

ideas surrounding noble honour and patriotism was at the heart of the conflict between the nobility and the third estate in 1788. However, this argument is confined primarily to one chapter, and the remainder of the book provides valuable analysis of the extensive literature on the eighteenth-century intellectual conceptualization of the French nobility and its role in the moral regeneration of France. In addition, Smith has considerably expanded our understanding of the attraction that the ideals of classical republicanism held for eighteenth-century social critics, as well as broadening our understanding of patriotism as it was understood during the old regime. Finally, *Nobility Reimagined* reveals much on the general origins of revolutionary language regarding patriotism, virtue, and military service, marking the study as an important contribution to current interpretations of the era.

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TENTLER, Leslie Woodcock — *Catholics and Contraception: An American History*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004. Pp. 335.

Many historians of the United States in the twentieth century take the fact that the Roman Catholic Church opposed the birth control movement as a truism that needs no investigation or explanation. Leslie Woodcock Tentler's meticulously researched new book should certainly encourage those historians to take another look — not at the notion that the institutional church opposed birth control, but that such a stance was simple and uncontested. Tentler takes readers inside the American Catholic community, allowing them to examine the perspectives of both the clergy and the laity as they struggled with the demands of Catholic moral teaching on marriage and family throughout the twentieth century. Hence Tentler's exhaustive research includes source material from pastoral literature (homilies, manuals, and confessor's guides), Catholic lay publications, and extensive interviews with 56 priests, all of which allow her to tell a story that comes as close as possible to revealing how the clergy and laity experienced the Church's teaching. This struggle eventually led to an irreparable crisis of authority in the Church that continues to this day. In doing this work, Tentler measurably contributes to well-established literatures on the history of reproductive politics and the growing literatures that address Catholic social and intellectual history.

Tentler begins her investigation of the Catholic encounter with the birth control issue with a discussion of pastoral practices. During these early years, from the last quarter of the nineteenth century through the end of World War I, Catholic mission preachers delivered a confident message about contraception in their instruction to married Catholics. While these visitors to American parishes tackled difficult subjects, parochial clergy rarely addressed contraception from the pulpit or in the confessional. By the 1920s, the tide had turned on public reticence about contraception, and increasingly a number of Catholic clergy, press, and laity mobilized to articulate a stance against the use and legalization of birth control, even as many lay persons

remained ignorant of that position. Such innocent ignorance was hard to maintain after 1930, with Pius XI's issuance of *Casti Connubii*, which constituted a fully developed teaching opposing contraception. From that point on the laity encountered a clergy in the confessional who had been instructed to bring that teaching forcefully to their flocks. This shift from reticence to inquiry caused increasing trauma for the laity, many of whom were torn between the need to refrain from having more children due to economic circumstances and ever more invasive confessors. These private interactions were complimented by a barrage of pamphlets and increasingly influential radio preaching.

The emergence of the rhythm method during the 1930s made it less difficult for the clergy to maintain a hard line against artificial birth control and allowed the adoption of an increasingly positive view of marital sexuality. These developments proved to be the seeds of what would become a full-blown crisis, both for the clergy and for the laity, accentuated by the arrival of the anovular pill in American markets in 1960. In Tentler's account, this crisis is humanized through the voices of myriad devout Catholics who after years of marriage knew that they could not fully rely on the rhythm method to protect them from additional pregnancies but who also fully appreciated the unitive blessings of marital intercourse. These devout, educated Catholic married people experienced a bitter disappointment when, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul reaffirmed the Church's ban on artificial contraception in *Humanae Vitae*. While the voices of loyal dissent grew in volume and number, an influential group of conservative theologians argued that, if Church teaching had been wrong about contraception, then a whole host of other moral issues would be called into question, particularly abortion. Unable to reconcile their personal experience and discernment with the Church's teaching, more and more Catholics began to turn to their individual conscience in such matters, and away from the authority of the parish priest and the Church hierarchy.

Tentler's exploration of these conflicts provides a much-needed addition to existing histories that deal with the birth control movement and Catholicism. Often told from the point of view of Margaret Sanger and her compatriots, notable histories of the birth control movement frequently relate little beyond the most public and vitriolic condemnations of the Catholic hierarchy in the 1920s. Archbishop Hayes of New York is certainly not the end of the story. Similarly, Tentler's work is a welcome complement to John Noonan's *Contraception*, which was originally published in the 1960s and traces the development of the Church's teaching through the ages by illuminating the ways in which teaching influenced the lives of Catholics within the context of American conditions. Finally, *Catholics and Contraception* joins a host of newer work from historians of American Catholicism, such as John O'Toole's edited volume *Habits of Devotion* (Cornell University Press, 2004), that seek to investigate the way in which this religion is practised in day-to-day life. Thus this book is essential reading for scholars and teachers working on U.S. Catholic history or gender and family history in America.

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