"; "blasing comments, lightning flames of love"; and "living mirrours" (349, 361, 367). In contrast, Peter also associates them with cooling waters or liquids, including milk or balm: "The eye of liquid pearl, the purest mother"; "Pooles of Hesebon, the baths of grace"; and "Turtle twins all bath'd in virgins milke" (357, 379, 433). The paradox of these descriptions is that the eyes both burn and soothe, purge by fire and cleanse by water, the very essence of all sacramental practices where the penitent is made worthy of Christ's grace. Joseph D. Scallon argues that Southwell's strong Baroque imagery "force[s] the viewer to look for the truth behind the picture and form a judgement on it" thus making him or her an active participant in the reading of the poem (qtd. in Brownlow 79). Brownlow suggests that Southwell, as a Jesuit, uses his training in meditation to

create the scene. More importantly, he addresses the audience directly, using “the sound and energy of the speaking voice” and the strong metaphors and conceits that we associate with the metaphysical style (Brownlow 78-79). His poetry reflects his Continental, Catholic training and, at the same time, his awareness of his own “Englishness” and English audience.

The concluding stanzas of this middle section shift from acts of confession and contrition to satisfaction, the final stage of the sacrament and the conclusion of the poem. Peter admits that “I know the cause” and begins focusing on his own tears: “Come sorrowing teares, the ofspring of my grieffe [ . . . ] By you my sinfull debts must be defraide”; “Come good effectes of ill deserving causes [ . . . ] Yet while you guiltie prove, you pittie pleade” (463-463, 468-470). By shedding tears, Peter makes his act of contrition, an action that the penitent should follow in order to seek forgiveness from God who offers the final satisfaction. For Peter, the rock upon whom the church will be built. and for Southwell, himself a priest, the need to seek outside oneself for absolution is complex. Peter’s sin makes him doubt his worthiness as the leader of the church early on in the poem:

Titles I make untruthes: am I a rocke?  
 That with so soft a gayle was overthrowne?  
 Am I fit pastor for the faithfull flocke,  
 To guide their soules that murdred thus mine owne?  
 A rock, of ruine not a rest, to stay:  
 A pastor, not to feede: but to betray. (169-174)

In the final section of the poem, he returns to this fear, facing the shame and scorn of other apostles because now, “our rocke (say they) is riven, . . . / Our Eagles wings are clipt, that wrought so hie: / Our thundering Clowde made noise but cast no shower” (613-615). These doubts show the humanity of Peter, a saint, and Southwell, a priest. For the English Catholic audience seeking a common identity, this humanity builds the ethos of the subject and of the writer.

The reflection of Peter throughout the poem mirrors that of the penitent Fowler describes in his *Fourme of Confession*: one who must be an agent in his or her own salvation. The emphasis on preparation, contemplation, and reflection responds to the sacramental teaching that was especially important for both Catholics and Protestants during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. As an engaged participant, the penitent ultimately receives satisfaction from God, not through the priest. Likewise, Peter’s confession and reconciliation remind the audience that while Peter will become the leader of the Church, he is first a follower like the readers and must work through the same steps in confessing his sin. In the final stanzas of “St. Peter’s Complaint,” Peter contemplates this unique situation of being entrusted with the care of the Church and of its people and needing this same sort of care and guidance. The qualities that provide this guidance act as the intermediary for Peter’s confession, as described towards the end of the poem in the following stanza:

A self contempt, the shroud: my soule, the corse:

The beere, an humble hope: the hersecloth, feare:

Thy mourners, thoughtes, in blackes of deepe remorse:

The herse, grace, pittie, love, and mercy beare.

My teares, my dole: the priest, a zealous will:

Pennance, the tomb: and dolefull sighes, the knill. (Southwell 745-750)

This extended metaphor of a funeral for his sinful soul allows us to review the steps of confession and contrition, including the importance of contemplation and reflection on the gravity of the sins that Fowler had advised. The soul itself is attended by his hopes, fears, thoughts, remorse, love, and sorrow. Only after this procession does the priest or “zealous will” (750) hasten Peter to penance.

Peter next addresses Christ as the bearer of satisfaction and forgiveness, a “Father in care, mother in tender hart” who “with mildness” can “measure my offence” and with “grace forgive” and “Love forget my fall” (755, 781, 785). This request for satisfaction, then, concludes the complaint, the confession, and the poem with Peter’s plea and Southwell’s final stanza:

Redeeme my lapse with raunsome of thy love,

Trasverse th’ inditement, rigors dome suspend:

Let frailtie favour, sorrow succor move:

Be thou thy self, though chaunging I offend.

Tender my suite, clense this defiled denne,

Cancel my debtes, sweet *Jesu*, say Amen. (787-792)

So, while Protestant critics decried the Catholic community’s reliance on priests as intermediaries in sacramental practice, Catholic defenders such as Southwell countered this argument with formalized guidelines that emphasized the role of

the laity in the sacramental practice. God's relationship with the individual is what matters, not the role of the priest. Southwell's use of Peter, the first priest as Jesus's chosen one, as the penitent in the poem makes this persona especially effective for the isolated members of the English Catholic audience

Southwell most directly addresses his audience, both Catholic and Protestant, in the "Author to the Reader" preface that he prepared for the poem. Indicating his intentions for the poem, the prefaces were published together in the editions immediately following Southwell's execution. More importantly, he foregrounds the themes of the frailty of man, the gravity of sin, and the way of forgiveness that are important to the sacrament and to the poem. By reminding the reader who "danest to let fall a looke" on the poem that "they were brittle mould, that now are Saintes," Southwell advises his congregation to "learne by their own faultes, what in thine owne to mend" (1, 4, 6). Even so, he argues that our sins are greater than Peter's for we have been granted salvation through Christ's death and yet continue to sin. For these reasons, he writes the poem, but like a priest, he only acts as intermediary to communicate these lessons. Using the metaphor of a muse to describe divine inspiration, Southwell pleads

License my single penne to seek a sphere,  
 You heavenly sparkes of wit, shew native light:  
 Cloud not with mistie loves your Orient cleere,  
 Sweet flightes you shoote; learne once to levell right.  
 Favour my wish, well wishing workes no ill:

I moove the Suite, the Graunt restes in your will. (18-23)

The last line describes the priest's role as God's servant on earth, stressing that only God can grant satisfaction and absolution. Yet, the focus on God's "will" also reminds the reader of the choice involved in this act. The lesson of the sacrament as described in "St. Peter's Complaint" is clear. God is always willing to forgive, but we too must be willing to confess, or to use Southwell's words, "moove the Suite."

### John Donne and Eucharistic Poetics

A discussion of seventeenth-century English religious poetry immediately calls to mind the poet John Donne (1572-1631). Two popular images of Donne represent how most readers and scholars view his life and works: Donne the youth with his love poetry and Donne the elder with his religious poetry, sermons, and meditations. Like Southwell, Donne was a poet and a priest, in this case a Protestant minister after his conversion. But another image of Donne deserves more careful study as well, and this image connects him even more closely with Southwell and the English Catholic community: Donne as Catholic raised by recusant parents. In his study *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility*, Dennis Flynn first examines this aspect of Donne's life with an analysis of a miniature portrait of a young Donne dressed stoically in black, holding a sword and wearing an earring in the shape of a cross. The motto included on the portrait, done by court artists either Nicolas Hilliard or Isaac Oliver in 1591, reads in Spanish "Antes muerto que mundada," which Flynn translates as "Rather dead than changed" (2). The motto is actually a "line

of verse" sworn by a shepherd's unfaithful mistress from a popular romance called *Diana* by Jorge de Montemayor, published around 1560. Thus, Flynn notes that

Donne's rigid motto is pathetic and ironical, not in Walton's sense of contrast between youth and age, but in that its histrionic defiance suggests a rueful, cynical premonition of inconstancy. [. . .] So the eager swordsman holding up his sword swears an oath of steadfastness. But the viewer should remember what Donne knew: Diana was not faithful. (2)

The motto suggests that this pose of Donne as a soldier indicates his constancy at that particular moment: in 1591 as a Catholic with the coat of arms of his father's Welsh ancestors and the cross earring representing his mother's Catholic background as member of the Heyward family. The style of wearing an earring is an emulation of the "cavalier style of Spanish and French *liquor* captains, those 'hard riding loose tongues, yet devoted' adherents to 'the religion of the swordsmen of Europe,'" swordsmen who were defiantly Catholic (Flynn 4).

The legend of Donne as a young rake who became the Dean of St. Paul's comes from Donne's own characterization of himself as "Jack Donne" and "Dr. Donne," but it has been a driving force in both biography and criticism of Donne and his work (Flynn 7). Although most accounts of Donne's life place his conversion at around ages nineteen or twenty, much speculation exists as to his

Catholic upbringing and the events that led to his conversion. Flynn cites one of Donne's few references to this background in his work *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610):

I have beene ever kept awake in a meditation of Martyrdome, by being derived from such a stocke and race, as, I beleeve, no family, (which is not of farre larger extent, and greater branches,) hath endured and suffered more in their persons and fortunes, for obeying the Teachers of Romanic Doctrine. (9)

Flynn builds his argument on such evidence from Donne's writings as well as on a careful examination of Donne's family and formative years, especially his mother's legacy as a Heywood and the influence and teachings of her brother, the Jesuit missionary Jasper Heywood. Flynn links Donne's Catholic connections to his association with the Catholic families Percy (the house of the Earl of Northumberland) and Stanley (the house of Earl of Derby). He concludes that the dignity accorded to these families and the subsequent loss of this honor with the changing religious and political environments is something that Donne himself experienced, especially as he faced the consequences of his secret marriage and, eventually, secured his place in the Protestant court and community.

In his review of Donne criticism, Flynn cites the work of Robert V. Young and his recognition of the influence of Donne's Catholic background (12). In Young's book *Doctrine and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, he expands on the private and public nature of religion and religious poetry within a Protestant society. He contends that the poetic preoccupation with grace and salvation



finds its “concrete manifestation” in the practice of “worship,” including the mass, prayer, and sacramental practice (81). He builds his argument on the foundation of Louis Martz’s *The Poetry of Meditation* (Rev. Ed. 1962), one of the key studies of religious poetry of the time period. Young points out two similarities between meditation and sacramental practice that are key to the interpretation of Donne’s poetry in its Catholic and Protestant traditions. First, both practices are closely linked because “meditation is an individual reinforcement, or even representation or imitation, of the enactment of the sacraments of the Church” (Young 82). Second, “the number and form of the sacraments, especially the nature and effects of the Eucharist, were the most important points of contention during the Reformation” (82). As a result, Young continues, the religious poets of this time, both Catholic and Protestant, became keenly aware of the arguments over the role of ritual and sacramental practices, and this “awareness of the threatened loss of the sacraments’ power to make grace present in the world . . . gives such tremendous tension and poignancy to their sacred poetry” (83). The belief of transubstantiation shifted in Protestant teachings to a memorialization of the act rather than a transformation to the “*absent presence*”:

In Zwingli’s teaching, as the term “memorialism” announces, there is no *real presence* at all, merely a “memorial” of the Last Supper and the sacrifice on Calvary. In Calvin’s view, the Body and Blood of Christ are really present *in the faith of the elect communicant*; hence communion is a sign that one already has grace rather than

a means of obtaining it. Even Luther's notion of consubstantiation, by which Christ is truly present in the elements of bread and wine because He is already present everywhere in the universe, can be turned around to say that He is *no more* present in the Sacrament than He is everywhere else. (Young 83-84, italics in original)

The presence of Christ that is the subject of contradictory views in Protestant and Catholic arguments thus becomes an underlying theme for the devotional poetry of writers such as Donne, especially since "a principal purpose of such poetry, like meditation itself, is to evoke a sense of the divine presence in the soul, analogous to the sacramental presence invoked by the liturgy" (84). Young concludes from this context that "Protestant devotional literature" actually owes much "to the influence of continental Catholic or Counter-Reformation practices" (85).

In his analysis of Donne's poetry, Young links the subject of presence to "the need to find one's personal identity with the communal worship" that characterizes Donne's religious verse (89). This search for identity happens through the sacraments performed during the mass, such as the celebration of the Eucharist, which act as private moments of meditation within a public setting. As a minister of the Church of England, Donne explicitly rejects the Catholic teachings on the sacrament in his sermons, but as a former Catholic and poet, these ideas form a background to his religious poems. In "Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward," Donne's concern over Mary's witnessing of the Crucifixion and his emphasis on "the saving presence of Christ in particular

creatures, among them the Mother of Jesus” demonstrate this balance between his Catholic past and present Protestantism (Young 94). The poem’s narrative is the speaker’s journey westward on the day when his “Soules forme bends towards the East” (Donne 10). Young states that even though the speaker rides away, “he is, nonetheless, preoccupied with the evocation of Christ’s presence” as a way of redemption and salvation, “that final, full presence of the Apocalypse” (95). His final conclusions about Donne’s use of the Eucharist in his devotional poetry are that the references show Donne as a committed Protestant but one who was concerned with the ways in which the meditative aspects of Catholic sacramental practice could be maintained.

Young acknowledges that while Donne does not directly address this issue in the devotional poetry, the poems are “rife with liturgical overtones and images obliquely hinting at the concept of blood and sacrifice” (99), the very elements that are at the center of eucharist practice as described by Wright in his sacramental guide. The celebration of the Eucharist is integral to the mass and thus takes place in a public arena, albeit for Catholics this might be reduced to practice within the household. However, the meditative aspect of the sacrament occurs in solitude, as Wright points out, as the communicant prepares for receiving the host; thus the public and private aspects of sacramental practice occur simultaneously. How then, does the communicant balance these two aspects? As the sacramental guide demonstrates, the individual must first focus his or her mind and spirit unto the act. A closer reading of “Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward” shows that Donne advises the same. The speaker

acknowledges the preoccupations of daily life which, like the effect of “forraigne motions” on the “naturall forme” of spheres, distract the soul with “Pleasure or business” (4-8). He makes a conscious effort to remove himself from these distractions, part of the meditative tradition so important to Reformation and Counter-Reformation teachings, a move that has parallels in Wright’s opening section on reflection, and as Martz points out, in the overall purpose of meditation practice: a deliberate setting aside of solitary prayer and reflection (26).

Once the speaker of “Good Friday” achieves that moment of peaceful reflection, he recalls the scene without actually entering it, a shift from the meditative tradition. He admits that his “Soules forme bends towards the East” even as he is moving west, but he is not yet ready to turn and face the horror and paradox of the Passion. He creates the scene in his memory, stating what he should see: “There I should see a Sunne, by rising set, / And by that setting endless day beget” (11-12). This recreation or memorialization fits the Protestant understanding of the Eucharist, but the passionate nature of the description, Young argues, focuses on the real presence of Christ’s body in the act. The scene, even though a memory, is too powerful an image, both in its incarnation of God and in the humanity of the act:

Yet dare I’almost be glad, I do not see  
 That spectacle of too much weight for mee.  
 Who sees Gods face, that is self life, must dye;  
 What a death were it then to see God dye?

It made his own Lieutenant Nature shrink,  
 It made his footstool crack, and the Sunne winke.  
 Could I behold those hand which span the Poles,  
 And tune all spheres at once, peirc'd with those holes? (15-21)

The immensity of God's sacrifice is seen as a paradox: death producing eternal life and the risk of one's own death in observing God's. This is the same paradox of Christ's passion that is reenacted in sacrament of the Eucharist. It has the same humbling effect on the congregation as Wright notes in the preparatory sections of his tract.

The movement towards the end of these lines, however, to the piercing of God's hands, focuses the poem and the scene on Christ's humanity and on the body. Thematically, this occurs by viewing the scene from Mary's perspective, while stylistically, Donne emphasizes the paradox of Christ's birth and death. The "traditional paradoxes of the scene echo the meditative treatises," according to Martz's analysis, as well as the "paradox of human perversity" (*The Poetry of Meditation* 54-55) that stand in contrast to the sacrifice of Christ celebrated in the Eucharist which, paradoxically, leads to salvation and resurrection. Christ's "blood" and "that flesh which was worn / by God" are now "rag'd, and torne" (Donne 27-29). Since the speaker cannot turn to face this sight, he casts his glance towards "his miserable mother . . . / who was Gods partner here, and furnish'd thus / half of that sacrifice, which ransom'd us" (30-33). In the act of the Eucharist, from the Catholic perspective, this transformation from bread to body is the incarnation and the sacrifice performed again and is the strongest

presence of God and unity with the congregation. If these moments are only remembered or memorialized in the Protestant Eucharist, God's presence is in actuality an absence. The speaker, even though he states explicitly that "these things . . . are present yet unto my memory," has in the poem itself recreated the act rather than recalled it (33-34). While Donne is foremost a Protestant, he hearkens back to his own memories of the passion of Catholic imagery and of Catholic belief in the Eucharist to create such a powerful image. In discussing Donne's treatment of the Eucharist in his sermons, Young states that

Such tergiversation about the nature of the Eucharist is not only characteristic of Donne's unsettled religious conscience—a source of anxiety throughout his life—it is also an index of his vexed preoccupation with and longing for the divine presence, for this is a key feature of transubstantiation to which he manifests alternate hostility and sympathy. There is no doubt that Donne was firmly committed to the Church of England, but he reveals some perplexity about how much of the Catholic heritage could be retained. (99)

This "longing for the divine presence" is what links these themes to Wright's concerns in writing a sacramental guide for Catholics and in prefacing it with the three letters that assume one universal church rather than a fragmented one. Wright is as committed to the Catholic church as Donne is to the Church of England, and the Eucharistic celebration, undisputed in the Catholic views, serves as a unifying symbol of this commitment.

The concluding lines of Donne's poem offer a final plea for redemption and salvation. The body imagery shifts from Christ's body to that of the speaker, a shift that emphasizes the unity of the individual with Christ, just as the communicant becomes one with Christ in receiving the Eucharist. Wright illustrates this with analogies focusing on the hierarchical relationships such as between son and father or student and teacher, for example. In these relationships, both parties share one goal: the education and elevation of the weaker member. This is analogous to the nature of the Catholic sacrament in that the Eucharist aids in the recipient's spiritual growth. In the poem, the speaker admits his unworthiness and his reasons for turning away from these images of the Passion in his ride westward:

O Saviour, as thou hang'st upon the tree;  
 I turne my back to thee, but to receive  
 Corrections, til thy mercies bid thee leave.  
 O think mee worth thine anger, punish mee,  
 Burne off my rusts, and my deformity (Donne 36-40)

Young sees this plea as the speaker's admitting his sin and serving his penance, acts associated more with the sacrament of confession: "With a characteristic witty turn at the close, Donne makes the act of turning his back upon the affliction of his sovereign Lord both the sin and the means of penance"(180).

This penitential practice is also an important step preceding the Eucharist, especially in the "Lamb of God" response that precedes the receiving of the host. The priest elevates the host and the congregation makes one final

plea for the forgiveness of their sins in order to be cleansed before taking the Eucharist. This communal response allows the individual to seek his or her salvation within the public act of the sacrament, just as “Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward” transforms the memorialization of the Passion to a private devotion in the Ignatian tradition. The concluding lines of the poem reinforce the theme of eternal salvation inherent in both the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. By asking that Christ “restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace, / that thou may’st know mee, and I’ll turn my face” (41-42), Donne, as preacher and poet, teaches the reader the way in which he or she should approach sacramental practice and thus develop a private, personal relationship with God.

Donne’s examination of the Eucharist in “Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward,” especially the paradoxes of the body, salvation, and sacramental practice in the Catholic and Protestant traditions can be further detected in the earlier poem “Upon the Annunciation and Passion Falling Upon One Day, 1608.” This poem also demonstrates Donne’s concern with the search for personal identity within communal devotion. The opening lines speak of the speaker’s “fraile body,” that must ‘abstaine to day” while the “soule eates twice” (Donne 1-2), a reference to the two events occurring on the same day in the Church calendar: the Annunciation and the Passion. This coincidence is a reminder of the cycle of birth, death, and salvation, like the host itself, a “circle embleme . . . whose first and last concurre” (4-5). In both of these celebrations, the body of Christ becomes incarnate in the body of Mary and in the body of the



Eucharist. The soul, through these acts, takes on a bodily presence as well in the physical act of eating that, in turn, satisfies the physical body. The emphasis on the body is further developed by Donne's linking of Mary to the Passion, just as he does in "Good Friday." Note the use of parallel sentence structures in describing Mary's acts of witnessing the Annunciation and the Passion:

Shee sees him man, so like God made in this, [. . . ]

Shee sees him nothing twice at once, who'is all

Shee sees a Cedar plant it selfe, and fall. (Donne 3, 7-8)

As in Ignatian tradition, the speaker recreates the scene in order to enter into it at a personal level, just as the poet composes the scene in "vividly dramatized, firmly established, graphically imaged openings" (Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* 31). By witnessing this through Mary's eyes and describing it through the use of paradox, Donne reflects on these two events as beginning and end for her, for Him, and especially for us, who find satisfaction through their suffering.

Mary next recalls the private and public moments in the Annunciation and Passion and how the two work as an "abridgement of Christ's story" (20). Her role in each of these events is both active and passive, as a mother conceiving and as a mother given to the Church. Donne again uses the repetition and parallelism sentence to emphasize the creation of the scene:

She sees at once the virgin mother stay

Reclus'd at home, Publique at Golgotha;

Sad and rejoyc'd shee's seen at once, and seen

At almost fiftie, and at scarce fifteene.  
 At once a Sonne is promis'd her, and gone,  
 Gabriell gives Christ to her, He her to John;  
 Not fully a mother, Shee's in Orbitie,  
 At once receiver and the legacie. (11-18)

Donne characterizes Jesus's giving Mary into John's care at the passion as a type of pregnancy, an image linking body and soul as in the Incarnation and the Eucharist. More importantly for the speaker, and ultimately for the reader, is the promise in this transfer: once we receive Christ, we receive the promise of salvation, the "legacie."

The focus on Mary in the poem is logical, considering the circumstances that inspired the poem; however, it does risk the charge of being too Catholic. Young argues that in the Holy Sonnets, Donne "risks this kind of attention to the Virgin, which was suspect among many Protestants, because the body and its redemption remain very important to the love poet of *The Songs and Sonnets*" (94). In the "Annunciation," Donne balances these loyalties by complimenting first the Church for placing these celebrations together on the liturgical calendar: "How well the Church, Gods Court of faculties / Deales, in some times, and seldmoe joyning these!" (23-24). The shift from the passionate descriptions of Mary's suffering to the present practicality of the Church's plan is sudden, especially since it shifts from memory to present. However, as Mary is seen as mother and wife, so too does Donne link God and His Church. In Catholic

tradition, Mary is often seen as a guiding star; here, the Church is described in these terms, acting as body to God's soul or feminine to the masculine:

As by the selfe-fix'd Pole wee never doe

Direct our course, but the next starre therto

.....

So God by his Church, neerest to him, wee know

And stand firme, if wee by her motion goe; (25-26, 29-30)

The Church, rather than Mary, begins the final lesson on the promise of the Annunciation and the Passion in the poem's conclusion; "by letting these daies joyne" it reminds the reader that "death and conception in mankinde is one" (33-34). This message concludes the poem because Christ's "imitating Spouse would joyne in one / Manhood's extremees" (39-40). The Church, like Christ, places these two events together, just as Christ incorporates all of the paradoxes in his birth, Passion, and the Eucharist. Donne describes this paradox and sacrifice:

. . . He shall come, he is gone:

Or as though one blood drop, which thence did fall,

Accepted, would have servd, he yet shed all; (40-43)

Wright also reminds the reader of this lesson in his tract through his emphasis on daily prayer and preparation for the sacraments as part of the process of salvation. The final act in the poem is the speaker's promise to relive these scenes each day, returning the focus of the poem to the individual's private moment of sacrifice that he carries with him: "This treasure then, in grosse, my

Soule uplay, / And in my life retaile it every day (Donne 45-46). The meditative tradition of the “acts of memory, understanding, and will” (Martz 38) thus informs “Upon the Annunciation and Passion Falling Upon One Day,” a process that Wright, Fowler, and Southwell also articulate in the sacramental guides and poetry. For the Catholic community to which all of these writers belonged, such traditions serve as unifying factors in both public and private practice.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Fowler, John. trans. *A Brief Fourme of Confession, Instructing all Christian folke how to confess their sinnes, and so to dispose themselves, that they may enjoy the benefit of true Penance, dooing the woorthy frutes thereof, according to th' use of Christes Catholique Church.* (Antverpiae : Apud Iohannem Foulerum , 1576. STC 11181.) The entry in *EEBO* lists Sir Thomas More as the author of the text, with Fowler and Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540) as additional authors. However, Fowler clearly cites More (see page 52 of text) as the author of the texts that follow the confessional guide, including a treatise on the Eucharist and a variety of prayers. So, I argue that More is not the writer of the confessional guide, but most likely Vives whose other religious works, mostly written in Latin, had been translated into English. However, since I am most interested in Fowler’s translation of the work for his English Catholic readers, I am citing him first in my discussion.

<sup>2</sup> I am citing using the printer’s marks for the leaf numbering in Fowler’s work which is more clearly marked than page numbering. The page numbering has inconsistencies in the prefatory pages, and afterwards only the recto side of each page is successively numbered.

<sup>3</sup> Wright, Thomas *The Disposition of Garnishment of the Soule* 1596. *English Recusant Lliterature 1558-1640*. Vol. 36. Ed. D. M. Rogers. Yorkshire, England: Scholar P, 1970. This is a facsimile edition from a copy held in the Downside Abbey in Somersetshire, England. The STC number for this facsimile is 18335.

<sup>4</sup> When citing from the prefatory pages of Wright’s work, I use the printer’s marks as there is no numbering for this pages. The body of the text is numbered and will be cited as such.

<sup>5</sup> One of Wright’s political tracts is especially relevant to this study as its title indicates: *Whether it is right for Catholics in England to use arms and other means, to*

*defend the queen and the realm against the Spaniards*, published around 1594. (Trans. John Strype. *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion in the Church of England*. Volume 3. London: Edward Symon, 1725-1731. 251-258. *Eighteenth-Century Literature* Reel #3153). Writing in Latin and thus addressing an educated audience, Wright argued that patriotism outweighed religious obedience to the pope who had supported the Spanish attack and thus failed to protect his Catholic followers on English soil. Queen Elizabeth acted justly in protecting her citizens, both Catholic and Protestant, and thus deserved loyalty on this issue. This controversy was one of the points of contention between the Jesuits and the group of priests who became known as the Appellants.

### CHAPTER III

#### ROSARY AND RITUAL

In his anthology of Catholic recusant writing, John Roberts notes that while prayerful and poetic devotions to Mary date back to the Middle Ages, poets and priests of the early modern era embraced the genre, especially rosary practices, in response to the needs of English Catholic individuals and the community. According to Herbert Thurston and Andrew Shipman in their *New Advent Encyclopedia* entry, the rosary is defined by the Roman Breviary as “a certain form of prayer wherein we say fifteen decades or tens of ‘Hail Mary’s’ with an ‘Our Father’ between each ten, while at each of these fifteen decades we recall successively in pious meditation one of the mysteries of our Redemption.” The meditative practice of the rosary mysteries as described by these guides became closely associated with Ignatian meditation practices that influenced Catholic and Protestant poets. Roberts argues that the objectives of these rosary guides were:

. . . to serve as guidebooks to the simple, unlearned layman; they were attempts to introduce him to the practice of mental prayer, which was considered more and more to be an essential of the spiritual life, by engrafting onto the most common and appreciated of popular devotions, the Rosary, a system of mental prayer. The object of the devotional writers in these books, like those of the books of formal mental prayer, was to make the mysteries of Christianity, and especially the persons of Jesus and

Mary, more meaningful, more immediate, and more personal.

(40)

Devotional writers of these guides also had to balance the need for simple, direct instruction of the unlearned Catholic and the need for more intellectual and individual responses to the rosary mysteries for the learned audience (Roberts 40-41). As with the other spiritual guides and treatises written at this time, these rosary guides acted as both textbook and teacher to serve the most personal needs of the Catholic community.

At the intersection of personal and public aspects of rosary practice, the rosary itself hearkened to the Catholic past and tenets of the faith in its retelling of the scriptures and its ritual practice of vocal prayer and use of the beads. Rosary practices began with ritual repetitions of prayers from early on in Christian tradition, and, according to legend, had been codified in the early 1200's with St. Dominic's invocation of rosary practice as a method of fighting heresy (Thurston). In Protestant England, Catholic writers of rosary guides now responded directly to the Protestant charges of sacrilege, false hopes of salvation, and detachment from ministry. The lay Catholic gained personal reassurance that this practice had the historical authority to serve as a defense of the faith.

The charges of sacrilege resulted from the Protestant rejection of Marian devotion and the Catholic emphasis on ritual and formal language. The use of rosary beads was deemed simplistic, unnecessary, and superstitious--the same reasons that church altars were stripped of candles, crucifixes, and religious images. In *The Poetry of Meditation*, Louis Martz argues that devotion to Mary

or Mariolatry was “especially encouraged by the Jesuits, [and] was one of the strongest resources cultivated by the Counter Reformation” (96). Building on the historical context of the rosary as well as the intimacy of Mary as mother to Christ and maternal figure to the congregation, English Catholic writers of the period smuggled into the country large numbers of rosary guides, either translations or compositions written directly for an English audience, as evidenced by the number of editions of many of these works (Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* 99-100). These writers and translators had many versions of the rosary to build upon, but two were especially popular with the laity. The Dominican rosary, established by St. Dominic, is what we know as the rosary format of the Catholic church today: 150 Hail Mary’s in fifteen decades which are then divided into three parts based on the fifteen meditations (known as the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries<sup>1</sup>) on the lives of Christ and Mary. The meditations dramatize the events of the Gospels as well as the legendary aspects of Mary’s life before the nativity and after the crucifixion (101). The second rosary form popular at this time was known as the “corona” of Mary or the Bridgettine rosary named after St. Bridgett. Martz describes it as follows:

The corona consisted of a set of beads numbering sixty-three Aves (according to the supposed years of the Virgin’s life) and arranged in six decades, with a final appendage of three Aves and a Paternoster. [. . .] The usual procedure was to divide the materials for meditation into seven parts, either distributing the events considered into seven sections or using the seventh part—the appendage of three Aves and the Pater—for some sort of



concluding topic, such as the merits of Mary. (*The Poetry of Meditation* 106)

In treatises on both rosary forms, the emphasis shifts from the repetition of the prayers to the contemplation of the mysteries, thus moving prayer practice from the rote to the meditative.

Protestants seized upon the rosary as a relic of the Catholic faith in their charges of heresy against the Roman church. For Catholics, the rosary guides, as with other pedagogical works, provided a defense of Mariology and rosary practice that ultimately defined the Catholic faith. Where Protestant writers decried the “worship” of Mary, Catholic writers linked Marian devotion to the belief in the intercession of faith. By praying the rosary, a Catholic asked Mary to intercede on his or her behalf, much as he or she would rely upon a priest to intercede. While Protestants viewed this as the individual’s removal from God, Catholics saw this as seeking guidance and example from a comforting maternal image. Moreover, by emphasizing meditation upon the mysteries over the prayers themselves, the rosary guides focused attention on the individual. By following the rosary guides, members of the Catholic community could learn the Gospels, practice their faith in public and private settings, participate in their own salvation, and answer their critics by further defining the practices of the Catholic faith.

#### Private Devotion and Instruction

The sheer multitude of books and guides on the rosary printed secretly in England or smuggled from abroad into the country demonstrates the popularity of such practices in the sixteenth and seventeenth century,

according to Roberts (36). The demand for works on Mary came from the Catholic community who sought the maternal comfort of such an icon and from the Catholic hierarchy who saw this as an opportunity to defend the faith and to minister to individual Catholics in forms of meditation. Two such treatises that address these issues are John Fen's 1579 English translation of the Jesuit writer Gaspar Loarte's *Instructions and Advertisements, How to Meditate the Misteries of the Rosarie of the most holy Virgin Mary* (1573)<sup>2</sup> and John Bucke's *Instruction for the Use of the Beades, Containing Many Matters of Meditation or Mentall Prayer, With Diverse Good Advises of Ghostly Counsayle* (1589)<sup>3</sup>. Both Loarte and Bucke argue in their prefaces for the importance of meditation practice on the mysteries of the rosary, directing the reader to model patience in the midst of suffering much as Mary did as witness to Christ's life and passion. These prefaces also identify various readers that make up their Catholic audiences. The audience might consist of learned Catholics such as Lady Anne Hungarforde, sister to the Duchess of Feria, both known as devout Catholics who supported the cause and the English mission. Another such learned audience would be the priests themselves, especially the Jesuits, who might use the guide to practice their own Ignatian meditation or as a teaching tool. Finally, many who may have read these works, Bucke's in particular, would have been the unlearned Catholics who had little practice or training in meditation and thus, as Protestant critics argued, prayed the rosary by rote recitation. All of these audiences, however, shared one common distinction. Praying the rosary in private, these individuals gained a sense of community

knowing that these forms and structures for salvation had been codified into a shared Catholic practice.

Gaspar Loarte was “a Spanish theologian who entered the Society of Jesus in 1552” and died in Italy in 1578 (Roberts 56). Also the author of *The Exercise of a Christian Life* (1569), Loarte takes on the role of spiritual advisor to the reader in these works especially in his focus on meditation practices that could be done by the lay Catholic in the course of his or her daily routines. Because both these works were translated from the original Italian into English then secretly published and distributed in England, Loarte’s popularity and reputation must have been highly regarded by the Catholic community involved in the English mission. Roberts suggests the translator is generally recognized as John Fen, an Englishman and teacher at Oxford under Queen Mary who lost his position under Queen Elizabeth (287). Fen went to the Continent where he was ordained as a priest in Rome and served as a writer, translator, and for a time, a confessor to the English Augustinian nuns at Louvain (Roberts 287), a town known for its Catholic sympathies as well as its community of recusant English exiles. Like other English Catholic exiles, especially priests, Fen must have reasoned that translating Loarte’s text would provide both a defense and comfort to those Catholics still living in England.

Loarte’s *Instructions and Advertisements* includes a note to the “devout Reader” and an “author’s preface touching the great profit and utilities that may be gathered by meditating upon the life of our Saviour Jesus Christe . . .” (Ajr). These prefatory materials identify the audience as fellow priests. Loarte states in the opening note that meditating upon the rosary as this treatise

teaches would benefit the reader as well as “every sort of people” (4v), an indication that the reader should pass along these teachings just as a priest would. Loarte also addresses the reader in his preface as his “derely beloved brother” (6v) again acknowledging his audience of fellow priests “for whose profite and commodities, this pamphlet was principally composed” (10r). Since most of his fellow Jesuits would already be familiar with these practices, the reader might ask why such a treatise was necessary. The first arguments of the preface are the benefits of praying the rosary and contemplating on Christ’s life, focusing especially on private, silent devotion. Such devotion is modeled after the behavior of Jesus’s followers who listened to His teachings with silence and reverence. Loarte also implores his readers to model Jesus’s behavior by considering

what thing can be more sweet, then to consider his most holy behaviours? How humble he was in conversation, howe affable in his wordes; howe milde in his answers; howe fervent in his preaching. (4v)

Like other devotional writers of the period, Loarte’s strong words minister to a persecuted population, assuring both priests and lay members of the worthiness of such practices. Furthermore, Loarte’s insistence upon his fellow priests’ devotion to the rosary models the devotion necessary for the lay Catholic.

Towards the end of the preface, Loarte provides a more specific and practical framework for meditation to be used with the learned and unlearned

Catholic. These directions help enable this treatise to be used as a teaching tool by a fellow priest or as a stand-in when no priest was available. He explains:

For the learned therefore, I have thought good, after a text wise, first to set down that which they maye meditate upon in every misterie, leaving each one to pause therin, and to dilate the same, according to their capacie and devotion: nowe for the ignorant, that knowe not howe to doo this, with some further help, I have shewed the maner, how to interteine themselves, and to discourse upon each point, which soever they may think good to meditation upon. (7r)

He also recommends three ways in which to recite the prayers following each mystery: before, during, and following the meditation. Loarte considers this last method best, "sith the soule doth commonly after meditation finde it self more supple, and better disposed to prayer with attention and devotion" (9v). The objectives of this treatise are seen clearly in the amount of attention he pays to meditation practice with only this passing reference to the recitation of prayers, a practice that Protestant critics targeted. Meditation practice at the various levels of intensity provided opportunities for each individual Catholic to participate fully in a unifying celebration of faith.

John Bucke's 1589 rosary treatise, published ten years after Loarte's translation and written specifically for an English audience, announces its intentions on the title page:

Instructions for the use of the beades, conteining many matters or mentall prayer, with diverse good advises of ghostly counsayle.

Where unto is added a figure or forme of the beades portraed in a  
table. Compiled by John Bucke for the benefit of the unlearned.  
And dedicated to the honorable good Lady, Anne Lady  
Hungarforde, sister to the Duchess of Feria. (A)

The two audiences--one unlearned and unnamed, the other educated and recusant--represent the poles of the English Catholic community towards the end of the sixteenth century. By 1589, many recusant Catholic laity and priests who had maintained their religious education and practice escaped to the Continent. From Louvain and other Catholic strongholds, they began working fervently for the salvation of the community. Bucke writes of this responsibility by declaring that "I have thought good to put foorth suche spirituall exercises, as I myself have privatlie used . . . in thinking [that] a good religouse mynde may be more diligent [and] more inflamed to devocion" (5). In addition to the meditations and spiritual exercises, Bucke notes in his title his intention to include a graphic explanation of the rosary (a "figure") for those "which cannot skill of curiouse discourses penned by great clerkes" (6). The figure (see Appendix A, Figure 2), includes a picture of the rosary with each bead labeled as either "Ave" or "Paternoster" framing an enthroned Madonna and child surrounded by praying women, angels, and priests (including a pope or bishop, judging by their attire).<sup>4</sup> Surrounding the central images are engravings of biblical scenes that make up the mystery cycles such as the nativity or the flight into Egypt. Many of these engravings are also produced within the body of the text. Here, these images accompany each line of the Latin Ave Maria, along with a short reflective poem. For example,

printed underneath the last line of the prayer “Sancta Maria ora pro nobis” is the following poem:

O holy mother praye for me,  
 Whose sinnes deserve eternall payne:  
 That after death my soule maye be,  
 Where my sweete Jesu now doth raigne. (qtd. in Crawford 81)

While the poem provides an interpretation of the Latin prayer, ultimately it assumes that the audience can read not only English, but also Latin.

Furthermore, the figure is titled “The Lady Hungarforde’s Meditations Upon the Beades,” after his dedicatee who obviously is not unlearned and thus serves more to illustrate and to honor her rosary practices. For these reasons, a graphic representation of the rosary appearing on the title page (Appendix A, Figure 1) may ultimately have been more useful for an illiterate audience. As in the other figure, the title page engraving is of rosary surrounding a simpler image of a Madonna and child without the worshipping audience. Each decade of this rosary is marked as follows in clockwise order: a heart at the top of the rosary; an upturned, open right hand; a right foot; a left foot; and a second upturned, open left hand. This anthropomorphic image with its open arms offers welcome to the reader who would recognize this image as Jesus’s stance on the cross or the priest’s stance at mass and prayer. The simplicity of the image would, as Bucke argues for his table, work better as a graphic explanation of the rosary’s purpose of providing comfort and guidance. As well, the stance, like the rosary mysteries themselves, calls to mind Jesus’s crucifixion.

Bucke's learned audience is perhaps best represented by his dedicatee, Anne. As a priest in her service, he is called upon to provide comfort and assurance. In his preface, Bucke praises Anne's patience and work for the Catholic community. He recalls how he had left "egiptiacal England" and came to Anne and Louvain where, "synce your coming in to these Countries, you have given such demonstracions of true Religion" (7). Her work and dedication, even in the face of persecution, act as "sufficient testimonies and proofes of your zele to vertue and of your perfection in Catholique religion" such that Bucke compares her to other holy men and women who served others under such persecution such as St. Paula, the patroness of Christian widows; St. Gregory, "the restorer of Christian Religion in England," and the biblical Job (9). Like them, Anne's actions are blessed and described as miraculous. For example, Bucke reports that

our Ladieshipps being at Namure in a time of great famin you releved the hungrie soldiers with fleshe and pottage, and how God so blessed your almoise<sup>5</sup>, as the meat provided in two pottes for thirtie persones did suffice well nigh two hundred people.  
(10)

The comparison here is obvious and startling; like Jesus, she has miraculously fed many with limited resources. Unlike the unlearned reader whose faith is undetermined, Anne is praised for her piety. Her trials and sufferings, like those of the English Catholics and other great saints, are "signes and arguments of Gods favour" (11). Finally, Bucke concludes by recalling the suffering of Mary as the last model of patience, an example that naturally leads



to the rosary guide that will follow. Anne and other good Catholics “shall . . . then look for privilege and immunities from wordlie [sic] afflictions, when we see that spotless lamb the sonne of God, and the immaculate virgin his mother to have endured all miseries that the worlde could procure against them” (12). This reassurance of their actions would confirm for Anne and other recusants the certainty of their cause: the survival of the English Catholic community.

In the body of their guides, Loarte and Bucke follow similar patterns in their instruction. While Ignatian meditation builds upon a three-step meditation that culminates in one narrative, Loarte revises the pattern slightly by constructing each mystery into a three-part meditation. As he argues in his preface, Loarte recommends meditating on the mystery before reciting the prayers, therefore emphasizing the intellectual practice over the rote. The meditations thus do not mention the prayers at all, but elaborate on the witnessing of each mystery by Mary and, through active transference, by the reader. While the joyful and glorious mysteries are Mary’s experiences, the dolorous mysteries focus more on the Passion, including key events where Mary was absent such as Jesus’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Like the transference that the reader makes in the meditation, Mary witnesses these events with her spiritual eye.

Loarte’s instructions are elaborate, detailed, almost baroque in their passion as are the engravings that illustrate each mystery. In the fourth dolorous mystery, Jesus takes his crucifix and carries it towards Calvary. The engraving (Appendix A, Figure 4) shows a fallen Jesus, weighed down by the cross and surrounded by soldiers who jeer at and kick him. The muscular

build and forceful stance of the soldiers indicates their brute strength, as does the weaponry and armor depicted. They are crowded together so that heads, bodies, limbs, and armor appear as one brute force; their faces are hidden or turned away, serving as a contrast to the tortured face of Jesus. Jesus himself is robed, the material cascading around him as he falls and the powerful cross towering over him. The Latin epigram underneath the engraving reads *“Pondera dum trahit, et trahitur dum terga laborant sub cruce, puniceo rore cruentat iter”* (55v), which translates as “While he carries the weight, and is carried while his back works under the cross, he strews the way with red rain,” a powerful and poetic image upon which the reader should begin his meditation<sup>6</sup>. The meditation then continues with a description of this event in three narrative points: Pilot’s sentencing, Jesus’s journey with the cross, and Jesus’s fall and meeting with Cyreneus and the devout women. In this last point, Loarte asserts that there “amongst [the women] . . . wel may we deem that his most holy Mother was” (56r). In his explication of this point, Loarte describes the fall passionately, in the baroque style associated with Catholicism:

How greatly he was pained and afflicted, sweting through the weariness of the visage he had made, howe wounded and annoyed through the heaviness of the Crosse, shedding his bloud a-new, which intermedled with swet, did bedew the ground he went upon; howe fraight with the shame and vilanes they did unto him, howe brused with the blowes and strokes which they gave him to make him go on ende. (60v)

Christ's humanity is evident in the descriptions of His suffering, an integral aspect of the empathetic contemplation of the mystery. To balance these passionate descriptions as well as address Protestant critics who decried Catholics' lack of biblical knowledge, Loarte includes heavy annotations throughout the work, indicating from which gospel or epistle he has gathered this information. Such citations would be useful for Catholics versed in the Bible, his fellow priests and the learned Catholic patrons, and for his second audience, unlearned Catholics searching for guidance and education.

Loarte is keenly aware of the complex Catholic community's needs for instruction and solidarity as he concludes this treatise. A Latin litany to Mary is designed to be recited over seven days following the rosary meditations. Harkening to the traditional language of the ancient church, Loarte makes a final appeal to the core Catholic community. The final two passages are guides to meditation upon waking and sleeping. Written in English, they are direct, simple, and didactic, designed to be used by Loarte's unlearned audience, perhaps the one most in need of guides such as his. In balancing the requirements of these two groups, Loarte establishes a Catholic identity rooted in the language, history, and ritual of the rosary that meets the practical needs of the community as well.

In his treatise, Bucke revises the Ignatian mode even further than Loarte, simplifying the process for the lay reader he addresses in his preface. In an unaddressed and shortened explanation of his preface, Bucke advises on "Certain matters of meditation" on the rosary (14), including its roots in Ignatian tradition and its prayerful purpose. This simplified argument would

be helpful to a Catholic who had not read the opening epistle, which was obviously directed to devout and learned persons such as Lady Anne. Serving an unlearned audience dominates Bucke's work more than it does for Loarte. Consequently, Bucke is more specific in his didacticism, indicating when the individual should recite the prayers within the meditation process. In the opening mystery, Bucke teaches:

The first Joyfull Mysterie or secret is the annunciation of the blessed virgin Mary. Ther fore when you take your beades, and have advisedlie commended your selfe to God, blessing your selfe with, *In nomine Patris and Filij and Spiritu sancti, Amen*. Then may you first set before the eyes of your soule, the Annunciation of our blessed ladie: and Imagine in your mynde that you beholde the Angel Gabriel presenting himself before that blessed virgin [. . .] And with that Imaginacion still kept in mind, say the first *Pater noster*, and ten *Ave Maries* following (which is the first part of the beades) attentivelie, distinctlie, and devoutlie, there let theis cogitaciõs following runne through your mynde awhile, before you goe any further. (15-16)

The continued exploration of the meditation is brief, only a few short paragraphs which reflect on Mary's virtues as a model for the reader. Unlike Loarte, who writes laboriously on each mystery, Bucke strives for brevity, simplifying the message to a more practical experience that a lay person could easily fit into his or her daily prayer.

Such directness in the meditations is also found in the printing styles and images that illustrate each mystery. Loarte uses both section and subsections to discuss each meditation. Bucke does not include subsections. Furthermore, Loarte heavily annotates his guide with biblical references and illustrates each mystery in a baroque style that is uniform throughout the text. Bucke does not make these biblical citations, relying instead on an intuitive knowledge and assumed acceptance of these principles by the audience. The illustrations in Bucke's guide, while elaborate, are not uniform in style. Some are framed quite ornately while others have simple scrollwork. This may have been the printer's design rather than Bucke's; regardless, the images seem secondary to the text. For example, the same image of Mary within the rosary used on the title page is placed with the fourth dolorous mystery, Mary's assumption. The open palms that mark the decades on this rosary image reinforce God's embracing of Mary and, through this rosary practice, His embracing of the reader as well. The most striking engraving that hearkens to the reader's experience is the image of Jesus carrying His cross to Calvary that concludes the explanation of the mysteries (Appendix A, Figure 3). Instead of a crowd of soldiers tormenting Him or the women weeping, the crowd of followers in the background carry crosses on their backs as well. This empathetic call to the reader is a final reminder of the rosary's purpose as a meditative technique.

Bucke continues this call to prayer by appending to the end of the rosary guide a multitude of meditations and explanations of church teachings. The meditations are reflections on God's gifts to man as indicated by our creation,

sacramental practice, and Christ's passion. In the explanations, Bucke offers advice and comfort such as his warning against "the miseries and inconveniences that man doeth fall into by relapse and sinning again after reconciliation to God" (61) and "good lessons for preserving our hope and confidence in God" (78). Finally, Bucke intends to conclude the figure for saying the rosary so that the "unlearned" might be able

to recite the crowne of our ladie upon the beades which matters have not bene before this tyme put into englishe meter, for the beter memorie and delectario of devout persons. Therefor if thou hast bene here to fore delited with vain ballads and sonnets, thou may now upon better advise please thyself with songes and ditties more profitable. (84)

Bucke had earlier referred to this figure in the title, perhaps as a way of advertising to the unlearned reader who might "while traveling by the waye; or in tilling or plowing the ground" (84) want to recite the rosary. However, with this final attempt to teach the reader both through pedagogy and poetry, Bucke addresses a congregation who, by 1589 (the year of publication), needed lessons that could be easily practiced and recalled outside of the church within the private, domestic sphere.

*The Society of the Rosary: Public Concerns*

Henry Garnet (1555-1606), the author of *The Society of the Rosary, Newly Agumented* (1596)<sup>7</sup>, was born in England, the son of Brian Garnet, who was the master of Nottingham School which was known for its Catholic tendencies (Pollen, "Henry Garnet"). In 1575, he converted to Catholicism publicly by

entering the Society of Jesus and enrolling at the Roman College to pursue his studies. In 1586, he, along with Robert Southwell, returned to England as part of the English mission. By the next year, Garnet had become Superior of the Jesuits in England, a position that he held until his arrest and imprisonment in 1605. During his tenure, he led the mission in its external conflicts with Rome and with the crown, and dealt with internal conflicts among the mission priests. A prolific writer of correspondences, treatises, and guides, he also oversaw the growth of the mission while avoiding capture by the queen's authorities. In 1605, he was arrested for his knowledge of the Gunpowder plot. The next year, he was convicted of treason and executed on May 3, 1606 (Roberts 301).

By 1596, the revised publication of his earlier 1593 edition, Garnet had been in charge of the English mission for almost nine years and had watched the Catholic community become more unified. Elizabeth's government had witnessed this growth as well, and, subsequently, responded with stricter enforcements of laws and fines concerned with Catholic practices. In the preface to his rosary guide, Garnet recognizes this alarmed state, comparing it to Noah's flood. Yet, rather than merely decrying the situation, he offers the rosary as a sign of God's comfort:

How generall a deluge of heresie and of all maner of iniquities  
our miserable countrey hath these late yeeres sustained we yet  
feele by the experience of the calamitie therof, and it is to pitifull  
to remember how many soules have already perished therby.  
Neither doe we see any other reliefe in so great distresses: than to

make our humble recourse unto our mercifull Lord [. . .] to shew  
 this sign of his Testment with mankind, his gloriouse rainbow . . .  
 I meane to be the glorious Virgin, a most beutifull signe of Gods  
 frenship with men. (A2r)

This sign of God's friendship, "a figure of mercy and peace," takes on a more militant role as "a rainbow against hereickes . . . From this bow there goeth . . . arrows taken forth of the quiver of God him self" (A3v). As the Catholic community is threatened, Mary becomes a fierce mother protecting her young, and the rosary "beades must be to our afflicted brethren, in steed of all maner of armour or weapons" (A5v). The shift in this treatment of Mary from feminine maternal nurturer to masculine paternal protector reveals Garnet's own role in the English mission. As its leader, he must protect his lay community and his fellow priests.

Garnet's strategy is to expand the rationale for reciting the rosary and establishing rosary societies to address Catholic audiences and Protestant critics. While acknowledging the unlearned audience briefly, he announces his intention to summarize his argument in two points:

to have a deep and settled conceit of her worthiness and  
 greatness [. . .] secondly to derive from such due estimation, an  
 earnest study, and endeavour for her honour and the glorie of  
 God, and our owne profite, of doing and performing whatsoever  
 may become us. (Bv)

The meditations on Mary show her to be worthy of such devotion, a point questioned by Protestants in their criticism of Catholicism. Ironically, another



focus of this treatise is the explanation of indulgences and benefits resulting from rosary recitation, a practice that Protestants also criticized. Indulgences are organized into forty-day periods or “quarentenes” (40 days) that can replace penance assigned at confession. Furthermore, one could use this indulgence to pray for one’s own or another’s penance in purgatory, one indulgence relieving one hour of suffering. Protestant critics viewed indulgences, or papal-sanctioned replacements for penance, as further indications of Rome’s excesses.

Throughout the guide, Garnet emphasizes the intention behind each indulgence, clearly arguing that the indulgence is not an automatic or insincere excuse for sin. He responds to this argument by arguing as follows:

Here is diligently to be considered that we may so both stoppe the blasphemus and venomous mouthes of Heretickes, and by Catholickes make the fruite of these Indulgences to be enjoyed, that no Indulgence can be obtained out of the state of Gods grace.

(34)<sup>8</sup>

Intention and sincerity are essential to good rosary practice, so this argument works to instruct and to protect the Catholic community. Garnet builds on this defense throughout the treatise, ending with a list of “twenty propositions to prove the Catholicke custom of saying the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin” (169) that refute all criticisms of the rosary. First, he offers biblical precedents in the ritual patterns of psalms in the Old Testament and Jesus’s use of anaphora in the parables of the New Testament. Second, the beads are not holy in themselves but rather serve as markers, just as ancient orators used stones or

beads to mark repetition. Finally, the beads and rosary form itself work symbolically to teach about the passion of Jesus so that when

the Heretickes laughing there at and asking *what meane these five beades? What meaneth the whole Rosary?* Answer may be made: they are signifcatiōs of the five wounds which Christ suffered for them and us. And that the Rosary is a certaine summe or abridgment of the new Testament and Christian doctrine. (182-183)

The guide directly and powerfully responds to Protestant critics and thus offers reassurance to Garnet's Catholic audience who could now use the rosary itself as an argument in defense of their faith.

The idea of a society dedicated to the rosary offered a Catholic who was most likely cut off from other public declarations of faith a community of worship. Membership was offered to all individuals since "there is no generall bond, but only to the rehearsing of the Beades thrice a week, . . . and that without the incurring of any sinne by the omission therof" (7). Again, intention and reflection are essential to the sincere recitation of the rosary, especially in the course of saying the Psalter of Our Lady, the complete rosary sequence encompassing all fifteen mysteries in the three mystery cycle. In each town, the society would be bound to a church where the society would also dedicate an altar stone. However, members were allowed and encouraged to recite the rosary within their own home or church, a practice especially necessary to Catholics in hiding. Garnet modifies as necessary some public activities of the society, such as the official roll book which members would

sign and that would be kept in the church or public feast days that the society celebrated. He cautions that

so long as our Countrey remaineth in the present estate, it is good and sufficient that every household procure their ordinary Altar stone to be deputed unto this Society [. . .] the maner of enrouling being not convenient in our country for respects too well known: it sufficeth that after the names be once taken of such as enter, they be torne. (19-20)

The society, although not secret in its incarnation, could thus operate covertly while still allowing its members to feel a sense of security, and more importantly, of community.

The reassurance Garnet directs towards his congregation through this guide is the final section: a newly translated English version of “An Epistle Consolatory: Of an Ancient Pope to the Catholics of Albania sore aggrieved with the Persecution of the Heretickes of those daies.” The epistle, which Garnet attributes to “Clemens Papa” (most likely Pope Clement VII, 1478-1534, elected pope 1523) is dated 1529, yet its message speaks to the English Catholic community. The translation begins by greeting the “well beloved children” who “be in very deed a long distance of land and sea disjoined from us” (2). However, because of their “faith” and “bond” to Christ and their reputation as devout, practicing members of the faith, they “be so conjoined with us, and so neere unto us” that “we be so moved with every event of your affaires, that with you and in you we do rejoyce, and together also with you, we beare your crosses” (3-4). As leader and spokesman for the English mission, Garnet

becomes the voice of Rome. So, by attaching such an epistle to the guide, Garnet uses this historical event to parallel the events of his day. Pope Clement writes that:

For it hat beene brought unto our understanding, that you are for the confession of the Catholicke faith most grievously vexed at the hands of your own Brethren, who have forsaken the God of their forefather, and have betaken themselves to the following of strange Godds, that is the prophane novelties of errors and heresies: and not considering their own miserable estate do not only lie themselves in darkness, and in the shadow of death, but doe also most cruelly assault and persecute such as be the children of light, their own brethren, who so firmly retaine the auncient religion, which have so many ages since bin taught by the holye Romane Church; and doe further, upon the instigation and exagitation of a certaine furie never heard of before, use crueltie towards their own flesh, and butcher and teare asonder their own bowels. (7-8)

The faithful Albanians are unified with the Pope and other Catholics, even though they have been abandoned by their own “brethren.” Like the English Catholic community, the Albanian Catholics are cast as heroic martyrs whose lives can serve as an example, much as the lives of Mary and Jesus are presented honestly in the meditation of the mysteries.

Ritual and Devotion in Poetic Sequences on Mary and the Birth of Jesus

The use of the rosary as teaching metaphor and example parallels the ritual of two poetic sequences on Mary's devotion and Jesus's nativity: Southwell's "Sequence on the Virgin Mary and Christ" and Donne's *La Corona*. Their formal structures, Southwell's sestets (fourteen poems of three sestets each) and Donne's sonnets (seven total) have precedent in the various rosary forms and mysteries. As for narrative, Southwell chooses to focus on Mary's experience from her own immaculate conception through Christ's nativity and childhood unto her own death. He does not speak to the passion of Jesus, but chooses Mary's life as exemplar, much as the joyful and glorious mysteries do. Moreover, the sequence works as a defense of Mary's divinity and thus as an argument for Marian devotion. Donne's *La Corona* retells the sorrowful mysteries, with more emphasis on Jesus's experience than Mary's, a shift understandable considering Protestant movement away from Marian devotion. As poetic works that act didactically, *The Sequence* and *La Corona* utilize the mysteries as meditative practices in the Ignatian tradition.

Southwell's sequence of fourteen poems, as Martz describes them in *The Poetry of Meditation*, while obviously in the rosary tradition, does not "fit the sequence of fifteen meditations used with the Dominican rosary" (105). However, as I described in the introduction to this chapter, it does fit the "corona" of the Virgin Mary which consisted of "a set of beads numbering sixty-three Aves (according to the supposed years of the Virgin's life) and arranged in six decades, with a final appendage of three Aves and a Paternoster" (106). Martz notes the inclusion of directives of this rosary in

Garnet's *The Society of The Rosary* which divides the "materials for meditation into seven parts" and emphasizes the "life of the Virgin before and after the life of Christ" (106). Southwell's works were published after his execution, and the fourteen-poem sequence came together as such only after the publication of them in three groupings. The 1595 edition of *St. Peter's Complaint* contained poems six and twelve: "The Nativite of Christ" and "Christs Childhood." John Busby, the publisher of *Moeonie* (1595), omitted these two poems in this collection of short lyrics because of their appearance in *St. Peter's Complaint*. *Moeonie* included poems one through five: "The Virgin Maries conception," "Her Nativitie," "Her Spousals," "The virgins Salutation," "The Visitation," and seven through eleven, "His Circumcision," "The Epiphanie," "The Presentation," "The Flight into Egypt," and "Christs Returne out of Egypt." The final two poems, "The Death of Our Lady" and "The Assumption of Our Lady," were found in the manuscript copy at Stonyhurst College by A. B. Grosart who used them as the copy text to complete the sequence in his 1872 edition of Southwell's work (McDonald and Brown xxxix). Each poem, with the exception of "The Nativitie of Christe" and "The Epiphanie," follows a three-stanza structure, each stanza a sestet with an ababcc rhyme pattern. The two exceptions add a fourth stanza. The language is baroque in style, with "hyperbolic praises of the Virgin [that] go beyond anything allowed by even the most conservative Anglican orthodoxy" (Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* 105).

The first of Southwell's fourteen poems in the sequence is "The Virgine Maries Conception." Here, her role in our redemption and her own divinity is

emphasized when Southwell addresses her as “our second Eve” who now “puts on her mortall shroude” (1). According to church tradition, Mary was born without original sin, an immaculate conception, so that she would be worthy to conceive and give birth to Jesus. Southwell describes her birth as a fulfillment of God’s promise:

Her being now begins, who ere she end,  
 Shall bring the good that shall our ill amend.  
 Both Grace and Nature did their force unite,  
 To make this babe the summe of all their best,  
 Our most, her least, our million, but her mite:  
 She was at easiest rate worth all the rest,  
 What grace to men or Angels God did part,  
 Was all united in this infants heart. (“Conception” 5-12)

One of the “four only wights bred without fault” (13), Mary shares her purity with Adam, Eve, and Jesus. However, unlike them, Mary is both of heaven and earth, born “of man and woman” yet “bred in grace” (18). Much religious poetry and argument presents the paradox of Christ as both God and man; here Southwell presents the paradox of Mary not just as mother to a divine son, but in her own immaculate birth. She is born of both man and God, thus maintaining some of God’s divinity as well as her humanity. However, she is not both human and divine, as Jesus will be. Her birth--and as the poem will eventually reveal--death and assumption show her special place in God’s plan and thus argues for devotion to her as God’s chosen.

The paradox of Mary continues in her birth and in her marriage according to the next two poems in the sequence: "Her Nativity" and "Her Spousals." In the first poem, the paradox moves from that of her birth to that of her purpose: the conceiver of Jesus. Southwell places her purpose within the biblical story, for

The Patriarchs and Prophets were the flowers,  
Which Time by course of ages did distill,  
And cul'd into this little cloud the showers,  
Whose gracious drops the world with joy shall fill,  
Whose moisture suppleth every soule with grace,  
And bringeth life to Adam's dying race.

("Her Nativity" 7-12)

Her heritage prepares her to be the "royall throne, / The chosen cloth . . . / The quarry" ("Her Nativity" 13-15) from which Jesus will be formed. Southwell's references to biblical history serve as proof of the legitimacy of Marian devotion in the Catholic tradition. The paradox of her immaculate conception is further complicated by her "spousals" as described in the next poem. As "wife did she live, yet virgin did she die" in her marriage to Joseph who was "blessed" to not only have "such a spouse" but "more bless'd to live with such a childe in house" ("Her Spousals" 1-2, 11-12). Their marriage duties are fulfilled by their duties as parents and not marked by "carnall love" ("Her Spousals" 13) but by chastity. So, as an example to the reader, Mary and Joseph serve one another and God by their chaste devotion. By performing one's secular duties within the home in the context of religious obligation and



devotion, the reader can model his or her life on Joseph's devotion and Mary's purity. The rewards may not be as great as Mary's, yet her own "renowne" was "dubled" by her "Virgins, wives, and widows crowne" ("Her Spousals" 17-18), the domestic duties familiar to a female audience.

As these first poems indicate, Southwell's attention is directed towards Mary. "The Virgins Salutation" and "The Visitation" are the next poems in the sequence. In both, Southwell constantly refers to Mary's blessedness and near-divinity in heaven and on earth by praising her: "O virgin breast the heavens to thee incline / In thee their joy and soveraigne they agnize" ("Salutation" 7-8), and by addressing her as "Proclaimed Queene and mother of a God / The light of earth, the soveraigne of Saints" ("The Visitation" 1-2). Her visitation to her cousin Elizabeth, mother to John the Baptist, inflames the infant John, still within Anne's uterus, to awaken as Southwell awkwardly describes in the last stanza of "The Visitation":

Eternal lights enclosed in her breast,  
 Shot out such piercing beames of burning love,  
 That when her voice her cozens eares possest,  
 The force thereof did force her babe to move,  
 With secret signes the children greet each other,  
 But open praise each leaveth to his mother. (13-18)

While admittedly not one of Southwell's strongest poetic attempts, the movement here and in the next seven stanzas is to Jesus's story. Poem six, "The Nativitie of Christ," most resembles the meditation instruction on the rosary mysteries and biblical stories that Ignatian models teach and that Donne

follows in *La Corona*. The poem's images describe the paradoxes of Mary's role as daughter of and mother to her God and of Jesus's equal divinity and humanity: "Behold the father, is his daughters sonne: / The bird that build the nest, is hatched therein" ("The Nativity" 1-2). The speaker in the next lines places himself directly in the scene not merely as an objective witness, but as an affected participant in the nativity as cause and effect:

O dying soules, behold your living spring:  
 O dasled eyes, behold your sonne of grace;  
 Dull eares, attend what word this word doth bring;  
 Up heavies hartes; with joye your joye embrace.  
 From death, from darke, from deafeness, from dispaire:  
 This life, this light, this word, this joy repaires.  
 Gift better than himselfe, God doth not know:  
 Gift better then his God, no man can see:  
 This gift doth here the gever geven bestow:  
 Gift to this gift let each receiver bee.  
 God is my gift, himselfe he free gave me:  
 Gods gift am I, and none by God shall have me.  
 ("The Nativitie" 7-18)

As the transitional poem in the sequence, "The Nativitie of Christ" shows our redemption through Christ's birth and through the constant practice of prayer and meditation on these mysteries.

Poems seven through twelve in Southwell's sequence elaborate extensively on the nativity story before ending as abruptly with Jesus's

childhood. The titles are as follows: "His Circumcision," "The Epiphany," "The Presentation," "The Flight into Egypt," "Christ's Return Out of Egypt," and "Christ's Childhood." While important events in Jesus's life, they are not part of the rosary mysteries. The attempt of these mysteries to elicit the same passionate response in the reader lacks the ecstasy of the incarnation and nativity and the sympathy of the Passion. At "His Circumcision," the lines "The knife that cut his flesh did pierce her heart, / The pain that Jesus felt did Mary taste" (15-17) serve as a response that echoes Mary's empathetic pain at the crucifixion. However, Southwell omits the Passion narrative in his sequence, moving from "Christ's Childhood" to the death of Mary in the last two poems. Ironically, in "Christ's Childhoode," Southwell had pointed out the biblical writers' omission of Jesus's life as a child:

Till twelve yeres age, how Christ his childhood spent,  
 All earthly pennes unworthy were to write,  
 Such acts, to mortall eyes he did present:  
 Whose worth, not men, but Angels must recite. (1-4)

Here, Southwell may be speaking as a poet. Southwell argued for English poets to return to religious purpose in their writing because he saw writers in roles similar to those of biblical scribes, as poets and prophets. Yet rather than continuing his retelling or religious parody with Jesus's adult life, Southwell chooses to end with the childhood and then return in the final two poems to the subject of the early part of the sequence: Mary's divine place within the narrative.

“The Death of our Ladie” and “The Assumption of Our Lady,” much like her own nativity and spousals, are not part of the biblical narrative but of the traditional lore surrounding Mary’s life. At her death, the earth and the speaker react in a manner that parallels the death of Jesus:

Her face a heaven, two plannettes were her eyes  
 Whose gracious light did make our clearest day,  
 But one such heaven there was, and loe it dyes,  
 Deathes darke Eclipse hath dymmed every ray.  
 Sunne hide thy light, thy beames untimely shine,  
 Trew light sith wee have lost we crave not thine.  
 (“Death of Our Lady” 13-18)

The second line of the stanza (“did make our clearest day”) can be read as a symbolic reference to Jesus, but Southwell’s plea that the “sunne” (another reference to Jesus) should disappear is a powerful allusion to the sun’s eclipse at the death of Jesus. This is a strong assertion and one that could be argued as sacrilegious by a Protestant reader. For the Catholic brought up in the tradition of Marian worship, however, the loss of the spiritual mother causes suffering akin to suffering at Christ’s death. This serves as a transition to the final poem in which assumption of her body and soul into heaven shows the fulfillment of God’s promise to all of a final triumph over death. Here, however, Southwell focuses only on the scene at hand and not on the meditative transference of this experience to the reader. The last stanza casts the scene as a mystical marriage:

Gemm to her worth, spouse to her love ascendes,

Prince to her throne, Qweene to her heavenly kinge,  
 Whose court with solemne pompe on her attends,  
 And Quires of Saintes with greeting notes do singe.  
 Earth rendreth upp her undeserved praye,  
 Heaven claymes the right and beares the prize awaye.  
 ("Assumption" 12-18)

Mary is of the earth, yet, because of her blessedness, is above it; thus she is the "prayer" that the earth is "undeserved" to offer as spouse. Such language is a return to the sequence's opening images in which "earth breeds a heaven, for Gods new dwelling place" ("Maries Conception" 2), thus closing the poetic nature of the sequence. Pedagogically, Southwell does not conclude his lesson. The biblical and traditional narrative of Mary's life has been completed, but not the more important lesson of how to apply this experience to the reader's own spiritual narrative of salvation. Although ultimately unsuccessful in fulfilling the aims of such rosary and meditation practice, "The Sequence on the Virgin Mary and Christ," exemplifies the complexity and depth of theology and emotion surrounding Marian worship. For Southwell, the challenge as both poet and priest was to explicate this doctrine in a manner that could define and defend Catholic identity.

As poet and priest also, John Donne roots *La Corona* in biblical, poetic, and Catholic traditions. Written sometime between 1607 and 1609 during the time of his religious crisis, the poetic sequence follows "the continental practice of linking sonnets or stanza forms in the form called the corona, where the last line of each sonnet or stanza forms the first line of the next, and the last line of

the whole sequence repeats the line that began it" (Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* 107). The form is similar in pattern to the coronas to Mary that Southwell had followed, but the "sequence is, of course, addressed to Christ, and the life of the virgin is very carefully subordinated; this is what we should expect in an Anglican adaptation of the corona" (Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* 107). However, the meditative aspects of these scenes echo the Ignatian techniques that Donne perhaps learned from his Jesuit uncles or during his Catholic upbringing. Like the great epic poets and gospel writers, he asks first for guidance and inspiration by calling out to a religious muse. The first line addresses not the audience but God as Donne asks that He "Deign at my hands this crown of prayer and praise" (1). This will be the poem in the form of the corona, and Donne prays that it will be as glorious as the "thorny crowne gain'd, that give mee, / A crown of Glory which doth flower always" (7-8). He builds on this paradox through the multiple uses of the word "crown" in the next line: "The ends crowne our workes, but thou crown'st our ends" (9). God awards the crown as salvation and in the creation of the poem itself, yet the poet's work is not completely forgotten. Rather, the crown will be "weav'd in my low devout melancholie" (2), wrought by the speaker for comfort, just as meditative prayer and rosary recitation serve as comfort. The opening stanza describes a more direct relationship between God and man. In de-emphasizing the need for an intermediary in prayer, Donne focuses on teaching the individual to act for him or herself.

Donne then moves quickly to the "Annunciation," "Natvities," and presentation in the "Temple," the scenes from the Gospels and from the

mysteries that focus on Jesus's birth and childhood. In the first poem, Donne masterfully enumerates the inherent contradictions in Jesus's conception and in Mary's pregnancy:

Salvation to all that will is night;  
 That All, which always is All every where,  
 Which cannot sinne, and yet all sinnes must beare,  
 Which cannot die, yet cannot chuse but die,  
 .....  
 Ere by the spheres time was created, thou  
 Wast in his minde, who is thy Sonne, and Brother;  
 Whom thou conceiv'st, conceiv'd; yea thou art now  
 Thy Makers maker, and thy Fathers mother;  
 ("Annunciation" 1-4, 9-12)

The further paradox of God's incarnation is matched with the humility of the circumstances of His birth in the line that connects the "Annunciation" and the "Nativitie." It is an "immensity cloyester in thy deare wombe" ("Annunciation" 14, "Nativity" 1). The irony, of course, is the frailty of the infant Jesus that stands in contrast to His divinity and purpose. The incarnation is the purposeful action, and Mary, cast as passive witness to the event, is most similar in subject position to the reader or "soul" that Donne addresses. The speaker, as poet, priest, and teacher, issues the following direction: "Sees thou, my Soule, with thy faiths eyes, how he / Which fills all place, yet none holds him, doth lye?" ("Nativitie" 9-10). To benefit from the rosary mystery sequences, the penitent should witness, suffer, and reflect upon

the experiences, as “With his kinde mother, who partakes thy woe” (“Nativitie”14). The “woe” that Mary shares is the reader’s; likewise the reader partakes of Mary’s suffering as witness to the nativity and the passion that will conclude the poem. This serves as contrast to Jesus’s more active role in the sequence that becomes apparent in “The Temple,” the fourth poem and middle poem in the sequence. This poem is also the transition between Christ’s private childhood and public adulthood. Suddenly, the incarnation of God is now a public event, witnessed by sight as well as sound: “The Word but lately could not speake, and loe / It sodenly speakes wonders” (“The Temple” 5-6). The use of “Word” as metaphor symbolically reminds the reader of the incarnation of God’s promise and Jesus’s entry into public life. The spoken word indicates Jesus’s growing agency in the poem as voice that calls the reader.

In the fifth and sixth poems of Donne’s corona, the subject is the “Crucifying” and the “Resurrection.” Here, Donne observes that those whose “Weake spirits admire” Jesus’s miracles and teachings were inspired to have “faith” while other “ambitious” souls were led to “envy” and “hate” (“Crucifying”1-3). Ironically, the ambitious souls are the weakest in their failure to admit to their sinful state, a failure that the speaker and reader who embrace such meditation practices as the rosary or corona sequence avoids. Man’s weakness serves as a contrast to Jesus’s strength in active acceptance of His fate, even though he is “Fate” Himself (“Crucifying” 7). The title of the poem, the gerund verb form “Crucifying,” takes Jesus as its object but throughout the poem, the paradox of this moment changes Jesus to the subject



position. He “Beares his own crosse, with paine, yet by and by / When it bears him, he must bear more and die” (“Crucifying” 9-10). As Jesus is “lifted up” in death, He again takes agency in “draw[ing]” the speaker to Him and to salvation (“Crucifying”12). This shift in agency also serves as a marked contrast to the speaker’s spiritual state in the final line of “Crucifying” and the transition to “Resurrection,” a request that Jesus “Moyst, with one drop of thy blood, my dry soule” (14). Thus, “Resurrection” is not the retelling of Jesus’s resurrection but rather the resurrection of the speaker’s soul. The soul, both “stoney hard and yet too fleshy,” will find salvation:

If in thy little book my name thou enrould,  
Flesh in that long sleep is not putrified,  
But made that there, of which, and for which ‘twas;  
Nor can by other meanes be glorified. (“Resurrection” 3, 8-11)

Through this intimate relationship with Jesus, the speaker will overcome sin and death as Jesus did through incarnation and resurrection: “I againe risen may / Salute the last, and everlasting day” (“Resurrection”12-14).

The “Ascencion” concludes the corona’s poetic and pedagogical purpose. As in the last poem, Jesus’s triumph over death continues through the ascension, one of the final scenes of the biblical story and one of the glorious mysteries of the rosary. The speaker watches in awe as Jesus completes the path of return to heaven, a path that will guide the speaker and, likewise, the speaker’s audience:

Behold the Highest, parting hence away,  
Lightens the darke clouds, which hee treads upon,

Nor doth hee by ascending, show alone,  
 But first hee, and hee first enters the way.  
 O strong Ramme, which hast batter'd heaven for mee,  
 Mild Lamb, which with thy blood, hast mark'd the path;  
 Bright Torch, which shin'st, that I the way may see  
 ("Ascension" 5-11)

Donne use of paradox in the "strong Ramme"/"Mild Lamb" imagery recalls those developed earlier in the poem such as the Immaculate Conception and Christ's incarnation. But such a technique can also be applied to the poetic structure of the poem in the corona sequence where the last line becomes the first of each successive poem. Moreover, the responsibility of poet as prophet, and in Donne's and Southwell's cases, priest, allows for the final paradoxical teaching tool: the speaker as both pupil and teacher. The speaker works towards his own salvation through witnessing Jesus's death and resurrection. By following this same path, the speaker thus marks or teaches the way to the reader. The final line of the poem that becomes the first illustrates these many paradoxes: "Deign at my hands this crown of prayer and praise" ("Ascension" 14). This crown is passed to the readers from God through Mary, Jesus, the "Muse," and the poet and then returned to God in our worship, just as the rosary ends where it begins.

#### Conclusions: Rosary Doctrine and Devotion

As guides for a Catholic community, rosary treatises included very prescriptive notions of the form, context, and practice of saying the rosary and of living the life of a good Catholic. However, the Catholic writers of these

treatises—Loarte, Bucke, and Garnet--focused on the rosary mysteries as a way for the individual to witness and respond emotionally and intellectually. Martz points out that such meditation “cultivates the basic, the lower levels of the spiritual life; it is not, properly speaking, a mystical activity, but a part of the duties of every man in daily life” (*The Poetry of Meditation* 16). In this manner, the rosary guides combined both practical and theoretical aspects. By showing how rosary practice and Marian devotion contributed to the salvation of the individual, these treatises responded to Protestant criticisms of superstition and sacrilege. Most importantly, this form and theme, ritual song and maternal love, offers comfort to the reader, especially for a Catholic struggling to maintain his or her faith in Protestant England.

Linking such practices to Southwell’s “Sequence on the Virgine Marie and Christ” and Donne’s *La Corona* on the basis of this form and theme is logical, as is seeing Southwell’s as more Catholic in its focus on Mary and Donne’s as more Protestant or Anglican in its shift toward Jesus’s experiences. As a priest ministering to the English Catholic community, Southwell must teach, console, and defend his followers. His sequence builds on the past traditions of the Catholic faith with the more contemporary practice of Ignatian meditation, much as the early modern Catholic community combined these two aspects in creating an identity. *La Corona* struggles with these concepts as well and while poetically more successful, its conflict between Catholic and Anglican/Protestant identity is indicative of the condition for the larger English community. In his crisis of faith, Donne most resembles the religious

communities of the period, both Catholic and Protestant, who witnessed the fragmenting of religion into political and personal realms.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In 2002, to commemorate his twenty-fifth anniversary as pope, Pope John Paul II introduced a fourth set of mysteries, known as the luminous mysteries or the mysteries of light, thus indicating the continued importance and presence of the rosary in the lives of Catholics today.

<sup>2</sup> Loarte, Gaspar. *Instructions and Advertisements, How To Meditate the Misteries of the Rosary of the most holy Virgin Mary*. Trans. John Fen. London: W. Carter, 1597. STC 16646.

<sup>3</sup> Bucke, John. *Instructions for the vse of the beades conteining many matters of meditacion or mentall prayer, vvith diuerse good aduises of ghostly counsayle. VVere vnto is added a figure or forme of the beades portrued in a table. Compiled by Iohn Bucke for the benefit of vnlearned. And dedicated to the honorable good lady, Anne Lady Hungarforde, sister to the duchesse of Ferria*. Louvain: I Maes. 1589. STC 4000.

<sup>4</sup> The table is not included in the facsimile from the British Library used by *Early English Books Online*. Fortunately, Patricia Crawford includes a copy of the image in her book *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “almoise” or its other forms “almoise” or “almoise” means “alms” or “good deeds.”

<sup>6</sup> Dr. James V. Zeitz, professor of religious studies at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas, has kindly provided this translation.

<sup>7</sup> Garnet, Henry. *The Society of the Rosary. Newly Augmented*. London: H. Garnet, 1596. STC 11617.8.

<sup>8</sup> In earlier references, I have cited using the printer’s marks since the prefatory pages to Garnet’s *Society of the Rosary* are not numbered. However, beginning with this citation, I cite by page number as the body of the treatise is numbered.

## CHAPTER IV

## CATHOLIC MARTYRS, MOTHERS, AND WIVES

While sacramental and rosary guides provided education for the Catholic in his or her spiritual life, they were not directly addressed to the practical, worldly issues of daily life. Spiritual directories such as the Spanish saint Luis De Granada's *A Memorial of a Christian Life* (translated and published in English in 1599), Robert Parson's *The First Book of the Christian Exercise* (1582) and Southwell's own *Short Rules of a Good Life* (published by Garnet's press immediately following Southwell's execution in 1595) extended the didactic model by instructing the Catholic community in daily routines and duties. The opening chapters of Southwell's work follow the "traditional schemes" described by Parsons in his *Christian Exercise* to provide the "three things" necessary to a man's salvation: "to resolve himself to serve God indeed; to begin aright; and to persevere unto the end" (qtd. by Brown "Introduction" xii). Southwell uses this same pattern in his opening argument of the *Short Rules of a Good Life*:

The end of my being thus made, redeemed, preserved, and so much benefited by God is this, and no other: that I should in this life serve him with my whole body, soul, and substance, and with what else soever is mine, and in the next life enjoy him forever in heaven. (23)

The second chapter explores ways in which to honor God, especially through daily prayer and meditation. The next chapters describe the perseverance of the good Catholic who learns to show deference to his or her superiors, to neighbors and to him or herself and the ways in which to conduct daily activities such as

working, dining or, more importantly, instructing children and servants in their own religious education and salvation.

The *Short Rules* is written in first person, but the narrative voice maintains the authoritative tone of the priest. For example, in chapter nine, “Of the Care of My Children,” the narrator list his responsibilities:

I must think that my children . . . ought to be kept as myself, I having in this time to answer for them. [. . .] I must use them to devotion by little and little, not cloying them with too much at once but rather seeking to make them take a delight in it. I must teach them their Pater Noster and their Creed, and other good prayers, and make them perfect in the Ten Commandments and the points of faith, specially those that heretics deny. [. . .] I must often speak to them of the Passion of Christ and of the lives of saints . . . and to use reverence to aged persons and spiritual men, and praise often the true religion and virtue of their parents and ancestors in their hearing that it may move them to imitate their good works. (50-51)

Written from the perspective of a lay Catholic, Southwell’s spiritual directory, while it provided much needed direct instruction, is limited in its ability to inspire. Just as religious poetry teaches by dramatizing the events that make up the Catholic faith, narratives that dramatized the lives of model Catholics could both teach and inspire. A hagiography or life of a saint was one form of this, but often the saint’s piety is inaccessible or impractical for even the most devout Catholic to imitate. Thus, spiritual biographies of English Catholics immersed in the controversy of their days began to appear. The narratives of these members clarified the duties of an English Catholic in two important ways. First, the

heroes of these works demonstrate their holiness through prayerful devotion and practice in their private lives. Yet, because of their persecution, they are forced to defend their faith in public. This is the core conflict in defining English Catholicism as a congregational as well as an individual practice. Through the publishing of the lives of famous English Catholics, a resolution to this conflict was offered to members of the Catholic congregation. Second, the very appearance of such works served as a response to the Protestant community and government authority through their publication and distribution in defiance of laws banning such publications.

Two spiritual biographies, John Mush's martyrology "A True Report of the Life and Martyrdom of Margaret Clitherow" (c. 1586) and anonymous biography *The Lady Falkland, Her Life* (written. 1643-1650, published 1861), illustrate this conflict through a careful negotiation of audience. As women and mothers, Clitherow and Lady Falkland, nee Elizabeth Cary, maintained their Catholic faith and community through the running of their households despite of their husbands' disapproval. Clitherow (1556-1586) became the first female English Catholic martyr of the early modern period. Elizabeth Cary (1585-1630) was a Catholic convert whose literary talents included translations and dramatic works. She is most well known for *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry*, the first published original play in England written by a woman, and also for being the first women writer memorialized in a biography (Weller and Ferguson 1). Their stories add support to John Bossy's argument that the English Catholic community survived because of Catholic matriarchs. Such assertions tempt us to see Clitherow and Cary as strong female role models who challenged the authority of their husbands' and country's rule in order to assert their own

identity. This is relevant especially from an examination of women's roles in the literary, political, and religious history of England. However, such actions, while defiant, reify the Church's authority. In *Ventriloquizing Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts*, Elizabeth Harvey argues that such a ventriloquization of voice "is most often invoked in and around issues of authorial property, especially as property intersects with history in the recreation—and often enshrinement—of the past" (12). Mush, Clitherow's spiritual advisor and biographer, speaks not only of Clitherow's piety, but speaks for her, ventriloquizing her voice throughout the narrative to create a hagiographic portrait. Privy to her experience at home and in prison, Mush addresses the practical and philosophical concerns of his audience through Clitherow's actions. The biography becomes less dogmatic and more dramatic only in the passionate scenes of her execution. By speaking through Clitherow, Mush maintains the authority of the church and negotiates his own authority as confessor, biographer, and member of the English mission.

In the case of *Lady Falkland, Her Life*, the author remains anonymous throughout the transcript, but has been identified as either Anne or Lucy (Weller and Ferguson 4), two of Cary's daughters who both entered the convent in Cambray. The author's recall of details of Cary's life is strong, indicating that she was either witness to such events or to the retelling of them. Throughout the biography, much focus is on Cary's struggles to participate in both intellectual and religious pursuits. Her conversion comes after studying the religious controversies of the time both independently and with Protestant and Catholic religious leaders, including Jesuit and Benedictine priests. The biographer also recalls the many ways in which Cary lived her faith through her charity, piety,



and dedication to the conversion and upbringing of her own children as Catholics, including the biographer herself. Cary's story is not told as a sympathetic memorialization of the biographer's mother, but rather more formally as a nun writing the life of a goodly woman, even at some moments saint-like, as part of her duties to the convent and to the order established by the Catholic hierarchy.

Cary's and Clitherow's lives parallel one another and fulfill some of the conventions of hagiographies and spiritual directories. Both women converted to Catholicism after their marriages and in defiance of their husbands' orders. They continued their own religious education through their contact with Catholic priests and began instructing their children and servants in the Catholic faith. Their biographers describe in great detail each woman's piety, humility, and obedience. In her trial, punishment, and execution, Clitherow negotiates these virtues in her defense by arguing that her disobedience to her husband and her defiance of the law will be judged by God, not man. Cary, born a year before Clitherow's execution and converting during Charles's and his Catholic queen Henrietta Maria's reign, faces no physical threats, but must defend her choices to her husband, to the courts, and eventually, to her sons who control her financial well-being. Clitherow's arguments are the voice of her confessor and biographer John Mush. Cary's reasoning, however, seems her own, carefully demonstrating the intellectual capacities her biographer and daughter, an educated woman as well, stresses throughout the story. As narratives of holy women written to inspire and to defend the Catholic faithful, these works bridge the domestic, devotional, and political spheres of the English Catholic community.

### Clitherow and Her Confessor

The transcribed manuscript copy of “A True Report of the Life and Martyrdom of Mrs. Margaret Clitherow.” is dated 1654, and is held in St. Mary’s Convent in York, where Clitherow’s hand is preserved as a relic. In more contemporary biographies of Clitherow, John Mush’s role as her confessor and biographer is often referred to, but little direct reference to the manuscript is mentioned. The copy examined for this study comes from an anthology of Catholic writings of the early modern period entitled *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers Related by Themselves*, edited by Father John Morris and published in 1877<sup>1</sup>. Morris places “The Life” within the context of other Catholic English martyrs of the period, noting the significance of her place of execution. Earlier Catholics had been executed at this site near a bridge in York, including thirty-three priests who were drawn over the bridge in route to their execution in 1564.

Clitherow was born Margaret Middleton in 1556, and like many English citizens born under Mary’s reign, baptized a Catholic. With Elizabeth’s ascension, she was raised in the Church of England. Married in 1571 to John Clitherow, a chamberline in York, she converted to Catholicism around 1574. She was imprisoned various times for harboring priests, and arrested for treason in 1586 when a young servant of the household confessed to officials her secret hiding places for priests and mass relics. After an intense interrogation and trial, she was sentenced to death by pressing. The execution took place on Good Friday, March 25, 1586. A few weeks after her death, Mush wrote the account of her life to be circulated among Catholic followers and to protest Protestant accounts of her trial.

Mush divides the narrative into twenty-one chapters, the majority of which are dedicated to Clitherow's devotion, spiritual exercises, and virtues as a good Catholic. These first chapters act as spiritual directories by categorizing each of her virtues and then providing examples of them from her daily activities. Mush elaborates extensively on each of these virtues, so that his Catholic audience can learn by both exhortation and example. Her humility, charity, and love are demonstrated first by her conversion and then by her desire to serve the mission through harboring of priests and prayers for both "heretics" and "lukewarm Catholics" (Mush 376). Later on in these chapters, he writes of her charity to neighbors, especially fellow recusant Catholics who were imprisoned. The most important example of these qualities, however, is her choice of God over other "foolish loves" (377) and worldly goods. "Lukewarm" Catholics (376) such as church papists choose incorrectly, which recusant Catholics saw as their key error. Clitherow must forsake her own judgment to follow her priest. As her confessor, Mush taught her that by following her rightful duty to God, she would have to forsake her duty to husband and to her country. Here, his lessons to her become lessons to the reader, again showing his awareness of audience. The rewards that follow these public acts of her faith are the "alacrity and joy" that Clitherow shared in private knowing that her decisions were just (388).

The didacticism of these early chapters becomes even more apparent as Mush writes of Clitherow's spiritual exercises and sacramental practices. As in Southwell's guide and other spiritual directories, he provides a specific schedule for a layperson to follow, much in the pattern of the mental and vocal prayers practiced in a convent or monastery. She would set aside private time each

morning to pray with the priest, and she received the Eucharist twice weekly which was something only the most devout Catholics practiced. Such modeling provided much-needed instruction for fellow recusants who might not have access to such instruction. Her behavior as a Catholic thus becomes a didactic tool for others.

How aware her husband John Clitherow was of her actions is never reported in Mush's account. Because of his social position, it would be fair to assume that he publicly acted as a Protestant while allowing Clitherow to practice her faith privately. He even paid the fine for her absence at church services. One event reported by Mush, however, indicates John Clitherow's public disapproval of her action. At a banquet, John Clitherow, described as being:

. . . liberal of tongue among the pots, spoke such like words as these, with an oath or two: 'I cannot tell . . . what Catholics are. The will fast, pray, give alms, and punish themselves more than we all, but they are of as evil disposition in other things as we. (407)

Upon hearing this, Margaret cried, to which her husband responded by calling her a "fool" and yet a good wife who only fasted too much and refused to attend church with him. Her tears, she later admits to her confessor, were not because she is "anything at all sorry in respect of myself" but because she fears her husband has so "heinously offend[ed] God by slandering Catholics and the Catholic Church" that he will never reconcile himself with the true faith (407). Ironically, as a papist, John Clitherow was condemned by the English mission and Margaret herself even while his tacit ignorance and quiet acceptance of her actions helped to assure the survival of the mission.

For Mush's purpose as well as for the mission's, the only good Catholic was a recusant Catholic willing to martyr herself for the cause, if necessary. Clitherow is suspected and brought in for testimony on numerous occasions, including charges that she had sent her oldest son to France to gain a Catholic education. Clitherow had not first gained her husband's permission, perhaps a way to protect him from charges. The court succeeds in finding a witness against her, but only once they beat a young boy, most likely a servant's child, to the point where he led them to the priest's chamber in the Clitherow household. There, they confiscated religious books and materials. The boy also reported that Clitherow harbored two priests: Francis Ingleby and John Mush. Harboring priests, especially Jesuits, was a traitorous act. Clitherow, however, showed little fear. Instead, she worried that she and her fellow Catholic cell mate might be "so merry together that, unless we be parted, I fear me we shall come to lose [the merit] of our imprisonment" (Mush 412). And, perhaps in a bit of irony or foreshadowing, she joked with the court watchers, including her supporters, by gesturing towards them with her fingers in the shape of a pair of gallows (412). Her light attitude towards her situation exemplifies her acceptance of this fate rather than a misunderstanding of the severity of her situation.

At her trial, Clitherow becomes a much more articulate advocate for her cause, demonstrating how carefully she has learned her faith, or, if we consider the ventriloquization of her voice by Mush, how Mush intends to use this hagiography. Her accusers derided and mocked her and, in doing so, mocked the seriousness of the court. They tried on the church vestments found in Clitherow's possession and "pull and dally with the other, scoffing on the bench before the judges, and holding up singing breads" (Mush 413). The judge asked

her to speak her beliefs and to allow herself to be tried by the courts. Deftly, Clitherow responded with an answer that did not contradict either Catholic or Protestant teachings. She believed in God, in the Trinity, and in the promise of salvation achieved through Jesus' passion and resurrection. Claiming that God, not man, will be her judge, Clitherow refused to submit to the court proceeding. The judges, however, continued to ply her with accusations, eventually moving to more vicious attacks, including charges of committing harlotry with the priests. She deflected their arguments and continued to refuse to participate in the trial. Even after the court sentenced her, the judge stayed the execution for a few days in case Clitherow changed her mind and offered to submit to the court.

During this last confinement, ministers sent by the council presented three important arguments to Clitherow, and by association, to Mush and to the Catholic audience. First, why would Clitherow and other Catholics accused and arrested refuse to be tried and thus willfully accept their death? Clitherow responded:

I am a woman and not skillful in the temporal laws. If I have offended, I ask God's mercy, and I know not whether I have offended them or no; but in my conscience I have not. As for traitors, I never kept nor harboured any in my house. (Mush 421)

Using their own methods against them, she admitted to the actions she is accused of, but not to their intent or interpretation. They then asked if she is pregnant, a claim made earlier by the court during the trial as a way to postpone any sentencing. Now, however, the minister stated that she "cannot have the benefit of her condition" if she were (Mush 421). Thus, any answer she would provide would be pointless, a situation akin to the paradoxical reality for any

Catholic on trial for treason. Her response mocked this situation for she “can neither say that I am nor that am not, having been deceived heretofore in this, and therefore I cannot directly answer you, but of the two I rather think that I am the otherwise” (Mush 421). Finally, they asked her a series of questions related to church doctrine. When asked how she will be saved, she responded that salvation was achieved through Jesus’s passion and resurrection. Then, when asked why, if this were the case, she would “believe far otherwise, as in images, ceremonies, sacramentals, sacraments, and such like” (Mush 422-423), Clitherow countered by saying:

I believe . . . as the Catholic Church teaches me, that there be Seven Sacraments . . . As for all the ceremonies, I believe they be ordained to God’s honor and glory . . . as for images, they be but to represent unto us that there were both good and godly men upon earth . . . and also to stir up our dull minds to more devotion when we behold them; otherwise than thus I believe not. (Mush 423)

In giving voice to these beliefs through Clitherow’s statements, Mush gives the Catholic audience a defense of the faith through this dramatic rendering, building on the passion of Clitherow’s final hours and on the logic of church doctrine.

As the actual execution approached, Clitherow faced accusations most pertinent to a Catholic audience: her disloyalty to her family and husband. How might an English Catholic maintain his or her personal responsibilities in the midst of conflicting duties to the church and the state? Clitherow responded to charges of disloyalty to the crown, in effect, the charge of treason used by the court to persecute Catholics (and under Mary’s reign, Protestants as well). By

refusing to be judged by the courts, she placed her loyalty first to God, then to the crown. She deflected any reference to the Catholic church, arguing that, “I pray God I may make my submission unto Him, and do my humble duty to my prince in all matters temporal; but in this which I am charged withal, I trust I have neither offended God nor my prince” (Mush 426). As for her duties towards her husband and family, she responded:

As for my husband, know you that I love him next unto God in this world, and I have care over my children as a mother ought to have; I trust I have done my duty to them to bring them up in the fear of God, and so I trust now I am discharged of them. . . . I mind by God’s assistance to spend my blood in this faith, as willingly as ever I put my paps to my children’s mouths, neither desire I to have my death deferred. (Mush 427)

In these arguments, she ranked her duties as appropriate for a pious Catholic, a devoted wife and mother, and a loyal citizen. Service to God is first, and all other responsibilities should aid in her service to this faith. Southwell advises in his chapter on one’s “duty to my superiors” that one’s superiors be chosen wisely, as they are God’s “vicegerents and substitutes” on earth who should have “affection and desire to direct me with great joy, diligence, and care to all spiritual good” (*Short Rules* 33). This argument is one of the most important defenses for English Catholics who choose to go against one’s family and country. John Clitherow’s reluctance to convert and, more importantly, the crown’s religious errors work against Clitherow’s service to God, so her “conscience” (Mush 427) prevails over these temporal duties.



While Clitherow herself referred to her execution as a “marriage” that would unite her with God, Mush focuses instead on its cruelty and lewdness (430). Clitherow asked to die in her smock rather than naked as ordered. When refused, she asked that the women undressing her avert their eyes for modesty’s sake, an odd request considering that she is about to be executed. She was then laid upon the ground with a linen cloth partially concealing her and a handkerchief over her face. Her hands were bound to “two posts, so that her body and her arms made a perfect cross” (Mush 432). They placed a door upon her and then gradually added weights. Finally, a stone was placed under her back and the weigh was increased to “the quantity of seven or eight hundred-weight at the least, which breaking her ribs, caused them to burst forth of the skin” (Mush 432). The execution began in the morning and lasted until that afternoon. In her last actions, she indicated her hopes for a final reconciliation of her duties by praying for the conversion of Elizabeth and by sending her hat to her husband, “in sign of her loving duty to him as her head,” and her hose and shoes to her eldest daughter, “signifying that she should serve God and follow her steps of virtue” (Mush 432).

While Mush’s tone throughout the work had been tinged with angry moments, he tempered it with Clitherow’s calm acceptance of her fate. In the final chapter, Mush unleashes his anger towards Clitherow’s persecutors whom he calls “heretics.” He spends almost seven pages ranting against their “horrible practices and barbarous cruelty” (433) that stands in sharp contrast to her chastity and faithfulness. He criticizes the court as representatives of the larger Protestant faith:

She, a woman, with invincible courage, entered combat against you all, to defend that most ancient faith, wherein she and you were baptized, and gave your promises to God to keep the same to death; where you, men, cowardish in the quarrel, and faithless in your promise, laboured all at once against her, [. . . ] You know well that these new statutes, which violently you endeavor to establish by shedding of much innocent blood, and which are quite contrary to the ancient justice and laws of the realm, which in this point is not justly abrogable by any modern temporal authority or new decree? (435)

Unlike the rest of the narrative where he speaks through his re-creation of Clitherow's voice, Mush, a Jesuit and member of the English mission, defended her and the goals of the Catholic Church in England in his own voice, thus openly challenging the law.

As in most hagiographies, the work ends with Mush invoking Clitherow as a holy martyr in a prayer for his own salvation. Their relationship shifts from Mush being defender, teacher, and "ghostly father" to Clitherow to becoming her follower, pupil, and child in need of protection and guidance from her. He prays, "O sacred martyr, letting go thy enemies, I turn to thee. Remember me, I beseech thy perfect charity, whom thou has left miserable behind thee, in time past thine unworthy Father, and now thy most unworthy servant" (Mush 440). As his "glorious mother," she had modeled for him the form of the perfect Christian and, in her sacrificial death, she could now intercede for him, her "miserable son" (440). Silenced by her persecutors and given voice through her confessor, Clitherow, as presented in Mush's narrative, is the perfect image of

dutiful mother and martyr whose story serves as model, defense, and inspiration for the English Catholic reader. By the embodiment of these duties, “A True Report of the Life and Martyrdom of Mrs. Margaret Clitherow” empowers her as a defender of the Catholic faith even while relying upon her submission to it.

Elizabeth Cary’s Life and Biography

Barry Weller and Margaret W. Ferguson write in their introduction to Cary’s *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *The Lady Falkland, Her Life* that while the biography affords scholars more information about Cary’s life and literary career than is known about most early modern writers,

Even the information it does present cannot always be taken at face value, for the author has both filial and theological investments in the representation of her mother. Clearly designed to stress Cary’s trials and triumphs as an “exemplary” subject of Catholic conversion, the *Life* nonetheless presents a rhetorically subtle and sometimes critical account not only of its prime subject but also of her Protestant husband, the author’s difficult but by no means wholly unsympathetic father, Sir Henry Cary, viscount of Falkland.

(2)

The *Life* exists in a manuscript copy written in a “cursive Italian hand” that includes marginal notes in the same hand as well as other notes in a “more angular hand, apparently belong[ing] to the biographer’s brother Patrick” (Weller and Ferguson 47). It is housed at the Archives of the Département du Nord in France which also holds documents from the Cambrai convent, including a register of names of those who had entered the convent. Four of

Cary's daughters—Anne, Elizabeth, Lucy, and Mary-- are included on this registry from the years 1638-1639 (Weller and Ferguson 48). The author is unidentified, a practice in keeping with the traditional vows of humility taken by nuns. Heather Wolfe, in her introduction to *Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland Life and Letters* (2001), the most recent edition of Cary's biography, states that as part of the "class of 1640," Cary's four daughters—Elizabeth (admitted 1638), Anne, Lucy, and Mary (admitted 1639), along with other nuns educated and professed together at the English Benedictine monastery of Our Lady of Consolation, were one of the most prolific group of nuns whose "work is notable for its quantity and range: original prose works, poems, sermons, letters, translations, and transcriptions" (*Elizabeth Cary* 45).

Many scholars, including Weller and Ferguson, see Anne as the most likely candidate for authorship of the *Life*, but Wolfe argues convincingly for Lucy. Using both textual and manuscript evidence, Wolfe supports her claim by examining Lucy's "death-notice," a short biographical notice of the nun's death which both commemorated her death and used it as an exemplar for others. Lucy's notice states that Lady Falkland's biography was "written by one who knew her well" (qtd. in Wolfe, *Elizabeth Cary* 46). The biographer only makes reference to herself as one of Elizabeth's daughters and refers to herself in the anonymous third person plurals. However, the biography itself makes special mention of the young Lucy's cruelty towards Elizabeth. As a child not yet converted to Catholicism, Lucy would wait until Elizabeth, hungry with her fast, would be "ready to putt her meate in her mouth" (qtd. in Wolfe, *Elizabeth Cary* 59), before reminding her of the vow to fast and to abstain from meat on Fridays. This tendency to tease is also seen in the biographer's "biting remarks" and "dry

tone [which] descends into outright sarcasm in the passages describing William Chillingworth's attempts to reconvert Lady Falkland's daughters [now Catholic converts] back to Protestantism" (Wolfe, *Elizabeth Cary* 60-61). Because the writing of religious lives becomes a way in which the author redeems her own sins, Lucy, as Wolfe argues, may be using the *Life* as her own admission of and penance for her sins. Returning to Lucy's death-notice, Wolfe remarks:

Lucy's portrayal in *Life* is remarkably similar to the description of her in her death-notice. Of all the extant death-notices from Cambray during this period, Lucy's is the *only* one that portrays a nun in an unfavourable way during her pre-conversion life.

According to the death-notice, Lucy was far from perfect before she converted and when she lost her temper, ever her mother "scaped not her affronts." It describes Lucy as an "obstinate, haughty, disdainful, jneereing [sic] lady" who was "carried away with the vanities of the world" and who was accustomed to spending several hours a day dressing in "vaine attire." (*Elizabeth Cary* 60)

The death-notice, like the biography itself, is indicative of the dual purpose of writing in the convents: "life writing at Cambrai was distinctly inward-looking, and was as much an exercise in authorial self-abnegation and repentance as it was an edifying text for its readers" (Wolfe, *Elizabeth Cary* 48). Thus, the existence of the *Life* itself is a product of the English Catholic community's educational efforts as well as a record of the author's and subject's contributions to Catholic pedagogy.

Cary's biographer puts much emphasis on Cary as an intellect first and as a woman of piety second. The only daughter of Laurence and Elizabeth

Tanfield, Elizabeth learned to read quite early and then began learning languages, a skill that would help her in her writing career as a translator of other works. Besides French, Spanish, and Hebrew, which she learned “with very little teaching,” Cary also knew Latin, the language of the classics and of church writings, had “translated the Epistles of Seneca” while still young and, years later near her death, began to translate the Latin devotional writings of the Flemish monk and mystic Louis de Blois (*The Lady Falkland* 186). Her intellectual abilities also revealed themselves when at age ten, she intervened on behalf of a woman accused of witchcraft who was being tried in her father’s court.

Elizabeth, quite young to be at the trial yet perhaps indicative of her father’s indulgence in and force behind her intellect, witnessed the weeping and fearful woman confess to all accusations of witchcraft. Her compassion for the woman is credited with inspiring Elizabeth to act, but her understanding of argument and the rules of evidence in a trial is evident by her strategy to prove the woman’s innocence:

But the child [Elizabeth], seeing the poor woman in so terrible a fear, and in so simple a manner confess all, though fear had made her idle, so she whispered to her father and desired him to ask her whether she had bewitched to death Mr. John Symodes of such a place (her uncle that was one of the standers-by). He did so, to which she said yes, just as she done to the rest, promising to do so no more if they would have pity on her. (*The Lady Falkland* 187)

This occurred around the year 1595, a year of intense Catholic persecution by the government of which Elizabeth, as the daughter to an attorney and later judge, would have been aware. In this particular case, she witnessed how accusers

could badger their witnesses into such false confessions and thus obscure the truth. Later on, when she is forced to defend her own choice to convert, she will have to stand strong in the face of her accusers, including her husband, her children, and her friends and confidants.

This early intellectual curiosity also had a negative effect on Cary's livelihood. To protect the young Elizabeth who would stay up all night reading, her mother, also named Elizabeth, took away the candles in her room so that Elizabeth had to bribe the servants to sneak them in. This led quickly to debt, a situation that would follow her throughout her life, especially as family and friends turned away from aiding her after her conversion. At fifteen-years-old, she married Sir Henry Cary, a marriage based more on his desire for her inheritance than love. She went to live with her mother-in-law who expected Elizabeth to wait upon her. When Elizabeth again showed more interest in her books, the mother-in-law "took away all her books, with command to have no more brought her" (*The Lady Falkland* 189). Elizabeth then began her lifelong habit of writing verses and translations, including "many things for her private recreation, on several subject, and occasions, all in verse (out of which she scarce ever writ anything that was not translations)" (190). Once she became Catholic, she would also write the lives of such female saints as "St. Mary Magdalene, St. Agnes Martyr, and St Elizabeth of Portingall in verse" and "many verses of our Blessed Lady" (213). Such creativity is the only type mentioned by the biographer who leaves out information on her secular works such as *The Tragedy of Mariam*. This is fitting, since these hagiographies served a religious purpose for both writer and reader as spiritual guides. It is also during her early marriage that she began reading religious controversies and entering into such

discussions with other learned individuals. According to Patricia Crawford in *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720*, such intellectual activities could be excused since religious inquiry provided a woman with “her best alibi for incursions into the male domain” (10). In pursuit of her own religious education, she read first

a Protestant book much esteemed, called Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity*. It seemed to her, he left her hanging in the air, for having brought her so far (which she thought he did very reasonably), she saw not how, nor at what, she could stop, till she returned to the church from whence they were come. (*The Lady Falkland* 190)

Her brother-in-law shared the readings of the Catholic church fathers and St. Augustine. After reading them and other religious writings, she eventually refused to attend church services on two separate occasions, returning only after discussions with Protestant ministers convinced her that she “might lawfully remain as she was” (*The Lady Falkland* 191). Her intention to remain Protestant demonstrated her loyalty to her temporal duties as daughter, wife, and good Protestant, yet her desire to convert defied her intentions at both the spiritual and the intellectual level. In Clitherow’s case, her conversion was a result of her inherent piety leading her to the “true” religion, or as Crawford argues “a regime of piety legitim[izing] an area of activity for women” (10). In contrast, Cary made a more deliberate and active conversion based on her piety and her intellectual ability, as her biographer repeatedly stresses.

While Cary went against traditional notions of women’s roles by such activities, she did fulfill the expectations of her as wife, mother, and head of the domestic household. Due to Henry Cary’s military duties that kept him away



from Elizabeth and perhaps because of her young age, the couple did not have any children until seven years into the marriage. This same period was also the time of Cary's interest in literary work and religious controversy. However, once their family was established, Elizabeth and Henry took on their prescribed roles.

The biographer reports that

She . . . did seem to show herself capable of what she would apply herself to. She was very careful and diligent in the disposition of the affairs of her house of all sorts; and she herself would work hard, together with her women and her maids, curious pieces of work, teaching them and directing all herself; nor was her care of her children less, to whom she was so much a mother that she nursed them all herself. (*The Lady Falkland* 191-192)

Her domestic duties follow Southwell's advice in his *Short Rules* in which duties to servants and to children both require "necessary instruction in matters appertaining to the salvation of their souls" (49). For children, salvation is not a mere accounting of errors and rebukes, but rather being "taught such civility, courtesy, and complements" and instructing them in "the use of the sacraments, the only remedy for their unstead and green wits" (Southwell, *Short Rules* 51). Rather than teaching them the Protestant catechism, Cary's "first care was . . . to have them soone inclined to the knowledge, love, and esteem of all moral virtue" as stated in the "Principles of Christianity . . . in a manner more apt to make an impression in them" to love God who made them and all things for their salvation (*The Lady Falkland* 192). Again, this rationale recalls Southwell's premises as to raising children in his spiritual directory. The love and respect that she had for her husband is taught to her children. Though Cary eventually

displeased her husband by her conversion, she had tried throughout the marriage to please him; even “though she had a strong will, she had learnt to make it obey his” (*The Lady Falkland* 194). By casting her duties as part of the order established by God and as part of one’s own salvation, Cary and her biographer could justify disobedience when Cary chooses religious authority over her husband’s authority.

Ironically, it was her husband’s appointment as viceroy of Ireland from 1622-1629 that brought Elizabeth closer to her actual conversion. Part of Cary’s duties “was the enforcement, largely unsuccessful, of edicts against the Roman Catholic clergy”; Elizabeth, meanwhile, “having much affection to that nation,” learned Irish through an Irish Bible and worked on behalf of the Catholics to influence Henry, if possible (*The Lady Falkland* 197). She even began a factory where tradesmen and women could work and apprentice young orphans. Unfortunately, fire destroyed the building and her business plans. After her conversion, she decided that the fire was a “punishment of God for the children’s going to [Protestant] church” (*The Lady Falkland* 198). Both she and her biographer read such disastrous events in her life as religious signs leading to her conversion. During their return from Ireland in 1625, Cary and her children survived a tempest that briefly knocked the “breath” out of one of her sons “at her breast” and who then “remained as dead a quarter of an hour” (201). Then, after first greeting Henrietta Maria, the Catholic bride-to-be of Charles who would eventually become a maternal symbol for Catholics, Cary traveled to her mother’s home to avoid the plague. En route, her pregnant daughter fell into the water while being carried over a bridge. She was saved, only to be so troubled by the fear she caused everyone else that she quickly became ill and died within

a week of delivering her baby prematurely. In her last moments, the daughter had a vision of a “bright woman clothed in white having a crown on her head” appearing at her bedside. Elizabeth believed this to be a vision of the Virgin Mary, indicating her daughter’s salvation because “of the consideration of the good inclination her daughter had for Catholic religion” (*The Lady Falkland* 202). The baby died soon after in the same manner as her mother—in the arms of Elizabeth.

Within this short amount of time, Cary began making plans for her official and public conversion. As Crawford and other religious scholars point out, “religion consisted of both private beliefs and public practices” (3). Cary’s intentions were to be “reconciled” with the Catholic Church, but she put off this action at the pleas of her friend Lady Denbigh, neé Susan Villiers Fielding who would eventually become a close confidant of Queen Henrietta Maria and a Catholic convert as well as the patron of Richard Crashaw<sup>2</sup>. Lady Denbigh requested that Elizabeth wait until she too was ready to convert, thus keeping Cary from doing so for almost six months. Finally, as a last effort to prevent Cary from converting, Lady Denbigh requested that Elizabeth visit her at court. Once at court, Lady Denbigh intended to keep her there until Cary could be convinced not to convert. Cary slyly agreed, then quickly disappeared to the Lord of Ormand’s home, where her conversion was witnessed by Father Dunston Pettinger in the stable of the estate, an ironic location reminiscent of the nativity. Once returning to Lady Denbigh, Cary announced her conversion, which Lady Denbigh quickly made public. She was sent back to her parents’ home where she was isolated from other Catholics and preached to by her former Protestant confessor. This was followed by yet another debate in which

“arguments on all parts” were presented; the Protestant ministers brought by those friends who wished to convince her to recant and Father Dunston, her confessor, by Cary herself (*The Lady Falkland* 205). Thus, Cary’s practice of religious inquiry continued even after her conversion, now acting more as a defense of her decisions. Furthermore, her biographer notes the fortitude Cary had in obtaining her conversion in the face of adversity and “most dangerous deceit, in which it may be feared too many have lost themselves dying so, and other living lost the light they had” (205). This commentary reveals the biographer’s pedagogical purpose by working as an observation and as a warning for an audience who may have been wavering in their religious loyalty.

The most difficult trials for Cary were to follow: her family’s response to her religious conversion, both privately and publicly. Henry Cary refused to provide for her allowance because of “her turning” and its compounding result of “disabl[ing] herself to advance his affairs” (*The Lady Falkland* 210). His servants reported to him of Elizabeth’s supposed further disobedient and disrespectful actions, but the biographer makes note of her supporters as well, most of whom (such as Lady Denbigh) were Catholic as well. These defenders petitioned the Privy Council to intervene on her behalf, and the council, noting his responsibility as her husband, ordered Cary’s support of her to continue at five hundred pounds a year. Elizabeth, throughout this time careful to remain a dutiful wife in as many ways as possible, “would never make use of” these funds,

knowing well how much it would displease him to see himself ordained to do that which he would not do voluntarily; and she desired in all things to do her uttermost to avoid the increase of his

displeasure where with conscience she could. (*The Lady Falkland* 212).

The biographer notes that the other reason was her knowledge of “what case his estate was”; as usual, her husband was financially insecure (212). Her concerns for the financial status of her husband and thus her own household—even though she in essence has been removed from it—shows her dedication as a good wife.

This constancy ultimately led to a peaceful settlement with her husband in which he recognized her fulfillment of duties to him in caring for his soul.

Rather than casting Henry Cary, the biographer’s father, in such strict opposition with her more devout mother, the biographer uses his death and reconciliation with Elizabeth Cary as way to demonstrate the proper ordering of the family in service to God. Crawford rightly points out the solution offered to wives of this period who found themselves in religious conflict with their husbands:

If the husband were an unbeliever, or of a different faith, whom was a wife to obey? Initially, theologians stressed the equality of all believers before God. Individuals were responsible for their own salvation. Potentially, the role of the individual conscience was enlarged, and most divines agreed that a wife should place obedience to God and the true church above her duty to her husband. (52)

By showing such obedience, the wife, much as the English Catholic citizen who places private duties over public obligations, chooses religious salvation which should be the goal guiding all other duties. The idea behind Southwell’s *Short Rules* and other guide books is that such steadfastness to living a good life will

bring those who have strayed—Henry Cary, church papists, and the throne itself—to a proper reconciliation with the Catholic church.

For Henry, this came through his own devotion to his duty to his children. He constantly taught them to respect Elizabeth as their mother as she had taught them to respect him, even though they seem to show resentment towards Elizabeth for her act since “they paid to him the love and respect due to both, leaving her but a small part” (*The Lady Falkland* 218). In 1633, Henry Cary fell from a horse and broke his leg, an injury that led to gangrene, amputation, and ultimately, his death. Upon learning of the accident, Elizabeth rushed from London to be by his side. At hearing her voice, he “took care to have her comforted” while he gave his final blessing to his daughters and sent them home (*The Lady Falkland* 219). Elizabeth’s presence allowed him to make final arrangements for his family as head of the household, communicating to her his wishes for the children and servants as well as how his friends and the court should deal with his death. More importantly, he asked to speak to a priest. One was not available, but Elizabeth consoled him by telling him

. . . the best she could how to dispose himself interiorly, not having exterior means; but she durst not propose to him the professing himself to have a desire to be a Catholic, before the standers-by, not thinking it to be necessary, and fearing he might be too loving and careful father, and not have the courage to do that for fear of prejudicing his children towards their friends. (*The Lady Falkland* 220)

Henry’s conversion occurred where it was most important--in his heart. A surgeon attending him asked him to profess to dying a Protestant, for fear that it

would be reported that since “his lady being there and speaking much to him, it would be reported he died a papist” (221). He refused to do so, asking that he be allowed to continue his “silent meditation” (221), which he did until his death. In analyzing this scene in the biography, Weller and Ferguson argue that the “daughter-biographer” now writing as a nun “hopefully but probably inaccurately surmises that Elizabeth led him back to Catholicism” (8). Without other proof, Henry’s conversion cannot be certain, however, we can surmise two important points from this description by the biographer. First, the argument that Elizabeth makes for the primacy of Henry’s private conversion shows recognition of and sympathy for church papists who struggle with their conflicting obligations. A more dogmatic religious writer charged with corralling Catholics into compliance with the church may not have been as sympathetic. By giving voice to this struggle, the biographer accomplishes the task of making his conversion public, albeit many years after the death of both her parents and within the secure confines of the convent. Still, the biography serves its purpose as an exemplar of an English Catholic’s life by portraying the constant struggles to maintain his or her faith in a realistic manner.

After her husband’s death, Elizabeth began negotiations to take over the raising of their remaining children. Her intent, according to the biographer, was her desire to do so “in order to their being Catholics” (*The Lady Falkland* 221). She told her children that this was their father’s wish, and then promised “not to speak of religion to them till they should desire it” (223). In making such a promise, Elizabeth used the same intellectual inquiry and application in maintaining her own faith and respecting that of her children. She inquired of her confessor Father Bennet Price

whether a Catholic might not have flesh dressed on fasting days for a Protestant to keep him in a place where he were likely to be converted, where he would not stay without it, and where some flesh was to be for [sick] infirm Catholics? He told her, such likelihood there might be of a conversion, as he judged it might be done, but if she asked for her own children, of whose there was not any, he would not say so. She made use of the first part of this answer, not thinking herself bound to take his word for the latter, and without it she knew they would never stay. Yet she did this only upon the strength of her confidence, not with any contempt of the ordinance of the Church . . . (*The Lady Falkland* 223)

Again, Elizabeth and her biographer show a preference for pragmatics rather than strict adherence to Church law by using the more important goal of her children's conversion and salvation as a rationale. Elizabeth also encouraged the same religious debate in her home that aided her own conversion. Such "discourse (at the table) was frequently religion, there being those that were very capable on both sides, and she believed that this discourse being mingled with others . . . would draw her daughters' attentions, whose conversion she sought in all" and which she achieved (225). Four of the Cary daughters, including of course the biographer herself, eventually converted and entered the convent. The conversion of her two youngest sons was to be the most important test of her resolve as a Catholic.

As part of the religious debate that Elizabeth encouraged in her household, her son Lucius introduced the family to William Chillingsworth, a companion who had, according to the history reported by the biographer,



converted to Catholicism while at Oxford. He left to study at the Douay missionary college in France, and then

returned to Oxford a Protestant (at least not Catholic), where having, as it was said, preached at St. Mary's, and there again becoming a Catholic or towards it, coming to London, he much frequented this [Cary's] house, and calling Protestants "we," and in his clothes being like an Oxford scholar[s], he was secretly a Catholic, if not more secretly neither . . . . (*The Lady Falkland* 227)

The biographer excuses Chillingsworth's shifting religious affiliations as typical of such scholars who find a "kind of impossibility of agreement between his heart and his tongue" (227). Chillingsworth's religious conversions are thus in contrast to Elizabeth's own single conversion, but such scholarly attention to religious debate must have impressed her and offered her hope that his discussion would aid in her daughters' conversion. Eventually, Chillingsworth wavered in his Catholic convictions and, worse, his loyalty to Elizabeth and her daughters. He admitted that "he had dissembled himself a Catholic one half year for their sakes. . . . and from that time did seem to go seeking the drawing them back, and that with so much closeness, subtlety, and so many forgeries," he continued to work against Elizabeth's intentions (*The Lady Falkland* 232).

During this time, due to growing debt, Elizabeth sent her daughters to join Lucius's home where her two youngest sons, Patrick and Henry, already resided. She had feared doing this as Chillingsworth was also part of Lucius's household, but her son's generosity and her faith in her daughters' convictions convinced her. The daughters returned to her home even more firm in their faith but worried about their younger brothers whose own "dispositions to religion [were]

renewed and confirmed by their being with them" (*The Lady Falkland* 247).

Elizabeth began to plan her sons' escape to France, an action most feared by Protestants and the government. Elizabeth arranged, with her daughters' help, for the two young boys to leave Lucius's home secretly one evening, meet up with two hired men who would guide them, and return to her household. The escape was successful, and Cary hid the boys in London with other friends until they could be safely sent to Paris. Upon realization of their escape, Lord Newburgh questioned Cary. Her arguments again reflect the intellect and pragmatism that had guided her own conversion. She argued that,

. . . though she had been forced to fetch them away from their brother's secretly, she had in that done nothing contrary to the law, since she could not be said to have stolen that which was her own, her son having no pretense to right to keep his brothers from her against her will and theirs, having never been committed to him neither by the state, nor their father; that she had often warned him she would do thus, if he would not remove them from under Mr. Chillingworth, whom she would not have the guidance of her children. (*The Lady Falkland* 258)

Having made this very legalistic and daring argument in which she admits her intentions to protect her children from Protestant influences, Cary then showed her shrewdness in having the boys meet her servants to complete their escape. Since the boys left of their own accord, they could not be assumed to have been taken by force. She then asked them to prove that the boys had been sent away to France, something they could not since the boys were in hiding. Finally, she questioned the accuracy of the law itself in which, they inform her, "officers of

the port [are] to let none pass without licence" (*The Lady Falkland* 259). She replied that this law did not apply to her since she was not an officer. The impertinence of her answer led the court to refer the case to Lord Chief Justice Bramston of the King's Bench with the threat of Elizabeth being sent to the Tower. Their meeting was described as being "with very much civility" on both their parts, and the judge released her because "he knew not what more to say to her (unless she would be persuaded to bring her sons back)" (*The Lady Falkland* 259). Her daughters and servants were then questioned and her home and the homes of her friends were searched, all the while her sons being safely hidden in London. Finally, with the financial aid of a Jesuit priest, they made their passage to France. The biographer carefully notes that Elizabeth did not know who accompanied the boys on this journey, thus assuring that the biography would not implicate her in this illegal act. Once in Paris, Patrick and Henry found safe haven in the Convent of the Benedictine Fathers where they completed their religious education. Elizabeth's successful conversion of six of her children fulfills what the biographer casts as her most important role as a Catholic: a mother guiding and protecting her children as part of her duty to God.

The last part of the biography describes Elizabeth's final years when she continued to practice her faith in the midst of financial instability. Like her daughters who as nuns undertook a vow of poverty, Elizabeth's poverty increased her devotion. Much of her free time was spent in reading and writing, but the biographer does not elaborate upon Elizabeth's literary accomplishments. For literary scholars, the lack of such details in the biography is especially frustrating, as little is mentioned of her secular works. Her reading list, however, showed that her interest in moral and religious controversy included poetry,

world history and ecclesiastical history, the religious writings of St. Augustine and other Catholic apologists, religious controversy by writers such as Luther, Calvin, and Sir Thomas More, and especially the writings of “Protestant controvertists” (*The Lady Falkland* 268-269). Such a list reflects the study appropriate to the “learned” Catholic whom many writers of spiritual guides saw as their audience. Likewise, the biographer chose throughout the biography to focus not on her secular writings, but on her religious writings such as her translation *The Reply of the Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron, to the Answear of the Most Excelent King of Great Britaine* which was found in her husband’s possessions at his death, even though all but “approximately twelve copies of the impression were burned when they arrived in England from France” (*The Lady Falkland* 181)). Her “only work of controversy” was a response to her son Lucius’s *Discourse of Infallibility*, itself an answer to Walter Montagu’s published letter to his father defending his conversion to Catholicism (267, 269). The biographer describes Elizabeth’s biblical allusion to “the fulfilling of his prophecy who said he came not to bring peace but the sword, the son being here against his father, and the mother against her son, where his faith was the question” (*The Lady Falkland* 269). The irony here is the parallel to Elizabeth’s own rhetorical situation and the constant struggle between spiritual and familial duty. In Elizabeth’s final literary effort, a translation of Blosius, the biographer is careful to attribute it, as is often the case with women writers in the early modern period, to a male influence: her priestly confessor, Father John Meutisse. As Cary’s daughter and writer in her own right, the biographer, like Elizabeth, evokes religion as authorization for intellectual activity. The biographer described Cary’s last foray into writing as proper

preparation to death, it is very like she was much helped by her being conversant in the works of Blossius, which it may well be believed in the providence of our Lord did for that end put into her hand (as it is no doubt it was the father's chief design who set her upon the translation, who, being a most true friend to her and hers, hath ever showed himself a most earnest seeker of their good in all things.) (*The Lady Falkland* 274-275)

Elizabeth, in her final moments, used her intellect and her talent for the glory of her faith and of God, the proper conclusion to this written account of the life of a good Catholic woman.

Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry*: Questions of Loyalty, Piety, and Subject Positions

In her edition of Lady Falkland's biography, Heather Wolfe is troubled by the fact that *The Lady Falkland, Her Life* has usually been studied in relation to Cary's play *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry*, an approach taken, for example, by Weller and Ferguson in their study. The comparisons of Elizabeth Cary to her heroine Mariam are easily made. Their husbands both married them to increase their own power. Mariam, like Elizabeth, speaks her mind in opposition to Herod and to those forces that doubt her virtues. Mariam's public voice parallels Elizabeth Cary's publication of the play (albeit the latter is marked by her denial of participating in its publication). For Mariam, however, her voicing results in the ultimate silencing--her execution--which ironically affirms her virtue by her silent and stoic acceptance of her fate. Elizabeth Cary's virtue, while never a question of sexual fidelity but rather loyalty to her husband and to the crown, finds its most fervent defense in the retelling of her story by her

daughter. This final comparison is especially apt for this study since it confirms the conviction, bravery, and stoicism of both women not just as the relationship between author and subject, but as an example for the English Catholic community.

Cary's choice of subject further reflects the historical and political events most relevant to the changing fortunes of English Catholics due to Henry VIII's multiple marriages and his break with the Catholic church. According to Weller and Ferguson, Cary builds upon the portrayal of Herod and his role in the murder of John the Baptist in mystery or Corpus Christi plays and "humanist plays . . . written in Latin for elite audiences and performed in schools and the Inns of Court" (33). In these works, John the Baptist and Herod were allegorical figures representing the innocent and the tyrannical; their story serves as "didactic warnings against tyranny to both rulers and subjects" (33). Herod had divorced one wife to marry his half-brother's wife Herodias. John the Baptist denounced this act for which Herodias sought revenge, having her daughter Salome dance for Herod and then demand the head of John the Baptist as a reward (Weller and Ferguson 31) In examining Cary's subject, Weller and Ferguson examine the "social context" of the story, noting that

the story of John the Baptist's death was a locus of interpretive dispute because it was deployed both against and for Henry's divorce in texts written not only during his reign but also during that of his daughter Elizabeth and her heir, James, son of a beheaded Catholic queen and a man feared, by some of his Protestant subjects, as a closet papist. One of Henry's own chief arguments in support of his divorce was the illegitimacy of his

marriage to Catherine on the grounds that she was the widow of his elder brother Arthur. Catholic writers like Nicolas Sanders whose major polemic work, *De origine et progressu schismatici Anglicani* was probably written in the 1530's but was first published in 1585 refuted this argument by insisting that the law invoked by John the Baptist forbidding marriage with a brother's widow (or wife) was in Henry's case "inapplicable," "partly because the marriage of Arthur and Catherine was never perfected [i.e., consummated]. Partly because, even if that were the case, Arthur was now dead." (31-32)

Sanders, like other Catholics, went on to argue that Anne Boleyn "was really Henry's daughter, her mother having being his mistress" and then comparing Anne's seductive beauty to Salome's (Weller and Ferguson 32). These arguments serve not only to criticize Henry VIII's divorce and ultimate schism with the church, but also to stress the innocence of Catherine, as representative of Catholicism, and the deception of Anne, as representative of Protestantism.

Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*, however, focuses not on the biblical Herod of this story, but rather an Old Testament Herod whose actions parallel, and in the biblical tradition, act as precedent for the Herod of the Gospels. Mariam's predicament parallels Anne Boleyn's in that she too was a "second wife abhorred and openly denounced by the cast-off first wife [and] executed for adultery by her 'tyrannical' husband" (Weller and Ferguson 32). Likewise, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth Cary, Mariam, and the play's villain Salome all speak in implicit opposition to expectations for Renaissance women. Thus, the biblical, historical,

and social context for *The Tragedy of Mariam* help argue the issue of religious legitimacy so central to English identity<sup>3</sup>.

If Cary's play is to be understood as argument for Catholic legitimacy, then how do we read this interpretation? The title itself identifies Mariam as the "fair queen of Jewry," establishing the qualities of nobility and virtue deigned to Mariam through her heritage as granddaughter of "Hircanus, the rightful king and priest" of the Jews (Cary 67). This historical argument for Mariam's integrity parallels the Catholic argument of historical authority. By marrying Mariam and then eliminating her brother and grandfather as legitimate heirs to the Jewish throne, Herod, who first gained political power through his association with the Romans, completes his usurpation of power through treachery. As Weller and Ferguson argue, this parallels the political intrigue of Henry VIII's reign. Mariam's heritage is reflected in her innate purity, a trait that characters throughout the play constantly point out, especially when comparing her to others. So, Alexandra, Mariam's mother, decries Herod's lower birth by calling him a "Base Edomite, the damned Esau's heir" who is a "fatal enemy to royal blood" (1.2.83, 90), as runs in her own and in Mariam's veins. Doris, Herod's first wife, notes Mariam's "purer cheek" which "rob[bed]" Herod and the throne from her (2.3.223-224). Mariam also asserts her own purity by comparing it to the illegitimacy of others, especially Herod and his sister Salome. In responding to Salome's rants against her, Mariam reminds her that

My birth thy baser birth so far excell'd  
I had to both of you the princess been.  
Thou parti-Jew, and parti-Edomite,  
Thou mongrel: issu'd from rejected race,



Thy ancestors against the Heavens did fight,

And thou like them wilt heavenly birth disgrace. (1.3.233-238)

While the use of racial superiority as an argument for one's own purity is troublesome, Mariam's assertions pale in comparison to the actions of Herod, Salome, and Doris. The illegitimacy of Herod's claim to the throne, Doris's curse of Mariam's children, and Salome's plot against Mariam force her to claim essentialized superiority in racial terms. Cary uses Salome, and at times Doris and Cleopatra, in the trope of the whore in contrast to Mariam's "virgin" nature.

These traditional dichotomies are also deployed in the language of church controversy, especially arguments concerning the church as the rightful "bride of Christ." Donne eloquently posits the argument in his poem "Show me dear Christ thy spouse." The opening line names the church as "Thy spouse" and describes her as "bright and clear" (1), one of the few explicit descriptions of her within the poem. Like Mariam, the "spouse" is described through the use of dichotomy, positing her virtue by what she is not. Donne asks "What! Is it She, which on the other shore / goes richly painted? or which rob'd and tore / Laments and mournes in Germany and here?" (2-4), thus setting up Catholicism with its perceived excesses ("richly painted") and Lutheranism with its severe austerity ("rob'd and tore") as opposed to one another as well as to the one true "spouse." The poem's answer is that Christ's "mild Dove" is revealed and "most trew, and pleasing to thee, then, / When she is embrac'd and open to most men" (12-14). The sonnet's turn in representing the true spouse as one who is "open to most men" is especially ironic in the context of the accusations made in Cary's play and in the saga of Catholic women on trial for heresy and treason, such as Clitherow. Harboring priests could lead to charges of adultery and lascivious

behavior. In the play, Herod links Mariam's chastity to her silence by invoking the image of sexual promiscuity through his claim that "she's unchaste, / Her mouth will ope to ev'ry stranger's ear" (4.2.433-434). As the mission priests preached to Catholic women who willingly listened, Mariam speaks indiscriminately and thus is seemingly unchaste. But, as Donne's poem argues, the true spouse of Christ, whether it be the church or an individual member, is one who speaks the truth to all.

While history and heritage grant both Mariam and the Catholic church legitimacy, the stronger argument lies in their actions which show themselves as truth. Inherent virtue is revealed in the choices Mariam and English Catholics such as Cary make. In any religious controversy, the public voice of those in the minority—priests, martyrs, women—threatened authority and served as a marker of religious piety. As author, Cary uses the play as a statement of this principle by its subject and its very existence. Yet, this public voice must be couched within the parameters of religious ideology and authority, as is the case with Margaret Clitherow whose "voice" is actually voiced by her confessor and whose actions, like Cary's, reflect the dutiful Catholic more than a rebellious woman or wife. Mariam's public voice in her criticism and renunciation of Herod shows her loyalty to her heritage and virtue. Yet, she faces criticism for these actions, even from herself. In the opening scene, she chides herself ("oft have I with public voice run on") for criticizing Antony for insincere mourning while she is now conflicted at the news of Herod's apparent death (1.1.1). Sohemus, Herod's counselor whose admiration for Mariam is unceasing, recognizes the hastiness of her forswearing of Herod and remarks that "Unbridled speech is Mariam's worst disgrace" (3.3.183). The chorus articulates

the risk for women who act in opposition to their husbands, even when their intentions are virtuous:

That wife her hand against her fame doth rear,  
 That more than to her lord alone will give  
 A private word to any second ear,  
 And though she may with reputation live  
     Yet though most chaste, she doth her glory blot,  
     And wounds her honour, though she kills it not.

When to their husband they themselves do bind  
 Do they not wholly give themselves away?  
 Or give they but their body, not their mind,  
 Reserving that, though best, for others' prey?

No sure, their thoughts no more can be their own,  
 And therefore should to none but one be known. (3.3.226-238)

The chorus's criticism is the dilemma facing Catholic women who act against their Protestant husbands and, to a larger degree, the dilemma facing all Catholics who act against the crown.

The solution to such a conflict is what Catholic pedagogy proposes as one's true duty. Spouse, church, and nation should all be aids to one's own salvation. Stoic adherence to that belief comforts and strengthens the resolve of English Catholics, and in Mariam's case, her decision to remain silent in the midst of Herod's persecution. Because of Salome's plotting, Herod believes that Mariam has been untrue to him with Sohemus. To this accusation, Mariam responds with stunned awe rather than with her earlier verbosity, asking only

“Is this a dream?” (4.4.184). Herod’s accusation is full of the language of essentialized beauty and virtue previously associated with Mariam whom he now sees as tainted and false:

Oh Heaven, that ‘twere no more,  
I’ll give my realm to who can prove it so:  
I would I were like any beggar poor,  
So I for false my Mariam did not know—  
Foul pith contain’d in the fairest rind  
That ever grac’d a cedar. Oh thine eye  
Is pure as Heaven, but impure thy mind,  
And for impurity shall Mariam die.

Why didst thou love Sohemus? (4.4.185-193)

Mariam replies by removing herself from such interrogations, stating her denial in simple terms: “They can tell / That say I lov’d him, Mariam says not so” (4.4.194-195). Like Clitherow facing her heresy charges or Cary facing accusations of kidnapping her sons to send abroad, Mariam retreats into a passive stance of a silent, chaste woman that upholds her virtue as a chaste, silent woman. The only defense she offers throughout the rest of the play is said in her soliloquy before facing Doris’s curses and her execution. She berates herself that she “presum’d so much” that her beauty and virtue could never turn Herod against her (4.8.1), but she finds comfort in her faithfulness which triumphs over what she sees as her lack of humility:

Had I but with humility been grac’d  
As well as fair I might have prov’d me wise:  
But I did think because I knew me chaste,

One virtue for a woman might suffice.  
 That mind for glory of our sex might stand,  
 Wherein humility and chastity  
 Doth march with equal paces hand in hand.  
 But one, if single seen, who setteth by?  
 And I had singly one, but 'tis my joy,  
 That I was ever innocent, though sour:  
 And therefore can they but my life destroy,  
 My soul is free from adversary's power. (4.8.558-570)

Ironically, she has achieved humility through her stoic silence, a quality that turns her execution into a martyrdom.

The execution is not seen on stage, but reported by Nuntio, Herod's servant. The reported nature of the execution has parallels in the "retelling" by Mush of Clitherow's life, and at another level, Cary's own life by her daughter. Thus, Clitherow and Cary "speak" through the voice of religious authority: a priest and a nun under the direction of her convent. They quietly accept their fate, good or bad, as Mariam does at her execution. Nuntio describes the scene:

She came unmov'd, with pleasant grace,  
 As if to triumph her arrival were:  
 In stately habit, and with cheerful face:  
 Yet ev'ry eye was moist but Mariam's there. (5.1.55-58)

Herod, recognizing his error, is tormented by these details as further proof of Mariam's innocence. Mariam sent Herod this message through Nuntio:

Tell thou my lord thou saw'st me loose my breath  
 [. . .]

If guiltily, eternal be my death—

[ . . . ]

By three days hence, if wishes could revive,

I know himself would make me oft alive. (5.1.73, 75, 77-78)

Mariam's setting of three days for Herod's repentance is Cary's allusion to the three days before Jesus's resurrection, but Mariam need not wait so long. Her chastity, now recognized by Herod, grants her eternal life, even as Nuntio bluntly states that "her body is divided from her head" (5.1.89) as the result of her beheading. In a sense, Nuntio is incorrect because Mariam's head, body, and soul have all been united in the same service to her heritage, integrity, and faithfulness. Herod, like the Protestant husband and the English crown that turn their back on their faithful Catholic spouses, is the one divided, losing his wits in his grief. He accepts the blame for Mariam's death, even after acknowledging Salome's manipulations, because he lacked the faith and integrity that sustain Mariam. He makes the admission that

Her heav'nly beauty 'twas that made me think

That I with chastity could never dwell:

But now I see that Heavn's in her did link

A spirit and a person to excel. (5.1.243-246)

While Herod doubted that physical and spiritual beauty could co-exist, Mariam, like the faithful Catholic, proves that such external and internal qualities can be balanced, just as, for recusant Catholics, public and private duties co-exist in harmony. The play ends with the chorus ordaining these events a "warning" against acting hastily, especially for those in power (5.1.291). Because of the play's history as a closet drama, *The Tragedy of Mariam* provides intriguing

warnings, messages, and examples for its intended audience. Mariam and Herod serve to remind readers of the questions of loyalty directed to an audience sympathetic to Catholic causes. Cary, a Protestant at the play's publication but turning towards conversion, would share this view. More importantly, Mariam's own struggles over how best to present and preserve her piety serve as a pedagogical model for recusancy in the English Catholic community.

#### Richard Crashaw and the Teresa Poems: Salvation through Acts of Reading

As a religious poet of the seventeenth century, Richard Crashaw rightfully belongs to and has been studied as a metaphysical poet, yet his poetic style, often described as baroque, has served to separate him from the seemingly more restrained voices of Donne and Herbert. Crashaw's life and poetry are especially reflective of the religious controversies of early modern England. Son of William Crashaw, a Puritan preacher with a strong and public aversion to Catholicism, Richard Crashaw found early success with his poetry written while a student at Charterhouse in the late 1620's. The poetry of this period, according to Paul Parrish's study of his life and works, suggests that Crashaw "is still very much his father's son" because of the political nature of the poems on the king's coronation and the Gunpowder plot in which "Catholic plotters are associated with the night and darkness" (21). Yet as his religious life saw changes, so too did his poetic style. At Peterhouse, Cambridge, Crashaw, "a young man moving further away from the severe faith of his father and gradually toward the warmth and luxury of Rome" (Parrish 25), completed his education and began preaching. As curate of Little St. Mary's and as a member of the Little Gidding religious community, he extolled the value of ceremony and ritual which stood in contrast to the growing wave of Puritan simplicity. His growing Catholic

sympathies led him to be cited by Puritan investigators in 1641 for “worshipping the Virgin, for engaging in ‘superstitious’ practices at Little St. Mary’s, and for following ‘the popish doctrine of private masses’ [and] of ‘other practices . . . of like nature’” (Parrish 29). In 1644, all scholars at Peterhouse were to be present to answer charges that they had not followed Parliamentary dictates to destroy all church “altars, tables of stone, tapers, crucifixes” and other religious materials seen as too High Church, or worse, Catholic. Along with Joseph Beaumont and three others, Crashaw was not present to answer these inquiries made by the Parliamentary Commissioner and thus was “formally ejected from the Fellowships” on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1644 (Parrish 30).

In actuality, Parrish notes most documents indicate that Crashaw had left Cambridge in early 1643, fearing his position within Peterhouse was growing more precarious, and by 1645 he had converted to Catholicism (31). In 1646, the Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria was writing to Pope Innocent on Crashaw’s behalf. Arriving in Rome during this year, Crashaw had already suffered the loss of his homeland and the intellectual and financial security of a university position. During these tumultuous years, he flourished creatively, culminating in the publication of his poems in *The Steps to the Temple* in 1646. While in Rome, he “was initially a resident in the Venerable English College, an institution set up as a hospice and then converted to a college for those studying for the priesthood,” before being appointed to serve Cardinal Pallotta “in late 1647 or early 1648” (Parrish 31). In April 1649, he was:

then appointed to the office of beneficiatus at Loreto . . . [where]  
we may speculate that Crashaw would have experienced in his  
new office some of the peace and satisfaction that had been difficult



to find over the previous five years; he was now to serve in the church which, tradition said, was the house of the Virgin and the location in which she received the Annunciation. (Parrish 32)

Soon after arriving at Loreto, Crashaw died on August 21, 1629. In 1652, a posthumous volume of his work entitled *Carmen Deo Nostro* was published in Paris. It contained revised poems from the 1648 edition of *Steps to the Temple*, and, as Parrish observes, it is from this text that Crashaw's reputation was established as a poet revealing both English and Continental influences (32-33).

It is during his time of religious conversion that Crashaw begins writing his poems to St. Teresa of Avila, the great Counter-Reformation Spanish saint and mystic. These three poems, "The Hymn to St. Teresa," "An Apologie for the fore-going Hymne," and "The Flaming Heart," have as their themes a message similar to the hagiographies and spiritual biographies of Clitherow and Cary: example, conversion, and salvation. The Teresa poems are in fact re-tellings of her story that were well known through the publication and translations of her spiritual writings. Yet rather than taking the voice of St. Teresa in his poems, Crashaw's narrator is an observer, albeit not a passive one. The effect is the creation of St. Teresa as spiritual guide and the narrator as the penitent being led by her. The means of salvation offered in these poems are thus more ritualistic and more Catholic methods looking to the model of the saint as a religious template. This movement towards ritual is reinforced by Crashaw's maturing Baroque style. Unlike the metaphysical conceit which

is based upon the philosophical doctrine of correspondance and . . . give[s] at its best the effect of truly exploring the nature of some metaphysical problem, . . . the Baroque conceit does not explore: it

rather views the same paradox or symbol from various angles, reviewing and revising and restating and expanding the issues until some truth of emotion gradually grows out from all that glittering elaboration. (Martz, *The Wit of Love* 126-127)

The Teresa poems fully reveal this use of the conceit, and while the sensual language is used primarily in describing Teresa's experiences, the narrator's clearly longs to share in this ecstasy. This is an essential component of mysticism; Parrish states that "mysticism leads to a denial of the phenomenal world and to a de-emphasis on the human being experiencing the vision or writing the poem." (45). At the end of each of the Teresa poems, most especially "The Flaming Heart," the speaker, through the example of the saint, is prepared to share in the experience and salvation.

Four poems eventually comprise Crashaw's poetic devotions to St. Teresa. "A Hymn to St Teresa" and "An Apologie for the fore-going Hymn" were first published in 1646. In 1648, the third poem, "The Flaming Heart," completed the devotional narrative begun by the earlier poems, and "A Song," added immediately after the trio offered separate commentary "on the state of ecstatic sacred love which the three Teresa poems celebrate" (Williams 52). In 1652, the set was reprinted once again with the addition of twenty-four lines at the conclusion of "The Flaming Heart" (Williams 52) which further illuminates St. Teresa's influence on Crashaw's religious life. In this conclusion, the narrator calls upon St. Teresa to inspire in him the same mystical experience as her own. Through this plea, the poet makes explicit what had been implicit in the spiritual biographies: a way to utilize another's life to inspire and to instruct one's own.

St. Teresa (1515-1588) was a favorite heroine of the Counter-Reformation for both her mysticism and her spirit of reformation as she established the Discalced Carmelites, a reformed order of the Carmelite nuns. Because of her “most striking . . . ability to be common and extraordinary at the same time, to work and sweat and worry and then to achieve the heights of mysticism and spiritual ecstasy” (Parrish 145), she is an especially apt model for English Catholics to follow as they too struggle to maintain a community as well as their own individual spiritual lives. She had recounted her own story in *Vida*, published in Spain in 1588 and “as early as 1611 an English translation of *The Life* by a W. M. was published in Antwerp,” the initials being those of “a William Malone, a Jesuit persecuted and in exile from Ireland” (Kavanaugh and Rodriguez 48). Additional English translations followed in 1623 and 1642 (Parrish 147). As a young Spanish girl, Teresa had an early desire for martyrdom. She then began experiencing mystical visions, including the visitation by a seraphim who pierced her heart with a flaming dart. This story has been immortalized in various paintings and ultimately by Alberto Bernini’s sculpture in the Conaro Chapel at Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome. But more relevant to this study, St. Teresa’s life and mystical experience become, in Crashaw’s representations, the template by which the poetic speaker and, through him, the reader, can find salvation. Two of these poems, “A Hymn to St. Teresa” and “The Flaming Heart,” most directly retell the saint’s experience rather than focusing on the narrator’s perspective until the concluding lines. The distancing throughout the poem allows Crashaw first to explore and elaborate on the religious ecstasy experienced by St. Teresa before he attempts to experience it for himself. In the final powerful conclusions, most especially in “The Flaming

Heart," Crashaw is able to locate the experience at an extremely personal level. The use of the saint as an intermediary does not detract from the religious experience, but rather places it within a Catholic emphasis on ritual and ceremony.

In "A Hymn to St. Teresa," Crashaw established a structure that follows the meditative tradition of St. Ignatius in which an "event in sacred history" is reconstructed as a starting point for contemplation and introspection" (White *The Metaphysical Poets* 231), a moment when "every detail of an imagined scene [is brought] vividly to one's mind, as if one were present, and then to draw fruit and grace in prayer and new resolutions" (Evennett 48). Ignatian mediation remained an important part of the Jesuit experience and mission throughout England as a way to educate Catholics in prayer. Crashaw opens the poem with a statement of his goals, then moves to a detailed retelling of St. Teresa's story. The voice in the opening lines is that of the narrator who "To prove the word" plans to "now appeal to none of all / Those thy old Souldiers, Great and Tall" but rather to the story of the "soft child" Teresa (2-4, 14). The "word" is the salvation promised by love, "absolute sole lord of LIFE and Death" (1-2). Crashaw's confidence, however, comes not from an internal assurance but from relying upon the saint's experience. Martz argues that "we can tell from the firmness of this opening that a mature, controlling, reasonable intelligence will be at work, dealing with the meaning of the Saint's life, as the narrator recalls it and recounts it for us" (*Wit of Love* 132). Yet, this confident and rational thinking does not fit within the mystical experience which is composed of supernatural effect and passionate, unexplainable response of the recipient. The narrator of

the poem may have an intellectual understanding of St. Teresa's experience, but he is not yet emotionally prepared to share in it.

Crashaw then moves into the account of Teresa's childhood wish for martyrdom. In his version, the young Teresa has an almost innate and unexplainable desire for martyrdom so that she can share in the joys of heaven:

Scarce has she learn't to list the name  
Of martyr; yet she thinks it shame  
Life should so long play with that breath  
Which spent can buy so brave a death.  
She never undertook to know  
What death with love should have to doe:  
Nor has she e're yet understood  
Why to show love, she should shed blood  
Yet though she cannot tell you why,  
She can LOVE, and she can DY. (15-24)

In the *Vida*, Teresa describes her longing for martyrdom as a desire to be in heaven, but she seems keenly aware of the impetus for these ideas that inspired both her and her brother:

But we two joynd muche together in reading the *Lives of Saints*;  
and when I saw the martrydomes, through which, some of them  
had passed for the love of our Lord, me thought they had bought  
Heaven (where they were to see and enjoy his Divine Majesty) very  
cheap: And my self also desired much to dye so; not for the love  
which I found my self to bear him; but rather, that I might come by

so compendious a way to enjoy those great felicities which I had read to be imparted in Heaven. (2)

In the opening of the poem, Crashaw purposely moves away from the more formal and impersonal hagiographic description of Teresa the saint in order to focus on Teresa the child, naive yet already sure of her path in life. R. V. Young argues that Crashaw “is interested in Teresa more as a saintly pattern for the faithful than as an individual” (9), yet casting her as an unknowing child in the opening lines creates a more genuine, innocent piety.

When Crashaw describes Teresa’s mystical experiences in the poem, he uses the exuberant and passionate imagery characteristic of the Baroque style. For example, he creates God in the image of a lover who calls Teresa to Him, much as Donne does in his Holy Sonnets. In Crashaw’s poem, the narrator is distanced from the experience. Throughout this description, the speaker’s voice narrates this interchange, but does not participate in it: “Sweet, not so fast! Lo thy fair Spouse / Whom thou seekst with so swift vowes, / Calls thee back” (65-67). He shows how Teresa is overwhelmed by God’s presence by exclaiming, ‘How kindly will thy gentle HEART / Kisse the sweetly-killing DART! / And close in his embrace keep / Those delicious Wounds, that weep / Balsom to heal themselves with” (105-09). The speaker, however, remains outside the actual experience, thus acting as a “rational presence” who “with his tone of familiar conversation, controls the Baroque extravaganza” (Martz, *The Wit of Love* 135). Yet, it is this “extravaganza” of emotion that characterizes the mystical experience which will lead the speaker to salvation.

In the hymn’s concluding scene, we are given brief glimpses of the speaker’s opportunity to share in Teresa’s experiences, although this is couched

within her entry into heaven, the final reward foreshadowed in her mystical visions. In heaven, Mary, the angels, and the “good workes” (139) done by Teresa await her, but what is even more welcoming is the image of Teresa’s earthly suffering becoming the heavenly reward she imagined as a young child. As the scenes of suffering were described in terms that emphasized the overwhelming power of the experience, so too is the transformation of the suffering to salvation. Crashaw describes it as:

All thy old woes shall now smile on thee  
 And thy pains sitt bright upon thee  
 All thy sorrows here shall shine,  
 All thy SUFFERINGS be divine.  
 TEARES shall take comfort, and turn gemms  
 And WRONGS repent to Diademms.  
 Ev’n thy DEATH shall live; and new  
 Dress the soul that erst they slew.  
 Thy wounds shall blush to such bright scarres  
 As keep account of the LAMB’S warres. (145-54)

Teresa will be surrounded by the souls in heaven as well as by her good works. In this last image, the speaker acknowledges his place in relation to her. Her works act as a guide to his own salvation. However, just as at the beginning of the poem, the narrator uses the plural “we” rather than the more personal “I,” Teresa’s life serves as inspiration not just to the narrator, but to the reader as well. Teresa’s “rare WORKS” will “here/ . . . feed our soules,” and “be / Both fire to us . . . ” (155, 157, 161). The hymn’s final lines describe Teresa as a guide who walks alongside God, modeling for man a path to salvation:

Thou with the LAMB, thy lord, shalt goe:  
 And whereso'ere he sett's his white  
 Stepps, walk with HIM those wayes of light  
 Which who in death would live to see,  
 Must learn in life to dy like thee. (178-82)

The narrator's role in "A Hymn to St. Teresa" is to observe and retell her experiences in terms that match the ecstatic nature of her mystical visions. While Crashaw accomplishes this through his use of Baroque imagery, he distances the narrator from the experience. The poem shows an incredible balance between the controlling tone of the narrator, who even withdraws himself further by aligning his voice with a universal voice, and the elaborate, even chaotic, descriptions of Teresa's joy and suffering. Yet, the narrator is unable to embrace completely the mystical experience as the means to salvation. Crashaw understands the purpose of meditating on a saint's life, but by the poem's conclusion, he still "must learn" to apply it to his own life—the ultimate goal of writing and reading spiritual biographies and hagiographies.

"The Flaming Heart" fulfills this goal by completing the movement toward the individual. The title of the poem is "generally thought to copy the title of Sir Toby Matthew's English translation of the *Vida, The Flaming Heart of the Life of the Glorious S. Teresa* published in 1642 (Williams 61). This title draws the reader's attention immediately to the scene of Teresa's most famous mystical experience in what begins another Ignatian-like meditation. The poem begins with the narrator's purpose—to convince the "well meaning readers" to:

. . . be rul'd by me; and make  
 Here a well-plac't and wise mistake,



You must transpose the picture quite,  
 And spell it wrong to read it right;  
 Read HIM for her, and her for him:  
 And call the SAINT the SERAPHIM. (1, 7-12)

Crashaw argues for a reinterpretation of the scene which would place Teresa as the central figure rather than the passive recipient of the dart. In order for her life to serve as a template for his own, he must place her in the position of the seraphim, as he argues in the following line: "Give her the DART for it is she / (Fair youth) shootes both thy shaft and THEE" (47-48). St. Teresa moves the reader to a mystical experience which will lead to salvation, yet the narrator has not yet placed himself in this position. As the poem progresses and Teresa's experience becomes more vivid, the narrator will follow.

Crashaw continues re-scripting the interchange between the seraphim and the saint, revising and re-examining the image in the Baroque conceit. Ultimately, the conceit results in a demand to "leave HER alone THE FLAMING HEART" (67) which will become the symbol of his own inspiration. The narrator asks that the passion that Teresa feels be given to him. His excitement and anticipation is evident as he prays that Teresa lead him to the same mystical moment:

Live here, great HEART; and love and dy and kill;  
 And bleed and wound; and yield and conquer still.  
 Let this immortall life wherere it comes  
 Walk in a crowd of loves and MARTYRDOMES.  
 Let mystic DEATHS wait on't; and wise soules be  
 The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee.

O sweet incendiary! shew here thy art,  
 Upon this carcasse of a hard, cold, hart  
 Let all thy scatter'd shafts of lights, that play  
 Among the leaves of thy larg BOOKS of day,  
 Combin'd against this BREAST at once break in  
 And take away from me my self and sin (79-90)

By asking that Teresa's flaming heart be placed within his own, the narrator positions himself in a more direct relationship with her and, through her, with God.

Crashaw concludes the poem by invoking Teresa's experience as the way to the narrator's own salvation. Syntactically, he uses a series of prepositional phrases that link Teresa and the narrator, many of which incorporate motifs of abundance and sensuality:

By all thy lives and deaths of love;  
 By thy larg draughts of intellectual day,  
 And by thy thirst of love more large then they;  
 By all thy brim-fill'd Bowles of fierce desire  
 By thy last Morning's draught of liquid fire;  
 By the full kingdome of that finally kisse  
 That seiz'd thy parting Soul, and seal'd thee his; (96-102)

The final four lines of the poem make clear the narrator's purpose in retelling Teresa's story: through her, he can find a way to achieve salvation. He does not worship Teresa, as the Protestants might claim but rather follows the Catholic tradition of intercession by declaring:

By all of HIM we have in THEE;

Leave nothing of my SELF in me.

Let me so read thy life, that I

Unto all life of mine may dy. (105-108)

Helen White argues that while this poem, especially the final lines, contain several elements which make it mystical, such as the “desire to express his wonder and delight in a fellow creature’ and “the great yearning, the basic passion, that gives volume and meaning to the ecstasy of the verse,” it is ultimately not mystical because the speaker has yet to enter into the same experience (*The Metaphysical Poets* 222-223). I would argue that by reading the poem as the narrator’s own ecstatic moment of realization, we can use Crashaw’s own metaphor to describe this poem as the dart of St. Teresa entering the narrator’s own heart. It is mystical not in the same sense of Teresa’s moment, but as Catholic tradition teaches and Ignatian meditation practices: salvation through the example of others. For an English Catholic, reading about and meditating upon the religious lives of other Catholics is, in itself, a courageous act in light of the political ramifications of his or her actions. Both Mush in his recounting of Margaret Clitherow’s martyrdom and Cary’s daughter in telling her mother’s story must have seen their acts of writing as a spiritual exercise for the author, and eventually, for the reader. As in all spiritual biographies and the creative works they inspire, Crashaw also elevates the act of reading to a mystical level by moving the narrator and, through him, the reader from a position of outside observer to participant in a subject position similar to that of Teresa. Through her, just as through Margaret Clitherow and Elizabeth Cary, the writer, the narrator and the reader are now prepared to receive the rewards of heaven.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Mush, John. "A True Report of the Life and Martyrdom of Mrs. Margaret Clitherow." *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers Related by Themselves*. Ed. John Morris. Vol. 3. London: Burns and Oates, 1877. 400-440.

<sup>2</sup> Crashaw's poem "A Letter from Mr. Crashaw to the Countess of Denbigh, Against Irresolution and Delay in matters of Religion" (published 1653) illustrates the dynamics of their relationship: Lady Denbigh as patron and Crashaw as a spiritual mentor. The poem also demonstrates Lady Denbigh's uneasiness in religious matters concerning conversion that is evident in her betrayal of Elizabeth Cary.

<sup>3</sup> In her study *Dido's Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003), Margaret Ferguson further analyzes Cary's political commentaries, especially in how *The Tragedy of Mariam* may be read as a further defense of Catholicism in the context of the Gunpowder Plot.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

I began this dissertation by introducing the life and work of Grace More, the great-great granddaughter of Sir Thomas More, who was born in 1591 amid the changing fortunes of the English Catholic community. Professed as Dame Agnes More upon entering the Convent of Our Blessed Lady of Consolation in Cambrai in 1625, More undertook the English translation of the French mystic Jeanne de Cambrai's *The Ruin of Proper Love and the Building of Divine Love*. Jeanne de Cambrai, born in 1581 in Douai, another French city which served as refuge for English Catholic exiles, was a nun who recorded her mystical visions in these works. Like St. Teresa of Avila, Jeanne de Cambrai was also known as a religious reformer. Both of their mystical writings may be seen in this light as part of the Catholic response to the Reformation. For my study, Jeanne de Cambrai's work and More's translation of it continue in the tradition of pedagogical practices for maintaining the Catholic community. While this work is not a culmination of the many approaches to educating and inspiring the English Catholic community that I have explored in my discussion, it does show a convergence of many of these trends. Dame Agnes More is an especially apt example of the English Catholic subject. A daughter reared in a prestigious Catholic family well acquainted with the risks of being Catholic, More would have been educated at home in the humanist tradition established by her great-great-grandfather and in the Catholic pedagogical practices of reading spiritual guides and hagiographies. In the convent, she helped create such texts for other Catholics through her translations, including a work by St. Francis de Sales (Latz x). Yet rather than being solely an interpretive voice for Jeanne de Cambrai's

words, More becomes a poetic voice retelling the narrative. Her translations carefully balanced Jeanne de Cambray's doctrinal arguments with her passionate descriptions, thus defending the Catholic faith as well as inspiring its followers. Viewed from these multiple perspectives, this translation of *The Building of Divine Love* provides a narrative by which we can undertake a final examination of the experiences of the English Catholic community.

The community of English Benedictine nuns at Our Lady of Consolation was founded in 1623. Heather Wolfe's study of reading and writing practices of the Cambray nuns and those in their daughter house, Our Lady of Good Hope established in Paris in 1651, has added much to our understanding of these communities ("Reading Bells" 135). Reading was a constant part of their religious duties as part of the Benedictine rule, but its importance was elevated under the guidance of the English Benedictine monk Augustine Baker, who, from 1624 to 1633, served as served as the nuns' spiritual director. At their request, he began writing reading guides that the nuns divided into two categories: "Touching Praier" and "morall treatises" (Wolfe, "Reading Bells"137). Like most of the writings discussed previously in this dissertation, Baker's works incorporated both pedagogical and poetic styles. He also "translated, modernized, and summarized the works of English and continental late medieval mystical writers including . . . Blossius, St John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila and Julian of Norwich, and often silently integrated their writings into his own commentary" (Wolfe, "Reading Bells" 138), much in the manner that Dame Agnes followed in her own translation of *The Building of Divine Love*. Baker observed that the reading experience was typically practiced in what Wolfe describes as a "linear, 'delightful' fashion" where books are read "for

pleasure *and* profit.” Wolfe states that Baker argued for an emphasis on “usefulness *over* pleasure; that is, reading for the love of God rather than for knowledge or delight” which could distract the reader from prayerfulness (“Reading Bells” 139). Such reading was the method for moving through the stages of mental prayer: reading (also referred to as meditation or discursive prayer), active contemplation (which consisted of immediate acts and aspirations), and for the very few, passive contemplation (mystic union). (Wolfe, “Reading Bells” 139)

The first stage included reading from spiritual works as many had done in preparation for life in the convent. However, this reading differed in that concentration was placed on the meaning of such works rather than the mere enjoyment, a difficult task that was practiced both individually and in communal oral readings. The next stage typically required that the nun recite or recall the text, or in some cases actually read a verse or sentence of it, in order “to see whether his affection will be moved by it” (qtd. in Wolfe, “Reading Bells” 139). In the final stage—mystical union or passive contemplation—the nun was to contemplate on God above any other image, including the text itself. Reading and its “intellectual and imaginative processes” were abandoned for this moment where “a nun stopped reading and began listening” to the “text inscribed internally” (Wolfe, “Reading Bells” 140, 142). This movement from reading to reacting is not a movement from activity to passivity, albeit the term “passive contemplation” implies differently. Rather, the practices of reading and listening and, concomitantly, learning a skill and utilizing it are deliberate actions on the part of the reader, a Catholic seeking his or her salvation.

This dissertation has examined the production and dissemination of Catholic texts as a way of maintaining the larger community. I have frequently noted the multiple audiences for such texts, audiences that would have included women such as Dame Agnes More who, as a Catholic and a follower of Baker, would have read Jeanne de Cambray's *The Building of Divine Love* as a model of spiritual piety and devotion as well as a tool in her quest for mystical union. In transcribing the works of Baker and other writers despite Baker's directives not to write, the nuns of Cambray and Paris

left behind many manuscripts which represent their efforts to write themselves into a higher level of contemplation. Their varying abilities to negotiate Baker's directions is apparent both in the style and content of their poetry and prose and by the way they preserved, transcribed, and transmitted his works. This negotiation plays a critical role in transforming the nun from reader to writer . . . (Wolfe "Reading Bells" 142-143)

Dame Agnes's cousin Dame Gertrude More is the most famous of these writers as her own work was transcribed by other nuns and by Baker himself. Wolfe observes that in one of Gertrude More's poems, More describes the "instance of the natural progression from reading to writing back to reading" in the line "I read what I write of thee." Wolfe further elaborates on this process: "she gathers matter in order to invent matter, she writes down the matter in order to read it, she reads it in order to process it and transform it into acts and aspirations that occur spontaneously and passively" ("Reading Bells" 143). How then does a translation fit into a "spontaneous" and "passive" act when we typically see it as a rote and secondary to an original creative work? As Tina Krontiris argues in



*Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance*, such translations gave women of the period a “legitimate voice and an opportunity to be heard” (10), but ultimately such a voice

was still a less active and hence less masculine literary activity than original composition. It called for a relatively passive role. A woman translator could thus hide behind another author (usually male) and protect herself against accusations pertaining to ideas and content. (20-21)

Dame Agnes’s translation, however, differs from this summary view. Most obviously, Dame Agnes translated the work of another woman. And, as with other translations such as Bucke’s translation of Gaspar Loarte’s rosary guide, Agnes did not write a literal translation, but instead she carefully crafted and edited Jeanne de Cambray’s work into a version which could inspire an English Catholic audience such as her fellow nuns. The manuscript, while showing multiple hands within the text, is clearly attributed to Dame Agnes More in the prefatory statement even though manuscript itself was completed in 1691, almost a half century after her death. This identification of More as author is a recognition of her contribution to the convent and the larger Catholic community.

Dorothy Latz, the editor of the 1992 printing of *The Building of Divine Love* as well as a scholarly edition of seventeenth-century recusant women writers including Dame Gertrude More, argues that works such as this translation are integral to the understanding of the English Catholic community’s identity and preservation: “The women recusant writers . . . lived in a period of intense literary activity inspired by a sense of urgency in preserving a heritage that was

to them threatened" (ix). Stylistically, like Crashaw's work, Cambray's work and More's translation illustrated the convergence of Continental mysticism, English recusant reading practices, and the metaphysical and religious poetry of the seventeenth-century, especially in the use of "Continental metaphors and symbols" (Latz xv). Utilizing the meditative traditions as literary conventions in much the same way as metaphysical poets such as Donne, Jeanne de Cambray begins with the soul in torment in the opening book *The Ruin of Proper Love*. The soul finds redemption through prayer in the second book *The Building of Divine Love* which is where More began her translation. Latz argues that More's reason for not including the first book were to focus on the more positive of the two books, thus emphasizing the soul's redemption rather than its more sinful nature (xx). By beginning at the moment where the soul starts its journey to redemption, More presents Jeanne de Cambray's ideas as a type of guide to prayer and penance, much like the more directly pedagogical sacramental guides that were also published and distributed to Catholic audiences. The opening chapters provide a context for asserting that conversion is beneficial to the soul, using the examples of St. Paul's and Mary Magdalene's conversions. As in Southwell's poem "St Peter's Complaint" or Crashaw's "The Flaming Heart", these examples use Baroque imagery to describe an almost mystical moment. When Mary Magdalene, out of her own "vain curiosity" sought Jesus,

God, seeing her design or intention, looked upon her not so much with a corporal sight as with a sight of the soul penetrating her heart with his heavenly voice—her heart, I say, made stupid or senseless by concupiscence, but now set on fire with Divine Love. And, as it were, even drunk with the love of her God, she followed

Him everywhere to sacrifice her soul to Him by a perfect contrition, and her body by suffering penance. Bitter tears flowed from her eyes, and being even prodigal of her goods, she poured whole boxes of ointment upon the head of our Lord. Thus did she who was named a sinner come to be the servant of Jesus Christ. (de Cambray 7)<sup>1</sup>

And, just as religious guides balanced poetic, passionate descriptions of sacramental and rosary practices with more pedagogical, practical advice, Jeanne de Cambray wrote poetically while also offering advice on these matters. For More and her audience, the need to find a confessor was perilous while living in Protestant England, and Jeanne de Cambray advised that the reader find a guide who is himself spiritual and experienced and “then mortify in yourself all human respect, with a resolution to submit yourself in all obedience to the counsel of the spiritual father” (de Cambray 12). This crisis is more directly addressed in the fifth chapter entitled “Of the great hindrance it is to a soul in a spiritual life if she has not a director who may instruct her how she is to mortify herself, exteriorly and interiorly, concerning the three powers of the soul.” Here, Jeanne de Cambray first describes the arousal of the soul in search of a confessor:

Then this soul, thus agitated and floating in the sin of this world, sometimes finds a serenity or clearness rising and appearing in her . . . but at the first occasion which is offered, lo, the tempests and waves swell up against her—that is to say, her unbridled passions.

And all this is for want of an assured guide . . . (de Cambray 15)

Then, de Cambray advises the soul to “let her commit herself wholly to God, taking Him for her guide” and become vigilant in “mortify[ing] all her exterior

sense, such as her sight, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching, because these exterior senses are the windows by which death enters the soul" (15-16). Here, de Cambray mirrors the practical nature of other spiritual and sacramental guides and even the descriptions of daily life described in religious biographies. The reader should not be "looking upon vain and curious things" nor "listening to detractions against our neighbor, nor to blasphemies or murmurs against God, nor to dishonest words or songs" (de Cambray 16). Appetites should only be used "for mere necessity of our bodies" and if one finds enjoyment in food or drink, "he ought to refer all to God who has created these things for man" and who does "much more . . . for the soul which is so incomparably more noble than the body!" (de Cambray 16-17). Such practical advice is reminiscent of Southwell's "Short Rules for a Good Life" where he includes such advice on mealtimes where one must not be too "precise in the quantity, fineness, or coarseness of the meat, but of that which God hath sent take a competent meal, measurable to my need and not hurtful to my health" (43). Like Southwell, Jeanne de Cambray and More make spirituality part of the everyday lives of their readers.

From such practical advice, Jeanne de Cambray next participates in her own sort of translation exercise through her explication of chapters of the *Canticle of Canticles*. By re-writing this biblical text, Cambray re-voices the biblical passages, an exercise that was often part of a religious education. More, by translating such an explication from French into English, further elucidates the Bible for herself and her English readers. The *Canticle of Canticles* is itself traditionally interpreted as a passionate exploration of the traditional courtship of the soul by God. The courtship is cast in male and female terms, so the text is

an apt choice for a mystical writer such as de Cambray. De Cambray uses the idea of the “annihilation of the soul” as part of her overall spiritual guide, noting that annihilation is not destruction but rather

An elevation of the most supreme part of the soul, wherein is the true portrait of image of the Sacred Trinity, to which image God had created us under Himself to enjoy the union and contemplation of the perfection of that divinity. In these mysteries of the Holy Trinity, the pure spirit remains wholly absorbed by a seraphical Love which can be neither explicated nor comprehended, except if it be by one who has experienced it. (44)

Such a rational explanation of the mystical moment, even while acknowledging that mysticism cannot be explained in such terms but only experienced firsthand, works as an argument against mysticism and Catholic detractors. Protestants often decried mysticism, like Catholicism, by characterizing it as a feminized, and thus untrustworthy, religious practice. Building on the traditional notion of the soul’s courtship explored in the *Canticle of Canticles*, Jeanne de Cambray legitimizes the union of the soul with God through a mystical marriage in one of the her last chapters entitled “Of the nuptial bed wherein the spouse lies with her bridegroom; the soul with God.” The earlier section of the work showed how “the kisses of the spouse mentioned by the wise man in the *Canticle of Canticles* are the excessive desires of the soul” but that “here in this state where the soul reposes in this bed of the Heart of Jesus” where such perfect union is both a heaven and a place on earth, a “Paradise [is] created for the souls of the blessed, where God manifests his love, His glory, and His own Self” (de Cambray 203). This explanation demonstrates how de Cambray integrates pedagogy and poetry

in her work. In doing so, she explicates a highly erotic religious text without losing that passionate tone. Such a process would help the reader understand the text more clearly and, as a result, began his or her own mystical experience.

The final chapters of *The Building of Divine Love* stress the primacy of God's love for the reader and the reader's obligation in return. First, de Cambray addresses the threat of persecution, a reality that More and her audience would find especially relevant and comforting considering the precarious state for English Catholics. Such persecutors have the following purpose within God's plan:

God makes use of creatures, leaving them with their free wills to do the evil they have conceived in their hearts. But out of this evil, God draws a great good, which is the perfection of His elect. The martyrs have suffered great torments for God whereby they have gained the great cross of glory, and yet it is not therefore very likely that the tyrants and hangmen acting out of rage have been exempt from punishment. For if they have not been punished in this world assuredly they are in the other. (de Cambray120)

Standing against such persecution is one part of the Catholic's duty, but as an even more important part of individual salvation is the duty to share it with others. De Cambray recommends in one of the final chapters that "persons of all states, married as well as others, ought to seek after this love of God and teach it to their children [by] their love and example both by works and words" (de Cambray 207), thus stressing the public practice of one's faith beyond private, prayerful behavior. She then rallies the reader by declaring:

Devout souls of all states, take courage, and in suffering persecutions by loving with Jesus, your Lover Who died of love for us, let us also die of loving, in suffering for His Love. Let us now speak a little about this Love, and show what those who are married ought to teach their children (de Cambray 207)

Stating in the conclusion that her purpose in this final message may be understated, as the themes of finding, accepting, and rejoicing in God's love has been the subject of the entire work. However, in these terms, de Cambray stresses the passionate nature of this love in practical terms as the duties of a good Catholic in ensuring a lineage. Catholic parents should "instruct their children in all that belongs to the Catholic faith, to salvation, and to the commandments of God, and amongst these commandments, the most important is that of Love" (de Cambray 207-208). Love, in her definition and in the tradition of other Catholic writers advising the faithful, is the annihilation of the soul that transforms it from a state of isolation and despair to a joyful union with God and with other devout souls: the community of the English Catholics.

As a religious text, Dame Agnes More's English translation of *The Building of Divine Love* serves a variety of audiences and purposes in ways parallel to other Catholic works of the early modern period. Jeanne de Cambray's own mystical experiences become a basis for a pedagogical guide. Mysticism, as described in this work, in the works of other spiritual guides, and in religious poetry, is much like religion itself in demanding participation rather than passivity. Thus, while the popular image of spiritual inspiration may be the dart puncturing St. Teresa's heart in a moment of uncontrolled ecstasy, the reality is that the mystic, the poet, or the priest, like the members of the laity themselves,

must engage in the experience. As a translator of such ideas, Dame Agnes More exemplified the life of the loyal, recusant Catholic within the isolated world of the convent and in the larger world of early modern England and the English mission.

### The Survival of the English Catholic Community and Their Texts

By the time of Dame Agnes More's death in either 1655 or 1656, the English Catholic community had struggled for almost a century to maintain itself amid changing political fortunes and the continual effects of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Hopes for a return to a more public presence and for tolerance faded in the face of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, but saw some revival in the succession of Charles I and his Catholic wife Henrietta Maria. Indeed, it is during the 1640's that Southwell and Cary underwent their public conversions to Catholicism. However, because of Charles I's close association with Catholics, during the Interregnum Catholics faced persecution by Cromwell and his followers, including increased imprisonments and executions. Even though they had supported Charles II in re-claiming the throne in 1660, Catholics still faced legal sanctions against the practice of their faith as Charles II bowed to continued anti-Catholic sentiment, especially in Parliament. The historian John Bossy observes that:

The community which emerged from this obscure crisis was in many ways qualitatively different from the one which entered it. [. . .] Without overdoing the contrast . . . between English pre- and post-Reformation Catholicism, one might suggest that the community which was expanding up to the Civil War was still, taken in all, a traditionalist community, while the community



which began to grow from somewhere about the close of the seventeenth century was a 'modernist' one, in the sense that it shared the essential secular values of the society it lived in. In the interval, Catholics had become reconciled to their environment.

(283-284)

English Catholics would continue to influence the politics and literature of their homeland, but as a quieter yet constant presence in their collective memory and cultural history.

Latz argues that More's translation was never published because of the religious controversies that characterized the Counter-Reformation throughout the late seventeenth-century. Movements of this time such as the Quietist and Jansenist schools of thought came under suspicion by the Catholic church because of their exaggerated and misplaced emphasis on the role of the individual over the divine in mystical practices (Forget). Latz argues that such controversies made all forms of mysticism suspect, and thus is the most likely reason More's manuscript remained unpublished beyond the convent at Cambray (xx). In light of Bossy's comments, we should also consider the changing audience of the English Catholic community who may not have felt a need to rely on such works as another possible reason for the lack of publication and distribution in England. However, it is important to remember that the translation was obviously shared by the English Benedictine nuns with the Cambray convent, as evidenced by variety of scribal hands in the preparation of the manuscript. Transcribing this work, whether from French into English as More did or from More's manuscripts into the final manuscript copy as was

undertaken by her fellow nuns, is both pedagogy and religious practice for the writer and for the audience.

As for the other works I have examined in this dissertation, they too cross literary genres in helping to construct a unified text for English Catholics to follow. Didacticism is balanced with aesthetics, even in the most polemic of these works such as the sacramental guides of John Fowler and Thomas Wright who utilize figurative language such as in the description of the state of English Catholics as a withered garden in need of heaven's dew (Wright 82). This careful balance is maintained in the rosary guides written by Gaspar Loarte, John Bucke, and the English mission's leader Henry Garnet. These treatises, like the sacramental guides, provided instruction for the physical and mental preparation for religious practice, relying upon Ignatian meditation to recreate in detail the religious mysteries recalled in saying the rosary. Such practices are best utilized by poets and priests like Southwell and Donne who formulated a religious poetry that responded to the controversies of the period, especially in how an audience or congregation should act. Members of that congregation such as Margaret Clitherow, Elizabeth Cary and Richard Crashaw continued that model through their lives or through their literary works which served to inspire other readers such as Cary's own daughter and biographer or Clitherow's confessor John Mush.

These writers helped maintain a Catholic community in early modern England by, ironically, creating a place for the individual lay person within the larger religious and national landscape. As for the literary landscape of the early modern period, this study has integrated analyses of poetic and pedagogical works with the intent of providing a context for our understanding and

appreciation of the religious poetry of the seventeenth century. It is neither simply a “Protestant” nor a “Catholic” poetics that informs the literary works of Donne, Southwell, Crashaw, Cary or the multitude of religious and metaphysical writers of the period. It is a poetics that emphasized the reader’s, and in a more spiritual sense, the soul’s response to the inspiring and instructive words of poets and priests.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In the citing of this work, we can see the multiple voices at play. I am utilizing Dorothy Latz’s modern edition of the work (Salzburg, Austria: Institut Für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1992). So, Latz’s comments about the work from her introduction are cited as such. Also, I am using the English translation by Agnes More that Latz has edited and modernized, but all quotations are attributed to de Cambray as the author of the text.

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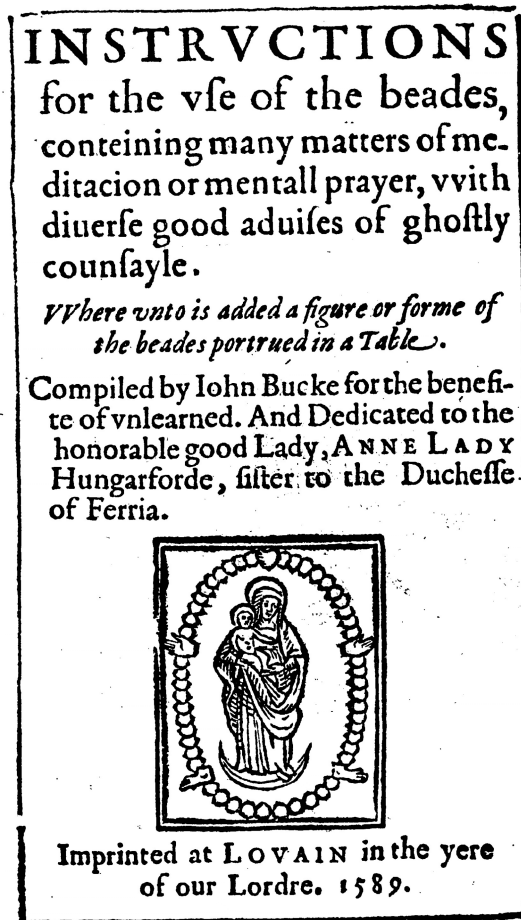
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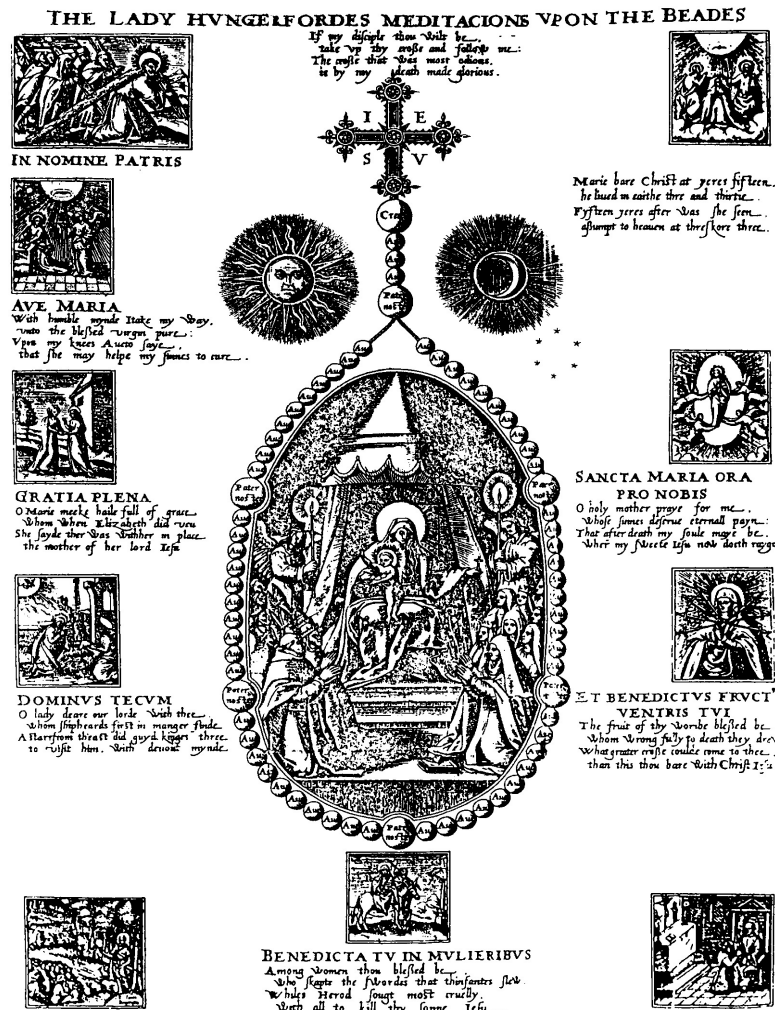
## APPENDIX A

Figure 1

Title page of John Bucke's *Instructions for the vse of the beades* (1589). \*

\* Image copyright by The British Library, all rights reserved. STC 4000.  
*Instructions for the vse of the beades conteining many matters of meditacion or mentall  
 prayer, vvith diuerse good aduises of ghostly counsaile. VVere vnto is added a figure or  
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 vnlearned. And dedicated to the honorable good lady, Anne Lady Hungarforde, sifter to  
 the duchesse of Ferria* by John Bucke (Louvain: I, Maes, 1589). Image published  
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Figure 2

Table from John Bucke's *Instructions for the vse of the beades* (1589).\*

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Figure 3



Concluding image of John Bucke's *Instructions for the vse of the beades* (1589).\*

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FIGURE 4

OF THE CARRYING OF  
THE CROSSE.



*Pondera dum trahit, & trahitur, dum terga  
laborans  
Sub cruce, puniceo rore cruentat iter.*

Image accompanying the fourth dolorous mystery in Gaspar Loarte's  
*Instructions and Advertisements, How To Meditate the Misteries of the Rosary of the  
most holy Virgin Mary* (1597).\*

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## VITA

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