

American Catholicism, American Politics Reconsidered
A State of the Field Panel Discussion with Timothy Matovina, Eugene McCarragher,
Kristy Nabhan-Warren, and Leslie Woodcock Tentler. Moderated by Marie Griffith.

March 10, 2016

Umrath Hall

R. Marie Griffith:

Good afternoon. Welcome to today's state of the field panel discussion on Catholicism and U.S. Politics, sponsored by the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics at Washington University in St. Louis. This is an event intended to be in conjunction and in conversation with last week's public lecture by His Eminence Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York. I know we saw many of you at that lecture, and we're happy to see all of you here today. I do want to invite all of you after the lecture ends to a public reception in Umrath Lounge foyer, right behind you, that will go until seven o'clock. So you're all very warmly invited to join us to that.

As the largest religious communion in the United States, Roman Catholicism is and long has been immensely influential in American political and civil life. From social justice issues to church/state debates, from questions about immigration to the death penalty to the market economy to sexuality and abortion, Catholicism has been central to shaping American public discourse and American political debates over matters of deep consequence to all of our lives. Catholics, once a small minority in a sea of American Protestants, have a proud tradition of dissent against U.S. values and assumptions, best known in noted figures such as Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, Simone Camel of the Nuns on the Bus, and Daniel Berrigan, about whose *Applied Christianity*, by the way, Senator Danforth's own daughter, Mary Danforth Stillman, wrote her undergraduate senior thesis at Princeton. Catholics have also, and increasingly, risen to high positions of power, from President John F. Kennedy to Vice President Joe Biden, to Supreme Court Justices John Roberts, Samuel Lolito, Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, and the late Antonin Scallia, just to name the most obvious examples. On the ground, American Catholics are as diverse in their political views as in their ethnic backgrounds; they are not easily pigeon-holed. We are grateful then, to hear today from a nationally renowned group of scholars of American Catholicism, and to ponder with them the contours of the current ecclesial and political landscape.

Our first speaker today will be Timothy Matovina, who is president of theology and director of Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He works in the area of theology and culture, with specialization in U.S. Catholic and U.S. Latino theology and religion. Prof. Matovina has authored over a hundred essays and reviews in scholarly and opinion journals; he has also written or edited sixteen books, most recently, *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church*, published by Princeton in 2012, the edited volume for Jelio Allesando, *Spiritual Writings*, published by Orbis in 2010, and *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, From Colonial Origins to the Present*, published by Johns Hopkins in 2005. He has received numerous competitive grants and scholarly awards; *Latino Catholicism* has for instance won five book awards, including selection as a Choice Outstanding Title for 2012. In addition to his scholarly work, Matovina

offers presentations and workshops on U.S. Catholicism and Latino theology and ministry throughout the United States.

Next we will hear from Eugene McCarragher, an associate professor of humanities and history and associate director of the honors program at Villanova University. A professor at Villanova since 2000, he has also taught in the history or religion departments at Rutgers, the University of Delaware, and Princeton. His study of liberal Protestant and Roman Catholic social and cultural criticism—*Christian Critics: Religion and the Impasse in Modern American Social Thought*—was published by Cornell University Press in 2000. In addition to publishing scholarly articles in the *Journal of the Historical Society*, *Modern Theology*, and *Modern Intellectual History*, he has also written many articles and book reviews for such venues as *Common Will*, *Books & Culture*, the *Other Journal*, *Dissent*, the *Nation*, *In These Times*, and the *Hedgehog Review*. He has been a fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities and of the American Council of Learned Societies, and he has just completed the manuscript of a historical and theological reflection on capitalism entitled *The Enchantments of Mammon: Capitalism as the Religion of Modernity*.

Third will be Kristy Nabhan-Warren, who is associate professor and Vio and Elizabeth Call Figgy Fellow in Catholic Studies at the University of Iowa. She taught previously at Augustana College and Barria College. Her published work focuses on American Catholicism, Mexican-American lived religion, ethnographic methods in the study of North American religions, women and American religion, and youth and religion. She is the author of *The Virgin of Elbario: Marian Apparitions, Catholic Evangelizing, and Mexican American Activism*, published by NYU Press in 2005. It's a deep ethnography of a Mexican-American Catholic community, and it was nominated for the 2006 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Distinguished Book Award. She's also the author of *The Crusuyo Movement in America: Catholics, Protestants, and Fourth Day Spirituality*, published by UNC Press in 2013. She was awarded a coveted fellowship in the prestigious Young Scholars in American Religion Program at the Center for the Study of Religion in American Culture at IUPUI. One of her current book projects is wonderfully titled *Cornbelt Catholicism: Faith, Food, and Culture in the Heartland*. The powerpoint photocopies in your seat are for Kristy's presentation.

Our fourth and final panelist today is Leslie Woodcock Tentler, who is Emerita Professor of History at the Catholic University of America, where she has specialized in the history of 20th century American Catholicism. She has authored numerous important books, book chapters, and essays, as well as authored or edited three major books of her own; three books authored and one edited. *Wage Earning Women: Industrial Employment and Family Life in the United States, 1900-1930*, published by Oxford in 1979. *Seasons of Grace: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit*, published by Wayne State University Press in 1990. *The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholicism Since 1950 in the United States, the Republic of Ireland, and Quebec*, and *Catholics and Contraception: An American History*, published by Cornell in 2004. And on this last subject I would highly recommend a public lecture Professor Tentler delivered at UNC a few years ago called "Breaking the Silence: Sex, Gender, and the Parameters of Catholic Intellectual Life," available for free viewing at

Vimeo. She is currently at work on a historical survey of American Catholicism to be published by Yale University Press.

Please join me now in welcoming these four as Prof. Matovina commences the panel.

Timothy Matovina:

Thank you Marie, and congratulations to you and all your colleagues at the Danforth Center. It's an honor to be here to speak to this audience as part of this work; the Danforth Center is very needed in academia and in the country, so it's an honor to be part of it, and thank you for all you're doing to launch the center and take it to new places. We did all watch the tape of Cardinal Dolan; we're not going to respond specifically to it, it seemed to be very self-contained and very well done, but we're all aware of what will be said, and that will be part of the q and a in any way that you want to tie it in to what we're going to talk about today. I will speak from my own expertise, which is Latino Catholics, and I want to make two points today; the political impact of Latino voters, as it's a presidential election year, and the impact of Latinos on public Catholicism, the public face of the Church. So first, Latino voters.

The growing Latino electorate has been the subject of much debate. When George W. Bush won a higher percentage of Hispanic voters than any modern Republican presidential candidate in the 2004 reelection, political pundits and strategists made controversial predictions about voter realignment among Latinos. Dick Morris's bold assertion three days after the election exemplifies such claims. Morris said, "The biggest reason for Bush's victory was that he finally cracked the Democratic stranglehold on the Hispanic vote. Though John Kerry won the majority of Hispanic votes, Morris based his contention on estimates that Latino's increased support for Bush since the 2000 campaign accounted for more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the president's 3.1% margin of victory in 2004. According to Morris, Bush's popularity with Latinos was rooted in a platform consistent with their preferences on core issues, as he held firmly to his party's stance on values concerns like abortion and same-sex marriage, but reversed his party's typical positions on issues such as bilingual education, English-Only policies, and immigration reform. Arguing for potentially enormous future consequences stemming from Bush's electoral success, Morris's Republican loyalties were evident in his conclusion that "Bush may have begun to crack the Unholy triple alliance of blacks, Hispanics, and single women that anchors the political base of the Democratic Party." ...That's supposed to be kind of funny, but I don't know. *[Laughter]* This is a nonpartisan talk, but take it wherever you want.

Four years later, Martin Kettle, associate editor of the Guardian, made similarly dramatic proclamations about Latino voters in the wake of their electoral support of Obama. This is supposed to be ironic. Noting that African American votes for Obama represented a relatively modest boost given their longstanding electoral loyalty to Democratic candidates, Kettle opined that "the big racial gamechanger in the voting patterns on Tuesday was not among whites or blacks either; it was among the Hispanic vote." He contended that the 2/3 of Latino voters who cast their ballots for Obama raised his margin of victory among Latinos 25 percentage points above that of John Kerry's far narrower Latino majority in the

previous election. Kettle concluded that the 2008 election is “a signal about the kind of American political map that will take shape later in the 21st century as the Hispanic vote begins to outnumber all others. It is very bad longterm news for the Republicans, whose immigration policies are costing them dear.”

So, where is the Latino vote? Everyone thinks they're about to get it. The post-election enthusiasm of both Kettle and Morris overstated the case. Taking a longer view, Ronald Reagan won 37% of the Latino vote in 1984, just a few percentage points below what Bush got in 2004. In the following three presidential elections, however, Republican candidates received 32, 28, and 21 percent, respectively. Even when Ross Perot's third party candidacies in 1992 and 1996 are taken into account, these decreases temper predictions of Latino voter realignment, since it is at least as possible to conclude that like Reagan, Bush's success among Latino voters reflected his own popularity with them. The longer view also suggests that the 31% of Latinos who voted for John McCain in '08 and the 27% for Mitt Romney in 2012 does not represent an irreversible trend of weaker support for Republican candidates. I suspect that somebody is going to say this year that the Latino vote is going to throw the election, I hope this will help you take a more long and more balanced view of such claims.

Latino voters cast 10% of the votes in 2012, the first time their participation reached double digits in the total electorate. But several factors need to be considered in assessing the overall impact of Latinos on national elections. First, in the three most populous Latino states—California, New York, Texas—which together account for more than half of all Latino voters, the victorious presidential candidate's margin of victory ranged from 9 to 27 percentage points in the last three presidential elections. And of course, as you know, Republicans always win Texas, Democrats California and New York. These comfortable margins mitigate claims of a Latino swing vote in presidential elections, and in fact it might even reduce Latino's incentive to vote, since the states where most of them live largely are predicted before the voters even go to the polls. Secondly, relatively low voter registration and turnout have inhibited Latinos from playing an even greater role in elections. Though the overall Latino population is greater than that of African Americans now, many Latinos are not eligible to vote because they're not citizens or they are younger than the legal voting age. Moreover, even among eligible Latino voters, they participate less than other Americans. In recent presidential elections, less than half of eligible Latino voters cast ballots, while close to 2/3 of African American and white voters did. So there are some factors that are keeping this to be a slow process and not an immediate and dramatic one.

On the other hand, Latino voter impact is frequently noteworthy in local, congressional, and some state elections. Their growing population and increasing participation will continue to augment their electoral influence, and their votes in presidential elections are already critical in swing states like Florida, New Mexico, Nevada, and Colorado, where increased Latino voter turnout and increased voting for Democrats swung those states from Republican in Bush's second election to Obama in both of his elections. Of course—this needs to be kept in mind—in close races the importance of every group of voters is magnified; though Latino voters are as important as any others in such elections, there is not sufficient evidence to deem Latinos, as some have claimed, the “decisive factor.” When

an election is won by less than one percent, how can you decide which votes pushed it over? It doesn't make any sense. Asking if Latino voters were decisive in certain election results is not the sole, or even the most important, question. Rather, more insightful analysts focus on Latinos' participation in voter coalitions that unite diverse constituencies in decisive outcomes to impact electoral outcomes. If Latinos don't join together with other voters they're not going to have the impact they could have, and that's been proven in these states over and over again.

Part two. What's the influence of Latinos within the public stances of Catholics in this country? One religious influence, of course, on Latino electoral participation is the denominational switching in recent decades, which has produced a discernible shift in Latinos' preference of political party. Those survey results differ on partisan preference percentages; Latino Protestants, and especially Evangelicals, are more disposed to the Republican party than Latino Catholics. Four recent surveys concur that while the affiliation of Latino Evangelicals is roughly split between the two parties, Latino Catholics favor Democrats by a margin of 3, or even 4, to 1. The only major exception is Cuban Catholics, particularly the elder generation, among whom the inverse is true; nearly 3 times as many are Republicans, a pattern generally attributed to their higher socioeconomic status and a conservatism born of their painful experience of exile in the wake of the socialist revolution Fidel Castro led in their homeland. Recent surveys also show that the number of Latinos in the United States who are Catholic has dipped for the first time below sixty percent, and nearly one in five Latinos state they have no Latino affiliation. So changes of denomination is going to effect this map. Nonetheless, even as the percentage of Latinos who are Catholic decrease, the numbers of Latinos who are Catholic continues to rise, since the overall Latino population continues to grow so much. The percentage goes down, but the numbers go up, because the number of Latinos in the country is greater. This shrink-while-you're-growing phenomenon of Latino demographics within the Catholic Church has considerable influence within American Catholicism. Latinos now comprise 40% of Catholics in the United States, a growing trend that has led to European-descent Catholics comprising less than half of the US Catholic church for the first time in its history. When you take Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, they add up to more than half the Catholics in this country. Euro-Americans are less than half for the first time. Any discussion of the US Catholic Church must bear in mind that it is not comprised solely, or even overwhelmingly, of the Americanized descendants of the European immigrants of generations past. Rather, while the Catholic Church in the United States is largely run by middle-class, European-descent Catholics, it is also comprised of growing numbers of Latino, Asian, and African immigrants, along with sizeable numbers of US born Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, and some Native Americans. The Democratic preference among Latino Catholics has a noteworthy impact on the overall profile of Catholic voters. It offsets gains Republicans have made in recent decades among white, non-Latino Catholics, who are now nearly evenly split between the two major parties. This upward trend is rooted in Republican stances on issues like abortion and their approach to lessening taxation and government increasingly favored among a Catholic population that has risen economically since World War Two. This is an important point that I think Leslie and others may hit on. We talk about a Catholic vote, but a lot of the Catholic vote is also determined or influenced by the class standing of the Catholics we're talking about, and

white Catholics who have risen in class standing, have simultaneously had greater appeal to the Republican party, whereas Latinos are overwhelmingly working class and have had a greater appeal from the Democratic party. So whether Catholicism is a deciding factor is an open question; it could be other factors that are more influential on these dynamics.

While the most crucial factors for enlarged Latino electoral influence are voter registration, participation in strategic collaboration in effective coalitions, convictions on social and moral issues and trends and denominational affiliation shape the interplay between Latino voters and those who crave their electoral support. But mainly what Latinos have been voting on in the last three elections are economic issues; immigration matters, education and health matters, but like all other American voters, the economy comes first.

One of the main influences Latinos within the US Catholic Church generally is the way they've influenced the views of the bishops on immigration. Catholic bishops of course are well known for their outspoken opinions on abortion, same-sex marriage, but the social issue on which the bishops have spoken most frequently and most consistently across the count is immigration. Arguably, that's largely because there are a large number of immigrants who are their parishioners. So the very presence of Latinos has increased attention of Catholic bishops. It wasn't always that way. There was a thing under President Eisenhower called "Operation Wetback," which as you can tell doesn't sound like something that's very pro-Latino in its focus, and even Catholic bishops at that time were in favor of it, because immigrants were taking jobs from Mexican-American citizen Latinos and so they were in favor of this deportation of immigrants, many of whom were here illegally, but were deported nonetheless as public charges or for other reasons. In more recent decades, of course, the bishops have been much more unified on this, and I think that's an example of Latino's influence.

I was going to say something about Latino's impact on faith-based community organizations, church organizations which are nonpartisan but get involved in issues. There's over 200 of these now in the United States. And it was Latinos in San Antonio that helped kind of pioneer the faith-based organizations that now influence many cities around our country. It's not partisan politics, but it's participation in public issues.

Let me make a quick conclusion.

Finally, at the most basic level, the growing Hispanic presence makes the ramification of moral and social issues more imminent in numerous parishes. Put another way, working class Hispanics have kept the United States Catholic Church from becoming an overwhelmingly middle class church. Employment, worker's rights, education, affordable health care, unintended pregnancy, dignity of immigrants—and so on—are some of the critical pastoral concerns Catholic ministry leaders face in their day to day ministries. In this context, Catholic teachings like those on justice and civic responsibility, political participation, are more salient when embodied in local organizing initiatives that enable grassroots people to address community concerns and participate in local decision making processes that affect them and their families. Arguably, the most significant contribution of Latino Catholics to public Catholicism is the various ways they illuminate that the

sometimes harsh realities of everyday pastoral work are the ordinary means through which the church lives its mission to transform lives, community, and society. Echoing something that we heard from Cardinal Dolan, the church is not just about lobbying; the church is not just about the voting patterns of its members; the church is involved with people's lives in local communities—immigrants, working class people, families—around the country. And that's really the primary way that Latinos and all Catholics influence the work of its church on influencing the political influence of the church on wider society.

Eugene McCarragher:

Good evening. I'd like to thank the Danforth Center for inviting me, along with the rest of the panelists. My remarks are mostly going to be about Catholics in the area of political ideology. I'd like to start by quoting a good Italian Catholic boy, and that would be Antu Tonio Gramchi—not Antonin Scalia.

“We live in an era where the old order is dying, but a new one seems powerless to be born. In that interregnum, a variety of morbid symptoms appear.”

In that spirit, I'm going to advance three distinct, but related, theses. First, that popular Catholic politics reflects the unstable authority of neoliberalism; the old order whose sinessence has given birth to the morbid symptoms of Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton. Second, that the vigorous invocation of Catholic “social thinking” is inadequate to the crisis of political imagination that characterizes our moment, and that that inadequacy is nonetheless a sign of a striving towards something new. And third, that the success of the Sanders campaign, together with the new respectability of “socialism” in our political vernacular, suggest the need for a radical reformulation of Catholic thinking about society and political economy.

Now, I want to be clear what I mean by neoliberalism, because this is a word that gets thrown around quite often in our political vernacular, and I think it's very much misunderstood. Neoliberalism is often considered synonymous with deregulation of business, but its acolytes, though, have not sought to limit state power. This is important to understand. Neoliberals are not about limiting state power, they're about redirecting it in a different way toward the promotion and extension of market activity. Hence, the privatization of many state services, the reconstruction of those that remain public to resemble the institutions of private enterprise. This is where you get this phrase, “running government like a business.” The reduction of the state's welfare provisions and the dramatic enlargement of its capacities for coercion, punishment, and surveillance, and most critically, the insulation of the market from the scrutiny and interference of democratic politics. Now, as Margaret Thatcher's infamous statement once suggested, “There is no alternative.” Neoliberals have aspired to something even greater, which is a sort of, in military terms, full spectrum dominance over the political imagination. The erasure of any desire or conception of any alternative whatsoever to market capitalism. Where traditional liberals used to think of the market and the state as two distinct and antagonistic spheres, neoliberals aspire to remake the state, along with everything else, in the image and likeness of the market. Now, both major political parties continue, I think, to remain enthralled in

neoliberalism, but that dominance is under assault, or its in the midst of reconstruction. Thus, I would contend, thesis one, that the politics of most white Euro-American Catholics reflects this turmoil of neoliberal hegemony. Let's consider white Catholic Republicans for few minutes. According to a recent 2015 Pew Research poll, 53% of white Catholics identify as republican, as opposed to 39% who favored Democrats. The largest spread ever in the history of Pew's polling. Indeed, White Catholics are now proportionally more Republican than white protestants, either mainline or evangelical. Catholic Republicans think the GOP is too liberal on government spending, meaning of course government spending on social welfare, and it's too stingy on military spending. Of all Catholic republicans, 55% think that Donald Trump would make a good or great president, 52% say this of Ted Cruz, and 51% say it of Marco Rubio. 76% support the construction of a wall between Mexico and the United States, while 61% endorse Trump's immigration plans. Now it would be easy, and not entirely incorrect, to say that judging from these statistics, over half of GOP Catholics have few or no problems with a racist, demagogic plutocrat. Most of the commentary about Trump has zeroed in on his unapologetic racism and misogyny. But Trump's appeal, I think, also points to the unsteady hegemony of neoliberal tenets. Now surely, part of Trump's attraction stems from an American reverence for entrepreneurial achievement; regardless of the fact that he inherited a pile, Trump is an icon for the striving small businessman. His meretricious flamboyance is one of the gaudier examples of the neoliberal homage to wealth, and his attribution of economic stagnation usually to incompetence and stupidity both absolves the system on the one hand and hints at a technocratic solution. Notice that Trump always refers to or makes allusions to the "best people" or the "top people." So far, so neoliberal. But his invocation of various class and racial resentments, his appeal to the dark-skinned specter of demographic inundation and cultural dispossession, and his apparent promise to use the power of government to do something about the deteriorating prospects for his working-class supporters, all of these would seem to suggest at first an authoritarian brand of populism. But I think that when you put all of this together—the lavish worship of wealth, the xenophobic demagoguery, and the conception of political economy in terms of expertise—I think what you have actually is less populism than it is a more vulgar brand of corporatism. Now, why would Catholics be drawn to this? Well, for one thing, as Tim said, many middle-class Catholics, like their evangelical counterparts, consider capitalism to be almost a force of nature. It's a part of a cosmic order. Protestants aren't the only Americans to subscribe to the gospel of wealth. Epitomized by the Catholic crusaders for capitalism at the Akton Institute, the Catholic gospel of wealth has developed rapidly over the last four gilded decades, as the descendants of white New Deal Catholics have found a home in Babylon. But there's more than one way to affirm capitalism.

Trump has arguably tapped into something that's been dormant since the 1930s, when Father Charles Caglin and his National Union for Social Justice concocted a very similar brand of little guy-bootstrap-capitalism, solicitude for the working class, and toxic anti-Semitism. What I'm calling Trump's corporatism resonates with a similarly paternalistic ethos that characterizes on strand of Catholic social thinking among both intellectuals and the general Catholic public. The alliance of capital and labor at its mythical center, corporatism represents an attempt to reconcile the dynamism of capitalist markets with a desire for social and personal stability. Like so many brands of populism, in other words, it

fantasizes a capitalism without conflict, whose tensions are inevitably shifted onto some scapegoat. Among Cogliin's supporters it was Jews, for Trump's supporters it's Mexicans and Muslims. Now to me this proves that corporatism, Catholic or otherwise, inexorably trends towards some kind of chauvinism; those conflicts have to be displaced somewhere onto some malevolent other. But more to the point, I think it isn't simply that affluent white Catholic republicans want to protect and legitimate their wealth. Working Class Catholics in particular who endorse Trump see government not only as an instrument of racial protectionism, but also as the custodian of a working class that's been battered for four decades by neoliberalism. It's not as though the party traditionally hospitable to working class Catholics has been doing much for them lately—the Democratic party, that is, the other business party, the left wing of the neoliberal consensus, now distilled in the candidacy of Hilary Clinton. Clinton's political history reflects the harmonic convergence of finance capital, digital technology, and the culture industries. Despite her belated, and I think disingenuous disavowals of many of her husband's achievements, Clinton's fidelity to neoliberal, social, and economic orthodoxy has been pretty adamant. And that's not to mention the pronounced hawkishness of her foreign policy, both during and after her husband's presidency. What do Catholic Democrats make of all this? Well, according to Pew, 69% of Catholic democrats think Hilary Clinton would be a good or great president, while only 46% say the same of Bernie Sanders. Now, that's a 23% difference. Support for Clinton among Catholics, however, seems to be more varied and softer than support for Trump among Republicans. Some see her as the lesser of the evils. Some affirm her success as a woman in fields traditionally dominated by men. Some identify with her lean-in establishment brand of corporate feminism. Some, I think inexplicably, see her as a genuine progressive, devoted to the welfare of the poor and the marginalized. Now what does this fraught Catholic relationship with Trump and Clinton indicate? Well, on one level I think it indicates one of the basic narratives of American Catholic history over the last 50 years which is the entrance of white Euro American Catholics into the entrepreneurial and professional and managerial ranks of corporate capitalism. But I think it also illustrates the impenetrability of a lot of white Euro American Catholicism to what many call the Francis effect. Francis may excoriate unregulated capitalism, but I for one don't see any decisive political or ideological resonance among a lot of American Catholics. Trump's fracas with the pope doesn't seem to have diminished the fondness of Catholic Republicans for him, while Clinton's reconstructed neoliberalism seems to promise little more than a newfangled version of the 1990s. And neither one seems to envision a political economy beyond neoliberalism. Certainly not Clinton, and, for all his bluster, it seems to be neither does Trump. I think that his victory speech last week was very illustrative; when his victory speech turned into an infomercial for many of his products. This is an indication of something; when you are merging politics and commerce so completely. This is neoliberalism.

So, in other words, whether right wing corporatist or centrist establishment in their politics, it seems to me that a lot of white Catholicism doesn't really pose any real alternative of any kind to neoliberalism. But some of you might be out there thinking, "Doesn't Catholic social thought represent such a sign of contradiction?" I have many friends and colleagues who plead such a case, but—thesis two—I remain unpersuaded that "Catholic Social Thought" has either the coherence or the political traction to sustain any

kind of resistance to neoliberalism. Take for instance, “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” the voter’s guide published by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. We’re told in this pamphlet that “workers, owners, employers, and unions have a responsibility to work together to create decent jobs, build a more just economy, and advance the common good.” Economic policy should generate “jobs for all who can work with decent working conditions and just wages,” all while respecting “economic freedom, initiative, and the right to public property.” Now, this is all very genial and friendly, but it requires those Catholics who espouse it—whether they’re parables or politicians or political theologians who invoke Catholic social thought—to deny the nature and logic of capitalism. There is no responsibility to work together. These groups inhabit a capitalist economic ecology, where an economic freedom—otherwise known as competition—is the rule. Jobs for all and just wages are shimmers as the nature and logic of enterprise is to accumulate capital for owners, not provide decent working conditions, just wages, or even jobs for that matter. I want to expand a bit on that last point, because I think that technology is going to be one of the pivotal locations of political struggle in the next generation. Technological innovation under capitalism has always been about disciplining or dispossessing labor. “Cutting costs,” in the value-neutral technocratic idiom of the business schools. And the current wave of automated production technology promises to render problematic the ideal of jobs for all who can work. Anybody who’s read the statistics about the pace of automation and what’s coming in the next wave of automation knows that this is a very real thing. The pace of automation is raising all kinds of urgent questions about the nature of “employment,” the meaning of work, and the political character of technological development. I don’t see anything about this in the voter’s guide, and what I see in Catholic social thought is mostly moralism about “unbridled” or “unchecked” technological progress, with little if any attention to the promises and perils of automation. But bridling or checking technology, even if you stick to that sort of vernacular, would ultimately, it seems to me, mean critiquing capitalist property relations. In other words, that “right to public property,” so dear to Catholic social thought, might have to be rethought in a very unsettling way. That rethinking has in fact been going on, and the alternative vision that has broken through the firewall of consensus is something old but suddenly vibrantly new: “socialism.” Notice I’m putting quotes over this. And I’ll contend that the contest over its meaning is one of the most crucial ideological and political debates going on in our time. Now, Sanders exemplifies the amorphousness of this socialism in our contemporary political vernacular. He’s called himself a democratic socialist, a social democrat, and a New Deal liberal. He’s even called Pope Francis a socialist. But it’s worth noting how Sanders defines the pope’s, and therefore his, socialism. So I want to read the full quote from that interview on Canadian television.

“The pope has a very, very radical critique of the hyper capitalist system. He condemns the worship of money, the idolatry of money. He’s calling on us to live our lives in a way that alleviates human suffering, that does not accelerate the disparities of income and wealth. Wealth should be used to serve people, not as an end in itself.”

Now this is all in line with Sanders’s speech at Georgetown last November. Now, note the opposition here, not to capitalism as such, but to hyper capitalism. Note also the emphasis on conversion of heart and moral rectitude. Note what’s not there; the abolition of wage

labor, worker's control of production, and social ownership of productive property—all those things we necessarily have usually associated with socialism. Now it seems to me that these are pretty serious omissions, but that's why—thesis three—the reappearance of and conversation about “socialism” could occasion a grand revision of Catholic thinking about social and economic matters. It's worth recalling at this point that “Catholic social thought” itself emerged in the 19th century in part as a response to the rise of socialism and anarchism. But where Catholic social thought has usually declared itself to be an antagonist of and a surrogate for these movements, I think we should consider the possibility that we might treat them not as competitors but in a way as brethren who have much to learn from each other. It's here, I think, that the most hopeful political promise of Catholicism lies. In other words, we need to take up again the oft-maligned witness and ordeal of liberation theology; a return of sorts to that spirit of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Daniel Berrigan.

Thank you.

Kristy Nabhan-Warren:

Thank you so much for coming here and for having me here. I want to thank Marie, Leigh, and Sheri Peña for all of their hard work and dedication in bringing us here today. I won't be able to spend tons of time on each image, but I wanted you to have some images. How many of you all have been to Iowa before? Alright, so you have some images. I didn't want to assume.

Anyone who drives through the Midwestern region of the United States today will be sure to notice one thing: rows upon rows of corn. Whether it's green and stalky in the summer or brown sugar-colored in the fall, corn dominates the Iowa landscape. The plant and its treasured yellow grain are featured in Iowa folklore, art, and in Midwestern cookouts as well as local and state fairs, where butter-drenched ears are a featured cuisine. They're quite delicious, really. Corn has been the dominant Midwestern crop since the 19th Century in these six states: Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and South Dakota are collectively known as the corn belt. With the concomitant rise of commercial agriculture and livestock, most especially hogs and cattle, demand for corn has risen since the mid 20th century. So images 2 and 3 will show you some corny nostalgia for corn; yet nostalgia for county fairs and Future Farmers of America events must be tempered with a new reality for workers, crops, and animals today, one that has deep political implications for how we welcome and care for—or don't welcome and care for—Latinos and newer immigrant groups. The 1980s broad-scale mechanization of farming, animal husbandry, and slaughtering may be more efficient, but it's proven damaging, even devastating, to the earth and to the workers. Indicative to the current state of animal husbandry, welfare, and food production today are the concentrated animal feeding operations, more commonly known as CAFOs. There's an image of the hog operation. The smell is inescapable if you're downwind from them. Latino workers not only make up a large percentage of the CAFO workforce, mostly hogs, cattle and chickens—remember the big flue epidemic that hit Iowa where all the eggs had to be destroyed, those were chickens that were kept in CAFOs—they also dominate the workforce at the next phase in production, the combined

slaughterhouses and packing plants that dot the Iowa landscape. Images 5 and 6 are communities where I'm currently doing ethnographic work. West Liberty Foods in Iowa, formerly Oscar Meier; you'll see the turkey processing plant; the vast majority of Latinos, 98% of workers, work here. And Image 6 is Tyson Foods in Columbus Junction, Iowa. It's the largest hog facility in Eastern Iowa.

From the mid 19th century Methodist itinerant ministers and Irish and German Catholics who made Iowa their new home, Protestants and Catholics have made their mark on the state's religious and cultural history. Since the postbellum 1870s, corn and animal husbandry have largely defined the contours of the land and livelihoods of those who inhabit it. But the Corn Belt, I'd like to argue, is more than an agricultural and land-based regional characterization; the Corn Belt can be an evocative conceptual tool to reimagine and rework American religious histories and sociologies. Present day Catholicism in the corn belt is part of a complex and emergent global Midwest, and it is Latinos, the vast majority of whom are Catholics—despite the shift to Pentecostalism, which Tim picked up on—who are at the center of the global Midwest. It is Latinos who, joined by even more recent immigrants and refugees, primarily Mayans, Sudanese, Congolese and Burmese, cultivate and pick the crops as well as prepare the meat that feeds the world. Images 7 and 8—Iowa is the top 6 in the nation for meatpacking and the next one I thought was really interesting, 8, Latino migration and meatpacking. You'll see where Latinos have settled—and when I say Latinos, the vast majority of Latinos in the state are of Mexican origin—where you find meatpacking plants, so you will find Latino families. It's a chain migration pattern.

Latinos are now the majority non-white ethnic group in a growing number of Midwestern towns; from the years 2000 to 2014, the Latino population of Iowa increased 110.5%. 78.1% of Latinos in Iowa are of Mexican descent. The median age of Latinos is far younger than any other group—23 is the median age for Latinos in the state versus 38 for white non-Hispanics. By all accounts, Latinos are the major force behind the changing demographics of Iowa and the larger Midwest. Social services, schools, businesses and churches are among those institutions and services that have had to address Latinos needs. My adopted state of Iowa—I am a Hoosier transplant—is indeed an excellent case study of migration politics, rural and small town Hispanic ministry, and the increasing interfaith alliances born out of necessity, and hitting up on liberation theology, as Gene just talked about. It is mostly non-white workers who tend, kill, and package the animals that feed the world, and it is these men, women, and their children who are among the most vulnerable inhabitants of the state in the entire corn belt region. The Catholic Church in Iowa has taken notice; increasingly priests from around the state have become vocal leaders in what I'm calling a politics of inclusivity. Priestly fathers Rudy Juarez, Greg Stuckle, and Joseph Sia want to make their state and their parishes more inclusive places; they want to transform the minds and hearts of Iowans. Father Rudy, who's in Iowa City, has led pro-immigration rallies, Father Greg, who's in West Liberty, works closely with the West Liberty School and superintendent and city leaders, and Father Joseph has educated himself on ICE raid awareness and preparation. All three of these Eastern Iowan priests put themselves out in the public sphere and see themselves as advocates for their Latino and migrant Catholic parishioners. Moreover, these priests are reaching out of their theological comfort zones

and meeting with pastors from various Protestant denominations including Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians to work towards solutions. There's a popular slogan in Iowa today—perhaps you've seen the stickers, it's on cars everywhere, we have one—ANF, American Needs Farmers. Well, if the priests I'm working with had their way, and they might, given their stalwart constitutions, they would create a new sticker, America Needs Latinos—ANL.

So, my current research focuses on Catholicism in eastern Iowa. I'm working with parish ministries in these three places, and what I've discovered through my ethnographic research so far, the past four years or so, has led me to declare that if the discipline of Catholic Studies wants to understand the politics of migration and race relations in the church, and broader American society, then it must move away from an urban-centric focus, a pre-1965 trend that is not in keeping with current migration trends and realities. When we turn our gaze to the Midwestern part of the United States, and the Corn Belt region more particularly, we can gain a deeper appreciation for how Catholics, priests and laypersons alike, are taking concrete measures to address poverty, racism, workplace discrimination, and abuse in their parishes and communities. The meatpacking corn picking and harvesting workers who provide food for all of us live in states like Iowa, and the rise of rural Catholic ministries and activist priests should not be a surprise to us, as it is keeping with U.S. Catholics' historic predilections to aid migrants and their communities. Many of today's Corn Belt Latinos are documented, but some are undocumented, and some are on a temporary H2A work visa program. The vast majority of meatpacking industries, as many have written on, throughout the Midwest are non-unionized, and documented and undocumented black and brown workers alike are especially vulnerable in a profit-hungry industry. Workers are cast aside when injured, forced to sign medical waivers, and easily replaced by the men and women hoping to make a decent wage. And the system pits ethnic groups against one another. We're finding that in Columbus Junction, where the Latinos, many of whom have lived there for 20 years, are losing jobs out to the more recent Burmese refugees, who will work for a lower rate. The 2008 Postville Iowa ICE raids at the Kosher agro-processor plant are widely considered a watershed moment to all Iowans who are committed to protecting immigrant rights. The raid, simply known as Postville, is cited by the priest with whom I work in the state as a watershed moment and as a call to action. I don't know if you know much about Postville, but it's the largest raid in US immigration history. 389 immigrants were deported; 290 of those were undocumented, Guatemalan origin, mostly Mayan speaking, and 93 were Mexican origin, from Mishua Kan and other areas. As the largest ethnic minority in the state and the fastest growing, Latinos are positioning themselves as the future of the state, as well as the Catholic church, as my colleagues have commented on so beautifully. While their numbers are still relatively small when compared to the white non-Latino majority of Iowa and larger Corn Belt Midwest—it's very white in Iowa, if you haven't been there—the rate of growth among Latinos has been by all accounts impressive. And when we consider the geographic range of the Corn Belt, Latinos are clearly on their way to becoming the future of those states and religious institutions like the Catholic Church. And there's no doubt that Latinos political and social clout will continue to expand. The League of United Latin American Citizens, LULAC, sponsored its first get-out-the-vote drive in the state recently, and their efforts payed large dividends. Here is the recent caucus, which I participated in for the very first time. Latinos

came out in record numbers and were visual and vocal opponents against Donald Trump, most especially his “build the wall” and “Mexicans are rapists” rhetoric in February’s Iowa caucuses. The Latino vote was solidly Democrat, split almost evenly between Sanders and Clinton. Father Joseph Sia was among the Eastern Iowa religious leaders to be deeply shaken and moved by the 2008 Postville Raids. Father Joseph, a Filipino MD trained at the University of the Philippines, admits he was not sympathetic to undocumented “illegal” workers before the Postville raids. I gave you a quote from him, Father Joseph Sia: “I am an immigrant myself and I came from the Philippines. I’ve had to deal with a lot of paperwork, and I suppose this is why I was unsympathetic to the undocumented. I thought, ‘Well, why shouldn’t they get their papers, just like I did?’ My eyes were opened after I took a tour of the Tyson plant here in town with other members of the ministerial association. It was 2008, literally right after Postville. I saw how incredibly difficult the work is, how dangerous, how horrible it is. I’ve had a tour too, and it’s pretty awful. I saw how incredibly hard the workers work; very, very few people can do this work, and most Americans cannot fathom this kind of work.

Father Joseph is thrilled that the Postville raids have spurred the formation of interfaith alliances in towns and cities across Iowa. Churches and faith communities, he says, that used to ignore each other, are now banding together in common cause to aid workers and to promote workers’ rights. Columbus Junction, which is about 45 minutes from Iowa City, is part of a loose network of interfaith coalitions dedicated to putting aside theological differences for the common goal of aiding at-risk Latinos and other at-risk workers. As Father Joseph says, “Postville really brought us together.” Members of the Columbus Junction coalition meet regularly, and one of the issues they discuss is their preparedness in the event of a raid at the local Tyson Plant. They even have drills at the local school. Says Father Joseph: “While we can’t stop or prevent a raid at this point, at least we can be prepared to offer humanitarian aid to families, and make sure that the children are not traumatized in the way they were at Postville.” Father Joseph and other Eastern Iowan priests are engaging in a politics of inclusivity, social justice, and interfaith dialogue, and are challenging their parishioners as well as members of their larger communities to not only tolerate Latinos and other migrant groups, but to welcome them. They’re trying to move past the discourse of toleration into acceptance and understanding which they think are radically different concepts. For his part, Father Joseph says the biggest challenge right now as a priest in rural Hispanic ministries is managing what he calls the “schizophrenia of ministry.” He says, “My role as a spiritual advisor is to bridge the divisions that exist between Anglos and Hispanics. I have to go slow, and not appear to be too much of an advocate, you know, or else I will offend the Anglo community. It’s a delicate issue and I work very hard at maintaining balance in the parish.” Father Joseph, like other activist pro-Latino priests in Iowa, want their state and parishes to be places where reform is not just preached, but where it is practiced.

The relatively new bishop, Bishop Amus, he has a new Hispanic ministries outreach. It’s actually pretty radical if you compare it to other area outreach, and I can say more about that later. We’ve got the Eastern Iowa association of Hispanic ministers that meets monthly, and then there are a couple interfaith gatherings too. I just wanted to give you a sense of some concrete things that are happening. The next image is Father Sia in

Conesville, Iowa. He works with migrant detasslers for Bell Melons Corn this summer; I get to go out with him this summer, I'm really looking forward to it. He ministers to the migrant workers and brings them the Eucharist every summer.

Lastly I wanted to give you an example of a recent homily of Father Joseph that he gave, Lenten Challenge. This might seem really small on the surface. Many parishes across the country that are Anglo and Latino have two separate masses, one English speaking and one Spanish speaking. Father Joseph as well as the other parish priests in the area want to bridge that divide, so his Lenten challenge for his parishioners are for those who attend the first mass, which is in English, to attend the second mass, which is in Spanish, and vice versa. I really like this, and I want to read this last part out to you.

"I know the situation out there, and this has unfortunately been magnified by some politicians, especially during this campaign period. They can debate about it on national TV and talk about in Washington, but here in CJ is where the rubber hits the road. We all experience it every day, as we have in the past thirty years or so, especially those of you who have been living here a long time. The situation is not simple, and there is no easy solution, but it is not only a political situation, it is a situation in our church. That's why I'm talking about it here. Jesus Christ tells us to love one another, and one way we can do that is to get to know each other right here in the church, and break down that border between the masses, and make our church a safe place to have that encounter."

So I just want to end there, on Father Joseph's words.

Leslie Woodcock Tentler:

My fellow panelists have already indicated my thanks to the Danforth Center, I would like to say in addition that it was very nice to be back in the friendly Midwest. One of the few joys in growing older lies in one's memories becoming the stuff of history. Certainly this is true for me when the subject is Catholics and politics. Growing up in the 1950s in a politically active and highly partisan family—we were Democrats—I acquired a store of political wisdom at an early age. What did I learn? Well, first of all, when it came to politics, religious affiliation mattered. The Dutch reformed Calvinists, who dominated the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, where my earliest political memories were formed, were Republicans. Local Democrats, much fewer in number, were mostly Catholics or Jews or drawn from the handful of religiously non-affiliated, who generally kept quiet about their then peculiar status. That Catholics and Jews were natural Democrats was confirmed by my family's subsequent move to Detroit, then still a heavily Catholic city. It was an increasingly African American city as well, so I made my first acquaintance with Protestants who were also democrats. But, they were generally seen as anomalous in this regard, and of course they had once been Republicans. I was somewhat shocked to learn, as I eventually did, that Eisenhower had proudly won the Catholic vote in 1956 after having made significant inroads into that vote in 1952. But Catholics came back to the fold in 1960, casting over 80% of their ballots for coreligionist John F. Kennedy.

So, Catholics were Democrats, indeed major players in the party; which did not necessarily mean that theirs was an easy political row to hoe. There was still a lot of anti-Catholic sentiment around, some of it emanating from highly educated and genteel sources. Catholics were said to be un-American when it came to their views on church and state; should Catholics ever become a majority in the United States, they would be obliged by the teachings of their church to scrap the first amendment of the Constitution. Wherever they constituted a sizable percentage of a state's population, it was frequently asserted, they undermined support for the public schools and made birth control hard for married couples to obtain. It was widely assumed that Catholics, congenital authoritarians, would behave exactly as their bishops told them to do; something, by the way, that the bishops themselves did not believe. But the bishops in those days did think it wise to keep a low political profile. They wielded political influence quietly and behind the scenes; they had surrogates, mostly laypeople, make the Catholic case where such was warranted in congressional hearings, they maintained a scrupulously neutral posture in national elections. About the only instance I can recall where a Catholic was publicly disciplined over a political issue came in 1962, when Archbishop Joseph Rummel of New Orleans excommunicated one Leander Perez for orchestrating resistance to the Archbishop's order to desegregate local Catholic schools. Ironically liberals cheered him on. The bishop's moderately progressive stance on Civil Rights in the later 1950s did a lot to temper liberal anti-Catholicism, but it was still a truism of the politics I imbibed as a child that no Catholic could be elected president. About the only thing worse than being a Catholic when it came to the presidency, it used to be said, was being a lapsed Catholic. Although my father was an early Kennedy supporter, I remember his being distinctly nervous about the religion issue, and he was right. Kennedy may have won a very large share of the Catholic vote, but he lost support in the south among more devout Protestants, and carried only about 50% of regularly attending black churchgoers. That's a smaller percentage than voted for either Truman or Stevenson. It's easy to forget at this distance how extraordinarily close the 1960 election was.

Well, that's sort of, in a nutshell, the political wisdom of my early years. Let's see how it has stood the test of time. First, with regard to politics and religious affiliation: yes, religious affiliation does still matter, despite growing numbers—as many as 20% of the population today—who say they have no religious affiliation whatsoever. But religious affiliation probably matters less for Catholics today than for other religious groups. As all the panelists have attested, Catholics are no longer solidly democratic; they are found today in both political parties, with a surprisingly large number behaving like independents. Catholics have, in fact, emerged since the 1970s as the largest body of swing voters in the country, a constituency that since 1952 has sided with the winner in every presidential election, based on the popular vote. That's assuming that Gore actually won in 2000. They voted for Gore. Thus, EJ Dion's bon mot: "There's no such thing as the Catholic vote, and it matters enormously."

The independence of the Catholic electorate in recent decades rather strongly suggests that the nation's bishops can no longer deliver the Catholic's vote, if in fact they ever could. Notwithstanding this disability, the nation's bishops, mostly as individuals but also collectively via their national conference, have been more aggressive in their public

political conduct since the 1970s than at any previous time in our history. Initially their new political assertiveness was nonpartisan in the sense that they criticized both political parties. The bishop's high-profile championing of the human life amendment to the constitution in the years after *Roe v. Wade* was widely read as a tacit endorsement of Ronald Reagan in 1980. But, their 1983 pastoral letter on nuclear arms and their 1986 letter on the requirements of a just economy, both of which received enormous publicity, were vigorously critical of Reagan's political agenda. After the 1980s, however, a more conservative episcopate increasingly treated abortion as the issue that trumped all others, downplaying the social justice concerns that had long been central to the political agenda of the bishop's conference. Even in 1984, New York's cardinal John O'Connor was willing to state publicly with reference to Geraldine Ferraro's vice-presidential candidacy as a pro-choice Catholic, that he did not see how a Catholic could, in good conscience, vote for someone who explicitly supported abortion. Many more bishops made the same argument in 2004, when John Kerry was the Democratic candidate. Some went so far as to deny communion to Kerry for his pro-choice views should he attend mass in their diocese. The bishop of Colorado Springs went even further, asserting that voting Democratic would, in his view, be matter for confession.

Despite the unprecedented nature of this behavior, and the very real reservations some bishops had about it, the bishop's conference endorsed such actions as a proper exercise of a bishop's pastoral authority. More recently, we saw the bishop's conference, whose predecessor body first called for subsidized healthcare back in 1919, emerge as a principle opponent of President Obama's healthcare reforms on the grounds that Obama's program might facilitate access to abortion. The current dispute over the provision of contraception is, in my view, really about abortion too; the bishops to my mind clearly view that a future administration might order employers to provide insurance that covers abortion as well as birth control. I think they're trying via the dust up over contraception to head off this eventuality. Cardinal Dillon might dispute me, but that is my opinion. Now, should the bishops of my childhood have behaved in comparably partisan fashion, it would have fueled anti-Catholic sentiment to such a degree that Kennedy might well have been unelectable. But despite the bishops' unprecedented conduct, being Catholic is no longer a barrier to the presidency, especially for Republicans. Even under Pope Francis, a Democrat could expect to take some episcopal flak. Even being a lapsed Catholic is no longer a handicap, if we judge by the careers of Sarah Palin, John Kasich, and even Marco Rubio, who may have come back to the one true church but still keeps a pretty visible foot in the evangelical camp. No Catholic running today, however, can expect to get anywhere near 80% of the Catholic vote; John Kerry, lest we forget, lost the Catholic vote in 2004. So, what explains these changes? Well, as Tim pointed out, Catholics themselves have changed. White Catholics today are richer, older, better educated, and more ethnically homogenous than they were in the 1950s, when a good many Catholics were still working class and had ties to the immigrant generation. Hispanic Catholics, by contrast, are younger and poorer than the national average, and intimately connected to the immigrant experience. They are also heavily and reliably Democratic, as opposed to Hispanic Evangelicals, who often trend Republican. The Catholic Church has lost much of its visible otherness, as a result partly of reforms emanating from the Second Vatican Council—no more Latin mass or nuns in full habit or lines at Confession on Saturday night. Catholics today attend mass much less

frequently and evince far less doctrinal conformity than in the 1950s, and they marry non-Catholics at a far higher rate. White Catholics today, in other words, are more like other Americans than at any time in our national past, and their demographic profile suggests that many of them are natural political independents. Changes like these have had the effect of radically diminishing anti-Catholicism, which hangs on only in the oddest and most remote corners of our culture. Popes today receive bipartisan invitations to address joint sessions of Congress; imagine such being tendered to Pius XII. When John Kerry ran in 2004, he was chided by Republicans for paying insufficient attention to the teachings of the Holy Father; when John Kennedy ran in 1960, he had to assure voters that if elected he would pay no heed to the pope.

But it's not just Catholics who have changed; American politics have changed as well. The Catholics of my childhood were New Deal Democrats; the chief business of government, as far as they were concerned, was maximizing economic security for ordinary people like themselves, by which they meant people living in two parent families with the father as principal breadwinner. Virtually every New Deal program was premised on the assumption that such family arrangements were and ought to be the norm. Progressive Catholics spoke in terms of a family wage: a rate of pay sufficiently generous that a working man could support a non-employed wife and numerous offspring. Issues pertaining to sexuality and gender, highly divisive in recent decades, almost never surfaced in political discourse despite the fact that the laws governing sexuality and gender, all of them enacted at the state level, were highly restrictive, not just by our standards, but even by the standards of the 1950s. In most states, a divorce could be obtained only on very limited grounds; abortion was prohibited in nearly all circumstances; homosexual conduct was illegal; and access to contraception was still, in some states, difficult, especially for the unmarried. Very few politicians were eager to press, however, for reform in these sensitive areas. Democrats were particularly unwilling given their numerous Catholic constituents.

Well, as you know American politics, particularly the liberal variety, were reoriented over the course of the 1960s towards a rights-based individualism, which privileged claims for justice based on race, gender, and eventually sexuality rather than class. Catholics who voted democratic in both 1964 and 1968 did generally support the great Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965—which mainly impacted the South, where very relatively few Catholics lived—but there was real division among Catholics over open housing legislation, which less affluent Catholics in particular often opposed. Racial tensions, which we haven't talked much about, have a lot to do with the rise of the so-called Reagan Democrats, who were mostly working-class Catholics. But in my view it was tensions over abortion, especially after *Roe v. Wade*, that does most to explain the migration of Catholics into the Republican party that was evident by 1980, and the general loosening of Catholic bonds to the Democrats—not that a majority of Catholics today favor a reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. Most are deeply ambivalent about abortion. There's not much room in the Democratic Party today for this particular ambivalence, however, although the Party is still aligned with the bishops when it comes to social provision and immigration. Thus for me more than any other, the issue of abortion symbolizes the demise not just of an older Catholic culture, but the politics which that culture helped to shape. Perhaps this is why so many Catholics today feel in their heart of hearts like political orphans.