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Anxiety, Identity, and the Displacement of Violence during the *Année Terrible*: The Sacred Heart and the Diocese of Nantes, 1870–1871

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Monseigneur Félix Fournier, bishop of Nantes, spoke words of consolation: "In your anguish you will ask me if there is no refuge against this tempest of divine anger. . . . There is one. We have just shown it to you, and we beseech you to close yourself within it." The opening of the war of 1870 brought the abrupt collapse of the Second Empire and weeks of unrelenting news of military defeat. The people of Nantes, like people throughout France, felt shock, dismay, and fear. Fournier's refuge was the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and he called on the faithful to retreat to its "mysterious recesses."[1] Soon he made this invocation official by solemnly dedicating the diocese of Nantes to the Sacred Heart, an act imitated in dioceses across France.[2]

Fournier's Sacred Heart had a maternal quality which contrasted sharply with its aggressively masculine invocation a few weeks later. Early in December soldiers known as the Volunteers of the West, many of them from the diocese of Nantes and environs, cried out, "Vive le Sacré-Coeur!" as they launched a suicidal charge against German troops. Behind a banner that bore the name and image of the Sacred

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[1] "Mandement de Mgr. L'Evêque du diocèse de Nantes à l'occasion de la consécration solennelle de son diocèse au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus," *La Semaine religieuse du diocèse de Nantes* (hereafter *SR*), 1 Oct. 1870, 480.

[2] For a list of diocesan dedications and their dates see *Bulletin de l'Œuvre du vœu national au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus*, 10 Dec. 1876, 391–92.

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Heart, three hundred men charged across the frozen open ground; nearly two hundred fell.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus provided the central iconic reference for the anxieties and heroic narrations of the *année terrible,* as it had done during earlier *années terribles* in the west, notably those of the Vendée revolt. Although never absent from local memory, the Sacred Heart motif was actively promoted in 1870 through the efforts of the bishop of Nantes and the diocesan clergy and through the sacrifice of the Volunteers of the West, self-consciously fighting as the ideological (and often familial) descendants of the "giants" of the counterrevolutionary Vendée of 1793 and after. For a time during and after the *année terrible* it appeared that the Sacred Heart cult might escape its regional and historical confines and compete successfully for a place in a national debate on French decadence and renewal. If this initiative failed, it was not for lack of blood, without which there can be no durable memory to sustain new founding myths. The failure of the attempt to promote the Sacred Heart as a national emblem is ultimately traceable to its parochial nature, its long-standing role as the symbol of a Catholic discourse of French national decline, and its association with the west and with a politically militant Catholicism. These things no quantity of pure blood could efface. Even so, the Sacred Heart refocused and provided ritualized outlets for anxieties about the future of France. Unlike its antecedent in 1793, the Sacred Heart of 1870 served as an alternative to civil violence rather than an insignia of it.

The Sacred Heart as an Object of Memory

The Sacred Heart was, first of all, a reinvention of the image of God, emphasizing a gentle and charitable Jesus who could be intimate and was approachable as a source of consolation in a violent and faithless age. In the late seventeenth century Marguerite Marie Alacoque, a Visitationist nun, experienced several visions in which Jesus opened his cloak to reveal his heart aglow with love. He also made demands for a new devotion centered on this symbol. The cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus developed rapidly in the following decades as a site of practical, popular devotion. Talismanic images of the Sacred Heart were worn on the chest, or on fabric hung around the neck, as shields against illness, injury, and other evils. In the 1720s Bishop Belsunce induced the city fathers of Marseilles to dedicate their city to the Sacred Heart in order to gain relief from an epidemic.[3]

[3] On the devotion to the Sacred Heart see Jacques Bainvel, "Devotion au cœur-sacré de Jésus," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique,* vol. 3 (Paris, 1938), 271–351. See also Xavier de Fran-

The personality of God has a history too. The Sacred Heart devotion appealed to a modern, romantic sensibility which grudgingly accepted the idea of an angry and judgmental God. The Sacred Heart was "the new name of God," the "name of the God of Love."[4] To the faithful, to look on the heart of Jesus provoked not so much thoughts as feelings and desires. One could love this God, who could feel and share pain.

The Revolution brought the cult of the Sacred Heart into French political culture. The use of the image of a heart surmounted by a cross as a safeguard, as in Marseilles, was an established popular religious practice decades before 1789, so for Vendéen peasants about to go into combat with republican forces, it made eminently good sense to wear one.[5] Indeed, the Sacred Heart was present at many great moments of the counterrevolution. The discovery of a Sacred Heart among the personal effects of Marie Antoinette by agents of the Revolution was used at her trial as prima facie evidence of counterrevolutionary intent. It was widely rumored that Louis XVI had consecrated his realm to the Sacred Heart in 1792, a few months before his execution, in belated fulfillment of the demands made of Louis XIV through Marguerite Marie. Soon priests, including military chaplains in the Vendéen armies, were incorporating into their sermons the tale of Louis's deed.[6] Little wonder, then, that the Sacred Heart became the emblem of the Catholic and Royal Army of the Vendée. Its value as a talisman was manifest. Its association with the martyred king Louis XVI gave emblematic organization as well as religious validation to misgivings about and outright hostility to the Revolution. Indeed, when the Restoration monarchy commissioned portraits of the Vendéen generals Jacques Cathelineau, Charles Artus de Bonchamps, François-Athanase de Charette, Henri de la Rochejaquelein, and others for the portrait gallery of France's generals, the artists featured the Sacred Heart, sometimes along with the *mouchoir de Cholet*, as an indispensable insignia of the Royal and

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ciosi, *La Dévotion au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus et au Saint-Cœur de Marie* (Nancy, 1885), 280; and Auguste Hamon, *Histoire de la dévotion au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1923–39), 3:439. See also Raymond A. Jonas, "L'Année Terrible, 1870–1871," in Jacques Benoist, ed., *Le Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre: Un Vœu national* (Paris, 1995), 31–41.

4 Louis Baunard, *Histoire de la vénérable mère Madeleine-Sophie Barat, fondatrice de la Société du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1892), 1:xv–xvi.

5 "Le Scapulaire du Sacré-Cœur," in *Bulletin de l'Œuvre du vœu national au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus*, 10 Mar. 1878, 138. See also Claude Petitfrère, *Les Vendéens d'Anjou (1793): Analyse des structures militaires, sociales et mentales* (Paris, 1981), 186–87; and Jean-Clément Martin, *La Vendée et la France* (Paris, 1987).

6 For the full text of the vow see *L'Ami de la religion et du roi: Journal ecclésiastique, politique et littéraire* 3 (1815): 77–80. See also Yves-Michel Marchais, "Les Raisons des échecs de l'armée catholique et royale" (15 Aug. 1793), in François Lebrun, *Parole de Dieu et révolution: Les Sermons d'un curé angevin avant et pendant la guerre de Vendée* (Paris, 1988), esp. 109.

Catholic Army.[7] In short, the Sacred Heart embodied a counterrevolutionary discourse expressing the conviction that the Revolution was not only a political mistake but a sure sign of the presence of evil.

From insignia of revolt to symbol of a critical counterculture was a small step, but it was virtually inevitable. The transition from a regional culture to an official national culture was more complicated and, of course, ultimately a failure. Outside France, the cult of the Sacred Heart bore no overt political signs.[8] In the west of France from 1793 onward, the Sacred Heart remained part of the local memory and a feature, albeit contested, of regional identity.[9] Fostering the cult of the Sacred Heart was one way of keeping alive the memory of the Vendée, and the converse was true as well.[10]

Such associations carried risks understood by all. When Sophie Barat founded the women's teaching order of the Sacred Heart in 1800, she dared not publicly take the name Sisters of the Sacred Heart, because the words and symbol were still widely perceived as seditious. Her order was instead known by the more discreet name "Dames de la foi." After the official constitution of the order in 1815, Barat sent emissaries to Nantes to acquire a property. They chose l'Eperonnière, known locally as "le Sacré-Coeur," a fourteen-hectare domain rich in associations.[11] Revolutionary authorities had used it as a prison and place of execution for Vendéens guilty of, among other things, bearing the image of the heart of Jesus—talisman, sign of faith, prima facie evidence of treasonous revolt—on their chests.[12]

Keeping the cult and its resonances alive depended on such establishments in the west of France and elsewhere. Between 1815 and the time of the July Monarchy, the order grew from six of them to forty. Daughters of the nobility made up many, but by no means all, of the new members. For all novices of this generation, the Revolution had been a formative experience; the Vendée and the Sacred Heart were

7 See J. Bottineau, *Les Portraits des généraux vendéens* (Cholet, 1975). The portraits are now on permanent display at the Musée d'histoire d'art de Cholet.

8 For example, Jean Croiset's devotional guide to the Sacred Heart, translated and widely distributed among seminary libraries in the anglophone world, contains none of the political baggage of the cult (*The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, trans. Patrick O'Connell [Westminster, Md., 1948]).

9 Jean-Clément Martin, *La Vendée de la mémoire, 1800–1980* (Paris, 1989); Jean Huguet, *Un Cœur d'étoffe rouge: France et Vendée, 1793. Le Mythe et l'histoire* (Paris, 1985).

10 See François Pie, "Eloge funèbre de Madame la Marquise de la Rochejaquelein, prononcé à la cérémonie de ses obsèques dans l'église de Saint-Aubin de Baubigné, le samedi 28 février 1857," in *Œuvres de Monseigneur l'évêque de Poitiers*, 6 vols. (Poitiers, 1868–79), 2:636–37.

11 Baunard, *Histoire de Sophie Barat*, 1:65. On the founding of the order see ibid., 1:55, 125; on its constitution, ibid., 1:175.

12 According to Baunard, "Ces premières mères du Sacré-Cœur ont presque toutes passé par le creuset de l'épreuve révolutionnaire" (ibid., 1:97).

etched in their memory. For Sisters Annette, Thérèse, and Julia de la Rochejaquelein, bearers of the name of a Vendéen general, taking the vows of the order combined faith and family honor.[13]

The Sacred Heart was the sign of a new spirituality, a way of imagining God not as an unforgiving judge meting out eternal punishment but as a loving protector and a nurturing fountain of grace.[14] After 1789, and especially in the west after 1793, however, the Sacred Heart was also an object of memory and a rich source of associations about France, its Christian mission, and its postrevolutionary decadence and decline.

Cultivating a Regional Identity: The Sacred Heart and the Diocese of Nantes

The cultivation of the Sacred Heart owed much not only to the efforts of the Catholic laity but also to the support of the clergy and the diocesan hierarchy.[15] Just as revolutionary leadership had made of the Vendée a term applied to an area much larger than the department itself, so the regional identity created by the revolt was enlarged, too. Thus the curé of the parish of Orvault, north of Nantes and therefore well north of the Loire and the department and diocese of the Vendée, could speak of "notre Bretagne et notre Vendée" as if the identities of Brittany and the Vendée were henceforth united by the revolts north and south of the Loire.[16] The two regions were assimilated not by a shifting of administrative boundaries but by a common heritage that guided a common outlook.

The weekly diocesan newsletter, *La Semaine religieuse du diocèse de Nantes*, frequently carried items that kept alive the memory of the Vendée revolt and its association with the Sacred Heart. One such item consisted of a discussion of a canvas by Gustave Marquerie titled *Une Première Communion vendéenne sous la Terreur*. Marquerie's painting, completed in the 1860s, recalled the clandestine Church of the Vendée and the First Communion of four hundred children.[17] Another item

13 Ibid., 1:452; Pie, "Eloge funèbre de Madame la Marquise de la Rochejaquelein."

14 "Sous la Restauration, la prédication du salut 'affaire d'éternité' fait appel à la crainte du Dieu vengeur plus qu'à Jésus qui nous sauve. La peur du péché et du jugement dernier est omniprésente" (Marcel Launay, "Prédication," in *Catholicisme hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, ed. G. Mathon, G.-H. Baudry, P. Guilluy, and E. Thiery, vol. 11 [Paris, 1988], 802).

15 On the social construction of memory see Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris, 1952); and Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York, 1980). On bodily rituals and memory see Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, 1989).

16 Archives épiscopales de Nantes, boîte d'Orvault, letter of 27 May 1860, cited in Marcel Launay, *Le Diocèse de Nantes sous le Second Empire* (Nantes, 1982), 737.

17 *SR*, 21 May 1870, 254.

promoted the sale of a collection of poems by Emile Grimaud titled *Chants du bocage vendéen*, organized around the revolt of 1793 and intended to conflate the identity of the west with that of the Vendéen revolt. *La Semaine religieuse* reproduced several verses from the poem "Une Chrétienne" to demonstrate how Grimaud combined "the true talent of a poet with the true faith of the Vendée."[18]

The identification of the west with the Vendée and the Sacred Heart was reaffirmed in the 1860s with the formation of the Papal Zouaves. Italian unification could succeed only at the expense of the Italian princes, including the pope. The threat to his temporal authority became a lively concern and, eventually, the impetus for a recruitment campaign. The Zouaves were to be the "pope's army." Indeed, if someone had asked Stalin's irreverent question ("How many divisions has the pope?") in the 1860s, its ironic quality would not have been evident. Of the eleven thousand volunteers in the Papal Zouaves, the diocese of Nantes contributed over two hundred, an enrollment figure exceeded only by the archdiocese of Cambrai, in Flanders, whose population was twice that of Nantes.[19] The appointment of the Nantais Louis La Moricière as general of the papal forces—along with the fact that many Zouaves, notably those from the west, wore the Sacred Heart, as had the Vendéens before them—helped solidify the association of the Zouaves with the west and the Sacred Heart devotion.[20] In a letter to the papal nuncio, Bishop Jaquement recommended for service in the Zouaves two members of his diocese whose uncle had fought "for the cause of religion and legitimacy in our first revolution."[21] Athanase and Alain de Charette were grandnephews of François-Athanase de Charette, the Vendéen general who had borne the Sacred Heart on his chest in battle. The descendants of the giants of 1793 were only waiting for a sign to undertake "a new crusade" in "the service of a noble cause."[22]

In what way did the fight to defend the pope lie within the tradi-

18 *SR*, 4 June 1870, 276. Grimaud's poetry, like *La Semaine religieuse*, evoked connections between the giants of 1793 and the Zouaves throughout the *année terrible*. See his poem of 10 Dec. 1870, reproduced in Athanase Charette, *Noces d'argent du regiment des zouaves pontificaux, 1860–1885* (Rennes, 1886), 67–69.

19 Launay, *Diocèse de Nantes*, 742; Marius Faugeras, "Les Fidélités en France au XIXe siècle: Les Zouaves pontificaux (1860–1870)," in *Fidélités, solidarités et clientèles*, ed. Yves Durand (Nantes, 1986), 275.

20 On the Zouaves and the Sacred Heart see Louis Baunard, *Le Général de Sonis d'après ses papiers et sa correspondance* (Paris, 1890), 316–17.

21 Archivio segreto vaticano, (Segretaria de Stato) 283—1860, cited in Launay, *Diocèse de Nantes*, 734.

22 Launay, *Diocèse de Nantes*, 734. According to Georges Cerbelaud-Salagnac, some papal advisers had misgivings about Charette, but the pope dismissed them: "Pie IX laissa errer un sourire sur ses lèvres et répondit posément: 'Si c'est un bon royaliste, il défendra bien ma royauté. Si c'est un drapeau, il saura rallier du monde autour de lui!'" (*Les Zouaves pontificaux* [Paris, 1963], 20–21).

tions of the West? The answer has to do with the incarnations of the French Revolution in nineteenth-century Europe. After the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, partisans of legitimism, following de Maistre, shifted their concerns about the Revolution and moral order from the person of the king to that of the pope. These concerns deepened in the 1860s as the papacy seemed more and more imperiled. Of course, the status of the pope mattered because his temporal authority was deemed essential to his independence in spiritual matters. But it also mattered because France was the "eldest daughter" of the church, and the threat to the pope came ultimately from the Revolution, a French invention. Just as Louis XVI had been a sacrificial lamb whose tragic death could be explained and understood only as an act of atonement for the sins of France, so now the Revolution threatened to pursue Pius IX, perhaps to the point of annihilation.[23] As the nature of Louis-Napoléon's Italian policy became evident, Bishop Pie of Poitiers spoke for other members of the episcopate when he argued that France's failure to honor its responsibility to defend the pope amounted to a recapitulation of the act of revolutionary regicide/deicide. Monsignor Pie condemned Louis-Napoléon as one marked with the "deicide stigmata." The quietude of official France in response to this challenge to the pope's temporal authority was yet another manifestation of French decline; an energetic defense of him by French Catholics would contribute to the regeneration of France. It was as if Christian France, and notably the west, had remained the privileged repository of the vestiges of the old France, the true France, whose responsibility it would be to uphold France's honor by fulfilling its traditional role of defender of the church.

Although Bishop Jaquemet had his differences with Pie, on these matters they agreed. Indeed Jaquemet had invited Pie to Nantes in 1859 to speak on the occasion of the translation of the relics of Saint Emilien, an event rich in symbolic possibilities. Emilien, bishop of Nantes in the eighth century, had distinguished himself by fighting the Saracens at the head of his people.[24] Although neither Jaquemet nor Pie had any intention of returning to the days of the warrior bishops—in fact, this ceremony may be read as the transferring of the warrior role to the male laity—it was a perfect occasion to speak obliquely, but unmistakably, about the challenges to the church posed by the new infidels, partisans of the Revolution, whose energies were arrayed against

[23] This notion was not far-fetched. The assassination of Sibour, archbishop of Paris, on the streets of Paris only a few years earlier (1857) was still fresh in the public's mind. See René Pillorget, "Un Prélat assassiné: Monseigneur Sibour, archevêque de Paris de 1848 à 1857," *Le Souvenir napoléonien* 53 (1990): 29–36.

[24] Launay, *Diocèse de Nantes*, 704.

the pope himself. It was the perfect occasion to dust off an older, more literal image of the church militant and to prepare public opinion for the drive to win recruits to the pope's army, the Papal Zouaves.

So was the death of La Moricière, whose appointment as commander of the Papal Zouaves had given the recruitment campaign for the papal forces momentum throughout the west. In death, La Moricière continued to serve, now as the epitome of the Catholic male: fearlessly, even militantly, devout and willing to sacrifice his life for a Rome besieged by the Revolution.[25]

Doing Violence to God with Prayer

War on behalf of the empire of Louis-Napoléon in 1870 was not a gleeful prospect for the people of the west. Nantes was not notably Bonapartist, and, in the opening weeks of the war, *La Semaine religieuse* emphasized generic patriotic themes, written scrupulously to avoid the barest hint of support or sympathy for the regime. An item titled simply "A French Soldier" was typical; it recounted the story of the Spartan mother who told her son to return alive with his shield or dead on it.[26]

The initial defeats invited contextualization; they provided the occasion for a veiled critique of the Second Empire. An address before school-aged boys in Nantes made an ideal venue for Bishop Fournier's remarks (Jaquemet had died early in 1870) on the moral sources of defeat. France's setbacks merely demonstrated the moral bankruptcy of its secular leaders: "Where are the gods of the sponsors of [moral] disorder?" Following an invocation of Christian honor, he concluded that it was evident that only the just were suited "to defend the flag."[27]

After early September 1870, Fournier's account of the war again changed registers. Now the significance of defeat was what it said not about the moral bankruptcy of Louis-Napoléon's discredited regime but about that of France itself. The struggle was on to define the political context in which the remainder of the war would be fought, for that context set the agenda for political and moral reconstruction. The struggle was a rhetorical one. On 4 September, Fournier told the faithful in the cathedral of Nantes, "France has received a blow; therefore, it can only be because we are guilty: sin attracts the terrible blows of

25 On male fulfillment through action see Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York, 1993), esp. 12–13.

26 *SR*, 23 July 1870, 354.

27 Cited in Abbé Pothier, *Monseigneur Fournier, évêque de Nantes: Sa Vie, ses œuvres*, 2 vols. (Nantes, 1900), 2:26. The date of the address is not given, but it precedes the disasters of early September 1870.

divine justice."[28] For Fournier, the key theme was that France itself was implicated in the enormity of the French defeat, which deserved moral condemnation and demanded expiation and spiritual renewal.[29] Within a few weeks the war had been dramatically transformed into a vast contest in which the line dividing the principal antagonists was not national but moral and spiritual. Although real fighting would continue between Germans and French, by the fall of 1870 the war against Germany was drawing to a close, to be superseded by a discursive civil war over the meaning of the defeat and the prospects of national renewal.

With the empire in shambles and France's moral failure displayed for all to see, Fournier called on those righteous souls remaining in France to respond in some way to a vengeful God with an insatiable appetite for destruction.[30] This response was to take two ultimately related forms: to seek refuge in the Sacred Heart and to offer a suitable sacrifice, a "sublime holocaust," as a gesture of appeasement. The Sacred Heart first emerged as the dominant symbol in Fournier's rhetoric of the *année terrible* in the address of 10 September, when he urged his audience to join him in a "flight toward the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our refuge and our hope."[31] During the following days he drafted a statement to be circulated throughout the diocese. Fournier's *mandement* served as a précis of the current moral state of France and Europe; it concluded with a call to dedicate the diocese of Nantes to the Sacred Heart, an act quickly imitated in dioceses throughout France.[32] It deserves close examination because of the unified historical vision it conveys not only of the war but of the moral status of France since 1789 and of the relationship between France and the Sacred Heart.

Fournier's statement began with the dramatic image of an angry patriarchal God wreaking destruction on France. "The justice of God is passing over France like a tempest," he wrote. "Who could fail to see it? . . . Yes, it's God who passes, chastising his people." Impiety, revealed by France's failure to defend the pope, was the ultimate cause of the nation's troubles. After repeating that France was "the eldest daughter of the church," Fournier chastised her for "trying to wipe from her noble forehead the traces of the baptism conferred on her

28 *SR*, 10 Sept. 1870, 441.

29 Privately, Fournier expressed sentiments consistent with his public positions. Late in the fall he wrote to one Paul Fournier (possibly his brother) that "la France devait expier, elle devait crouler sous le poids de son immoralité érigée en système" (cited in Pothier, *Fournier*, 2:78).

30 Ibid., 2:52.

31 Ibid., 2:52–53.

32 For the full text see "Mandement," 477–84. On the imitation of this act see Jacques Gadille, *La Pensée et l'action politiques des évêques français au début de la IIIe République, 1870–1883*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1967), 1:230.

by Saint Rémy." In this sense, the events of 1870 were like those "of eighty years ago [1789], when God chastised her in such a terrible way to avenge his outraged love."[33] In this construction, God was like an angry parent whose emotions lead him to hurt the one he loves.

To this violent "male" version of a divine relationship, Fournier opposed a "feminine" alternative embodied in the Sacred Heart. "In your anguish you will ask me if there is no refuge against this tempest of divine anger. . . . There is one. We have just shown it to you, and we beseech you to close yourself within it." Fournier relied on bodily metaphors and the idea of enclosure to explain the qualities of the Sacred Heart: "He will receive us with gentleness and tenderness, and when we are hidden in his sweet and mysterious recesses, we will have nothing more to fear, neither from the world nor from the inferno."[34] The Sacred Heart, in contrast to the threatening world, was womblike. How the faithful were to reconcile the image of the vengeful, patriarchal God with the maternal image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Fournier did not say.[35]

Fournier acknowledged what he perceived to be gender-specific qualities of God when he remarked that God loved as a father, a son, and a mother. God's patriarchal violence would be countered by an "assault of prayers" in order "to do violence to God."[36] But it was to God's feminine identity that he appealed when he called on his diocese to dedicate itself formally to the Sacred Heart on 9 October 1870.[37] In the meantime, he urged the faithful to undertake a ritual cleansing to prepare themselves to enter the Sacred Heart: "Before entering this . . . august sanctuary, we must bathe our souls in the precious blood of the Lamb, which springs forth from the heart of Jesus like an inexhaustible well."[38]

The war had provoked profound anxieties about the future, about

33 Ibid., 477, 478–79.

34 Ibid., 480–81.

35 Fournier recognized that he was testing the ability of his audience to imagine the divine in feminine terms. Elsewhere in the same address he stated: "Ce Cœur est tout à la fois le cœur d'un fils, d'un père et d'une mère. Je ne me trompe pas: le cœur d'une mère. Il l'a dans ses Ecritures: 'Quand même une mère oublierait ses enfants, moi, je ne vous oublierai jamais'" (ibid., 482). Cf. Isaiah 49:15. On the feminine Jesus see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, Calif., 1982). I see no evidence to support Michael P. Carroll's assertion of the maleness of the Sacred Heart (*Catholic Cults and Devotions: A Psychological Inquiry* [Kingston, Ont., 1989], 132–53).

36 Cited in Pothier, *Fournier*, 2:68–69.

37 See "Mandement," 483. The diocese of Nantes was thus among the first dioceses of France to dedicate themselves to the Sacred Heart during the *année terrible*. Marseilles was the first diocese so dedicated, during the public crisis brought on by a cholera epidemic. See Gadille, *Pensée*, 1:230.

38 "Mandement," 481.

France, and, more immediately, about the risk of foreign occupation. Although Fournier could not make these worries go away, he chose nurturing, sheltering, "feminine" images for their soothing effect. He drew upon this rich set of images to incite desire for the Sacred Heart. The real danger, the German army, was reduced to a mere instrument in the hands of an angry, patriarchal god. Fournier's listeners prepared themselves to seek consolation and refuge in the "sweet and mysterious recesses" of the heart of Jesus. One could say that the theophany of the *année terrible* was dimorphous, but in a complementary way. The vengeance of the father induced feelings of helplessness and childlike fear in the French and prompted their search for protection that led to the Sacred Heart. Fournier's genius was to build his rhetoric on a carefully cultivated local memory of the Sacred Heart as a bulwark against worldly evil and as the emblem of Christian national regeneration.

Soldiers of Christ

The displacement of anxiety about the war onto anxiety about a patriarchal God enraged over official French apostasy and Fournier's counsel to turn to a soothing, maternal Jesus for spiritual and therapeutic remedy were only part of an arsenal of measures taken up in the diocese of Nantes.[39] In the weeks to come these energies were also channeled into a campaign of re-Christianization and penitence. The enemy was not so much the German army; it was the sinfulness of France's past that had prompted divine vengeance, for which the German army was but a vehicle. Fournier urged those who had fallen away from the church to return to "the God of your mother."[40] And in November and December 1870 he initiated a tireless campaign of penitential pilgrimage that would extend well into the postwar period. As the bad news about the war piled up, and as the fate of France was seen as a just consequence of the struggle, the representatives of the diocese of Nantes speculated on the conditions necessary for the regeneration of France.[41] *La*

39 For an example of how these anxieties were played out in a much deadlier way see Alain Corbin, *The Village of Cannibals: Rage and Murder in France, 1870,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, 1992).

40 "Oui, au milieu de tant de ruines, vous sentez le besoin de revenir au Dieu de vos jeunes années, au Dieu de votre mère et de votre première communion" ("Mandement," 481).

41 Of course, this sentiment was by no means limited to the west. In his pastoral letter of 10 Mar. 1871 Archbishop Darboy wrote, "La nation tout entière a besoin d'un changement moral" (cited in J. A. Foulon, *Histoire de la vie et des œuvres de Mgr. Darboy, archevêque de Paris* [Paris, 1889], 500). Nor was it limited to Catholic circles. See Ernst Renan, *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale de la France* (Paris, 1871), excerpted and translated in David Thomson, *France: Empire and Republic, 1850–1940* (New York, 1968), rpt. in Jan Goldstein and John W. Boyer, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Europe: Liberalism and Its Critics* (Chicago, 1988), 351–55.

Semaine religieuse, which was the "public face" of the diocese as much as Fournier was himself, carried items emphasizing four themes: the true French soldier as a soldier of Christ; the sacrifice of the life of the soldier as an act of expiation; the historical association of the west with the emblem of the Sacred Heart; and the Sacred Heart as the symbolic axis around which all efforts at regeneration were to turn.

At the center of these efforts were the activities of the Papal Zouaves. In the 1860s *La Semaine religieuse* had carried regular items on the Zouaves, most of them tragic and all of them serving as models of Christian soldiery and manhood. As Christian soldiers, defenders of the pope as legitimate monarch, political and literal sons of the Vendée, and devotees of the Sacred Heart, the Zouaves stood for all that remained strong and true and virtuous in France. The example of their service and their sacrifice made them heroes, even saints, among French Catholics, who needed reassurance in dark days that saintly men could still be found. One of the earliest casualties of the Zouaves was the young seminarian Joseph Guérin, who had overcome the objections of his spiritual directors and enlisted in 1860. His agony and death in October of wounds received at the battle of Castelfidardo made him the object of public adulation—his grave was visited by hundreds of "pilgrims" every week—so that he acquired the unofficial status of saint by lay acclamation.[42] A Zouave who had lost his leg emphasized the symbolic value of his disfigurement: "My amputated leg will remain as a protest against the sacrilegious attack of the government of Piedmont." Then, putting his condition in the best possible light, he wrote, "Don't feel sorry for me, because our chaplain told me that *if I already have one foot in paradise, it's sure that the rest of me will follow.*"[43] Other Zouaves helped shape the image of the papal volunteers and stimulated interest in them through their letters home. Some testified to their belief in the pope as the ideal of a patriarch and monarch by divine right ("Our father and our king"). Others commented on the sorry condition of France years before the *année terrible.* In 1866 Henri Le Chauff de Kerguenec wrote to his parents: "Poor France, how could I not think of you, especially on this day of 21 January? For seventy-three years now you have done penance for the assassination of the martyr-king, locked up in the chains of the Revolution."[44]

When the French recruits to the Zouaves returned home after the

[42] According to Launay, Guérin was the object of a "popular canonization" (*Diocèse de Nantes,* 735). See also Henri Le Chauff de Kerguenec, *Souvenirs des zouaves pontificaux, 1861 et 1862, recueillis par François Le Chauff de Kerguenec,* cited in Faugeras, "Fidélités," 207–11.

[43] *SR,* 19 Nov. 1870, 569.

[44] Le Chauff de Kerguenec, *Souvenirs,* 283.

failed defense of Rome in September 1870, they found France in deep disarray. Just as Rome had had to be abandoned, the French government, under the pressure of the advancing Germans, had had to abandon Paris and move operations to Tours. Such events confirmed their conviction of the inevitable link between the two struggles.[45] ("France, Rome—même combat.") The Zouaves resolved to remain together and to fight to defend France. One of their chaplains, the abbé Daniel, made a tour of diocesan parishes to promote enlistments.[46] This campaign revived the spirit of 1793 for a time, but with certain crucial differences. Unlike the counterrevolution of 1793, which in its early stages had enjoyed the limited participation of the local *notables*, this initiative came from the clergy and the *notables* of the west.[47] Unlike the uprising of 1793, this one was against an invader and not against republican France.

Was this, then, the hour of reconciliation, when the sons of the Vendée and the sons of the Republic would finally fight side by side, animated by the same patriotic ideal? Not at all, for this call to arms claimed to extend that of 1793 by honoring the values of the Vendée and by vigorously asserting their superiority over the bankrupt values that had prepared France's defeat. The Zouaves, enlarged following the recruitment campaign of the abbé Daniel and led by Colonel Athanase de Charette, offered their services to the French government in exile at Tours. The Government of National Defense, busy organizing a people's war along the lines of 1792, was in no position to reject any serious offer of aid, even if it meant validating efforts to revive the spirit of the Vendéen people's war of 1793. Charette's offer was accepted on the condition that the Papal Zouaves change their name to the "Volunteers of the West."[48]

45 This view was similar to Fournier's. See his letter of 23 Oct. 1870 to the papal nuncio: "Nous éprouvons, à la fois, toutes les douleurs; nous croyons que, dans cet ébranlement général du monde, la société chancelle, parce que Rome, qui en est la pierre angulaire, est elle-même ébranlée" (cited in Pothier, *Fournier*, 58). He would later write (in 1873) that he intended his efforts to lead to "notre délivrance des maux dont nous menaçaient à la fois les Allemands et la Révolution!"

46 On the abbé Daniel see Launay, *Diocèse de Nantes*, 738; and Le Chauff de Kerguenec, *Souvenirs*, 21, 117, 203. On at least one occasion Fournier had to defend his clergy against the accusation, brought by a public official, that a curé (in this case the curé of Vieillevigne) had advised his parishioners to join the Zouaves instead of the regular army. See Pothier, *Fournier*, 2, 515.

47 "Le religieux prime alors le politique mais la démarche est identique, à cette différence près que cette fois, le signal de la croisade a bien été donné par les tuteurs traditionnels des sociétés paroissiales" (Launay, *Diocèse de Nantes*, 743). One of the prize recruits was Fernand de Bouillé, grandson of the Vendéen general the marquis de Bonchamps. See Cerbelaud-Salagnac, *Zouaves*, 241–42.

48 Cerbelaud-Salagnac, *Zouaves*, 235–36.

The Sacrifice of the Hero

Charette's Zouaves were assigned to Louis d'Aurelle de Paladine's Army of the Loire, where they would be under the command of General de Sonis. Charette and Sonis were kindred spirits. The grandnephew of the Vendéen general required no introduction. His name, at least as much as that of La Moricière, served as a symbolic link between the Vendée's struggle against the Revolution and the defense of the pope against the revolution sweeping through the papal states. Sonis had already been featured in *La Semaine religieuse* as spokesman for patriotic Christian manhood. During the abbé Daniel's recruitment campaign, *La Semaine religieuse* quoted extensively from a letter that Sonis had written to express his fervent wish that he be allowed to die a Christian soldier's death.[49] In the weeks to come he would nearly get his wish.

Sonis contacted Charette and his volunteers shortly after they joined his forces. As Sonis's troops advanced on 30 November from Villepion toward Loigny to support General Alfred Chanzy, Sonis and Charette walked together in the company of the Zouaves' chaplain, Father Doussot. Charette and Sonis discovered that they shared a vision of recovery from cataclysmic defeat by means of a re-Christianized France and a committed Christian military. Sonis gestured toward his regimental colors, a white heraldic cross on a blue field. Charette chided him for not having something more religiously pronounced, then said, "Eh bien, mon général! I have what you need."

Charette then showed him an embroidered banner that he had received from the Visitationist nuns of Paray-le-Monial. The banner bore the image of the Sacred Heart and the invocation "Cœur sacré de Jésus, sauvez la France."[50] Sonis accepted Charette's banner. However, on the advice of a member of his staff, who was keenly aware of the irreligion of Sonis's men, he chose not to unfurl the banner until the sound of the cannon, "when no one feels like laughing."[51]

In November 1870 the Army of the Loire was able to make some progress, notably at Coulmiers, a victory that forced the Germans to evacuate Orléans. On 9 November, Aurelle's forces marched in.[52] This

49 "Lorsque Dieu se mêle de donner des leçons, il les donne en maître. Rien ne manque à celle que la France reçoit en ce moment. [Nous] demandons à Dieu . . . de nous faire la grâce de savoir mourir comme un chrétien doit finir, les armes à la main, les yeux au ciel, la poitrine en face de l'ennemi, en criant: Vive la France!" (*SR*, 17 Dec. 1870, 617).

50 For the story of the banner see Cerbelaud-Salagnac, *Zouaves*, 237. On Paray-le-Monial see Thomas Albert Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1983), 125; and Philippe Boutry and Michel Cinquin, *Deux pèlerinages au XIXe siècle: Ars et Paray-le-Monial* (Paris, 1980), 208–9.

51 Cited in Baunard, *Sonis*, 318–19.

52 Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870–1871* (London, 1989), 298; Henry M. Hozier, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London, 1872), 164. See also Stéphane

seemed to set the stage for the breakout from Paris that Trochu had prepared. Indeed, on 1 December, Léon Gambetta learned from Paris that Trochu's troops had taken the village of Epinay.

Gambetta, desperate for good news, was primed for a dramatic repeat of Valmy. He immediately concluded that Trochu's forces had reached Epinay-sur-Orge, twelve miles south of Paris, which would have represented a significant victory and a true breakthrough; in fact, the Epinay in question was Epinay-sur-Seine, a village north of Paris, near St.-Denis.[53] Thus Trochu had conducted little more than an exploratory sortie. However, an inspired Gambetta released a pronouncement, ludicrous in the context, to the effect that the hour for the final republican sacrifice had arrived; Sonis, too, saw the need for sacrifice and prepared an assault that would reveal the redemptive power of the Sacred Heart.[54]

Meanwhile, the Germans had driven Chanzy's forces out of Loigny. On 2 December, a First Friday and thus of devotional significance to the Sacred Heart, Sonis's troops joined Chanzy's at Villepion, where they made a last stand. Late in the afternoon, as the light faded, Sonis decided to try to retake Loigny. Regular troops under his command balked at his order to charge. Turning to the Zouaves, he remarked: "Those cowards refuse to march. . . . Forward! Let's show them what brave and Christian men are worth!" The Zouaves unfurled the banner of the Sacred Heart and charged the enemy with the cry "Vive la France! Vive Pie IX! Vive le Sacré-Coeur!"[55] Of the 300 who had joined the charge, 198, including Sonis himself, fell before Loigny. As night came, snow fell on the dead and dying.

Places of Memory

The military historian Michael Howard, who admired Sonis's sublime holocaust as little as he admired Gambetta's faith in the redemptive power of the people, said that on that day Sonis acted "like the colonel he was rather than the corps commander he should have been."[56] In other words, Sonis was as wrong to lead the charge as he was to order it.

Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870: La France dans la guerre* (Paris, 1989), 235–37. For a review of recent works on the *année terrible* see Robert Tombs, "L'Année terrible, 1870–1871," *Historical Journal* 35 (1992): 713–24.

53 Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, 310.

54 For Gambetta's statement see ibid., 510. On Sonis see Baunard, *Sonis*, 320. Of course, Sonis and the Zouaves were fully aware of the importance of Orléans to Jeanne d'Arc and the liberation of 1429.

55 Baunard, *Sonis*, 325, 327.

56 Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, 311. For a more gently critical assessment see Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870*, 237, where the charge before Loigny is described as "héroïsme inutile."

Howard is undoubtedly correct from a military-historical point of view. But in spite of Sonis's training, such considerations were not operative on that First Friday in December 1870. For Sonis, the charge at Loigny offered two possible outcomes, both of which can be understood only within the salvation narrative symbolized by the Sacred Heart. Either Sonis and the Zouaves would prevail against the Germans, in which case they would demonstrate, dramatically and irrefutably, the superiority of the Christian soldier and the special relationship between the Sacred Heart and France. Or they would die, a sublime expiation for a decadent France.[57]

Given the bloody failure of the charge, it was in the latter sense that Sonis understood his actions at Loigny. Death or, in his case, disfigurement conferred meaning. The Zouaves' charge was a military blunder but a spiritual success, because through their sacrifice they redeemed France. As Sonis later described it: "The shedding of so much blood, and a blood so pure and generous, seemed to me to be the price of mercy for France. Everything seemed lost for the friends of our Savior when the heart of Jesus on the cross was pierced by the lance, whereas in reality the torrents of divine blood that escaped from this blessed wound were going to purify and regenerate the world. Such thoughts, mingled with prayers for our dear dead and wounded, supported me during the two long hours it took me to lead from the battlefield at Patay the small troop of wounded who gathered around me."[58] Evidently, Sonis understood his actions as analogous to the passion and redemptive death of Jesus. His purifying effusion of blood, or his "martyrdom" (as he preferred to call it), hastened the end of France's suffering. Any sign of a conventional understanding of war disappeared from Sonis's rhetoric. Instead the war had provided a ceremonial occasion, an opportunity to perform a ritual sacrifice by which to atone for the nation's sins and reestablish sound relations between God and his people.

The return of the Zouaves to Nantes, whether dead or disfigured, provided ample opportunity to elaborate on the spiritual and political significance of their actions. When the abbé Pergeline spoke at the funeral of three Zouaves at the Chapelle des Enfants-Nantais on 6 March 1871, he emphasized the regional links uniting 1789 and 1870. He noted the filiation of some Zouaves to the illustrious leaders of the

57 On violence, sacrifice, and the sacred see René Girard, *La Violence et le sacré* (Paris, 1972), esp. 27–52; and Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1992), esp. 30–35.

58 Cited in Baunard, *Sonis*, 343–44n. This passage invites a psychosexual analysis, in addition to a historical and redemptive reading offered here.

Vendée revolt, the "giants" of '93 who had fought to defeat the Revolution and the Republic. No one missed his ironic intent when he described the Volunteers of the West as "covered with the spittle of the Revolution and the blessings of Pius IX."[59] In this war of values, the execration of their republican enemies meant as much as the recognition of the Pope. At the interment of the comte de Bouillé, volunteer and grandson of the Vendéen leader Bonchamps, Charette spoke of the Sacred Heart as a symbol of love and expiation and of the volunteers as victims whose deaths had appeased the anger of God and brought mercy on France. Bishop Cabrières of Montpellier later likened the sacrifice at Loigny to the sacrifice of Louis XVI on the scaffold in 1793—a regenerative act necessary for a new beginning for France.[60]

In the diocese of Nantes, these sentiments were fixed to local places and served the social construction of memory: the tomb of La Moricière in Nantes cathedral, built with the help of donations from Pius IX; the church Saint Donatien and Saint Rogatien, rebuilt in fulfillment of the vow made to the Sacred Heart in December 1870; a street named for Sonis, leading to Saint Rogatien, the votive church to the Sacred Heart.[61] These sites and their inscriptions kept alive the memory of the crusade of the Zouaves, the righteousness of their cause, the anxieties of the *année terrible*, the courage of the Volunteers of the West, and the mercy of the Sacred Heart.

Sacred Heart and *Union Sacrée*

The sacrifice of Sonis, Charette, and the other Volunteers of the West at Loigny earned them a national reputation within Catholic circles. Their Christian patriotism gives the lie to the assertion that the bonds of religion were doomed to be replaced by those of the nation.[62] Their "imagined community," contrary to the assertion of Benedict Anderson, was where the enchantments of nationalism reinforced rather than challenged those of belief; though it might cost one's life, one could

59 *SR*, 25 Mar. 1871, 134.

60 *La Semaine religieuse du diocèse de Montpellier*, 1874, cited in Gadille, *Pensée*, 2:232.

61 For a description of the significance of the vow see "Souvenir de la consécration du diocèse au Sacré-Cœur, et du vœu solennel à Saint Donatien et à Saint Rogatien," *SR*, 6 Jan. 1871, 4–5. The facade of the church Saint Donatien and Saint Rogatien (also known as "Le Montmartre Nantais") bears the inscription "Sacratissimo Cordi Jesu Ex-Voto Nannetensium." An inscription across one side of the triforium reads, "Cor Jesu Victima Peccatorium." Nor should one overlook, among places of memory, Fournier's tomb in the neo-Gothic Saint Nicholas in Nantes.

62 Benedict Anderson's formulation of the relationship between nationalism and religious belief treats them as successive. Incredibly, he remarks that "the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought" (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* [London, 1983], 1).

both bring about national salvation and lay claim to the promise of everlasting life through a moment of personal courage. Of course, Christian nationalism could be only a partial nationalism, patently oxymoronic to anyone outside the community of believers.[63] The sacrifice of the Volunteers of the West would fail as a new founding myth as long as official France remained secular; the sacrifice was meaningless outside the spiritual context that inspired it. Secular France looked on and shrugged. This redemption was unsolicited.

All the same, in the years to come, notably during the 1870s, the legend of Charette, Sonis, and the Volunteers of the West at Loigny was aggressively put forth as a new founding myth, as the point at which France finally turned the corner and began the process of re-Christianization and regeneration through the Sacred Heart.[64] Sonis and Charette embodied the Christian soldierly character that some hoped would serve as a masculine ideal, and they joined willingly in a cultural struggle over the future and identity of France. They were among the many notables featured in the pilgrimage of thirty thousand to Paray-le-Monial on 20 June 1873, a moment that represented the climax of hopes for Bourbon restoration during the period of Moral Order.[65] Sonis's anticipated participation in pilgrimages promoted similar events in the west.[66] Charette would later serve, the misgivings of some members notwithstanding, on the lay committee appointed to promote the basilica of the Sacré-Coeur at Montmartre. (Sonis apparently declined a similar invitation.)[67] In short, Loigny conferred celebrity status on Charette and Sonis, who put it to good use thereafter. Loigny may yet confer sainthood on Sonis.[68]

The Sacred Heart, because of specific historical associations in the history of the west of France, provided a way to organize and represent a discourse on moral decay and national decline in postrevolutionary France. By the same token, the cult of the Sacred Heart was centrally positioned in the revival of penitential practices deemed necessary to national renewal. Annual remembrances of diocesan vows, along with parish, diocesan, and national pilgrimages, mobilized more people in

63 Caroline Ford has shown how regional identity could aid national integration (*Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Political Identity in Brittany* [Princeton, N.J., 1993]). The example of the *année terrible* shows how vexed and problematic such integration could be.

64 On the new context see Gadille, *Pensée*, esp. 2:251–52; Stéphane Rials, *Révolution et contre-révolution au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1987), 246–53; and Raymond A. Jonas, "Monument as Ex-Voto, Monument as Historiosophy: The Basilica of Sacré-Cœur," *French Historical Studies* 18 (1993): 482–502.

65 See Baunard, *Sonis*, 405; and Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies*.

66 *SR*, 10 Aug. 1872, 379; 30 Nov. 1872, 586–87.

67 Jacques Benoist, *Le Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre de 1870 à nos jours*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1992).

68 See "Supplément," *Bulletin paroissial*, Oct. 1995, esp. 6–8.

public places in the early Third Republic than workers' strikes and republican festivals; pilgrimage was a larger and far more common form of popular mobilization than the strike. Finally, the Sacred Heart provided the occasion, in the form of churches dedicated to or named for it, to use actual constructions and reconstructions as a metaphor, in Nantes and elsewhere, for the moral reconstruction the *année terrible* was to have initiated.[69]

Clergy more or less self-consciously experimented with gender attributes of the sacred. They found the image of the Sacred Heart useful in their reinvention of the divine for a generation of believers less content to accept a God defined in starkly patriarchal terms. If we accept the assertion of Claude Langlois, Ralph Gibson, and others that Catholicism was feminized throughout the nineteenth century, should we not expect a corresponding feminization of the image of the divine?[70] The Sacred Heart was promoted in Nantes and elsewhere in this spirit, although the feminized Sacred Heart remained in tension with the more conventionally imagined patriarchal deity—a complement rather than a substitute. Both visions of the sacred displaced the fear of violence: the Sacred Heart by offering a place of refuge, the patriarchal God by providing the ultimate explanation for the terrifying violence of war and by suggesting an appropriate counter to a seemingly irresistible force, the shedding of pure blood for the sake of appeasement and national redemption.

Here, too, we see how during the nineteenth century the Sacred Heart made a significant movement away from its previous role as a symbol of treason and insignia of bloody religious civil war. Despite obvious attempts by the Catholic Church to cultivate and capitalize on the memory of the Vendée, there was no attempt to revive religious civil violence. There were no massacres of French soldiers and civilians in the

69 Acts of reconstruction, such as those at Nantes and Tours (the basilica of Saint Martin), have the additional advantage of emphasizing the anteriority of Catholic tradition to rival secular traditions. See Raymond A. Jonas, "Restoring a Sacred Center: Pilgrimage and the Sacré-Coeur," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions historiques* 20 (1994): 95–123.

70 There is some evidence that this differentiation in the notion of the divine was driven by the feminization of belief and practice in nineteenth-century France. Among the laity, women were far more active than men in cultivating the devotion of the Sacred Heart in Nantes in the 1860s. See the letter of 20 Nov. 1866 to Père Drevon, in *Le Cœur de Jésus consolé dans la sainte Eucharistie: Recueil de différentes publications concernant l'Œuvre de la Communion réparatrice* (Avignon, 1866–68), 2:120–21. The role of the local clergy is not fully clear, although Fournier, as parish priest at Saint Nicholas, energetically promoted the Sacred Heart. On the feminization of Catholicism see Claude Langlois, *Le Catholicisme au féminin: Les Congrégations françaises à supérieure générale au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1984); and Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789–1914* (London, 1989). See also Odile Arnold, *Le Corps et l'âme: La Vie des religieuses au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1984); and Claude Langlois, "Féminisation du catholicisme," in *L'Histoire de la France religieuse*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and René Rémond, 4 vols. (Paris, 1988–92), 3:292–310.

name of God, king, and Sacred Heart. Eighteen seventy was not 1793; Loigny was far from Machecoul.[71] This not only reveals a capacity for the displacement of anxieties and religious and anticlerical hatreds that would have erupted in civil violence in an earlier epoch but also helps explain the decline of religious violence postulated by Langlois for the nineteenth century. It is significant that Sonis and Charette's men were far from Paris during the massive repression of the Commune in May 1871. That they were not there was surely not for lack of opportunity or historical symmetry. Adolphe Thiers had been desperate for soldiers, and what sweeter revenge for the grandsons of the Vendée than to avenge their ancestors on the sons and daughters of the sansculottes? But while Thiers's men were hunting down the Communards in Père Lachaise cemetery, Charette was in Rennes, consecrating his Volunteers to the Sacred Heart.[72] Thiers's civil war was fought on other terms.

The Franco-French struggles of 1870 show an extraordinary capacity for symbolic conflict in place of religious violence and civil war. Catholic clergy theologized the war: God acted because France had sinned; Prussia was merely his instrument. Thus the external enemy was internalized and an internal enemy vanquished. Defeat in a war of competing dynasties shifted into a civil war of rival patriotic memories. Gambetta, the Dantonesque republican firebrand, and Sonis, the Catholic royalist, obviously had little in common; ironically, they shared the belief that France's military problems were fundamentally spiritual rather than strategic. They also knew that if the war were lost, how it ended would condition national debate for years to come. They exploited a repertoire of ancient names and places, symbols and memories, seeking an advantage by defining the errors of the past and thus framing the answers to the inevitable questions about the future. Each groped for the moral high ground. In December 1870, within hours of Gambetta's telegraphed assertion that Paris had "founded its moral supremacy in remaining faithful to the heroic spirit of the revolution," Sonis had resolved to lead Charette's volunteers in the footsteps of Jeanne d'Arc at Loigny/Patay and behind the banner of the Sacred Heart.[73] Gambetta sought to incarnate Danton and Carnot. Sonis opted for the giants of the Vendée and for Jeanne d'Arc.

Was Loigny a rehearsal for the Marne? Did the Sacred Heart prepare the *union sacrée*? Certainly. However, if civil violence had been

71 At Machecoul in 1793, Vendéens massacred constitutional priests, government officials, and National Guard soldiers. On religious violence in France see Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu: La Violence au temps des troubles de religion* (Seyssel, 1990).

72 Hamon, *Dévotion au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus*, 5:36–37; *SR*, 17 June 1871, 285.

73 Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, 510.

drained out of attempts to define France and the French in confessional terms, if political combat remained rhetorical rather than physical, the goal of a re-Christianized France nevertheless remained. If the theology of the *année terrible* precluded the revival of the hot "guerre franco-française" of 1793, it left plenty of room for a bitter but cold civil war played out in the press, the courts, the pulpits, and the streets of the Third French Republic.