

THE GALLICAN REFORMATION: SOCIAL  
AND RELIGIOUS EFFECTS OF  
THE EDICT OF NANTES

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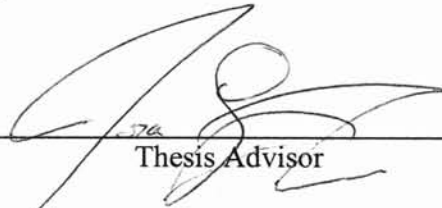
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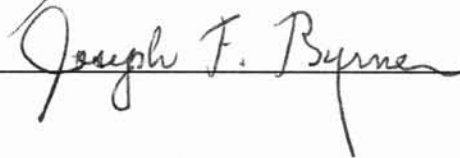
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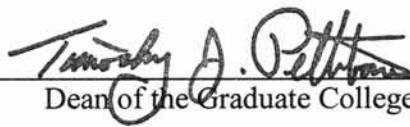
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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

After the period of violence, bloodshed, and political and religious stagnation during the second half of the sixteenth century, France entered a period of spiritual and intellectual growth in the form of the Gallican Reformation in the early 1600s.<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Church of France, known as the Gallican Church, had a history of semi-autonomy from the Roman Catholic Church. The Gallican Reformation differed from the Catholic Reformation that occurred throughout most of Europe, largely because persecution and violence marked the Catholic Reformation. The beginning of the Gallican Reformation in France ended the bloodshed between its two major religions and established a long period of calm and political stability. The Edict of Nantes in 1598 laid the groundwork of peace and constancy France needed before the Gallican Reformation could begin. The Edict of Nantes, seen throughout history as a Huguenot victory, actually enabled the Catholic majority in France to reassert itself.<sup>2</sup> The constant civil wars had benefited the Huguenots'

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<sup>1</sup> The official delineation of the Gallican Church within the Roman Catholic Church began with Francis I, king of France from 1515-1559. Francis I signed a concordat with the papacy in 1516, which gave the French king supremacy over the Catholic Church in France. The concordat helped to solidify the identity of the Gallican Church within the Roman Catholic Church. This concordat gave the king of France the official ability to control the appointment of bishops and abbots and to strictly limit the papacy's ability to demand financial exactions. Therefore, the French Catholic Church was free of papal control in regard to finance and the appointment of its prelates while accepting the pope's authority in matters of doctrine and discipline.

<sup>2</sup> Protestants in France were known as Huguenots. Originally, it was a derogatory term used by the Catholics to describe this group of heretics, but the French Protestants adopted the name and made it their own.

cause and hindered the Gallican Church's ability to participate in the Catholic Reformation. Previous historians have failed to recognize the importance of the Edict of Nantes for the Catholic majority of France. The Gallican Reformation began only after the Catholic Church of France instituted ecclesiastical and educational reforms. The Edict of Nantes, coupled with these Gallican reforms, guaranteed the primacy of Catholicism in France. The edict reestablished the Catholic Mass to all areas of France, and it ended internal conflicts. With these two major accomplishments, the edict enabled the Gallican Church to make the first serious strides toward reforming itself.

#### France in the Age of the Religious Wars

The Edict of Nantes of 1598 punctuated three decades of internal conflict in France. Two basic problems ignited the religious wars: the spread of Calvinism from the lower levels of society and the weakening of political leadership at the top. Before the sixteenth century, the Valois dynasty (1328-1589) had provided France with solid leadership. After the death of Henry II (1547-1559), the Valois tradition of stability crumbled. In fact, the sons of Henry II were incompetent and incapable. Unfortunately for the Valois dynasty, they were also unable to produce heirs. The sickly Francis II (1559-1560) succeeded his father to the throne at the age of fifteen. After Francis II's death eighteen months later, his ten-year-old brother, Charles, assumed the throne and became Charles IX (1560-1574). After Charles IX's early and untimely death, Henry II's only living son became Henry III, king of France from 1574 through 1589. The one constant throughout all of these changes

was Catherine de Medici, the widow of Henry II, who served as the regent for her first three sons. Catherine's position as regent ensured her a great deal of power and influence in France. She worked tirelessly to guarantee that the Valois dynasty continued.

During this period of constant change in the monarchy, powerful families and factions in France began fighting for influence over the weak kings. The two most powerful and successful families were the Guises and the Bourbons. The Guises were strong in northern and eastern France, while the Bourbons had influence in the far southwest and central areas of France. These influential families, who both shared family ties to the Valois rulers, though their clienteles, secular and ecclesiastical, local and international, virtually superseded royal authority. The succession of weak kings enabled these two prominent families to heavily influence French politics. Quickly it became obvious that the two factions were struggling for total dominance of the monarchy and France. The people of France, as well as Spain, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Germany began siding with either the Guises or the Bourbons for both political and religious reasons. Countries with large Protestant contingencies favored and offered aid to the Bourbons in their quest for the crown, while Spain, a militantly Catholic country supported the Guise family claim to the French throne.<sup>3</sup>

More than political differences separated these two families. The Guise family represented the traditional Catholic majority and rule in France, while the Bourbons had converted to the new Huguenot faith. The matriarch of the Bourbon family, Jeane

<sup>3</sup> Henryco Caterino Davila, A History of the Civil Wars of France, vol. 1. Translated by Ellis Farnsworth (London: D. Brown, 1758), 299-300; J.H.M. Salmon, French Government and Society in the Religious Wars (St. Louis: Forum Press, 1976), 2.

d'Albret, converted to Calvinism in the 1550s, and she championed Calvinists all over Europe. Her influence led to the conversion of many of the Bourbon leaders. Approximately 40 percent of the French nobles converted to Calvinism at some point during the religious wars. The power that the Lutheran princes had gained from Charles V in the Holy Roman Empire intrigued and excited the French nobility. Protestantism attracted the lower and middle classes as a way to protest against corrupt Catholic officials who limited local autonomy, taxed endlessly and wasted money and men in continuous battles. Many of the early Huguenot converts congregated together in areas protected and held by the Bourbons.<sup>4</sup>

In the early 1570s, the Huguenots finally gained the upper hand at court, when a prominent Huguenot military leader, Gaspard de Coligny, began advising Charles IX. Coligny helped influence Charles IX into making a fateful decision in 1572; he approved of the marriage of the Protestant Henry of Navarre to Marguerite of Valois, his sister.<sup>5</sup> Coligny suggested the marriage as a token of Charles IX's commitment to all the people of France—even the Huguenots. So, several thousand Huguenots gathered in Paris for the wedding and celebration of the symbolic union of the two religions on 18 August 1574. The strong Catholic Guise family was insulted by the marriage of Marguerite of Valois to the heretic. How could Charles have chosen Henry of Navarre over the duke of Guise? Therefore, the duke of Guise took advantage of the opportunity and attacked the

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<sup>4</sup> Will Durant, The Reformation (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), 520.

<sup>5</sup> Henry of Navarre was the Head of the House of Bourbon and the Prince of Bearn before he became Henry IV, king of France.

celebrating Huguenots in the form of an organized blood bath on 24 Aug 1572, which became known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. During the massacre, the duke of Guise assassinated Coligny and inspired several hundred Catholics to move throughout Paris killing other prominent Huguenot leaders. The massacre continued for three days and thousands of Huguenots died. In the aftermath, the Huguenots realized that they could not trust the Valois family to protect them from the Guise family or the other Catholics. The Huguenots took action and began fortifying their towns in case of further attacks.<sup>6</sup>

Lack of strong leadership within the Valois family further heightened the friction between the Catholics and the Huguenots. Charles IX died in 1574, and his younger brother Henry, who became Henry III succeeded him. Henry III was physically weak, sterile, and indecisive. His temperament wavered from periods of extreme piety to times of lavish parties with homosexual overtones. Henry III's personal weaknesses only escalated the urgency of the conflict between the Bourbons and the Guises. Henry III had neither sons nor brothers to succeed him, which meant that the throne would be vacant after Henry III's death. Henry of Navarre, a distant cousin, was Henry III's closest living male relative. Therefore Navarre was the First Prince of the Blood, while the prominent Catholic duke of Guise was a close second in line.<sup>7</sup>

The Catholics of France abhorred the idea of a Protestant king. The Catholic League, a group of Catholics committed to maintaining the Catholic faith in France, joined forces with the Guise family to attempt to prevent a Protestant succession. Under

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<sup>6</sup> Davila, A History, 300-316.

<sup>7</sup> The First Prince of the Blood is just an official title for the head of the family who was the closest bloodline to the current king; Davila, A History, 372-377.

the direction of the duke of Guise, the Catholic League appealed to the Spanish for help in 1588. Upon seeing that the Spanish aided the Guise-Catholic faction, Henry III had no choice but to defend France against the foreign invaders. Therefore, he sent troops to oppose the oncoming Spanish and Guises, but the Spanish-Guise troops forced Henry to withdraw. The king of France feared the growing strength of the Guise family and the Catholic League. Henry realized he had to gain the upper hand, in order to maintain his supremacy in France. Therefore in late 1588, Henry III arranged for the assassination of the duke of Guise for raising arms against the king of France.<sup>8</sup>

The duke of Guise's assassination did not provide Henry III with his desired result. Instead it sent the Catholic League into a revolt. Henry III looked to Henry of Navarre for support against the Spanish-Guise-Catholic League faction. The king died in 1589 while laying siege to Paris. Henry of Navarre continued fighting the Spanish-Guise-Catholic League faction until 1594, at which point he captured Paris. He marched into Paris as Henry IV, king of France. The following year he declared war on Spain, and in 1598 Henry put down the last of the League armies and forced the Spanish out of France.<sup>9</sup>

Only after Henry defeated his French and Spanish opponents was he able to restore stability in France. In a move that greatly upset his Huguenot supporters, Henry of Navarre had converted to Catholicism in 1593 in an attempt to gain the throne. In

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<sup>8</sup> Davila, A History, 564-571, 633-640.

<sup>9</sup> Davila, A History, 480-488,505.

order to appease his Huguenot supporters, Henry IV promulgated the Edict of Nantes in April of 1598. It provided for limited legal protection for Huguenots and attempted to restore the peace in France.<sup>10</sup>

### The Problem of the Edict of Nantes

For the past four hundred years, many historians have considered the Edict of Nantes as a Huguenot victory and the first civil guarantee for a religious minority in France, and have not fully investigated how the edict affected the Catholic majority.<sup>11</sup> Close examination of the Edict of Nantes supports that it did constitute the first steps towards religious toleration and freedom of conscience, and it also benefited the French Catholics. The edict did grant limited practice of the Huguenot faith in areas that were primarily populated with Huguenots. The edict did not directly confront the idea of religious toleration. In fact, most of the articles of the Edict of Nantes granted benefits to the Catholics. The most important benefit that the Edict of Nantes provided was peace. Without it, the government could not have enforced the edict's provisions. Without peace the Gallican Church could not have reestablished itself through out France with educational reforms and reconversion. The Edict of Nantes aided Catholics in

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<sup>10</sup> Davila, A History, 623-627.

<sup>11</sup> Elie Benoist, The History of the Famous Edict of Nantes (London: John Dunton, 1694), 6; W.J. Stankiewicz, Politics and Religion in Seventeenth-Century France Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 1-7.

reestablishing their dominance and also helped ignite the Gallican Reformation in France. Economically, the edict aided the Catholics by giving them the right to collect money, artifacts, and lands lost during the religious wars.

The edict also helped the Catholics reform their church. Prior to the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes, the Catholic Reformation, which had occurred throughout Europe, had not begun in France. Previously, the religious wars had hindered the reforms of the Catholic Reformation and the Council of Trent. After the edict and the peace it provided, French Catholicism, known as Gallicanism, began a revival. By allowing the Huguenots to maintain their schools, the edict frightened and encouraged many Catholics to create new orders devoted to teaching young Catholics about their faith. As we shall see, previous historians have focused on how the edict aided the Huguenots' cause, but have not explicitly examined how it affected Catholic France. Through a further investigation of the Edict of Nantes, this study will argue that the edict laid the groundwork and created conditions that guaranteed that Catholicism would remain the primary faith of France.



## Chapter Two

### Historians and the Edict of Nantes

The Edict of Nantes was one of many edicts and letters patent granted on religion during the religious wars in France. Contemporary Protestants in France and all over Europe considered the Edict of Nantes as their first major victory in the battle for religious toleration and equality, even though the Edict of Nantes was primarily a document granting civil liberties, not religious toleration. Most historians focused on what kind of peace the edict created, i.e. toleration, equality, or recognition, or they focused on how the edict helped the Protestants and hurt the Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup> The majority of the scholarship focused on the Protestant idea of “toleration” within the edict, while only a few historians examined the impact of the edict on the Catholic Church.

Even with almost four hundred years of study, a gap still appears in the scholarship on the Edict of Nantes. Few historians have looked at how Catholics were affected and reacted to the so-called pro-Huguenot Edict of Nantes, even if the only Catholics truly affected were the elites. All historiographical schools have evaluated the edict through the prism of the religious wars. Immediately following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, a pamphlet war began among the apologists. The only serious study of the Catholic reaction to the Edict of Nantes came during the period of the Revocation.

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Greengrass, France in the Age of Henry IV. The Struggle for Stability (New York: Longman, 1995), 100; Mack Holt, “Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion,” French Historical Studies 18 (1993): 524-551; Mack Holt, The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 163.

Unfortunately very few people adequately preserved these pamphlets and polemics. Catholic pamphleteers sought to prove that the Edict of Nantes never gave the Huguenots permanent freedom of conscience.<sup>13</sup> Most Catholics argued that Henry IV granted the edict to prevent the Huguenots from arming themselves and revolting again. In reaction to these Catholic histories, many Protestant historians and pamphleteers all over Europe began writing about the atrocities that Huguenots had faced.<sup>14</sup>

### The Apologist School

In reaction to the Catholic pamphleteers, Protestants began what are known as apologist studies, which continued up to the twentieth century. The first histories of the edict are chronological narratives, whose main goal was to explain the events in detail. Contemporary figures wrote some of these early accounts. One contemporary was Henrico Caterino Davila, a Protestant who idolized Henry IV. Davila traveled to France for the opportunity to fight along side of Henry IV. He blamed both the Protestants and the Catholics for the civil unrest within France, but he never found any fault with Henry IV.<sup>15</sup> Davila fought in the religious wars in France even though he was not French. Davila developed his high opinion of Henry IV on the battlefield. He wrote of his experiences during the religious wars during the late 1500s. His study is one of the few contemporary works of its kind that has survived. Davila's work is interesting to study,

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<sup>13</sup> Elisabeth Perry, From Theology to History: French Religious Controversy and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (The Hague: Martin Hijhoff, 1973.), 161.

<sup>14</sup> Perry, From Theology, 166.

<sup>15</sup> Davila, A History, 360-365.

because he did not share the religious viewpoint of some of his contemporaries. Also he was not overly concerned about who would become king and how a new king would affect France. He was a concerned fellow Protestant who discovered and was attracted to the personal power of Henry of Navarre. Davila does not address the Edict as a Huguenot or Catholic victory, because his main focus is the military and political influence of Henry IV. Throughout his two-volume study of the religious civil wars, Davila's work demonstrates some of his personal prejudices and biases; many authors of this time allowed their personal feelings to affect and shape their work.

The next phase in the historiography began with the Protestant apologia of the 1680s. It developed out of religious historians' desires to acquit their religion of any blame for the religious wars. Protestant apologists and their work always exonerated themselves and blamed the Catholics. The problem with this kind of research is that it usually ignores one or more sides of an event. There cannot be a true historical account of an event if the researcher is trying to prove a preconceived idea that can only be proven by ignoring evidence.

One of the first attempts to present a scholarly rigorous Protestant account of the Edict of Nantes remains one of the most famous and most widely consulted. Elie Benoist was a Protestant minister in Alençon during the period of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.<sup>16</sup> Benoist began writing a history of the Huguenots in the early 1680s. He explained that many Protestants and Catholics alike misrepresented the legal plight of the Huguenots. The only way to vindicate the Protestants from any wrong doings during the

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<sup>16</sup> Charles Johnston, "Elie Benoist, Historian of the Edict of Nantes," 55 Church History (1986): 470.

religious wars and the years following was to examine their legal charter: the Edict of Nantes.<sup>17</sup> Benoist claims that he was motivated by the absence of a truthful account of the affairs of religion. The account is an extensive and detailed chronological survey of the events. His study begins a full thirty years prior to the Edict of Nantes. It is primarily political, because he emphasizes the importance of the political battle between the Valois, Guise, and Bourbon families.<sup>18</sup>

Early in his study, Benoist claimed that he tried to represent the truth about the edict and stated that he would not use anything that he could not prove.<sup>19</sup> However, Benoist undermined his own credibility by failing to list the sources he consulted. For example, he stated that he relied on public and private memoirs, but one cannot help wondering whose memoirs he consulted. As a prominent Protestant minister, did Benoist consult Catholic memoirs? It would be difficult to answer that question. It is evident in the text that Benoist's account is slanted towards the Protestant viewpoint.

Although Benoist's work is over three hundred years old, it has influenced later historiographical traditions. The first historians to use Benoist as an important source were the liberal historians of the nineteenth century. Benoist validates the liberals' emphasis and focus with his thesis statement that the Protestants deserved the Edict of Nantes and that it was the only legal document allowing for Protestant worship in France. Benoist might not have realized that his study also proved that the edict was more of a civil document than a religious document. He illustrated how the edict allowed for civil rights

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<sup>17</sup> Johnston, "Elie Benoist," 476.

<sup>18</sup> Benoist, The History, xiii.

<sup>19</sup> Benoist, The History, 6.

of a minority, but it did not insure freedom of religion. The nineteenth century liberals agreed with the idea that the edict was not a religious document, but it was a civil document. Many social historians and religious historians consult Benoist's study in order to understand the liberal school or to use it to dispute that the edict was unreligious.<sup>20</sup>

The rise of the liberal school in the nineteenth century did not mean the extinction of the apologist tradition in the scholarship. Richard Heath carried on the apologist tradition in an 1886 article "The Reformation in France from the Dawn of Reform to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes."<sup>21</sup> Heath's goal in this one-sided account of the events is to gain approval and sympathy for Huguenots. His approach differed from that of Benoist. It was not a chronological account but a thematic study of events. Heath demonstrated the plight of the Huguenots through the mistreatment they received from the Catholic majority. Heath wrote in an unabashedly anti-Catholic fashion, which he illustrated in his statement about Henry IV's conversion to Catholicism. He stated that the conversion was the "first step in the ruin of the house of Bourbon and of the French monarchy."<sup>22</sup> He asserted that Henry IV granted the edict out of compassion and gratitude for the Huguenots' faithful services. The study examined the political assemblies that Huguenots held to discuss their situation. Between 1595 and 1597, Heath noted the Huguenots held five such assemblies in which they discussed their mistreatment. The

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<sup>20</sup> Benoist is a favorite source for many historians of this subject. The historians often range from social or religious backgrounds. One example of a political historian who consulted Benoist is W.J. Stankiewicz in his work Politics and Religion in Seventeenth-Century France. Stankiewicz uses Benoist's work as a way to ascertain the political mindset of the majority of French Protestants in the late 1600s.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Heath, "The Reformation in France from the Dawn of Reform to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," Religious Tract Society (1886).

<sup>22</sup> Heath, "The Reformation," 98.

assembly members complained that they did not have free exercise of religion in several areas of France. They also listed several abuses: their churches had been fired upon, their Bibles had been burned, and their members were often stoned on the way to service.<sup>23</sup> By describing the plight of the Huguenots during this period, Heath clearly tried to gain sympathy for the Huguenot cause. Heath's article is an example of some of the biased history of the period; therefore it must be dealt with carefully. This study is highly opinionated. Heath did not include a bibliography or endnotes, possibly because the article does not attempt to prove anything new. Even though Heath's article is biased in its description of the events, it does provide an illustration of the bitterness and frustration that French and European Protestants felt over the edict and its revocation, even approximately two to three hundred years later. This article helps get the reader into the mindset of the 'victimized' Protestants and how that has affected the study of the Edict of Nantes since its promulgation in 1598.

Nathanael Weiss's article "The Edict of Nantes: Its Adversaries and Difficulties" (1898) is another example of a traditional Protestant thematic account of the Edict of Nantes. Weiss did not attempt to explain how or why the Edict of Nantes was written. Instead, he detailed the difficulties that the Huguenots overcame before the promulgation of the edict. The article includes descriptions of the hardships that Huguenots faced in French law courts, because the motto "one faith, one law" ruled the law courts. He explained that Catholics felt that the Protestants were heretics; therefore by definition they were always wrong. Thus they could never receive a fair trial. Weiss used these hardships

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<sup>23</sup> Heath, "The Reformation," 99.

to explain the importance of the Edict of Nantes in the lives of Huguenots.<sup>24</sup> The article, written to commemorate the tricentennial year of the Edict of Nantes, is an example of the renewal of interest in the edict during the tricentennial. Weiss's emotional article does not include footnotes or a bibliography, which makes it difficult for the reader to follow his research. Without the necessary documented research, Weiss cannot prove his statements and arguments, which creates questions concerning the validity of the article. Weiss's emotional view of the edict follows the tradition of seeing the edict as a Huguenot victory in the battle for Huguenot recognition and equality. Therefore when Louis revoked the edict, the Huguenots were victimized again. Weiss's article is one of many during this period that helped draw attention back to the Edict of Nantes and its' affect on France and the Huguenots.

Continuing in the Protestant apologist tradition is William Prall's 1925 article, "The Edict of Nantes." Prall attempted to show that the early reformers had no intentions of separating from the Gallican church. These early reformers wanted to eliminate the superstitious beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church, and the only reason the early reformers broke away from the Gallican Church was that the Catholics refused to change their ways.<sup>25</sup> Prall blamed the institution of the Gallican Church for the religious wars in France. If the Gallican Church had reformed its ways, the religious wars would not have occurred.

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<sup>24</sup> Nathanael Weiss, "The Edict of Nantes: Its Adversaries and Difficulties," Huguenot Society of America (1898): 157, 160-161.

<sup>25</sup> William Prall, "The Edict of Nantes," Huguenot Society of America (April 1925): 2.

Prall's study is primarily political, because he focused on the career of Henry IV and the development of religious-aligned political groups in France. He did not credit Henry IV for granting the Edict of Nantes as most early historians did. Prall views Henry IV as a hindrance to the Huguenot cause. According to Prall, Henry's vision of peace for France made him a hero, but "his loose morals...and his betrayal of the Huguenots who placed him on the throne of France stamp him, however, as a mean man."<sup>26</sup> Prall faults Henry for not granting the Huguenots full equality. Henry's weakness was the reason that the reforms did not succeed. Prall credits the Union of the Huguenots, a group of men who swore to live and die united in the confession of their faith, for the edict. The Union of Huguenots met in political assemblies to discuss their situation and how to improve it, and Prall credits these assemblies and their power to influence the government for the Edict of Nantes.<sup>27</sup>

He fails to provide a convincing argument to support his thesis. The Huguenots only wanted to make the Catholic Church better, but the Catholics refused to accept any changes. Therefore, the Catholics forced the Huguenots out, but the majority of the argument deals with the political groups that developed within the Huguenot faith. Prall was unable to show that the Catholics were the only ones to blame for the wars of religion. Therefore, he did not illustrate how the Huguenots and the Edict of Nantes

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<sup>26</sup> Prall, "The Edict of Nantes," 3.

<sup>27</sup> Prall, "The Edict of Nantes," 3,15-16.



defeated the Catholics. Even with his focus on the political groups that he claims influenced the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes, Prall is still unable to prove that the edict truly benefited the Huguenots in a lasting way. The article exemplifies the influence of the liberal movement in history during the nineteenth century because of his emphasis on the political forces that helped attain the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes.

### The Liberal School

In the late nineteenth century the historiography changed due to the influence of liberals. The focus changed to an examination of the political causes behind the promulgation. The central problem with this liberal historiography is that religion did play a large part in the religious wars, yet most of these political studies failed to examine religion. The most troubling aspect of this trend in the historiography of the Edict of Nantes scholarship is the tendency to view the people and events of the 1590s through the lenses of nineteenth-century ideas of nationalism and the state. It is possible in the 1590s that ending the wars concerned some men more than their own religious agendas, but to claim that there was an actual party whose purpose was to gain peace by toleration is presumptuous. The few political groups that did develop during the religious wars were at heart religious groups with political agendas. This trend dominated the historiography for several generations.

The liberal school posits that the Edict of Nantes was the basis for political and religious toleration. Two assumptions guide their historical imagination: the centrality of Henry IV, and the existence of a party known as the *politiques*. This *politique* faction in France was comprised of moderate Catholics that desired domestic peace. Many scholars

studied Henry IV as a great statesman, whose ultimate goal was domestic peace. In this paradigm, these Catholics could be seen as early examples of the seventeenth century idea of *raison d'état*; the idea that the ends justifies the means. Historians from this period focused on what Mack Holt calls the “nineteenth century liberal view of the *politiques* as a modern-looking group of enlightened thinkers who believed that matters of state were more important than confessional disputes.”<sup>28</sup>

William Stankiewicz's Politics and Religion in Seventeenth-Century France looks at the *politique* faction within France and Europe during the sixteenth century. He examines the Edict of Nantes in terms of political toleration. He defines toleration as a legal device used by the *politiques* and Henry IV. According to Stankiewicz, the *politiques* were not a religious party, but rather a movement that placed the interests of the state above those of the Catholic Church. Religious toleration was a side affect of the greater goal of legally gaining peace in France. In the contemporary vocabulary of Catholics the word ‘toleration’ was a term of contempt, while for Protestants the idea of toleration was a weapon to be used in their struggle for survival. Stankiewicz claims that the *politiques*’ ability to look beyond religion to the state makes them forerunners of absolute rule. He also claims that the *politiques* changed international politics forever.

Stankiewicz makes a bold and controversial statement that after the Edict of Nantes, religion no longer played a role in international politics.<sup>29</sup> Stankiewicz has a very narrow focus for seventeenth-century France because his paradigm consists only of politics and the ideas of toleration. He admits that the Peace of Ales in 1629 ended a series of

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<sup>28</sup> Holt, “Putting Religion Back,” 549.

<sup>29</sup> Stankiewicz, Politics and Religion, 55, 1, 43.

religious wars in France, but he does not believe that it was a major event. For Stankiewicz, the Peace of Ales was just another example of Richelieu's commitment to justice and clemency. His examination of the Thirty Years War is cursory and only within the framework of Richelieu's policies of political toleration. His meager discussion of the English Civil War does not mention religion. With the English Civil War, his focus is again only on how the political aspects of that foreign war affected French policies of political toleration. He completely disregards a major aspect of seventeenth century society—religion.<sup>30</sup>

Stankiewicz successfully proves his ideas of political and legal toleration through several different sources. He uses letters, memoirs, and specifically pamphlets to gain understanding about the mindset of seventeenth century Frenchmen. He also examines primary monographs by political theorists. Stankiewicz also relies on the work of Elie Benoist as a secondary source. Stankiewicz's work is based on the political theories of the time. He examines numerous theorists and how their theories developed. The basis for Stankiewicz's work is also his problem. Several of the political theorists named in the work are obscure and therefore do not lend themselves to creating a basis for what the majority believes to be true of the political climate of France. Also, Stankiewicz does not explain the importance of these theorists within the context of the development of toleration.

Franklin Palm also follows the liberal premise that politics and not religion were the primary causes of the Edict of Nantes. He argues in Politics and Religion in Sixteenth-Century France (1969) that the *politiques* were key in the development of the Edict of Nantes. Palm claims that the *politiques* came to the conclusion that the welfare of the state

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<sup>30</sup> Stankiewicz, Politics and Religion, 112-113, 87, 147, 124.

should supercede all local, religious, social, or political interest. This belief brought the *politiques* into conflict with members of the more traditional Catholic League. According to Palm, *politiques* felt that they alone realized the unfortunate results of the religious trends of the day and had the courage to present a practical theory of government.<sup>31</sup> Like so many other Liberal historians, Palm fails to consider the importance of religion in late sixteenth-century France.

More recently, Edmond Beame, agrees with the idea of the *politiques*' existence, but breaks with the liberal conception of this group. In his article "The *Politiques* and the Historians"(1993), he argues that historians regarded the *politiques* as protectors of Gallicanism and the architects of the concept of divine-right absolutism. Yet, no one knows who the *politiques* were.<sup>32</sup> The notion of the *politiques* as a middle party in the Wars of Religion is easy for many historians to believe, because they want to give order to the past. The term *politique* did not represent an organized party or a cohesive conglomeration of individuals.<sup>33</sup> Beame established a model based on behavior and actions to determine whether or not someone was a *politique*.<sup>34</sup>

Beame describes how the term *politique* changed through the Wars of Religion. He does not attempt to analyze the over-arching religious questions of the period. Instead, he focuses on the political climate. Beame concluded that originally *politique* meant someone

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<sup>31</sup> Franklin Charles Palm, Politics and Religion in Sixteenth-Century France (Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1969), v, 13, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Edmond Beame, "The *Politiques* and the Historians," 54 Journal of the History of Ideas (1993): 355-356.

<sup>33</sup> Beame, "The *Politiques* and the Historians," 358, 379.

<sup>34</sup> Beame, "The *Politiques* and the Historians," 356, 362.

who was thought to be irreligious, while later the term became synonymous with royalist tendencies. Towards the end of the religious wars people used the term for all politically active Frenchmen that were not members of the Catholic League. For Beame, these *politiques* were the force behind the Edict of Nantes and any other advances made toward creating a political middle ground. The most important factor to Beame is how historians have misused the term. He cites contemporary histories, memoirs, and letters as proof that very few people used the term *politique* during the religious wars. It was not until the reign of Louis Philippe (1830-1848) that the concept of the *politiques*, as a party, began to take shape in historians' minds and appear in histories of the religious wars.<sup>35</sup> Most historians have failed to determine a distinctive feature, vocabulary, and usage for the term in late sixteenth-century France. Yet, Beame also does not develop a distinctive definition for what determines a *politique*. He merely states that it is one's actions and behaviors that make someone a *politique* without further definition.<sup>36</sup>

#### The Non-Confessional Religious School

By focusing on the *politiques* in France, liberal historians freed themselves from the narrow confessional biases of previous scholarship. However, their unwillingness to recognize religion as a source of conflict has left them open to criticism. In many ways these liberal studies impose ideas of the twentieth century onto sixteenth century France. Several recent historians have focused on debunking the idea that the edict resulted from a

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<sup>35</sup> Louis Philippe's reign encompassed the period when liberal studies of history began.

<sup>36</sup> Beame, "The Politiques and the Historians," 358-359, 371, 379.

desire for toleration. The majority of these historians have tried to keep religion a factor in the religious wars, although most of these studies only focus on the Protestant aspect of the religious wars and the Edict of Nantes. One of the only studies focusing on the Catholic reaction to the Edict of Nantes and the religious wars written in the last forty years is Philip Benedict's "The Catholic Response to Protestantism—Church Activity and Popular Piety in Rouen, 1560-1600" published in 1979 in J. Obelkevich's Religion and the People.<sup>37</sup> Benedict examines how an ecclesiastical establishment responded to radical change. Rouen is the basis of his study, because it was the second largest city in early modern France and predominantly Protestant.<sup>38</sup> Initially the clergy reacted very slowly to the rise of Protestantism, but eventually they did use the pulpit and processions to fight against Protestantism.<sup>39</sup> Later the populace, encouraged by the clergy, reacted violently to the rising tide of Protestantism.

Methodologically, Benedict is one of few historians to use ecclesiastical documents, which gives him the advantage of examining how the Gallican Church reacted to the religious turmoil in France. He developed a model that he uses to determine how the number of processions and rites performed changed over time. Benedict examines the issue of whether the reform of Catholicism was a reaction to Protestantism, and he argues that indeed it was. Benedict concludes that the alarm caused by the possible accession of a Huguenot king undoubtedly provoked an intensification of religious activity by many

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<sup>37</sup> J. Obelkevich, ed. Religion and the People (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

<sup>38</sup> Philip Benedict, "The Catholic Response to Protestantism—Church Activity and Popular Piety in Rouen, 1560-1600," Religion and the People (1979): 169.

<sup>39</sup> Benedict, "The Catholic Response," 170.

members of the urban elite. Rouen clearly illustrates that intolerance dominated Catholicism's initial reaction to the Protestant challenge. The example of Rouen also suggests that the movement of internal revitalization that subsequently developed received a strong boost from the crisis awakened by the threat of a Protestant king. For Benedict, it was a Counter-reformation not a Catholic Reformation.<sup>40</sup>

Religion and how it affected the period of 1560-1600 is the basis of N.M. Sutherland's study. Where Benedict argues that Catholicism reformed in reaction to Protestantism, Sutherland examines the Huguenots' attempts for official recognition, not tolerance. She develops her thesis in The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition where she examines the relations between the Protestants, the Catholics, and the crown in sixteenth century France. Sutherland uses the numerous edicts and letters patent issued prior to the Edict of Nantes as the basis for her study. No one previously looked at all of the edicts at as a whole.<sup>41</sup> Sutherland argues that the wars of religion were primarily religious, but she does concede that there were a few extremists driven by private passions. Some people simply wanted toleration, but she does not believe there ever was a *Politique* party.<sup>42</sup> Henry IV's politics played a large role in the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes, because Henry's first task, as King of France, was to impose his own authority, not to promote the

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<sup>40</sup> Benedict, "The Catholic Response," 190.

<sup>41</sup> N.M. Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), ix.

<sup>42</sup> Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle, 283.

Protestant cause as many people felt he would and should have done.<sup>43</sup> Sutherland does not believe that Henry asked the Catholic courts to endorse a principle of toleration. She states that the Edict of Nantes does not even hint at such a proposal.<sup>44</sup>

The bulk of the work is dedicated to describing the Huguenots desire to be recognized as an acceptable faith. They wanted the right to any job, attend any school, and worship anywhere. Sutherland uses the growth of the royal government, changes in political theory and the conflict between the Catholics and Protestants as a backdrop for the Huguenot struggle for recognition. Sutherland also details how all of the edicts before the Edict of Nantes provided some small portion of their goal, but none of the edicts came close to attaining their goal. She points out that extremist Catholics fought to keep the Huguenots down by destroying the previous edicts by refusing to enforce them or even to fail to cease fighting.<sup>45</sup>

In her 1988 article "The Crown, the Huguenots and the Edict of Nantes," Sutherland tries to dispel the myth of toleration.<sup>46</sup> Sutherland agrees with Richard Golden's statement that "true toleration was inconceivable in sixteenth century France. Society might tolerate a second religion only if absolutely necessary, just as one might be compelled to tolerate pain or death."<sup>47</sup> She asserts that the Edict of Nantes was not a

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<sup>43</sup> Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle, 286.

<sup>44</sup> Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle, 332.

<sup>45</sup> Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle, 6.

<sup>46</sup> N.M. Sutherland, "The Crown, the Huguenots and the Edict of Nantes," in The Huguenot Connection: The Edict of Nantes, Its Revocation, and Early French Migration to South Carolina, R.M. Golden, ed. (Boston: Kluwer, 1988).

<sup>47</sup> Golden, The Huguenot Connection, 3.



Huguenot victory, but the recognition of a deadlock in French society. The edict was a function of Henry's weakness, not his strength, because Henry was not able to establish peace on his own. Peace was the principle purpose of the edict. In some ways Sutherland continues the liberal line, because she explains that the purpose of the edict was to establish peace. Yet, she does not agree with the idea of a *Politique* faction during the sixteenth century, and she clarifies that the edict had a religious purpose. Sutherland resolves that the edict's purpose was to bring peace by reestablishing Catholicism as the only religion in France.<sup>48</sup>

Sutherland clearly outlines her major arguments. The edict was not successful and Henry's weakness led to the promulgation of the edict. It was not written to establish toleration, and the edict does not give Huguenots political privileges. In essence, Sutherland states that the edict never worked, because it did not reflect the needs of the crown or the Huguenots. She concludes that the edict "embodied a maximum of extortion on the one hand, and of concession on the other."<sup>49</sup>

#### Mack Holt—Religion as Culture

Recent work by Mack Holt has changed the scholarly focus on the Edict of Nantes and the French Wars of Religion. In his 1993 article "Putting Religion back into the Wars of Religion" Holt praises historians who are focusing on religion as a major factor in the Wars of Religion. Holt demonstrates how the historiography has changed in recent years,

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<sup>48</sup> Sutherland, "The Crown," 29, 31, 36.

<sup>49</sup> Sutherland, "The Crown," 29.

and how most recent historians of the religious wars have adopted new methods for studying the period. These methods of focusing on the culture and religion of a community follow the ideas that Holt has espoused for years. Holt was dissatisfied with the way that previous social historians, those of the *Annales* School, had treated the French Wars of Religion. The *Annalistes* of the 1960s began studying the social and economic backgrounds of the participants and how those backgrounds effected people's actions and beliefs. Yet, many of these studies downplayed the influence of religion by placing higher importance on the social and economic backgrounds of the participants.

Holt followed a new group of social historians in the later 1970s, which disputed the *Annalistes* for eliminating the human factor from history through their use of "structural-deterministic" social science models. Holt disputes that religion often took the back seat to socioeconomic forces.<sup>50</sup>

The latest shift in the historiography is towards cultural history and the idea that religion is culture. This trend does not attempt to apply a theory to history, instead it is attempting to "restore human agency to history."<sup>51</sup> Historians are now trying to understand the importance of religion in people's lives in sixteenth-century France, and from that understanding historians can examine the Edict of Nantes and the religious wars in new ways. According to Holt, religion was at the heart of the struggle. Religion is vital in the study of the Wars of Religion and leads to what Holt calls a cultural approach. For Holt, religion is culture, because contemporaries perceived their religion as a body of believers

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<sup>50</sup> Holt, "Putting Religion Back," 526.

<sup>51</sup> Holt, "Putting Religion Back," 550.

rather than a body of beliefs.<sup>52</sup> Holt strongly adheres to the idea that “the historian can never apply theory to history.” Theory can help point out new questions to ask of old sources or provide new answers to old questions, but theory can never be the history.<sup>53</sup>

In 1995 Holt made some very bold statements in his book French Wars of Religion. He claims that his work is the first accessible and comprehensive study of the French religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to appear for more than twenty years. He also asserts that his work is the first general history of the wars that focuses on religion. Holt is an innovator in the study of Early Modern France. He is a social historian studying communities and focusing on religion.

When discussing the edict, Holt laments, “so much historical misinformation and mythology has been propagated about this edict, that before analyzing its contents, it is necessary to explain what this edict is not.”<sup>54</sup> For Holt, the edict was not an act of sacrificing religion for the good of the state. Secular politics did not exist in sixteenth century France. There never was any organized party of “*Politiques*.” Holt supports the original definition of *politiques*, which were people who lacked religious zeal and piety. These “*politiques*” were not in favor of a permanent peace settlement of religious toleration or any modern reason of state.

Holt concludes that the edict resulted from the circumstances of the 1590s: Henry IV’s abjuration of the Protestant faith, the submission of the Catholic League, and Henry’s politics of appeasement. The edict did not introduce a systematic policy of

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<sup>52</sup> Holt, “Putting Religion Back,” 530, 534.

<sup>53</sup> Holt, “Putting Religion Back,” 550.

<sup>54</sup> Holt, The French Wars, 162-163.

religious toleration. It did allow for a temporary religious co-existence, however, he asserts that the main goal of the edict was religious concord. The edict in fact was a way to bring the Huguenots back into the Catholic faith.<sup>55</sup>

Holt's examination of the religious wars and the Edict of Nantes is unusual in many ways, and marks the beginning of new study into the events. Holt examines the political and economic issues of the time, but he does not lay emphasis there. His treatment of the edict is superficial, because he does not examine the edict individually and how it affected the religious culture. Holt believes that religious feelings motivated the religious wars. Therefore he did not study specific events. Instead he looks at how the religious wars changed the religious atmosphere of France. Holt examines the period from a social viewpoint. Religion is culture; religion is ethnicity. The conflicts arose over the survival instincts of one culture as they faced the beginnings of a new culture, or religion. Holt's study of the Edict of Nantes and the religious wars has broadened the scope of the historiography to include the human aspects of religion and community.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages of Synthesis

The historiography of the Edict of Nantes and the religious wars has dramatically changed through time. Originally, the apologists used the edict to blame one religion for the mistreatment of another. Recent historians have realized that it is difficult to uncover truths about history if historians are only willing to look at one aspect of the events. Yet even after four hundred years of often misguided research there are still areas of the Edict of Nantes that have previously been ignored and warrant further research. Historians, such

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<sup>55</sup> Holt, The French Wars, 163, 168.

as Mack Holt, are attempting to rectify some of the misinformation and bias of previous generations of historians. Philip Benedict is one of few historians who considered the Catholic reaction to the religious wars. He did not analyze the impact of the Edict of Nantes on the Catholic Reformation within France. There is a void in the historiography that needs to be filled by a cohesive study of the Catholic reaction to the Edict of Nantes that would examine the reaction in political, religious, social, and economic terms. This study will examine the Catholic social and religious reactions to the Edict of Nantes.

## Chapter Three

### Dispelling the Myth of the Edict of Nantes

Ever since its promulgation on April 12, 1598, historians have considered the Edict of Nantes the first move toward legal religious equality for Protestants in France. A close examination of the Edict of Nantes dispels this myth in several ways. The edict might have appeared to give the Huguenots some legal rights and recognition. However, the document itself benefited Catholics more than Huguenots. One of the first historians of the Edict of Nantes, Elie Benoist, wrote that Catholics received preferential treatment in the edict. He explained that it was the Catholics who decided what concessions the Huguenots received.<sup>56</sup> The Huguenots did receive some new legal rights, but the Edict of Nantes did not grant complete religious freedom. In fact, the Edict of Nantes ensured the financial and legal rights of Catholics and the prominence of the Catholic faith more than it granted religious toleration or legal rights to the Huguenots.

A few recent historians have agreed that the edict did not help significantly the Protestant cause. One such historian, N.M. Sutherland, claims that the edict was nothing more than the recognition of a deadlock.<sup>57</sup> Elie Benoist wrote that the edict granted seven basic demands of the Huguenots. He also wrote that he would not analyze the articles

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<sup>56</sup> Benoist, The History, 291.

<sup>57</sup> Sutherland, "The Crown," 29.

concerning or favoring Catholics. Therefore, of the ninety-four articles in the edict, Benoist only examined seven, which he interpreted as the only ones favoring Huguenots. The seven articles consisted of: the freedom to exercise their faith without fear of molestation, payment of ministers from public monies, and the right for children to attend any school, the right to receive inheritances, equal numbers of Catholic and Huguenot judges in courts and councils, civil equality, and the right to maintain their strongholds.<sup>58</sup> Benoist's study of the seven beneficial articles and his avoidance of the other eighty-seven articles suggests that the edict did not aid the Huguenots as much as it helped the Catholics. The general articles of the edict underscored the Catholicism of the crown.<sup>59</sup>

The edict does not mention anything about belief or doctrine. This supposedly religious settlement did not grant religious freedom; instead it attempted to integrate Huguenots back into the Catholic State.<sup>60</sup> The Edict of Nantes did not introduce a systematic policy of religious toleration. Henry IV did not ask his Catholic courts to endorse the principle of toleration, because his goal did not involve toleration. He desired peace.<sup>61</sup> Henry did not accept the idea of toleration, because he firmly believed in 'one faith, one law, one king.'<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Benoist, The History, 271, 273, 278, 280-281, 283, and 285.

<sup>59</sup> Holt, The French Wars, 165.

<sup>60</sup> Holt, The French Wars, 164.

<sup>61</sup> Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle, 332

<sup>62</sup> Marvin O'Connell, The Counter-Reformation 1599-1610 (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 329.

## Catholic and Protestant Opposition to the Edict of Nantes

Henry knew he had to appease the Huguenots, but he could not afford to anger the minority of Catholics that had vigorously opposed his bid for the French throne. The Catholic minority, known as the Catholic League, had a long history of hostility towards the Huguenots. The Guise family, the second most powerful family in France, along with the aid of Catherine de Medici, the mother of Charles IX and Henry III, formed the Catholic League in the 1560s. The League formed under the pretense of destroying Protestantism, and after it became apparent that the Valois reign would end. The principal goal of the Catholic League was to put the duke of Guise on the throne.<sup>63</sup> Initially, Catherine de Medici wanted to ensure that the crown would remain Catholic and yet be powerful enough to maintain the semi-autonomy from the Roman Catholic Church. Many clerics joined the Catholic League, because they believed that religion served as the foundation of the kingdom. The king owed obedience to the Church. Therefore a heretic could not fulfill such a role and had to be kept off the throne by any available means.<sup>64</sup> Leaguers, the most zealous and fiery Catholics, opposed absolutism, because they feared a Protestant majority and a Protestant monarch. They claimed that they formed to defend the “true” faith, the Catholic religion.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Benoist, The History, 46.

<sup>64</sup> Joseph Bergin, Cardinal De La Rochefoucauld—Leadership and Reform in the French Church ( New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 24.

<sup>65</sup> Stankiewicz, Politics and Religion, 54.



One common goal held the Catholic League together: to keep the ‘most Christian king’ from falling into the hands of a heretic, such as Henry of Navarre.<sup>66</sup> The League lost its momentum and purpose after Henry abjured the Protestant faith on July 25, 1593 and swore to keep the true doctrine of Catholicism. With Henry’s conversion and his promise not to attempt any innovations, declarations of allegiance poured into Paris from all over France. Most of the towns and *parlements* supported the newly converted king; thus the League lost its power base.<sup>67</sup> Yet the Guise family still held Rheims, therefore the crowning of Henry IV took place at Chartres on February 27, 1594.<sup>68</sup>

The Huguenots held assemblies to discuss their grievances against Catholic France. The Huguenot assemblies of 1594, 1595, 1596 and 1597 became much more political than previous years, and their demands to the king were more militant. The increasing size and length of the sessions indicate how the assemblies grew more insistent. The session in 1595 lasted two months and fifty representatives attended the meeting. In 1596, the fifty representatives remained in session for six months. By 1597, the representatives were in almost constant session. Between seventy and eighty representatives attended the March session, while almost two hundred representatives attended the June session.<sup>69</sup> Sutherland

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<sup>66</sup> Holt, The French Wars, 121.

<sup>67</sup> The *parlements* were the French law clerks. The king elected nobles, or they purchased their seats on the court from the king.

<sup>68</sup> Traditionally the royal French crowning ceremony took place in the cathedral at Rheims. D.J. Buisseret, Huguenots and Papists (London: Ginn, 1972), 81; Thomas Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 217, 220; Nancy Lyman Roelker, One King, One Faith: The Parlement of Paris and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 442.

<sup>69</sup> Mark Greengrass, France, 101.

discovered the sessions in 1597 dealt with more serious complaints, such as claiming Catholics stoned the Huguenots on their way to church service, burned the Huguenots' bibles and shot up their churches. Many Protestant communities refused to contribute their *tailles* to the royal treasury, while several other communities threatened to stop paying theirs. Some Huguenot nobles threatened an armed insurrection and a renewal of the civil wars, if the king did not accept their demands. The Huguenots hoped to pressure Henry IV into helping their cause. Besides the five 'pressure' assemblies between 1595 and 1597, the Huguenots formed a religious alliance, the Union of the Huguenots. Members of the Union swore to live and die united in the confession of the faith.<sup>70</sup>

Despite possible opposition from the now dormant Catholic League, Henry appointed two men to oversee the drafting of the Edict of Nantes. Henry took an active part in the production of the document. His presence at the council meetings insured that the men worked on the document, instead of fighting among themselves.<sup>71</sup> The two men in charge of overseeing the preparation the edict were Jean Jeanin, a Catholic from the *Parlement* of Normandy and Phillippe de Montauban, a Protestant and Henry's Chancellor.<sup>72</sup> Jeanin, the Catholic, worked very hard on the edict, and he demanded its full compliance. Jeanin wanted the edict strictly obeyed, because he feared that the Protestants would demand more rights, if they felt that the Edict of Nantes was not beneficial. While the Protestant, Montauban worked on the edict only because Henry forced him to participate. For five years he looked the other way and refused to enforce

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<sup>70</sup> Prall, "Edict of Nantes," 15; Heath, "The Reformation," 99, 162.

<sup>71</sup> Benoist, *The History*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> The Chancellor was the principal legal officer of the realm.

the provisions of the decree, because he thought the Huguenots deserved more rights. Jeanin and Montauban represented the general reaction in society. Most Catholics wanted this edict strictly followed, because they feared the Huguenots would ask for more rights. While most Huguenots favored the edict, they still believed that they deserved more concessions.<sup>73</sup>

The majority of partisan Protestant historians usually considered the edict as a religious document, while most non-Protestant historians often give credit for the edict to the political assemblies of the Huguenots.<sup>74</sup> The Huguenot organization resulted from years of incompetence within the monarchy, not just Henry IV's reign and the violent situations. The Huguenot party gained prestige as a military and political power throughout the later half of the sixteenth century.<sup>75</sup> The high percentage of nobles who converted to Protestantism gave the Huguenots valuable wealth and a small measure of respectability. The Huguenots gained admiration and support from Protestants throughout Europe, especially England, the German states and the Netherlands. Largely because of their newly found power, the Huguenots sought the advantages of a legal settlement, which would guarantee their future. These Huguenot political assemblies and nobles served as the basis for the few civil liberties that the Huguenots did gain in the Edict of Nantes, yet they were not powerful enough to force the Huguenot advantage any further within France.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Benoist, The History, 269.

<sup>74</sup> Prall, "Edict of Nantes," 16.

<sup>75</sup> Stankiewicz, Politics and Religion, 19; Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle, 285.

<sup>76</sup> Sutherland, "The Crown," 31; Holt, The French Wars, 162.

Undoubtedly, the political strength of the Huguenots played a part in the decision to promulgate the Edict of Nantes, which Henry declared in April of 1598 after defeating the Catholic League and his Spanish enemies. The Edict of Nantes repeated several clauses from previous edicts of pacification, such as allowing full freedom of conscience and liberty to hold services in a large number of specified areas.<sup>77</sup> Henry did not officially attempt to end the two faiths, but he did want to stabilize the relationship between the two faiths. The purpose of the edict was to provide one general law regulating all differences between those of the two faiths.<sup>78</sup>

#### Economic Benefits for Catholics in the Edict of Nantes

The edict helped Catholics financially who lost lands and goods to Protestants during the religious wars. It allowed Catholics to buy the houses or buildings built during the wars on their confiscated lands. The Catholics had previously received no restitution for the loss of their land. If the Catholic owners did not want to buy the buildings, they could force the inhabitants to pay for the buildings.<sup>79</sup> An important concession for the Huguenots was that neither the Gallican Church nor private citizens could repossess lands

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<sup>77</sup> Buisseret, Huguenots and Papists, 87.

<sup>78</sup> Sutherland, The Huguenot Struggle, 329.

<sup>79</sup> Henry IV, Edict of Nantes, Article four (London: n.p., 1680): 6-7.

and foundations used for the fortification of cities.<sup>80</sup> Even though Catholics could not regain lands used for fortification, article ninety states that the Huguenots had to return all confiscated Catholic goods.<sup>81</sup>

The requirement to pay the tithe to the Catholic Church obviously disturbed the Huguenots.<sup>82</sup> The Huguenots ultimately wanted exemption from the tithe, instead the edict allowed for public monies to pay the salaries of Huguenot ministers. The clergy did not want the Huguenots to be exempt from the tithe, because the clergy feared the loss of revenue would hurt the Church. Yet, the Catholic clergy objected to paying Huguenot ministers with public funds, because they feared it would elevate the Huguenot ministers. Many Huguenots hoped that the public funds would make the Huguenot ministers equal to the Catholic clergy, but the Catholics refused to allow that to happen.<sup>83</sup> The very idea of a Huguenot, a heretic, being equal to a priest of God's Holy Church was abhorrent to the Catholic clergy. Yet, few priests objected to receiving the tithe from the entire population of France, because the added revenue greatly benefited the Gallican Church.

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<sup>80</sup> Henry IV, Article five, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Henry IV, Article ninety, 47.

<sup>82</sup> Henry IV, Article twenty-five, 15.

<sup>83</sup> Benoist, The History, 278-279.

## Reestablishing Catholic Sovereignty in France

An overview of the edict reveals the pro-Catholic undertones of the document. Huguenots held many areas throughout France by force or by majority, and previously in these places the Huguenots refused to allow Catholic worship. Yet, the edict changed the Huguenot domination, because it reestablished Catholicism everywhere, even in areas where Huguenots had banned it for over twenty years.<sup>84</sup> The edict also restored Church property. Both actions were steps towards a return to one religion, but the most important step was the restoration of the Mass to all areas of France.<sup>85</sup>

The edict laid out several ways in which the Catholics could indirectly hinder the Huguenot's cause in France. It forbade Huguenots from preaching and exercising their religion in Catholic Churches, houses or other Catholic areas.<sup>86</sup> Huguenots had to observe all Catholic festivals, and they could not work, sell, or keep their shops open on those festival days.<sup>87</sup> The edict also prohibited Huguenots from disturbing Catholic ceremonies and from molesting their holy places.<sup>88</sup> The Catholic Church required that the Huguenots follow the laws of Catholicism concerning marriages and contracts. These requirements helped to eliminate the outer differences in the two faiths.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Henry IV, Article three, 6.

<sup>85</sup> Sutherland, "The Crown," 36.

<sup>86</sup> Henry IV, Article three, 6. Catholic areas were places that the overlord or majority of the town was Catholic.

<sup>87</sup> Henry IV, Article twenty, 13.

<sup>88</sup> Henry IV, Article three, 6.

<sup>89</sup> Henry IV, Article twenty-three, 14.

Another ploy in the edict to return France to Catholicism was the special rules concerning Huguenots in the city of Paris. Paris, as the capital of the kingdom, would remain Catholic. This article of the edict helped to insure that the political leaders of France would also remain Catholic, because the only legal faith in Paris was Catholicism. No Huguenots could exercise their religion in Paris or within five miles of its city limits. Therefore, the leaders of France who lived in the capital of Paris could worship Catholicism or nothing at all. The capital of the 'most Christian king' must remain Catholic.<sup>90</sup>

After 1589, when Henry became king of France, a considerable number of nobles left Protestantism, but many of Henry IV's top advisors were still Huguenots. Henry named Protestant Maximilien de Bethune as the minister of finance, which was one of the most powerful positions in France. He also became the duke of Sully in 1604. The dukes of Bouillon and Biron both remained Protestant, despite the growing trend to follow Henry by converting back to Catholicism. The edict forbade them from practicing their faith in Paris, but it could not keep these advisors from Paris and Henry IV.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Henry IV, Article fourteen, 11.

<sup>91</sup> Frederic Baumgartner, France in the Sixteenth Century (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 256.

The edict also restricted Huguenot recruitment. In article eight, the edict forbade Huguenots from preaching, witnessing, or publicly instructing children anywhere except where permitted by the edict.<sup>92</sup> Books about the Calvinist faith could not be printed or sold publicly, except in the cities and places indicated in the edict.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the edict disabled the Huguenots ability to spread their faith.

The edict limited the areas in which Huguenots could legally worship. Huguenots could practice Calvinism only in areas where the elected high justice was Protestant. If the high justice was Catholic, the edict forbade the Huguenots from publicly practicing their religion. Groups smaller than thirty could gather for christenings and other special occasions, but these places could not be in cities, boroughs, or villages held by Catholic lords.<sup>94</sup> Also, the edict prevented the Huguenots from holding public religious ceremonies.<sup>95</sup> Not only could they not have public ceremonies, but also the edict prohibited the Huguenots from speaking in public in a manner that might incite violence or acts against the state.<sup>96</sup>

Some of the final articles dealt with restrictions placed on the Huguenots as a group instead of as individuals. The edict attempted to keep the Huguenots from literally becoming a state within a state. Article eighty-one forbade the Protestants from

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<sup>92</sup> Henry IV, Article thirteen, 11.

<sup>93</sup> Henry IV, Article twenty-one, 13.

<sup>94</sup> Henry IV, Article eight, 8-9.

<sup>95</sup> Henry IV, Article fifteen, 12.

<sup>96</sup> Henry IV, Article seventeen, 12.



negotiating or carrying on intelligence operations with foreign countries.<sup>97</sup> The French Catholics feared that the Huguenots would appeal to foreign powers for alliances against Catholic France. The Huguenots could have easily looked to the Dutch or English for religious alliances, and they could have appealed to the Habsburgs in Austria and Spain for a political alliance against France. While the edict endeavored to keep the Huguenots from becoming their own state, Henry IV lacked the power to confiscate the fortified towns the Huguenots held. The edict allowed the Huguenots to keep their strongholds and fortified towns for eight years, and this was the only lasting guarantee of the Edict of Nantes.<sup>98</sup>

Although the majority of the Edict of Nantes favored Catholics and Catholicism, a few articles benefited the Protestants. In article twenty-two, the edict stated that religion could not be the determining factor for a student's enrollment in universities, colleges, or schools. The most important part of this article was what it did not say, because the edict did not forbid Huguenots from attending or establishing schools.<sup>99</sup> The edict allowed Huguenots to hold offices in the Estates or public charges; royal, seigniorial or of cities, lands, or lordships.<sup>100</sup> The edict also allowed for six Huguenots to be admitted to the *Parlement* of Paris and other *parlements* in France.<sup>101</sup> Although the edict permitted the Huguenots to be in the *Parlement* of Paris, they would not be allowed to practice their religion within the city limits of Paris. The edict revoked and nullified all sentences,

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<sup>97</sup> Henry IV, Article eighty-two, 44.

<sup>98</sup> Stankeiwicz, Religion and Politics, 56.

<sup>99</sup> Henry IV, Article twenty-two, 14.

<sup>100</sup> Henry IV, Article twenty-seven, 15.

<sup>101</sup> Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, 223.

judgments, procedures, seizures and sales made against Huguenots since the death of Henry II in 1559.<sup>102</sup> The edict pardoned criminals from any punishment for crimes committed during the religious disputes. While the edict absolved Huguenots and Catholics from legal punishment, it required that all people who raided and looted Catholic holy places return the stolen artifacts to their respective churches.<sup>103</sup> Article twenty-six forbade disinheritance because of religion, and people disinherited in the past for reasons of religion could retrieve their property.<sup>104</sup>

Many of the articles worked toward civil equality for Huguenots, but the only guarantee of that civil equality was the Edict of Nantes. The edict did not establish an infrastructure to ensure that the statements and guidelines outlined in the edict were being followed and enforced. Therefore, it forced the Huguenots' dependence upon the edict for protection, and after the death of Henry IV, no one even attempted to enforce the Edict of Nantes.

Both Catholics and Protestants expressed dissatisfaction with the edict. The edict did not provide a foundation for a permanent religious settlement, because both sides wanted a total victory and neither side received it.<sup>105</sup> The Catholic presidents of the *parlements* opposed registering the edict. The *parlements* were made up of nobles who had purchased their positions from the crown. Therefore they did not want to register an edict that would possibly endanger their positions. After Henry IV issued the Edict of

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<sup>102</sup> Henry IV, Article fifty-eight, 29.

<sup>103</sup> Henry IV, Article one, 5.

<sup>104</sup> Henry IV, Article twenty-six, 15.

<sup>105</sup> G.A. Rothrock, The Huguenots (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979), 124.

Nantes in April of 1598, all of the *parlements* of France had to register the edict before it could become law. Many *parlements* registered the edict without question, but the *Parlement* of Paris refused to accept the edict. The *Parlement* of Paris was the chief law court in France. Registering the edict would give it the status of a law, and that would have given the Huguenots a more secure status than any other religious minority in Europe. The *Parlement* of Paris finally agreed to register the edict after the king made some concessions, such as restricting Huguenot access to judicial offices.<sup>106</sup> The *Parlement* of Paris' earlier refusal angered Henry IV, because, as he stated, "the other *Parlements*, by their refusals, have caused those of the Religion to raise their demands. I don't want still more [demands] because of your refusal..."<sup>107</sup> While the Catholics perceived they had given too much, the Protestants still lacked permanent security. The earlier hope of rallying the kingdom to the Protestant faith fled after the Edict of Nantes. The edict condemned the Huguenots to be forever a minority, protected by civil and military rights, but restricted in their religious activities.<sup>108</sup>

The edict had not helped the Huguenots religiously. After the edict, the Huguenot faith began a period of decline. After Henry IV became king, many Huguenot nobles left the Protestant faith and converted back to Catholicism. Many nobles had converted to Calvinism as a way to rebel against the Catholic, Guise-influenced monarchy, and without the threat of the Guise family the nobles had no reason to remain Calvinist. After Henry

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<sup>106</sup> Roelker, *One King, One Faith*, 445.

<sup>107</sup> Nancy Roelker, ed. *The Paris of Henry of Navarre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 296.

<sup>108</sup> H. Daniel-Rops, *The Catholic Reformation* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1962), 218.

IV's assassination in 1610, Huguenots all over France feared that the provisions of the edict would be ignored. Therefore in 1611 Regent Marie de Medici allowed the Huguenots to have a national synod at Saumur. Marie wanted to show that she would carry on Henry's commitment to the edict. The synod at Saumur illustrated the declining numbers of Huguenot nobles and common people. Many of the noble families were dramatically affected by the constant warfare of the religious wars. Brothers fighting brothers often led to premature deaths and the demise of entire family lines. The lack of attendance at the Synod at Saumur demonstrated the early successes of the Gallican church's attempts to reconvert France.<sup>109</sup>

The edict had helped the Huguenot cause by formulating a written document, which they could use for political and limited religious leverage. However, historians and contemporaries have over exaggerated the significance of the edict.<sup>110</sup> Careful examination of the edict illustrates how it did not grant the kind of religious freedom that Protestants have claimed since its promulgation. The edict was not a basis for religious toleration; instead it regulated a religious minority.

Henry IV possessed the skill of any good politician—the power to appease his constituents. Henry promulgated the Edict of Nantes out of political necessity. Once Henry had attained the throne he abjured from Protestantism in order to gain the support of the majority. The Huguenots had supported Henry in his claim to the French throne, and he realized that he needed to appease the Huguenots. Yet, he only advocated the

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<sup>109</sup> Baumgartner, France in the Sixteenth Century, 256.

<sup>110</sup> Holt, The French Wars, 162-163.

coexistence of the two religions as a drastic remedy to the religious civil wars.<sup>111</sup> The Edict of Nantes was not a grand statement about the status of religion in France. It attempted to calm the fears of a minority group within a somewhat unified majority. The edict allowed for temporary religious co-existence. Its ultimate goal was religious unity under Catholicism. Therefore the edict was not a sign of surrender to Protestant pressure. The edict reflected the realities of power rather than the emergence of a new civil enlightenment. The policy of compromise benefited and endangered the Huguenots. By allowing the Huguenots to keep their fortified towns, the edict created opposition from Catholics who previously had no problems with religious and civil toleration. The edict did not grant guaranteed political rights to the Huguenots, but the retention of their fortified towns did give them a small degree of political power.<sup>112</sup>

Unfortunately for Catholic France, the provision within the edict, which allowed the Huguenots to maintain their fortified cities for only eight years, was ignored. Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIII's advisor, feared the possibility that the Huguenots would become a state within a state, and they would turn to a foreign power to aid them.<sup>113</sup> Richelieu advised Louis XIII to bring all of France under the Catholic faith. Convinced that France must be the most powerful Catholic country in Europe, Louis XIII decided to fully enforce the Edict of Nantes and Catholicize the Huguenot fortified cities of La Rochelle and Montauban. On 16 February 1627, Louis XIII announced his plan, which greatly alarmed

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<sup>111</sup> Michael Mullet, Radical Religious Movements in Early Modern Europe (London, 1980), 77-78; Roelker, One King, One Faith, 450.

<sup>112</sup> Stankiewicz, Politics and Religion, 58; Sutherland, "The Crown," 35.

<sup>113</sup> Louis XIII was crowned king of France in 1610 when he was eight years old. His mother, Marie de Medici served as Regent for Louis until he came to maturity in 1614. The same year Louis XIII met Cardinal Richelieu who became his most influential advisor.

the Huguenots.<sup>114</sup> As feared, the Huguenots did look to a foreign power for assistance in protecting their stronghold on the coastal city of La Rochelle in July of 1627. The British government sent a fleet to the coast of France within sight of La Rochelle. The treaty the Huguenots signed with the British ended all allegiance to France and set up the framework for an independent republic of Huguenots.<sup>115</sup> The French defeated the British at La Rochelle in early 1628. Louis XIII offered the Huguenots liberty of conscience and guaranteed the personal freedoms outlined within the Edict of Nantes, if the Huguenots would dismantle their fortifications at La Rochelle. The Huguenots refused to concede. The French laid siege to the city of La Rochelle. The standoff continued for several months, until the French troops finally marched into the city gates on 13 October 1628. The surrender of La Rochelle caused the other pockets of opposition to lose momentum. In June of 1629, the Huguenots signed the Peace of Ales with Louis XIII, which granted them liberty of conscience and freedom of worship, but removed the Huguenots' ability to fortify or protect their towns. The Huguenot faction in France was further weakened after 1629 by the desertions of many of their few remaining nobles. The nobles feared losing their royal patronage from Louis XIII and the influential Cardinal Richelieu.<sup>116</sup>

External factors in Europe also adversely affected the Huguenots of France. The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) in Germany put a heavy financial strain on France. In the beginning of the war, Richelieu favored aiding the Protestant German princes against the powerful Austrian Habsburgs. Over a period of several years the Thirty Years' War

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<sup>114</sup> W.S. Browning, History of the Huguenots from 1598 to 1838 (London: W. Pickering, 1839), 129, 132.

<sup>115</sup> Browning, History of the Huguenots, 133-134, 137.

<sup>116</sup> Browning, History of the Huguenots, 142, 147.

developed into a power struggle for political dominance between Catholic France and Habsburg Austria. In 1635, France declared war on Spain, the Austrian Habsburgs' strongest ally. The result of the Thirty Years' War was the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The treaty ended all fighting in Germany, but did not officially end the war between France and Spain. The treaty strengthened the autonomy of the German princes, thus weakening the power of the Holy Roman Empire. It did solidify some of the territorial gains that Louis XIII had made and overall helped Catholic France regain political dominance on the continent of Europe.<sup>117</sup>

Louis XIII's heir continued to work toward gaining absolute power in France and Europe. Raised and groomed in the idea of the absolute power of the king, Louis XIV firmly believed in the principle of 'one faith, one king, one law'. As Louis XIV matured, he brought several extremely devout advisors into his inner circle. Louis's advisors influenced him into reversing some of the tolerant policies of Henry IV, especially his decision to revoke the Edict of Nantes. In 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, in another attempt to bring all of France under the Catholic faith. After the Edict of Nantes, the Huguenots' numbers fell while Catholicism began a resurgence. Yet, it was through religious organizations that the Protestants all over Europe banded together to voice their disapproval of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Many Protestants in 1685 attempted to change the Edict of Nantes into a permanent guarantee of their rights to freedom of worship, when in fact, the edict was a short-term emergency policy to attain one goal—domestic peace. The Catholics in France originally agreed to the edict, because they knew it would serve their purposes. It provided Catholics with

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<sup>117</sup> Browning, History of the Huguenots, 154, 157.



financial restitution for their losses during the wars, and it helped keep the Huguenots out of major political offices. Revoking the edict did not change anything for Catholics, because it had already fulfilled its purpose.

Louis XIV's actions did affect France for years to come. Many Huguenots fled the intolerance of France. Approximately 200,000 Huguenots left France and many of them were merchants and skilled craftsman, which adversely affected the French economy. During the height of the religious wars, there were approximately one million Huguenots and about 2,000 Calvinist churches in France.<sup>118</sup> After the events of the generations following the edict and the changing political structure of France, the number of Huguenots in France dropped dramatically.<sup>119</sup>

In retrospect the edict was virtually useless for the Huguenots, but it was essential for Catholic France. The Edict of Nantes ended three generations of religious civil wars, and it provided peace for a weary and decimated France. During the religious wars, the Gallican Church failed to reconvert the Huguenots, largely because priests, brothers and nuns feared violent attacks in the many areas of France where Huguenots had banned Catholicism. Without peace, the French Catholics would have failed at their attempts of reform yet again.

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<sup>118</sup> There are no formal census numbers to use to establish a firm number for the Huguenot population in France. Roelker, One King, One Faith, 457.

<sup>119</sup> Baumgartner, France in the Sixteenth Century, 312; Durant, The Reformation, 521.



## Chapter Four

### The Edict of Nantes

#### Igniting the Gallican Reformation

According to A. Lynn Martin, “Historians have traditionally viewed the Protestant Reformation as progressive, the Catholic or Counter-Reformation as reactionary.<sup>120</sup> Whereas the Protestant Reformation looked to the future through education of the young and old, historians have viewed the Catholic reform movement as a return to the past, which found its strength in tradition.<sup>121</sup> This view of the Catholic Reformation evolved, because the Catholic Church did not make any major doctrinal changes due to the Protestant challenge. Instead, the Catholic Reformation reaffirmed many of the Church’s traditional views. This Catholic Reformation consisted of several different ideas such as the emphasis on the foundation and reorganization of the orders, education of the young, and the inculcation of a new piety.

The Gallican Reformation differed from the Catholic Reformation that occurred elsewhere in Europe. The reform movement throughout the rest of Europe was the result of the Roman Catholic Church reasserting itself, while the Gallican Reformation in France strongly opposed any Roman influence and was an internal reform. Also, the

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<sup>120</sup> A. Lynn Martin, The Jesuit Mind—The Mentality of an Elite in Early Modern France (London: Cornell University, 1988), 229.

<sup>121</sup> Elizabeth Rapley, The Devotes—Women and Church in Seventeenth Century France (London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 23.

Gallican Reformation occurred approximately fifty years later than the Catholic Reformation. In the 1590s, Henry IV successfully rid France of Spanish influence and troops, which laid the foundation for stability and peace for France. The earlier attempts at reform in France failed due to the lack of internal and external support. The Gallican Church as well as the papacy had larger problems to solve. The constant civil and religious warfare in France hindered any reform movements attempted by the Gallican or the Roman Catholic Churches.<sup>122</sup>

The Edict of Nantes helped initiate the Gallican Reformation by instituting peace in France, reestablishing Catholic sovereignty and by allowing for the legal worship of the Huguenot faith. Before the Gallican Reformation could begin, France had to have peace. Reforms cannot work effectively without stability. The edict established peace in 1598—a peace that lasted for over twenty years.

The Holy Roman Empire is an example of how the restoration of peace helped the Catholic Reformation effectively begin. In 1555 the Peace of Augsburg established the principle of *curius regio, eius religio*, which meant that each ruler would determine the religion of his/her region. The Peace of Augsburg only allowed toleration for Catholicism and Lutheranism, but it did provide a form of religious toleration. The Peace of Augsburg established a religious peace that lasted for over sixty years in the German states of the Holy Roman Empire. Even though the Roman Catholic Church held three sessions of the Council of Trent in the German states, the full force of the Catholic Reformation did not

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<sup>122</sup> Davila, A History, 625; Henry Kamen, The Iron Century: Social change in Europe, 1550-1660 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 235-236; Robert Keating O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France, 1584-1629; a study of Jesuit and Capuchin influence on French foreign policy towards the Habsburgs," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1975), 3.

begin in the German states until after the final session of the Council of Trent in 1562. The Roman Catholic Church within the Holy Roman Empire had to wait for peace before it could aggressively enforce the Tridentine decrees.<sup>123</sup>

Much like the Catholic Reformation in the Holy Roman Empire, the Gallican Reformation could not succeed without peace, but the Gallican Reformation also needed the restoration of Catholicism to all areas of France. The edict required the observance of Catholicism in all areas, even those areas held by a Huguenot majority. Without the reestablishment of Catholic sovereignty, the Gallican reforms would have failed. In order to implement reform and attempt to reconvert the Huguenots, Catholic priests, brothers and nuns needed to move and live freely in all areas of France.

Catholics actively opposed the rights the edict allowed the Huguenots concerning education and schools. By allowing the Huguenots to maintain and establish schools, the edict forced the Gallican Church to change its stance on education. The edict forbade Huguenots from publicly recruiting, but no one monitored everything that occurred within their private schools. The Huguenot schools attracted great scholars, as well as, student of both faiths from all over France. The Catholics realized that the Huguenots would continue to gain converts through their schools. Thus, to keep the Huguenots from continuing to convert Catholics who attended their Huguenot schools, many French Catholics demanded a change in Catholic education. Older orders, such as the Capuchins

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<sup>123</sup> The Roman Catholic Church held a series of meetings and debates in the city of Trent between the years 1545-1563. The Council of Trent met to answer the threat of Protestantism and the growing dissatisfaction of Catholics all over Europe. The decisions the Council made were called the Tridentine reforms, and Catholic Churches all over Europe were supposed to enforce these new reforms.

and the Jesuits, began pushing for more education for pastors and priests. Concerned Catholics established new orders and revitalized old orders to teach French youth and adults about Catholicism. Many of these new orders used the Protestant schools as models for their new Catholic schools. Protestant schools allowed girls to attend, and many Protestant teachers visited women and children in their homes. The Protestant teachers understood the importance of mothers in their children's education. Therefore Protestants actively educated adult women. Several new orders developed to fill the need of educating young girls and their mothers. These new teaching orders helped invigorate the Catholic faith, as well as, bring people back to the Gallican Church.<sup>124</sup>

#### Initial Responses to the Huguenots

In the 1540s, early Catholic responses did not involve developing new orders for education and charity. Instead, the clergy reacted only defensively, i.e. after a Protestant victory, against the spread of the Protestant Reformation. These initial reactions changed as the religious wars progressed and the Protestants continued to gain converts. The clergy used two traditional forms of propaganda, the sermon and the procession. The special processions usually followed Protestant attacks on objects Catholics held sacred, such as their churches or sacred icons. Also, the clergy often performed rites of purification, attempting to cleanse a city polluted by heresy. This sent the message to onlookers that the Protestants represented a polluting force within society that threatened

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<sup>124</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 46, 52, 6, 42.

to provoke divine retribution against the city, unless it purified itself. The traditionally conservative clergy moved very slowly toward religious reform. The alarm caused by the possible accession of a Huguenot king undoubtedly provoked an intensification of religious activity by many members of the urban elite.<sup>125</sup>

No institution flourished more in the peace created by the Edict of Nantes than the Gallican Church. The Roman Catholic Church gained a small amount of influence in France during the early years following the Edict of Nantes through the unofficially accepted Tridentine reforms. Henry IV never accepted or instituted the Tridentine reforms, because he feared that the Gallican Church would not accept them. Traditionally, the Gallican Church had closely guarded its autonomy from the Roman Catholic Church. The Gallican Church feared that accepting the Tridentine decrees would limit their independence from the Roman Catholic Church. The Gallican Church had enjoyed official autonomy since 1516 when Francis I had signed a Concordat with the papacy. Henry IV knew that he could not expect the priests in France to enforce the Tridentine reforms if the church leaders of the Gallican Church refused to accept them. However, unofficially, the Tridentine reforms began taking hold after the religious wars ended. Even though most priests in France began following the Tridentine decrees after the Edict of Nantes, several years passed before the Gallican Church officially accepted the decrees of the Council of Trent. Finally in 1615, the *Parlement* of Paris and the Assembly of the Clergy officially accepted the decrees.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Benedict, "Catholic Response," 170-171, 177, 190-191.

<sup>126</sup> Baumgartner, *France in the Sixteenth Century*, 229-230; A.G. Dickens, *The Counter-Reformation* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1968), 176.

The decrees of the Council of Trent established the foundation of the Catholic Reformation through out the rest of Europe. The reforms redefined Church doctrine concerning the pope and of the bishops, the seven sacraments, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the existence of Purgatory. They abolished the sale of indulgences and banned the marriage of clerics. Also, the Tridentine reforms encouraged the priests to keep parish records listing births, baptisms and deaths of the faithful. The Council of Trent also defined justification in an active sense. Justification was attained through accepting God's Grace and salvation won through participation in the Church.<sup>127</sup>

Early attempts to bring the Catholic Reformation to France before the Edict of Nantes floundered, because they could not effectively compete with the Protestants due to the religious and civil unrest of the period. A few new orders established themselves in France even before the religious wars. The majority of these earlier attempts developed in France because of the orders desire to stave off the threat of the Protestant Reformation. The Minims began to appear in 1540; they served as an active order in France. The Minims created a mendicant order with an especially austere lifestyle. The Minims, known as great preachers, often preached at Lenten services, when the congregations were the largest and most receptive.<sup>128</sup> The reformed Franciscan order of Capuchins emerged as another new order to France before the religious wars.<sup>129</sup> The Capuchins were also one of the first orders to become involved in politics. When the Catholic League formed in 1576,

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<sup>127</sup> Kamen, The Iron Century, 232, 236; O'Connell, Counter-Reformation, 331; Rapley, The Devotes, 21.

<sup>128</sup> Baumgartner, France in the Sixteenth Century, 242-243.

<sup>129</sup> Bonnie Anderson and Judith Zinsser, A History of Their Own—Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present, vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 230.

the Capuchins embraced it. The Capuchins saw the League as another good Catholic organization trying to fight Protestant growth. This marked the first major foray into French politics for the Capuchins.<sup>130</sup>

#### New Catholic orders following the Edict of Nantes

Another way in which the Edict of Nantes helped the Catholic resurgence was the revitalization of the Catholic orders. The existence of an opposing minority encouraged revitalization within the Gallican Church. The rise of new orders did not guarantee the reform of the old ones, and many older orders did not reform or attempt to reopen houses in France.<sup>131</sup> The monasteries and abbeys had provided protection from the violence of the religious wars for many monks and nuns, and without the fear of religious violence, many French Catholics attempted to meet the challenge of the Protestant Reformation in France. The Council of Trent and the Gallican Church rejected many of the new orders because of their desire to do charitable work outside of the walls of their monasteries and abbeys. The Roman Catholic as well as the Gallican churches believed they could not protect the nuns and monks if they did not remain within the walls of the monasteries and abbeys. Also, nuns and monks could find the ideal religious life, “flight from this world,” only in

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<sup>130</sup> O’Neill, “Politics and the new orders of France,” 6, 50, 76.

<sup>131</sup> Bergin, Cardinal De La Rochefoucauld, 2.

monasteries and abbeys. Only after separating themselves from the world could their souls aspire to perfection. Therefore, orders that wished to act 'in the world' violated part of their sacred monastic vows.<sup>132</sup>

The Capuchin reform within the Franciscan order was by far the most important and successful example of internal reform of an established order. After the Edict of Nantes, the Capuchins heavily influenced the Gallican Reformation. The Capuchins recognized the need for well-educated members. In 1613, the General Chapter declared that all clerics had to spend at least three years studying philosophy and logic and four years studying theology before they could preach.<sup>133</sup> The Capuchin clerics through education were able to be better teachers, ministers, and priests.

During the first few decades of peace in the seventeenth century, France experienced a "conventual invasion"--a revitalization of old communities along with the establishment of new ones.<sup>134</sup> During the sixteenth century, Christianity opened to women and became a more accessible way for women to express their faith and commitment to service. Many women developed new orders to educate Catholic youth. Catholics needed help from every aspect of society. Therefore women were allowed to help in the struggle to win souls for their faiths.<sup>135</sup> In the early seventeenth century, many noble Catholic women realized the possibilities that religion could offer them, such as chastity and the ability to do charity work. Religious doctrine did not attract most women.

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<sup>132</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 25-26.

<sup>133</sup> O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France," 6, 50.

<sup>134</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 20.

<sup>135</sup> Anderson and Zinsser, A History of Their Own, 229.



The structure of these new groups, both Protestant and Catholic, did interest many women. The new less strict female orders and the Protestant faiths included women and encouraged women to be actively involved in their faith. Without the peace gained by the Edict of Nantes these kinds of organizations would have failed their mission and purpose for Christianity and the women who served in them.<sup>136</sup>

The Edict of Nantes allowed for the continuation of Protestant schools. Huguenots founded schools all over France after the promulgation. This spread of heresy angered and worried many Catholics. Many of the new orders, such as the Visitation, formed their congregations on Protestant models. The Protestants had instructed males and females of all ages, since the beginning of their schools. The new female orders knew they had to educate mothers and daughters, as well as, sons and fathers in order to be successful in recapturing souls for Catholicism.<sup>137</sup>

During the sixteenth century, the renewed importance of the cloister had protected many religious women from the violence of the religious wars. Also, the Council of Trent reaffirmed Pope Boniface VIII's decree of 1298, and according to that decree a nun who had taken vows could not leave the cloister. The Council of Trent listed the only legitimate reasons for leaving the cloister as fire, leprosy, and contagious diseases. Yet with the peace the Edict of Nantes brought, nuns did not believe they

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<sup>136</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 17, 16.

<sup>137</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 42-42, 46; Henry IV, Article twenty-two, 14.

needed the strict protection of the cloister. Despite the Tridentine decrees, many female religious communities trusted the safety created after the edict enough to venture out into the cities and towns to do charity work, as well as educate the youth.<sup>138</sup>

Madame Acarie brought two of the earliest new female orders to France. Elizabeth Rapley writes, “when in 1601 a small group of Spanish Carmelite nuns appeared in Paris, the ground was already prepared for a revolution in female contemplative life.”<sup>139</sup> The establishment of new female orders excited many women who wanted to take an active role in their religious experiences. The arrival of the first Carmelites had given a powerful impulse to the reform movement.<sup>140</sup> Madame Acarie, a student of St. Francis, undertook the task of bringing the Carmelite order to France. Madame Acarie also encouraged the expansion of the Ursulines in France.<sup>141</sup> The principle purpose of the Ursulines was the instruction of girls. The Ursulines obtained royal approval in 1611 from Louis XIII.<sup>142</sup>

The Jesuits, after they reentered France, realized that the women of France needed further education.<sup>143</sup> A concerned, motivated French Catholic woman, Jeanne de Lestonnac, agreed with the Jesuits and began formulating the plan for the Filles of Notre-

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<sup>138</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 27.

<sup>139</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 5.

<sup>140</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 35.

<sup>141</sup> Dickens, The Counter-Reformation, 175.

<sup>142</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 52-53.

<sup>143</sup> Members of the Society of Jesus were called Jesuits. A discussion of the Jesuits and their impact on the Gallican Reformation is in the later part of this chapter.

Dame.<sup>144</sup> The Filles of Notre-Dame's creation honored the Blessed Virgin, the "powerful patroness of militant Catholicism."<sup>145</sup> Jeanne de Lestonnac envisioned a community of women patterned after the Jesuits. In April of 1607, under the name of the Sisters of the Visitation, the Visitation received official approval and became the first female teaching congregation to achieve official status in France. The Sisters of the Visitation wished to combine the monastic life with care for the poor and the sick in their neighborhoods. The Gallican Church denied the Visitation's desire to open to the world and to do public charitable work. It forced the Visitation to adopt solemn vows, strict adherence to the cloister and the rule of St. Augustine. The Visitation's found its main purpose in the schoolroom, where they educated girls and their mothers and brought them back to the true faith.<sup>146</sup>

Another new order that developed during the peace established by the Edict of Nantes was the English Ladies. In 1609, a young Catholic Yorkshire woman named Mary Ward opened a school in Saint-Omer, France to teach young girls to read, write, and sew. The community grew rapidly; within three years they had forty members. The English Ladies wanted to return to England as missionaries, and in 1614, the English Ladies opened a house in London. The English Ladies of the Institute of Mary had extremely ambitious ideas. They hoped to establish a female order to rival the Society of Jesus, with the powers to teach and to evangelize. Mary Ward submitted her plan for the

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<sup>144</sup> The Filles of Notre-Dame are also known as the Filles de Sainte-Mary, the Daughters of Our Lady, and more commonly as the Sisters of the Visitation or just the Visitation.

<sup>145</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 43.

<sup>146</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 24, 34, 43-44, 46.

Ladies to the Pope in 1615. It provided for Jesuit-style structure, complete with a superior-general and varying degrees of membership. In 1616 Pope Paul V gave the English Ladies provisional approval. Even with the Pope's provisional approval, the English Ladies aroused violent reactions, because this institute of women dared to do the work of men—proselytize. Also, the Ladies rejected the cloister. Partially due to public pressure, the French government arrested Mary Ward in 1630 for being a heretic and schismatic. She served a one-year sentence, and upon her release she discovered that the Gallican Church had closed her institute. The suppression of the English Ladies served as a warning for the other women who wished to be active apostolates.<sup>147</sup>

Women led many of the influential movements in the Gallican Reformation and there were several outstanding male innovators. Several men served as teachers and role models. Francis de Sales, an influential man during the Gallican Reformation, taught many of the women who established new orders in France, and he wrote pamphlets and books in the new tradition of Gallican reform.<sup>148</sup> St. Francis saw a need for a community of women who had spiritual potential, but could not withstand the strenuous life of traditional monasteries. He envisioned their lives of prayer, contemplation, and visits to the sick and poor.<sup>149</sup> St. Francis guided many important women, such as St. Jean of Chantel and Madame Acarie, both major influences in the French Catholic revival. In

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<sup>147</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 24, 28-29, 30-31, 33.

<sup>148</sup> Francis de Sales, also known as Francis of Sales, was canonized by the Catholic Church in 1665.

<sup>149</sup> Rapley, The Devotes, 35-36.

1609 Francis de Sales published the Introduction to the Devout Life. The book was non-theological and meant to instruct the ‘ordinary layman’ in their regular daily and secular activities. St. Francis also helped restore Catholic worship to Protestant citadels in France.<sup>150</sup>

Pierre de Berulle also took advantage of the peace brought by the Edict of Nantes, when he founded the French Oratory of Jesus Christ in 1611. The Oratory was one of the few new male orders that developed in France during this period. The Oratory produced a succession of saints, scholars, and seminary teachers, who greatly influenced the Gallican Reformation.<sup>151</sup> Cardinal Berulle founded the Oratory on the model of the Philippine Oratory and adhered to the requirements of the apostolate in France. Cardinal Berulle adapted the order of the Oratory to French needs. Vows did not bind the Oratory. Only their commitment to virtue bound them to together.<sup>152</sup> It was not a religious order; instead it was a holy club for laymen and clerics, aimed at personal sanctification and practical charity.<sup>153</sup> The Oratory attempted to improve the priesthood and make it more holy. The Oratorians needed to be within the priestly ranks so they could “reanimate them [priests] and give them back their ancient virtues.”<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Dickens, The Counter-Reformation, 174; Kamen, The Iron Century, 233; Joseph Lecler, Toleration and Reformation, vol. 2 (New York: Association Press, 1960), 147.

<sup>151</sup> Dickens, The Counter-Reformation, 158-175.

<sup>152</sup> Daniel-Rops, The Catholic Reformation, 367.

<sup>153</sup> Dickens, The Counter-Reformation 175, 69, 158.

<sup>154</sup> Daniel-Rops, The Catholic Reformation, 367; Kamen, The Iron Century, 237.

Even though the majority of the orders established in France directly after the edict focused on teaching, in the years following the edict many Catholics recognized an increased need to aid the sick and poor of their communities. Following in the tradition of the earlier Gallican reformers, Vincent de Paul established a new order.<sup>155</sup> Vincent de Paul co-founded the Sisters of Charity in 1633, with Louise de Marillac le Gras. This was the first religious order of women specifically committed to helping the poor and sick.<sup>156</sup> He helped induce wealthy ladies to form groups where they could accomplish more than they could individually. St. Vincent de Paul devoted his life to the service of charity.<sup>157</sup>

#### The Introduction of the Society of Jesus

The best example of the revitalization of an old order following the Edict of Nantes is the Society of Jesus. The Society of Jesus had a humble beginning. Ignatius Loyola, a Spaniard and former soldier, arrived in Paris to study. On 2 February 1528, Ignatius Loyola entered the Montaigu College of the University of Paris, the same college that John Calvin had attended. Loyola was thirty-seven years old when he began his college career. After a brief interruption due to lack of funds, Loyola transferred to the College of Saint-

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<sup>155</sup> The Catholic Church canonized Vincent de Paul in 1737. He is now known as St. Vincent of Paul.

<sup>156</sup> Louise de Marillac le Gras was a widow when she decided to join a cloister. The Catholic Church canonized her as St. Louise de Marillac, using her maiden name, in 1934. Anderson and Zinsser, A History of Their Own, 239; O'Connell, The Counter-Reformation, 331.

<sup>157</sup> Maurice Ashley, The Golden Century: Europe 1598-1715 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969), 81-82.

Barbe in Paris, where he attracted a small following of like-minded religious men among his classmates. On 15 August 1534, Loyola and seven of his classmates gathered at the chapel of St. Denis and vowed to dedicate themselves to apostolic work and offer their services to the pope.<sup>158</sup> The Jesuits established their goals and purposes in five articles submitted to the pope on 24 June 1539.<sup>159</sup> Pope Paul II sanctioned and established the Society of Jesus on 27 September 1540. Several years later, the Gallican Church officially established the Jesuits in France on 13 February 1562.<sup>160</sup>

The Society of Jesus, originally founded to combat heresy and reclaim lands and people lost to Protestantism, became the most influential of all the reforming orders. The Jesuits performed missionary work and taught children and adults the importance of strict obedience to God and the Roman Catholic Church. Loyola wrote the Spiritual Exercises, a handbook, to prepare and dispose a person to serve Christ.<sup>161</sup> The Jesuits abandoned the Augustinian thesis of human corruption and sinfulness in favor of a more modern emphasis on free will and the capacity of man to contribute positively to his or her salvation. The Jesuits' ideas on free will and salvation followed the decrees of the Council of Trent. These ideas differed from the traditional Augustinian view, and their beliefs also differed from the prevailing views of Calvinism.<sup>162</sup> "The Society of Jesus is neither a monastic nor

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<sup>158</sup> O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France," 39-40.

<sup>159</sup> The articles espoused the following beliefs and practices: preach faith, perform charity work and education; be absolutely at the disposal of the Pope; recognize and honor the superior as Christ, while he is to treat the members with Christ-like love; live in absolute poverty, except in the houses of study; choral responsibility is relinquished.

<sup>160</sup> O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France," 42-43, 68.

<sup>161</sup> Martin, The Jesuit Mind, 28.

<sup>162</sup> Bergin, Cardinal De La Rochefoucauld, 12.

a mendicant order, but an order of clerics regular in the sense that all its members, with the exception of lay brothers, are priests or destined to become priests.”<sup>163</sup> The Jesuits broke away from the monastic tradition and introduced fairly radical innovations in religious life. Jesuits wore no special dress, observed no special rituals in daily life and customs, and practiced no compulsory asceticism. They discouraged long periods of fasting and severe corporal punishment. They believed that they must conserve their energies for the demands of their active apostolate.<sup>164</sup>

The Jesuits followed the example of the Capuchins and joined the Catholic League and the Guises during the War of Succession, because they feared that Henry III could not keep the heretic Navarre off of the French throne.<sup>165</sup> The Jesuits saw religion as the foundation of the kingdom; the king therefore owed obedience to the Church. A heretic could not fulfill such a role. The Catholic League failed to keep Henry of Navarre from becoming the king of France. Many Jesuits had a hard time accepting Henry IV as king, even after he converted to Catholicism.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Martin, The Jesuit Mind, 26.

<sup>164</sup> O’Neill, “Politics and the new orders of France,” 53, 32.

<sup>165</sup> O’Neill, “Politics and the new orders of France,” 82.

<sup>166</sup> Bergin, Cardinal De La Rochefoucauld, 24.



### French Attacks on the Society of Jesus

Early in 1594, the year that Henry IV captured Paris and forced the Spanish out of France, the *Parlement* of Paris and the Divines of the Sorbonne of the University of Paris pledged their loyalty and obedience to Henry IV.<sup>167</sup> The *parlement* and the University of Paris wanted to display their loyalty to Henry IV, so the university charged the whole Society of Jesus with treason and attempted regicide. The Jesuits had raised many suspicions because of their activities with the Catholic League and their strong ties with Spain.<sup>168</sup> The *Parlement* and the University also feared that the close ties the Jesuits had with the papacy would limit and hinder Gallican liberties.<sup>169</sup> They charged the Jesuits of attempted regicide because of an attack made on Henry IV's life. The attempted assassin, Barriere admitted the Jesuits involvement before he was executed. After the attempt by Barriere, the *Parlement* of Paris fined the Jesuits on 7 July 1594 for their supposed involvement with Barriere and the attempt on the king's life.<sup>170</sup>

The University of Paris filed formal charges against the Jesuits and the trial against the Society of Jesus began on 12 July 1594. The trial against the Jesuits is another example of how Henry tried to appease the dominant Catholic force in France. The French Catholics disliked the Jesuits for being too Spanish and too Roman in their Catholicism.

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<sup>167</sup> Davila, A History, vol. 2, 472.

<sup>168</sup> Davila, A History, 501, 502; Greengrass, France, 211.

<sup>169</sup> O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France," 59.

<sup>170</sup> Antoine Arnauld, The arraignment of the whole Society of Jesuits in France, holden in the honourable court of the *Parlement* of Paris (London: Charles Yetsweirt Esq., 1594), 2.

Thus, the trial began with Antoine Arnauld pleading for the Sorbonne of the University of Paris, and Louis Dole pled for the Curate of Paris, who joined the Sorbonne in their accusations against the Jesuits. Claud Durer pled for the Jesuits, and Monsieur Seguier attended as the King's Attorney General.<sup>171</sup>

The prosecution began the trial by attempting to illustrate that the Jesuits had worked for the Spanish Habsburgs from the very beginning. Within this argument, Arnauld played upon the existing fears of the French public about the Jesuits involvement with the Spanish. He claimed that Charles V of Spain and his son Philip wanted to take over Western Europe. After they spread their influence to Rome, Charles V and Philip decided to establish an order that could integrate themselves in the Churches, governments and societies of Europe. The Society of Jesus resulted from these early plans.<sup>172</sup> Arnauld tried to prove his claim against the Spanish by pointing out that Loyola was a Spaniard and after Loyola only Spaniards had served as General of the Society.<sup>173</sup> He argued that the Jesuits were nothing more than "metamorphosed Spaniards." Finally, Arnauld concluded that it did not matter what country a Jesuit came from, because once a

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<sup>171</sup> Arnauld, The Arrainment, 3.

<sup>172</sup> Arnauld, The Arrainment, 5.

<sup>173</sup> Arnauld is actually incorrect here. The first three generals had been Spanish and so were several other higher officials. In 1572, Pope Gregory XIII wanted a non-Spaniard to be General. He suggested Everard Mercurian, a Belgian and the Society elected Mercurian in 1572. The fifth General of the Society was Claudio Aquaviva, an Italian. His term, 1581-1615, of thirty-three years and eleven months is the longest in the history of the order; William V. Bangert, A History of the Society of Jesus (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972), 52, 97.

man became a Jesuit he was loyal to Spain and its monarch. Arnauld also reminded the court that the Jesuits had joined the Catholic League, which the Spanish heavily influenced.<sup>174</sup>

Arnauld declared that the Jesuits had deceived and hurt every Frenchman. By following the Jesuits' false claims, all Frenchmen had blasphemed God. He claimed that everyone knew of the Jesuits' evil practices, but men feared speaking against them. All loyal Frenchmen must work to uncover plots of people not working for the betterment of France, because such people are enemies of the Crown. Arnauld argued that the Jesuits were such enemies. He asserted that the Jesuits only claimed they would take an oath of loyalty to Henry IV so they could bewitch him. After bewitching Henry IV, the Jesuits would have convinced him to turn France over to Spain.<sup>175</sup>

Arnauld played heavily upon the Gallican sentiments of the *Parlement* of Paris and the University of Paris by discussing the Jesuits' close ties to the papacy. The Jesuits' loyalties lay with the papacy and the Roman Catholic Church—not the Gallican Church of France. Rome supported the Jesuits and Spain. Therefore Pope Clement VIII had turned his back on France. He believed that Pope Clement VIII had betrayed France. Arnauld reminded the court that the Kings of France were the oldest sons of the Church, and therefore the people should honor the French king as much as they respected the Pope.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Arnauld, *The Arrainment*, 3, 6.

<sup>175</sup> Arnauld, *The Arrainment*, 5, 4, 3.

<sup>176</sup> Arnauld, *The Arrainment*, 7.

Arnauld also faulted the Jesuits for accusing others of being heretics. The Jesuits had accused the members of the Sorbonne of being heretics. The Spanish Inquisition investigated the Sorbonne, and the Inquisition found the Sorbonne guilty of heresy. By pointing out how the Jesuits accused the Sorbonne, it is not difficult to imagine why the Sorbonne and the *Parlement* of Paris condemned only the Jesuits and not some of the other high profile members of the Catholic League, such as the House of Guise.<sup>177</sup>

Arnauld harshly judged the accused Jesuits for using the name of Jesus in their title. He argued that this made all of their evil doings even worse, because using the name of Jesus made people trust them. He asked for the harshest possible punishment.<sup>178</sup> Henry IV agreed to expel the Jesuits from Paris and all of France. The government closed all Jesuit schools and confiscated many of their buildings. Henry's decision angered the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope knew that the Jesuits were the most affective way to enforce the Tridentine decrees, and therefore the Roman Catholic Reformation. This did not overly concern Henry IV, because being politically connected with the Pope was a liability in Gallican France.<sup>179</sup>

After the Jesuit expulsion, another would-be assassin attacked Henry IV. On 27 December 1594 Jean Chastel struck Henry IV with a knife and cut his lips. Henry's guards apprehended him.<sup>180</sup> Again, the people blamed the Jesuits for the attack, because

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<sup>177</sup> Arnauld, The Arrainment, 26.

<sup>178</sup> Arnauld, The Arrainment, 25, 24, 23.

<sup>179</sup> Bangert, A History, 121, 120.

<sup>180</sup> Davila, A History, 500.

Chastel had once attended the Jesuit College of Clermont. Chastel admitted, under duress of torture, that the Jesuit school he had attended taught him that it was lawful to kill Henry of Bourbon, because he had been raised as a heretic. Chastel claimed that the Jesuits felt that Henry should die because he was a “relapsed heretic and persecutor of the Holy Church.”<sup>181</sup> Government officials searched the Jesuit College of Clermont, and the investigators found old notes about the assassination of Henry III and pamphlets against Navarre inside Jean Guignard’s room, a Jesuit librarian. The *parlement* singled out Father Guignard and another father, Gueret, for possessing what the *parlement* deemed derogatory pamphlets. The *parlement* charged the Jesuits with corrupting the youth, and they decided to quarter Jean Chastel, stretch Father Gueret on the rack, and hang Father Guignard.<sup>182</sup> The trial of the Jesuit fathers of the College of Clermont is an example of some of the more severe persecution the Jesuits suffered during the early years of Henry IV’s reign.

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<sup>181</sup> Davila, A History, 501.

<sup>182</sup> O’Neill, “Politics and the new orders of France,” 97-98; Thomas Campbell, A History of the Society of Jesus from Its Foundation to the Present Time (London: Encyclopedia Press, 1921), 217.

### Impact of the Jesuits on the Gallican Reformation

One year after the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes, Henry IV sought to annul his marriage to Marguerite of Valois.<sup>183</sup> The Pope, Clement VIII, recognized the opportunity to gain something from Henry, so the Pope broached the subject of reestablishing the Jesuits in France. Henry IV agreed to listen to papal emissaries regarding the reestablishment of the Jesuits. He hoped his actions would influence the Pope into granting his annulment. Also, he knew that many Catholics disagreed with the concessions given to the Huguenots in the Edict of Nantes. The Catholics of France worried that the Huguenots would gain territory and converts because of the Edict of Nantes allowed them to maintain their schools. Therefore the strong teaching order of the Jesuits could help maintain Catholicism in France. Clement VIII granted Henry IV an annulment based on Henry's agreement to reconsider allowing the Jesuits back into France. On 10 December 1600, Henry IV married Marie de Medici, the niece of Pope Clement VIII. Marie used her influence to advance the Jesuit cause in France.<sup>184</sup>

Late in 1603, Henry IV addressed the *Parlement* of Paris concerning the Society of Jesus. Henry realized that the Jesuits, who had previously been seen as being Spanish Catholics, were now Catholic enough to appease the disgruntled Catholics in France. Henry acknowledged that many Jesuits had remained in France even after he had condemned them. Henry made it clear that he did not want to punish the Jesuits for it. He

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<sup>183</sup> Henry claimed that his marriage to Marguerite of Valois had been forced on both of them, and the Pope agreed. Henry's first marriage had not produced any children, and he knew that he needed a male heir to keep a Bourbon on the French throne.

<sup>184</sup> O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France," 99-100.

stated, "I should establish in this realm the Society of Jesus, which hitherto hath no settled abode in France." Henry claimed that his predecessors accepted the Society; therefore he would accept and preserve them.<sup>185</sup>

Henry absolved the Jesuits for their involvement with the League, because the Jesuits believed they were fighting for the preservation of Catholicism in France, therefore the Spanish-influenced Leaguers had deceived the Jesuits.<sup>186</sup> Henry cautioned the *parlement* against blaming the Jesuits for joining the League. Henry found the fault in "the iniquity of the times." The Jesuits convinced Henry IV of their loyalty to him.<sup>187</sup>

Henry IV did not censure the Jesuits for taking the name of the Society of Jesus. Henry pointed out that many institutions, including some of his own, took their names from the Holy Trinity or Christ. Henry asked that people recognize that the Jesuits did not work for self-gain. The Jesuits worked for the benefit of all people. He stated that his appreciation for the care the Jesuits had shown for him and France. Henry claimed that ignorance hated learning, which he believed explained much of the opposition to the Jesuits.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Henry IV, An Answer to the reflections of the five Jesuit speeches, or General Rules of Christian charity: Together with the speech of Henry IV, King of France (London: n.p., 1679), 2.

<sup>186</sup> Henry IV, A speech of King Henry IV of France to his parliament (London: Jacob Tonson, 1681), 5.

<sup>187</sup> Henry IV, An Answer, 2.

<sup>188</sup> Henry IV, An Answer, 2, 3.

Henry sought to establish the cause of the problems between the University of Paris and the Jesuits. Henry claimed that the university opposed the Jesuits, because they feared the learned and respected men. He concluded that the university felt threatened because many of the fathers surpassed the learning of the university. Henry claimed that the University of Paris disliked the Jesuits out of jealousy for the Jesuits' educational success. The university envied the large number of students that Jesuit schools attracted. The *parlement* blamed and criticized the Jesuits for recruiting the good young men of France, while Henry praised them for it. He stated that every person, in a position of training others, always looked for the best people and cut the undesirables. Henry stated that if the Jesuits put ignorant teachers in their schools or ignorant priests in their churches, the *parlement* would blame them for that also. Henry asked the *parlement* to remember how the number of students dropped when the Jesuits left France. Students who had attended Jesuit schools did not attend the University of Paris. Instead many of them left France to attend foreign Jesuit schools. Henry also noted that the university feared the loss of students to the Jesuit schools, because many students chose to attend the Jesuit schools where they learned virtue as well as scholarly knowledge.<sup>189</sup> Henry illustrated that the best and brightest students in France could recognize that the Jesuits were virtuous and honorable teachers. Henry decreed that the University of Paris could no longer oppose the Jesuits.

Even though Henry IV's speech ended the official disputes between the University of Paris and the Jesuits, problems still existed. The Jesuits had lost all of their properties and holdings during their expulsion from France. Henry advised the Jesuits to remain

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<sup>189</sup> Henry IV, An Answer, 2.



silent about the loss of their holdings and schools. Henry feared that the University of Paris would be unwilling to allow the Jesuits back into France and then also be expected to give the Jesuits back their holdings. To help ease the loss of their former schools, Henry founded a Jesuit college near Anjou.<sup>190</sup>

Henry IV admitted that, even though he trusted the Jesuits, many people in France did not believe their statements of loyalty. Henry claimed that he often had stated that Spanish fathers on missions often proved to be profitable for Spain. Therefore, he concluded that French fathers could be profitable for France. He asked why the French public would think that French fathers would not love France. Concerning the charge against the Jesuits' misuse of funds, Henry challenged the *parlement* to visit the Jesuit colleges in France and discover where the Jesuits supposedly hid the money. Henry claimed that they would find no great amounts of hidden money. Henry also stated that Jesuit doctrine and books did not support the killing of kings. People who claimed otherwise had patched together several different works and only produced fiction. He also stated that Jesuit doctrine did not prohibit their clergy from giving tribute to Henry IV or any other monarch.<sup>191</sup>

Henry urged the *parlement* to forgive the Jesuits of the actual and supposed past transgressions. He claimed that he had learned to "forget and forgive injuries for God's sake."<sup>192</sup> Henry asked the *parlement* what they would do if someone from the Society had

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<sup>190</sup> Henry IV, A Speech, 4, 8, 10.

<sup>191</sup> Henry IV, An Answer, 3.

<sup>192</sup> Henry IV, An Answer, 3.

tried to kill him. “Will you condemn all the Apostles for one Judas?”<sup>193</sup> Henry IV’s eloquent speech adequately convinced the *Parlement* of Paris that the Society of Jesus did not pose a threat to France. On 2 January 1604, Henry reestablished the Jesuits throughout France.<sup>194</sup> In 1604, the Society of Jesus reentered France after a decade of exile. The Jesuits quickly became some of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Bourbon monarchy. Henry IV allowed the Jesuits back into France under strict conditions, which made them more responsive to his royal influence than any other religious order in France. Upon readmission to France, the Society grew rapidly. In 1605 two new novitiates opened in Lyons and Rouen, and in 1608 the French Assistancy was created. By 1610, there were over 1,300 men in forty-five communities.<sup>195</sup>

Once the Jesuits reentered France, they occupied the important position of royal confessor. A Jesuit served as royal confessor from 1604 until 1643.<sup>196</sup> The position of royal confessor allowed the Jesuits to subtly influence the kings. The Jesuit Pierre Cotton favored the French reconciling with the Spanish. He concluded that a French-Spanish alliance was the only way to fight the Protestants and Turks. He proposed the idea that

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<sup>193</sup> Henry IV, *An Answer*, 3.

<sup>194</sup> O’Neill, “Politics and the new orders of France,” 100.

<sup>195</sup> O’Connell *Counter-Reformation*, 331; Greengrass, *France*, 211; Bangert, *A History*, 124.

<sup>196</sup> O’Neill, “Politics and the new orders of France,” 84; a list of the Jesuit royal confessors is as follows:

Edmon Auger(1583-87)	Charles Maillan(1630-37)
Pierre Cotton(1604-17)	Jacques Gourdon(1637-38)
Jean Arnoux(1617-21)	Nicolas Caussin(1638-39)
Gaspard Sequiran(1621-25)	Jacques Sirmond(1639-43)
Jean Suffren(1625-30)	Jacques Dinet(in 1643)
Alexandre Jarry(1630)	

Louis XIII should marry Anne of Austria, a Habsburg, while his oldest sister should marry Philip, the Infante of Spain. These marriage alliances would help establish further ties between Catholic Spain and Catholic France.<sup>197</sup>

Some of the good fortune the Jesuits experienced under Henry IV ended on 14 May 1610 when Francois Ravalliac assassinated Henry IV. Even though enemies of the Jesuits failed to implicate the Society in the assassination, the *parlement* refused to believe that the Ravalliac acted alone in the assassination.<sup>198</sup> Therefore, the Jesuits came under suspicion again. They played no part in the assassination and later absolved from any blame.<sup>199</sup>

Although Henry did not promulgate the Edict of Nantes solely to aid the Gallican Church, the edict did ignite the Gallican Reformation. The edict provided the needed peace for reform measures to work. Not only did the edict provide peace, but it also reestablished the sovereignty of the Gallican Church in France, which aided in the reconversion process. Also with the institution of new orders, Catholicism quickly regained many of Protestantism's converts. After 1598, the Church was more Gallican than ever, because the Gallican Church reformed itself internally without officially implementing the centralizing reforms of the Council of Trent. Henry IV considered himself the sole preserver of religion, because he firmly believed in divine right monarchy. Henry fulfilled his destiny as the 'most Christian king' by maintaining the faith of the kingdom.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France," 84, 127.

<sup>198</sup> Bangert, *A History*, 126.

<sup>199</sup> O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France," 111.

<sup>200</sup> Sutherland, "The Crown," 36.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

Political upset and religious violence dominated the later half of the sixteenth century in France. Years of political unrest developed into a civil war divided along religious lines. Once the issue of who would become king of France was resolved, Henry IV had to eliminate the external forces involved. After he expelled the Spanish forces from France, Henry IV focused on the internal religious problems in France.

In order to maintain peace, Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes. He knew that the Huguenots needed to feel secure in their new situation. The Huguenots, as a religious and civil minority, posed the greatest internal political threat to France. Without their complacency, France would remain in a state of turmoil and with the added threat of a possible violent uprising by the Huguenots.

Henry IV realized without peace in France he could not rule effectively. The Edict of Nantes embodies his political ideas, such as making temporary concessions to a minority to gain appeasement. His ultimate goal was a return to one religion in France, because Henry knew that religion was an effective way to control the masses. Henry also realized that he could not afford to lose the support of the Catholic majority. Therefore, the Edict of Nantes granted the Huguenots legal protection, while it delineated that the power of the monarchy returned to the Catholics of France.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Sutherland, "The Crown," 31, 6.

Henry IV made several decisions that affected French Catholics. In 1594, when Henry desperately needed the support of the Catholics, he agreed to expel the Jesuits from France. Many of the French people saw the Jesuits as Spanish conspirators during the religious wars because of their close historical ties to Spain.<sup>202</sup> Expelling the Jesuits insured the support of the University of Paris and the *Parlement* of Paris, two very influential Catholic groups in France. This bold move also greatly aggravated the Pope, who believed the Jesuits to be one of the most effective tools against Protestantism. Later when it could benefit his situation, Henry IV considered allowing the Jesuits back into France. Henry only considered the reentry of the Jesuits when he needed the Pope's approval for an annulment from Marguerite of Valois. The Pope granted the annulment, and Henry allowed the Society of Jesus to come back in 1604. By allowing the Jesuits to return to France, Henry insured the approval of the Pope and many French Catholics who felt that the Huguenots had gained too much from the Edict of Nantes. Henry required the Jesuits take an oath of loyalty to him, which made the Jesuits more responsive to the French crown than to any other monarch in Europe. The Jesuits realized how much of their survival in France depended on Henry IV. They became some of the greatest supporters of the Bourbon monarchy.<sup>203</sup>

The promulgation of the Edict of Nantes greatly affected the religious atmosphere of France. It signaled the end of generations of religious wars and civil strife. The fear of violent retribution kept many French Catholics from moving freely through out France and working toward bringing the country back to Catholicism. The edict helped eliminate this

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<sup>202</sup> Bangert, A History, 52.

<sup>203</sup> O'Neill, "Politics and the new orders of France," 100; O'Connell, The Counter-Reformation, 331.

fear. Without peace, the Gallican Church could not have effectively reestablished itself throughout France. The Edict of Nantes helped reestablish order and stability in France, which enabled the success of the Gallican Reformation.

The edict benefited the Catholic subjects of France far more than it aided the Huguenots. It aided the Catholics economically, socially, and religiously. The Catholics reclaimed lands, money and artifacts they lost during the religious wars at the expense of the Huguenots. The edict also required Huguenots to pay the tithe, which greatly helped the Gallican Church. By hindering the rights of Huguenots, the edict reestablished and maintained the Catholic dominance in political and social areas. Also, the edict required the Huguenots to observe all Catholic holidays, ceremonies, and laws. Most importantly, the edict restored Catholic sovereignty to all area of France. The edict helped guarantee that France would remain a Catholic kingdom.<sup>204</sup>

Although the edict was not truly a step towards religious toleration, it appeared to make life better for the French Huguenots. The edict allowed the Huguenots to maintain their schools, which were great sources of gaining new converts. After the edict, Huguenots could practice their religion without fear of persecution, as long as they were in areas where the leading officials were Huguenots. One important concession granted to the Huguenots involved maintaining their fortified towns for seven years. Allowing the Huguenots to keep these towns had a negative effect on the Huguenots' situation, because it alarmed many Catholics who feared that the Huguenots would begin fighting again. The edict provided defined civil liberties for Huguenots, as well as, the end to official

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<sup>204</sup> Henry IV, Article four, 6-7; Henry IV, Article three, 6; Henry IV, Article ninety, 47; Henry IV, Article twenty, 13; Henry IV, Article twenty-three, 14; Henry IV, Article three, 6.

persecution of Huguenots. The edict did not establish an organized infrastructure to insure that its laws were properly enforced. Following the edict, the Huguenots experienced a period of decline. The continued success of the Gallican Reformation hindered the Huguenots ability to maintain their converts. The French Catholics gained many converts through religious societies and schools. Also, many Huguenots left the faith due to political reasons. As soon as it became apparent that Louis XIII and his advisors were not as tolerant as Henry IV had been to Huguenot nobles, many of them reconverted to Catholicism.<sup>205</sup>

Henry's politics of appeasement brought stability and peace to France. He satisfied the Catholics of France by limiting the Huguenots politically and socially and by expelling the too-Spanish Jesuits. Henry brought the Huguenots under control with the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes, and later he placated the Pope and the Catholics of France by accepting the Jesuits back into France in 1604. Not only did his politics of appeasement bring stability, but Henry IV also made the Catholic Church of France more independent and Gallican than ever. Even though Henry made several important decisions that benefited the Gallican Reformation, he did not force the decrees of the Council of Trent on the Gallican Church. Henry did not accept or register the Tridentine decrees, because he recognized that accepting the Council of Trent would have limited some of the independence of the Gallican Church. The decrees represented the centralized authority of the Roman Catholic Church, and promulgating them would have placed the Gallican Church in a submissive role. Instead, he allowed the priests to remain somewhat independent of the Roman Catholic Church. If the clergy wanted to

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<sup>205</sup>Henry IV, Article five, 5; Sutherland, "The Crown," 35.

practice and teach the Tridentine decrees, it would have to be their decision. Many priests continued to preach and teach as they had before the Reformation, but now they had access to all of France and the peaceful situation they needed to bring all of France back to Catholicism.

Also, the Gallican Reformation that began in the wake of the Edict of Nantes was unique in several ways from the Catholic Reformation that occurred in the rest of Europe. The Catholic Reformation in Europe was largely an external movement from Rome to the areas where Protestantism had grown. The Roman Catholic Church held the Council of Trent to discuss and determine how the church would react to Protestantism. The Tridentine decrees were enforced through out the Roman Catholic churches of Europe. Yet, Rome had virtually no influence over the Gallican Reformation in France. French Catholics developed and instituted their own solutions to the rise of Protestantism. The French did not look to any outside source for aid. The Gallican Reformation also differed from the Catholic Reformation, because persecution and violence marked the Catholic Reformation throughout the rest of Europe. Conversely, the edict, which laid the foundation for the Gallican Reformation, ended the bloodshed between the two religions in France and established a long period of peace and political stability. Education and learning formed the basis of the Gallican Reformation.<sup>206</sup> New religious orders formed to educate the masses, as well as, the clergy about the Catholic faith and traditions. The reforms of the Gallican Reformation took place largely in classrooms and churches, instead of on the battlefields.

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<sup>206</sup> O'Connell, Counter-Reformation, 331; Rapley, The Devotes, 21.



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