



American Catholics and the Quest for Equality in the Civil War Era

ROBERT EMMETT CURRAN

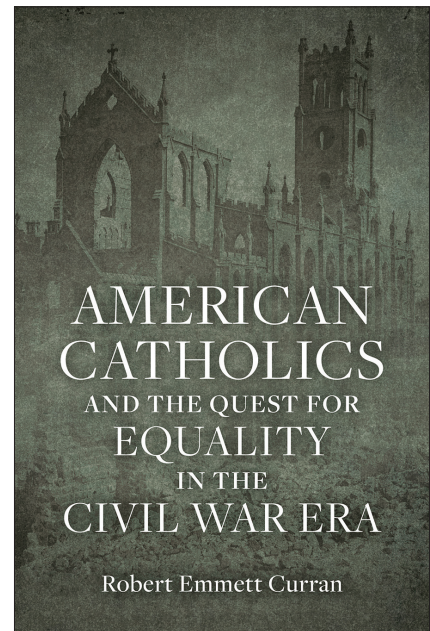
“This is an extraordinary book: Robert Emmett Curran makes clear how Catholics played a pivotal role in every aspect of public life during the greatest crisis in American history. In his comprehensive, often riveting narrative, Curran explains how many of the prelates and parishioners who battled discrimination against their faith also became defenders of slavery and then embraced the ‘Lost Cause.’ An indispensable book for anyone who cares about the Civil War era.”—Michael Kazin, author of *What It Took to Win: A History of the Democratic Party*

“Curran’s lively narrative provides new insight into what are indisputably the most turbulent decades in American history. Although mostly newcomers to the United States, Catholics played an often significant role in the politics of slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction—a role that, in Curran’s telling, foreshadows certain troubling trends in current Catholic political life. His book, grounded in admirably thorough research, will enlighten specialists on the period and also engage the general reader.”—Leslie Woodcock Tentler, author of *American Catholics: A History*

“Curran’s deeply researched and carefully written study of Catholics in the United States repeatedly substitutes close analysis for cliché. It is an important and sobering achievement, as Catholics and all Americans revisit the distant past—from the Mexican-American War to Catholic tributes to the Confederacy—in order to better understand a troubled present.”—John T. McGreevy, author of *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*

Robert Emmett Curran’s masterful treatment of American Catholicism in the Civil War era is the first comprehensive history of Roman Catholics in the North and South before, during, and after the war. Curran provides an in-depth look at how the momentous developments of these decades affected the entire Catholic community, including Black and indigenous Americans. He also explores the ways that Catholics contributed to the reshaping of a nation that was testing the fundamental proposition of equality set down by its founders. Ultimately, Curran concludes, the revolution that the war touched off remained unfinished, indeed was turned backward, in no small part by Catholics who marred their pursuit of equality with a truncated vision of who deserved to share in its realization.

ROBERT EMMETT CURRAN is professor emeritus of history at Georgetown University and author of numerous studies on the history of Catholicism in America, including *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574–1783*.



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