

MORMON-CATHOLIC RELATIONS IN UTAH HISTORY: A SKETCH

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One of the happy surprises that makes history so interesting is the fact that Utah ever became Mormon Country, for during the roughly one hundred years before 1847 it had been, if anything, Catholic Country. Catholic explorers, soldiers, fur trappers, and traders had repeatedly plied their trades back and forth through the territory. Brigham Young University historian Ted J. Warner offers an intriguing speculation as to what might have happened if the Franciscan friars Dominguez and Escalante had been able to fulfill their promise to the Indians at Utah Lake that they would return and establish a mission among them.¹ If they had, when Brigham Young started looking for a place no one else wanted where he could bring the Latter-day Saints, he would have seen a thriving Catholic community in Utah and perhaps turned his gaze elsewhere, to Mexico, Texas, or somewhere else. But of course, for various reasons, they did not, and so the friars became one more entry in the long list of transient Utah Catholics. By 1866, when the Catholics made their first attempt at a permanent institutional presence in Utah, the territory had for almost two decades become home to a large and

1. Ted J. Warner, ed., *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), xvii. Notes for this essay document only sources not previously cited in the two articles upon which it is based: Gregory A. Prince and Gary Topping, "A Turbulent Coexistence: Duane Hunt, David O. McKay, and a Quarter-Century of Catholic-Mormon Relations," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 1 (2005): 142–63 and Gary Topping, "Mormon-Catholic Relations in Utah History: The Early Years," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2013): 230–48.

well-entrenched Mormon population. The Catholics would henceforth never become more than a tiny minority in Mormon Country, and getting along with their numerous Mormon neighbors became an imperative priority. That imperative has occupied a very large part of Utah Catholic history.²

The task of establishing that first permanent Catholic presence fell to Father Edward Kelly, a Chicago priest assigned to the Diocese of Marysville, California (now the Diocese of Sacramento), which had the responsibility of ministering, as best it could, to the far-flung mining towns of Nevada. At one point, Fr. Kelly received a sick call from Salt Lake City, where someone was dying and requested the services of a priest. Upon his arrival in Salt Lake City, he discovered a population of Catholics that, tiny though it was, seemed to him to merit establishment of a parish. He contacted his bishop, who tendered his permission. A search for property turned up a lot with a small adobe structure in a very auspicious location on the west side of 200 East between South Temple and 100 South, at the eastern end of Social Hall Avenue. It was close to the bustling heart of the city, with residences and businesses of important people nearby. He made an offer, closed the deal, and set out for Nevada to collect his personal belongings.

Upon his return, however, he found that the deal had gone sour, for title to the property was being contested. Not wanting to get his new parish off to a bad start with a protracted lawsuit, he decided to submit the case directly to Brigham Young, who, he had obviously already

2. Although Catholics are the largest religious minority in Utah, the comparison must be made with tongue firmly in cheek, for we have never constituted more than about ten percent of Utahns. Or so we think. The truth is that no one really knows how many Catholics there are in the state because many of them are undocumented immigrants who cannot risk having their presence recorded, and others are lax about registering for parish membership.

learned, *was* the law in Utah.³ Fr. Kelly must have been an extraordinary young man, for, although he had been ordained barely a year, he was already nicknamed by his bishop “the windfall from Chicago” and did not shrink from confronting none other than the Lion of the Lord. Perhaps it was his audacity that pleased the audacious Brigham Young, for the prophet not only ruled in Kelly’s favor but even offered a donation of five hundred dollars if the priest would create a Catholic school. Kelly never did, as health problems forced him to withdraw to California (other priests came to continue the work), but things had gotten off to a promising start. Fr. Edward Kelly became the first Utah Catholic to learn that if he extended friendship to the Mormons, they would warmly reciprocate tenfold. It was a good lesson to keep in mind as history moved forward.

No trumpets blared, no bells pealed in Salt Lake City on September 15, 1873, but well they might have, for that date marked the arrival of Fr. Lawrence Scanlan to assume the pastorate of St. Mary Magdalene parish. He would become the first bishop of the diocese in 1891 and continue in that capacity until his death in 1915. During that time, he stamped his personality on the diocese more indelibly than any other person, including establishing the tenor of Mormon-Catholic relations that has continued to the present day.

From the beginning, Scanlan knew he was going to need outside financial help, for the tiny Catholic population was barely going to be able to sustain the ongoing work of the parish, let alone the hospitals and schools and charitable functions that are characteristic of Catholicism. Accordingly, almost at the outset he began appealing for funds to

3. We Catholic historians have pretty consistently garbled this story, proudly trumpeting the tale of Kelly’s appeal to Brigham Young in order to avoid a lawsuit. Denis Kiely, Bernice Mooney, and Gary Topping have all repeated the story while Mooney and Topping ignore that fact that the matter *did* go to court (Bernice even cites the case number). The full story, as I have tried to straighten out here, is that the court would have done anything Brigham told it to do. See Topping, “Mormon-Catholic Relations,” 232, n. 6.

an organization known (in English) as the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a group of French lay people dedicated to raising money for struggling dioceses and parishes such as the one in Utah. Anyone donating money is going to want some accounting of how it is spent, so Scanlan's reports to the Society from 1874–88 constitute useful vignettes of the activities and well-being of the church in Utah—including glimpses of relations with the Mormons. Useful as the reports are, though, they require judicious interpretation on the historian's part, for they are to some degree propaganda pieces in which Scanlan told the Society what he thought they wanted to hear, and that included some effort to convert the Mormons.

Although Scanlan's reports sometimes contained very intemperate characterizations of Mormonism, "whose superstition, & fanaticism have no parallel in modern times," his efforts to convert Mormons were entirely passive, bearing no resemblance to the public debates promoted by the Protestants, nor even the home visits and public preachings of Mormon missionaries. Instead, Scanlan hoped to make inroads into Mormonism by the exemplary piety he expected of his fellow Catholics, to which he hoped the Mormons would be attracted.⁴ The Holy Cross Sisters, for example, who had established St. Mary's Academy in Salt Lake City as early as 1875, had, by their pious lives, made great progress "not only removing all prejudices from [Mormon] minds, but even gaining their respect and admiration." And, if one can trust the statistics in Scanlan's 1876 report, his strategy was experiencing some success: "During the past year, many of the [Mormon] pupils expressed a desire to be baptized. I baptized about a dozen and refused to comply with the desires of many others, through motives of prudence and objections raised by their parents." One assumes that those Mormon parents who did accede to their children's baptism had lost their Mormon faith, and

4. Motivated probably by such texts as Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (RSV).

one imagines that those who objected to such baptism would have been gratified by Scanlan's refusal to grant it.

Gradually, though, even such passive missionary efforts seem to have receded from Utah Catholicism. One reason for that was that as Scanlan (and presumably other Utah Catholics as well) got better acquainted with his Mormon neighbors, despite whatever "superstition and fanaticism" he might have found in their theology, he learned that the people themselves were honest, hardworking, and moral and were living a species of Christianity not too different from his own. As Utah Catholicism expanded into rural parts of the territory remote from Salt Lake City, Scanlan felt an obligation to bring pastoral care to those far-flung locales.⁵ Often, in those travels, he was able to find hotel and restaurant accommodations, but on other occasions he could not and found himself dependent upon the hospitality of isolated Mormon farm and ranch families. Invariably, he found that hospitality warmly extended, with his hosts sometimes curious to learn about Catholicism to the extent that he would be invited to give talks about it in Mormon churches. One doubts that such events occurred as frequently as he seems to intimate, but the fact that they took place at all is remarkable.

Perhaps the most remarkable episode in Mormon-Catholic comity during Scanlan's day took place on May 25, 1879 in, of all places, Silver Reef, Utah, almost three hundred miles from Salt Lake City, where a rich vein of silver ore had been discovered and many Catholic miners had moved in to work it. With the help, once again, of the redoubtable Holy Cross Sisters, Scanlan built a church, a school, and a hospital, the latter funded by the first group health care plan in Utah history.

5. The Most Reverend George H. Niederauer, eighth bishop of Salt Lake City (1995–2006), was in awe of his great predecessor's stamina on those long journeys. "Bishop Scanlan and I had to cover the same territory," he would observe, "but I have a Ford Taurus and he had a horse and buggy." Things were actually much worse than that, for prior to 1931 when the Diocese of Reno was created, the eastern counties of Nevada were part of the Diocese of Salt Lake City.

Although Silver Reef frightened the Washington County Mormons by quickly becoming the largest town in the county with the possibility of becoming the county seat (it never did), there was a mutually beneficial symbiosis between the Mormons and Gentiles: the miners needed food and building materials, which the Mormons could provide, and the Mormons needed the cash and the markets available in Silver Reef.

On his trips to Silver Reef, Scanlan boarded at the same hotel as John M. Macfarlane, deputy US mineral surveyor and director of the St. George Tabernacle choir. The two discovered a mutual love of choral music, which led to a remarkable offer from Macfarlane to loan his choir for a Mass to be said by Scanlan in the tabernacle. Scanlan reportedly traveled repeatedly to St. George to train the choir in proper pronunciation of the Latin text, then brought his Catholic flock with him for the actual Mass on May 25. Scanlan was even invited, either as part of his homily or (more likely) after Mass, to give a talk explaining the Catholic faith to his largely Mormon audience.

It was a remarkable ecumenical gesture, but in the end it accomplished nothing permanent. The event was never repeated before the silver ran out, and Silver Reef ceased to exist in the mid-1880s. Charles L. Walker, the indefatigable Mormon diarist, reported that in a Mormon service that afternoon, after the Catholics had departed, the resident apostle in St. George, Erastus Snow, got up and rebutted Scanlan's talk point by point. Thus, on that lovely spring day of May 25, 1879, Mormon-Catholic dialogue in Utah began and Mormon-Catholic dialogue in Utah ended. It has never again gained traction, and, given the mutually exclusive theologies of the two churches, it will not and cannot. Fortunately, that fact has not generated ill will, and instead of theological dialogue, we have found ways to join forces on social, political, and charitable endeavors we have mutually supported.⁶

6. Not, perhaps, without a few bumps in the road, as the rest of this essay will detail. In addition, there are thousands of undocumented episodes like this: The Good Samaritan Program, operated out of the Cathedral of the Madeleine,

The best feelings Scanlan ever generated within the Mormon community came during the 1880s, though it almost did not work out that way. As the anti-polygamy crusade during that decade began to gather momentum, Protestant clergymen in Salt Lake City called a series of meetings of all non-Mormon clergy for the purpose of drawing up an anti-polygamy petition to send to their colleagues in the East as a tool for them to use in lobbying Congress for legislation to suppress the Mormons. Scanlan attended one of the meetings in 1881 but walked out when he saw what was happening and told the others not to put his name on the petition. To his great dismay, and that of his Mormon friends, they included his name anyway. Finding himself attacked in the Mormon press for the first time, he hurried to issue a retraction. His position vis-à-vis Mormonism, he said, was that if Mormonism is right, there is nothing he can do to stop it, and if it is wrong, it will naturally fail. That was good enough for the Mormons, and for the rest of his life the *Deseret News* could hardly stop praising the bishop.

In view of the demonstrable success of such a policy, the next few Catholic bishops thought they could do no better than just follow Scanlan's example. Besides, they had other fish to fry and saw no point in distracting themselves with inevitably futile controversies with the Mormons. Scanlan's successor, Joseph S. Glass (1915–26), for example, was preoccupied with redecorating the interior of Scanlan's cathedral, which Scanlan had left in a simple Irish green and white. Glass brought in woodcarver Johannes Kirchmayer and muralist Felix Lieftuchter, who between them imparted the intricate artwork and brilliant colors that bedazzle visitors even today.

provides, among other things, free sack lunches to anyone during daylight hours who requests one. A friend of mine, who supervised the volunteers who make the sandwiches, reported that one of them, upon being informed that the bread and bologna for the sandwiches had been provided by the Mormon Church, immediately resigned in a pious huff. The homeless people lined up at the door presumably had not been aware that there was a theology of bologna sandwiches.

Privately, though, Glass was no more impressed with Mormon theology than Scanlan had been, and he found an opportunity in the redecoration project to take a few jabs at the Mormons. High on the walls of the transept and the apse, Glass had Lieftuchter inscribe in gold letters several scriptural passages that he no doubt interpreted in an anti-Mormon way. One is the almost inevitable “Thou art Peter,” from Matthew 16:18, which Catholics regard as legitimatizing the apostolic succession from Peter, the first pope. Another is the “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you,” from John 6:54–55, which Catholics interpret as the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. A third one is St. Paul’s admonition to the Galatians (1:8) that “Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you let him be anathema”—an obvious dig at the heavenly visitations through which Joseph Smith claimed to have restored primitive Christianity.

Yet if those inscriptions are indeed—as I think they are—manifestations of Glass’s anti-Mormonism, I have been unable to document any deleterious effect on Mormon-Catholic relations. I propose two reasons for that: one is that in Glass’s day, and indeed before the mid-1980s, the cathedral was solely a Catholic structure that Mormons and other non-Catholics would presumably have no reason to enter, and thus even to be aware of the inscriptions. The other reason is that Mormons of course have their own view of church history in which the “Thou art Peter” and the “anathema” statements were made before the Great Apostasy, after which the church fell into darkness and they became irrelevant. The “body and blood” quotation could be interpreted, as it is by many Protestants, as simply figurative language.

Mormonism figured once again in a 1921 correspondence between Glass and Mother Augustine, prioress of a Carmelite convent in Santa Clara, California. Glass knew that even though the Carmelite foundation had only been created in 1916, it was thriving, and he also knew that the Carmelite Rule prohibited their convents from having more

than twenty-two members. Would Mother Augustine, he wondered, have a few nuns that she could send to Utah? “Prayer and sacrifice are absolutely necessary if we are going to make any impression on the [Mormon] people of this community,” he argued.⁷ She picked up on it immediately, responding that “the thought that those benighted souls sunk in the depths of such a so-called religion should urge one to go immediately to their rescue.”⁸

In the end, as much as she obviously wanted to create a Carmelite foundation in Utah, Mother Augustine determined that her own house was of such recent origin and her nuns green enough in their Carmelite vocations that she deemed it unwise to be trying to establish satellite houses. It was not until 1952 that other Carmelites, from Alhambra, California, established the convent that exists in Holladay, Utah today.

Mormons, of course, were and are to this moment completely unaware of the correspondence between Glass and Mother Augustine, so it had no effect on relations between the two churches. I bring it up here, though, simply to illustrate that Bishop Glass held to the same philosophy of evangelization of Mormons as Scanlan. Cloistered nuns are certainly not going to be riding around on bicycles and knocking on doors like Mormon missionaries, but through their prayers and lives of exemplary piety they could hope to win people—not just Mormons—over with love.

Finally, there is another episode during the time of Bishop Glass that is hard to explain but impossible to ignore. The Utah State Historical

7. Bishop Joseph S. Glass to Mother Augustine, June 21, 1921, in records of the Carmel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, hereafter cited as Diocesan Archives. For non-Catholic readers, the Carmelites are a contemplative, cloistered order reformed as the Discalced Carmelites in the sixteenth century by Saints Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross. They do not leave the cloister, and their basic function is to pray.

8. Mother Augustine to Bishop Joseph S. Glass, July 24, 1921, in records of the Carmel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Diocesan Archives.

Society has the papers of one John Frederick Tobin, a Catholic lawyer in Salt Lake City who also happened to be the football coach at Judge Memorial Catholic High School. At one point in 1923, Tobin had been out of town for a period, and a fellow lawyer, Ira R. Humphrey, wrote to catch him up on the doings of some of his friends. Apologizing for a typing error in a previous paragraph, Humphrey offered the following explanation: "The spelling of 'guess' in the second paragraph is due to the fact that I played poker last night until after three o'clock this morning with Heber J. Grant, Rev. Goshen, Bishop Glass, and Charley Quickley." The Salt Lake City directory reveals that Reverend Goshen was pastor of First Congregational Church, and Charles *Quigley* (Humphrey's typography was still unreliable) was a mine operator in the firm of Quigley and Welch.

Is the letter credible? There seems no reason to suspect that Humphrey was perpetrating some kind of joke, and the three religious leaders, a lawyer, and a business owner would all have been members of roughly the same social class, and thus finding them in attendance at such a gathering should not raise eyebrows. But the image of the puritanical Grant with loosened necktie bluffing a pair of deuces certainly seems out of character. And we can be sure that Grant, who insisted upon strict observance of the Word of Wisdom, would not have partaken of the whiskey and cigars one often finds at such events.

There is little evidence of formal contact between the Mormon and Catholic Churches during the following two episcopates, John J. Mitty (1926–32) and James E. Kearney (1932–37), and this is largely attributable to the fact that the Catholic diocese had its gaze fixed inwardly during that time. Those two bishops were preoccupied with bringing financial solvency back to the diocese after the extravagant spending of Bishop Glass, largely on redecoration of the Cathedral of the Madeleine. Ever since his days as a priest in Los Angeles, Glass had exhibited a reverse Midas touch in his financial affairs. Although his personal needs were in part taken care of by the Doheny family, he otherwise spent money

he did not have, leaving the diocese almost hopelessly mired in debt on the verge of bankruptcy. Unneeded real estate had been purchased, loans were taken out to cover the interest on previous loans, and the Catholic people were so demoralized by the fiscal irresponsibility that donations had sunk to pennies per person per year. Not until 1936, when the last debts of the cathedral had been paid off (remarkably, during the depth of the Great Depression), was the diocese able to redirect its attention to affairs in the outside world, including its relations with Mormons.

That hiatus, though, was the lull before the storm, because the next bishop, Duane G. Hunt, found himself in the midst of an almost constant storm of conflict with the Mormon Church. That most of that conflict was a result of misunderstanding of Catholicism on the part of the Mormons and ignorance of Mormon sensitivities on the part of Hunt's auxiliary bishop, Leo J. Steck, did not make it any less bitter, and eventually it was only the developing friendship between Hunt and President David O. McKay that saved the day for the comity that has characterized later years.

Hunt was raised a Methodist in the Midwest. Though he desired a career in law, his eyesight was poor from an early age, and he settled for a major in rhetoric instead during his college years. Confronted for the first time with the claims of Catholicism at about that time, he set out to refute the Church but instead became the proverbial scoffer who converted to Catholicism.⁹ Eventually his professional career brought him to Salt Lake City, where he became a professor of speech at the University of Utah. During that time, he became interested in the priesthood, entered the seminary in 1916, and was ordained by Bishop Glass in the Cathedral of the Madeleine. He proved to be a uniquely valuable

9. Hunt tells the story of his conversion in "Not for Mental Cowards," in Severin and Stephen Lamping, O.F.M., eds., *Through Hundred Gates: By Noted Converts from Twenty-Two Lands* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1939), 27–32 and at greater length in his *My Conversion to the Catholic Faith* (New York: The Paulist Press, n.d.)

priest to Bishops Glass and Mitty, the latter of whom encouraged him in 1927 to begin “The Catholic Hour,” a weekly broadcast explaining various points of Catholic teaching and dogma on the radio station KSL. His strengths as a speaker did not go unnoticed, and in 1935 the CBS network picked it up for a national feed, the first for KSL.

Hunt was a prolific writer. In addition to keeping an almost daily diary (our only bishop so far to have done so), he published the texts of his “Catholic Hour” broadcasts in a long series of booklets, along with autobiographical essays and a couple of small volumes of apologetics in which he defends Catholic teaching against Mormon assertions.¹⁰ It is vital to understand that neither of those apologetic volumes were attacks on the Mormon Church. The first, *The People, the Clergy, and the Church*, was a response to two articles attacking the Catholic Church by a Professor James L. Barker, published in the *Relief Society Magazine*. As such, its intended audience was anyone—Mormon, Catholic, or anyone else—who might be interested in the debate. The other one, *Great Apostasy? No! Unbroken Chain? The Continuity of the Catholic Church*, was intended for Catholic eyes only, for it gave a Catholic response to the essential Mormon idea of a great apostasy at some point in the early history of the church, so that Catholics would have some idea what to say when the missionaries came knocking.

So why was it, then, that Hunt aroused such suspicion in the minds of Mormon leaders like President David O. McKay, J. Reuben Clark, and Mark E. Petersen? It is an important question because the evidence contains no grounds for such suspicion. Perhaps one can assign some blame to both sides. For one thing, it is clear that the Mormon leaders had an imperfect understanding of the function of religious orders like the Trappists, whom they suspected of being a beachhead for an effort to

10. *The People, the Clergy and the Church: An answer to accusations against the Catholic Church made by a Mormon writer of Utah* (New York: The Paulist Press, 1936) and *Great Apostasy? No! Unbroken Chain? The Continuity of the Catholic Church* (London: The Queen’s Work, 1959).

convert Mormons, and of terms like “mission,” which means something very different to each faith. On the Catholic side, even though Hunt was careful never to attack Mormonism, he did have a polemical style (he had been a professor of rhetoric, after all) that seems to have triggered suspicion. And one of the roughest episodes in Mormon-Catholic relations was provoked, as we shall see, by a leaflet published by Auxiliary Bishop Leo J. Steck, who had freshly arrived from St. Louis as Hunt’s assistant and who had a very limited knowledge of Mormonism and of Mormon sensitivities.

Let us begin, though, with a controversy triggered by Fr. Robert J. Dwyer, editor of the *Intermountain Catholic* and rector of the Cathedral of the Madeleine, who was one of Bishop Hunt’s most valuable lieutenants.¹¹ Dwyer grew up on Second Avenue in Salt Lake City, just a short trolley ride from the cathedral where he was baptized and ordained. A sophisticated theologian and historian, Dwyer had received a PhD from the Catholic University of America, and his dissertation, published as *The Gentile Comes to Utah*, is a classic of Utah historiography.¹² But Dwyer thought of himself as a member of a persecuted minority in Mormon Country, had no use whatsoever for Mormonism, and missed no opportunity to skewer his Mormon neighbors.

He got a splendid opportunity in 1945 when Fawn M. Brodie published her trailblazing but controversial biography, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*.¹³ Although a blue-blooded Mormon

11. Dwyer (1908–76) was, in 1932, the first native Utahn to be ordained to the priesthood. He later became Bishop of Reno and Archbishop of Portland, Oregon. A useful summary of his life and anthology of his writings is Albert J. Steiss, ed., *Ecclesiastes: The Book of Archbishop Robert Dwyer* (Los Angeles: National Catholic Register, 1982).

12. Robert J. Dwyer, “The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study in Religious and Social Conflict” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1941).

13. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945).

herself (David O. McKay was her uncle), Brodie had become disaffected, and her biography was an attempt to demonstrate that Joseph Smith and the religion he had created could be accounted for completely by “naturalistic” means, i.e., that heavenly visitations and golden plates were unnecessary and incredible, and that Smith’s creative genius and the materials present in his environment were sufficient to explain the religion.

It was an opportunity made in heaven for Dwyer, who rushed into print in his own newspaper with a review praising Brodie’s book to the skies. Dwyer knew that the Mormon leadership was going to be unbending in its refusal to accommodate any of Brodie’s assertions, and also that they were going to insist that the rank and file hold tenaciously to the received interpretation, which was to accept Smith’s claims at face value. Rather, Dwyer hoped to appeal to Mormon scholars and intellectuals who might find Brodie’s ideas at least somewhat cogent, and thus drive a wedge between them and the leadership.

That Dwyer would review such a book favorably was to be expected, but what was not expected was the vehemence of his denunciation of Mormonism. By asserting a belief in a physical deity, “Mormonism definitely places itself outside the realm of rational inquiry and rests its case upon a physical impossibility,” Dwyer stated, and its doctrine of eternal progress “is demonstrably an intellectual absurdity.” Such inflammatory remarks inevitably drew a rebuke from the *Deseret News*, but remarkably they even drew a rebuke from the Catholic-owned and -edited *Salt Lake Tribune*, which called Dwyer’s review “Ill-Timed, Ill-Natured, and Very Ill-Advised.”

Bishop Hunt’s position in all this is undocumented, but it is a reasonable speculation that, in the interest of comity between the two churches, he may have asked Dwyer to pen a conciliatory response. If so, he was frustrated, and indeed Dwyer had stuck his neck out so far by that time that one wonders what kind of conciliation would have been possible. His actual response in the *Intermountain Catholic*, later

reprinted under the title “The Uses of Disagreement,” was brilliant but not conciliatory, and even a bit disingenuous. It asks why, when discussion and even debate of a wide range of serious issues like politics, foreign policy, artistic matters, and cultural issues is routinely accepted and even assumed, similar debate about religious matters is frowned upon. It was perhaps disingenuous in that Dwyer’s insulting rhetoric was on the margins of, if not actually outside, the scope of measured discourse.¹⁴

In any event, Bishop Hunt realized that things had gotten out of hand and that Dwyer clearly had no intention of backing down. The only alternative he could see to maintain whatever good will remained between the Catholic and Mormon Churches was to silence Dwyer. Accordingly, on December 1, 1946, Dwyer’s name silently disappeared from the masthead of the *Intermountain Catholic*, and it would be almost four years before it returned. By that time, Dwyer had only two years left before his departure to take over the Diocese of Reno, and Hunt must have been relieved that nothing controversial came along during that time to rile his controversy-loving priest.

Things were not helped during that period, though, by the appearance in 1949 of a leaflet authored by Bishop Leo J. Steck. Steck, a native of St. Louis, had been appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Salt Lake City at Bishop Hunt’s request, Hunt assuming that his failing eyesight would soon mandate his retirement, at which time Steck would be prepared

14. One wonders why Hugh W. Nibley, the brilliant BYU professor and Mormon apologist who had as much of a zest for polemics as Dwyer, did not enter the lists at this point to engage Dwyer in protracted debate. Nibley’s *No Ma’am, That’s Not History* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946) was his self-appointed answer to Brodie’s book, and perhaps he felt he had already said enough on the issue. But Dwyer’s article had been as much an assault on Mormonism itself as it was a review of the book, and Nibley might well have seen Dwyer’s work as an escalation that deserved a response. The debate would have been highly entertaining, if ultimately unedifying. Boyd Jay Petersen, *Hugh Nibley: A Consecrated Life* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002) discusses the Brodie affair on pp. 223–28.

to take over the diocese. Steck had at that time little understanding of Mormons and Mormonism and an equally limited sense of what might trigger Mormon suspicions of Catholics.

The leaflet was titled “A Foreign Mission Close to Home!” Its intended audience was not Mormons, but rather wealthy Catholic donors in the East whom Steck wished to inform of the difficult circumstances under which Utah priests had to operate and to appeal for financial support. Mormonism is nowhere mentioned or even implied. When the leaflet got into Mormon hands, though, two things aroused their ire. The first was a map of the United States that depicted Utah in black, as though it was a blot on the character of the country. The other was the term “mission,” which Mormons naturally interpreted as a field for proselyting. David O. McKay was outraged by the leaflet, which he roundly denounced during a conference in his hometown of Huntsville. An apostle Mark E. Petersen, editor of the *Deseret News*, began organizing ward committees to resist the anticipated onslaught of Catholic missionaries.

A crisis was clearly emerging, and Bishop Hunt requested a meeting with President McKay. The meeting, which took place in Hunt’s office at Holy Cross Hospital, produced little healing, though he did finally convince McKay that he was misinterpreting Catholic intentions, and through subsequent correspondence the crisis was eventually averted.¹⁵

Peace between the two churches did not long endure, however. In July 1958, Elder Bruce R. McConkie published his encyclopedic *Mormon Doctrine*, which referred to the Catholic Church as the “Church of the Devil” and characterized it as “most abominable above all other churches.” When a copy found its way into Hunt’s hands, he was stunned. During a congratulatory visit to his Mormon friend, newly-elected congressman

15. My colleague Gregory Prince, a practicing Mormon, points out that Hunt’s Mormon opponents were guilty of a double standard: for a church that at any given time fields tens of thousands of missionaries, often attempting to convert Catholics, to object that Catholics could not legitimately turn the tables is inconsistent.

David King, Hunt carried a copy of McConkie's book and with tears in his eyes he protested that "We are your friends. We don't deserve this kind of treatment." Not content to employ King as his middleman, Hunt took the matter up directly with President McKay, asking, "Is this the attitude of the Church, that the Catholic Church is the 'Great and Abominable Church'?" As things worked out, although McKay asked McConkie to tone down his anti-Catholic rhetoric in a couple of places, he saw that offending Catholics was only one of many worries generated by the book: a study disclosed that there were no fewer than 1,067 doctrinal errors in the volume, with at least one found on most of its 776 pages.¹⁶

The peace that ensued was symbolized the following year when Bishop Hunt and John F. Fitzpatrick, publisher of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, attended the funeral for McKay's counselor Stephen L. Richards, eliciting an effusive note of thanks from McKay. McKay reciprocated in 1960 when Hunt himself died and he attended the funeral, the first Catholic Mass he had ever witnessed. This comity extended into the term of Hunt's successor, Bishop Joseph Lennox Federal, who personally greeted and thanked McKay for his presence at the service. When McKay himself died in 1970, Federal not only attended the funeral, but, "as the cortege passed the Cathedral of the Madeleine on its slow, sad journey along South Temple Street to the Salt Lake City Cemetery, he ordered the bells tolled in a final demonstration of respect."¹⁷

The rest of Bishop Federal's term as bishop (1960–80) was a time of calm between the two churches, mercifully free of offensive books and pamphlets and obstreperous editorials. In fact, there is little evidence of any but the most perfunctory contact at all, as the two churches seemed to have issues of their own to deal with that did not involve the other. This is certainly true on the Catholic side, for the 1960s were largely occupied with implementing the profound changes of the Second Vatican Council

16. Prince and Topping, "A Turbulent Coexistence," 160–62.

17. *Ibid.*, 163.

(Bishop Federal attended all four sessions). The 1970s, on the other hand, were preoccupied with an external restoration of the Cathedral of the Madeleine, an expensive and time-consuming project that left both Federal's budget and he himself taxed almost to the breaking point.¹⁸

Federal's cathedral renovation plans, which were to have included restoration of the interior artwork and the stained-glass windows, proved to be beyond both his financial and personal resources, so that was left to his successor, Bishop William K. Weigand (1980–95). Weigand recalls that he was given notice by diocesan officials at the time of his arrival that the interior renovation was something they expected of him.¹⁹ Together with his close associate, cathedral rector Monsignor M. Francis Mannion, he began formulating plans for the project, and almost paradoxically, relations with the Mormon Church, or at least the Mormon people, became once again a top priority.

Mannion's strategy, probably bolstered by Bishop Federal's experience, was based on the realization that such a huge undertaking simply could not be sustained only by funding from the state's relatively small Catholic population. Instead, he set out to build, in the minds of the Utah population at large, an image of the cathedral as a "public church," one of Utah's great architectural treasures and worthy of maintenance at public expense (though through voluntary individual and corporate donations), and as a venue for free public programs in the arts and humanities. It was to be, as the slogan had it, "A Cathedral for All People." Although the Mormon Church itself would not be a contributor, individual Mormons and Mormon foundations, like those funded by the wealthy and generous Eccles family, would be heavy supporters.²⁰

18. Gary Topping, *The Story of the Cathedral of the Madeleine* (Salt Lake City: Sagebrush Press, 2009), 59–74.

19. Bishop William K. Weigand, comments made at the Bishop's Dinner, Oct. 1, 2015, video recording available in Diocesan Archives.

20. Gary Topping, interviews with Msgr. M. Francis Mannion, Feb. 4, 2009; Bishop William K. Weigand, Oct. 2 and Dec. 1, 2009; and Gregory Glenn,

Mannion was center stage again during a potential flare-up of Mormon-Catholic hostility early in the term of Weigand's successor, Bishop George H. Niederauer (ordained November 3, 1994). At issue was a general conference talk on April 2, 1995 by Elder Dallin H. Oaks titled "Apostasy and Restoration," in which he discussed the central Mormon teaching of a Great Apostasy early in Christian history, an apostasy that rendered necessary the Restoration of the true Church under Joseph Smith. Catholics are well aware of that Mormon teaching, and ordinarily its discussion at conference would be expected and would not merit comment by any Catholic spokesman. In this instance, though, Mannion, as official theologian of the diocese, was challenged by the Associated Press to offer a response. He ordinarily would have declined, but the AP, with its national audience, would provide a huge forum for the Mormon position alone, so since they had invited him to respond, he chose to. His strategy was a measured response that, while reaffirming traditional Catholic doctrine, was couched in a respectful tone regarding Mormons and Mormonism. Although referring appreciatively to "The basis for a solid dialogue [that] exists in the very positive interreligious relations that have been building in recent years," he nevertheless cites the "intense modern scholarship [that] has strengthened rather than weakened Catholic appreciation of . . . the continuity of normative church teaching with that of the apostolic church."

In order that his comments would not be misunderstood by "a media reduction of them," Mannion sent his complete text to Elder Oaks, adding that "In my response, I sought to be constructive, fair and respectful. . . I have the greatest concern that our good relations continue to grow and thrive." Oaks responded in kind, graciously reassuring Mannion that

Feb. 19, 2009, all in Diocesan Archives. See also Mannion, "Public Church, Public Support: A Case Study in Ecclesiastical Fund Raising," an address given to the Partners for Sacred Places national conference, July 19, 1992, also in Diocesan Archives, and "The Church and the City," *First Things* 100 (February 2000): 31–36.

“Your comments are surely ‘constructive, fair and respectful.’ And your responding is entirely understandable and necessary from your point of view, which I honor,” concluding with the hope that “any mistakes I may have made in representing the content or origin of someone else’s faith will not detract from the great common interests that unite us.”²¹ Crisis averted.

Looking ahead to the close personal relations that would develop between Niederauer’s successor, Bishop John C. Wester and the LDS leadership, one would have to say that comparatively, those relations during the Niederauer years were cordial, if not intimate. But that intimacy could spring up occasionally. One example (which also exhibits Niederauer’s memorable sense of humor) came in the fall of 2004 when President Cecil O. Samuelson of Brigham Young University invited Niederauer to a BYU-Notre Dame football game on September 4. “We do hope to see you on the fourth,” he concluded, “though we may be rooting for different teams!” Niederauer accepted gratefully, but added the warning, “Don’t be too certain of how I will be rooting: I am a graduate of the University of Southern California, a longtime, militant rival of the school in South Bend!”²²

Most of Mormon-Catholic relations during the Niederauer years, though, with the exception of exchanges of routine holiday greetings and the like, were occupied with putting out occasional brush fires like the Oaks-Mannion incident. One of them occurred in 1997 when the newsletter for the Bountiful Twenty-Third LDS Ward reported a foot injury to a young man that would delay his departure on his mission to Rome. The newsletter expressed the hope, though, that in time he would be ready to go up against the “Papal Princes of the FEL (Forces of

21. M. Francis Mannion to Elder Dallin Oaks, Apr. 6, 1995 (with enclosure); Oaks to Mannion, Apr. 7, 1995, papers of Bishop George H. Niederauer (hereafter Niederauer Papers), Diocesan Archives.

22. Cecil O. Samuelson to Niederauer, Aug. 9, 2004; Niederauer to Samuelson, Aug. 11, 2004. Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives.

Evil).” Ordinarily such an inflammatory statement in a ward newsletter of limited circulation would go unnoticed by the Catholic community, but in this case it was picked up by Rolly and Wells’s column in the *Salt Lake Tribune* and a copy was passed along to Niederauer by a presumably Catholic woman.²³ Niederauer fired off a letter to the ward bishop, one Kent L. Worthington, pointing out that “Such language directed at another religion damages tolerance and good relationships between churches at any time, but is particularly unfortunate at this moment [pending the imminent arrival in Salt Lake City of Cardinal Edward Cassidy, cardinals often being referred to as “princes of the Church”].” The phraseology of the newsletter, he continued, “is particularly obnoxious and insulting. Some people might write the matter off as youthful high spirits. I cannot do so. Thinking and speaking of people of another religious faith in disparaging and derisive terms is puerile at best and bigoted at worst. I am hopeful that this matter can be satisfactorily resolved so that our two churches may live together in peace and mutual respect.”²⁴ In order to ensure that such resolution took place, Niederauer sent a copy of his letter to President Gordon B. Hinckley.²⁵

23. Rolly and Wells, *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 5, 1997, D2. Paul Rolly and JoAnn Jacobsen-Wells wrote a popular column exposing various foibles in Utah life, taking particular pleasure in skewering all things Mormon and Republican. Eventually Jacobsen-Wells dropped out, but at this writing Rolly is still doing the column. Ann Marie Helms to Niederauer, May 5, 1997, Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives.

24. Niederauer to Kent L. Worthington, May 7, 1997, Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives.

25. A copy of the Hinckley letter apparently has not survived, but Niederauer received an appreciative acknowledgment from First Presidency Secretary F. Michael Watson in which the First Presidency distances itself from the newsletter language, adding that “President Hinckley reaffirms to you a commitment to congenial relations with those of all faiths and has asked that I express his appreciation for the warm association enjoyed with you” (F. Michael Watson to Niederauer, May 12, 1997, Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives).

Worthington lost no time in making an effusive apology, copying his letter to President Hinckley. “The statement . . . was in very poor taste,” he admitted, “and should never have been used by anyone.” He further promised to print an apology in the next newsletter. “I am most grateful for your kind words and I join you in your wish to maintain good relationships with all neighbors,” Niederauer replied, adding that “It is my prayerful hope that we can now put this matter behind us and proceed to cooperate together in peace and mutual respect.”²⁶ Once again, crisis averted.

Although it is true to say that relations between the Catholic and Mormon Churches became much more frequent and personal during the terms of the two most recent bishops, Niederauer and John C. Wester (2007–15), it is also clear that Wester’s years mark the high-water mark in the entire history of the two churches. Much of that, no doubt, is due to the happy dearth of the kinds of incidents that had caused friction during previous years, and much of it, too, is undoubtedly a result of warm personalities on both sides of the aisle that simply meshed together well.

It would be a meaningless task to try to rank the bishops of the Diocese of Salt Lake City in order of greatness because each has made positive contributions to the diocese in very different ways. But by any standards one might wish to pose, Bishop Wester would rank very close to the top. Youthful, handsome, talented, articulate, and funny, he is the kind of person that people naturally feel attracted to. Much of his charisma, too, emanates from a deep and unfeigned warmth and compassion that one immediately feels in his presence. When he met similar qualities among the leaders of the LDS Church, good things began happening.

Elder M. Russell Ballard and President Thomas S. Monson attended Wester’s ordination at the Cathedral of the Madeleine, to Wester’s sincere

26. Kent L. Worthington to Niederauer, May 15, 1997; Niederauer to Worthington, May 20, 1997, Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives.

delight.²⁷ But that much would have been expected, no matter who the respective church leaders might have been. But the fact that Elder Ballard and their golf partner Ellis Ivory journeyed all the way to Santa Fe for Wester's 2015 installation as Archbishop of Santa Fe surely exceeded any formal institutional obligation.

Those official contacts quickly became personal, especially when golf came into the picture. Wester is very athletic and loves outdoor recreation: fishing, hiking, and golf. Eventually he became part of a regular golf foursome, with Elder Ballard, LDS real estate developer Ellis Ivory, and prominent Catholic physician Dr. Dominic Albo. Those golf outings became the vehicle for much good-natured ribbing and self-deprecating humor. To Ivory, for example, Wester wrote, "You are very kind and most thoughtful. And, I may add, a good golfer! The match was a lot of fun, despite all my 8s." And in handwriting at the bottom of the letter, "Thanks for the great picture . . . US Open here we come!" Ivory responded in kind: "Thanks for the fantastic golf outing last Thursday. Never has being whipped been more enjoyable."²⁸

A curious feature of Bishop Wester's term that one struggles to explain is an almost sudden upsurge in local Mormon interest in Catholicism. Perhaps it was fueled by Wester's charismatic personality or something going on within the Mormon Church that the present writer is unaware of, but there was an amazing flurry of events, both formal and informal, in which various Catholics were invited to explain aspects of Catholicism to Mormon audiences. These ranged from Deacon Lynn Johnson being asked to give a tour of the Cathedral of the Madeleine and answer questions about various Catholic doctrines and practices to an institute group from Utah County, to Bishop Wester being invited to address the Quorum of the Twelve in Salt Lake City and a symposium

27. Wester to Ballard, Mar. 22, 2007, and to Monson, Mar. 28, 2007, Wester Papers, Diocesan Archives.

28. Wester to Ellis Ivory, July 18, 2012; Ivory to Wester and Dr. Dominic Albo, Aug. 7, 2012, Wester Papers, Diocesan Archives.

(with question and answer period) at the Utah Valley University Institute, to formal addresses to the BYU Forum by Cardinal Francis George, OMI, of Chicago and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, OFM of Philadelphia, who addressed the Forum twice.²⁹

On the other hand, amid all this flurry of Mormon inquiry into Catholicism, one drily notes that the Catholic diocese has never exhibited a reciprocal interest in the nature of Mormonism. It seems an odd reversal of the intuitive: surely one can expect a basic familiarity with Catholicism, a two-millennia-old religion, on the part of any reasonably well-educated person, whereas Mormonism, not yet two centuries old, would seem to be the religion that begs explanation. Nevertheless, however one chooses to interpret this strange and lopsided phenomenon, it is clear that as Bishop Wester departed for New Mexico in 2015, Catholic-Mormon relations in Utah were better than they had ever been. With the installation of Rev. Oscar A. Solis as the new Catholic bishop on March 7, 2017, Utahns in both churches can well hope for Mormon and Catholic leadership that will build on that solid foundation and generate even more ecumenical energy in the future.

29. A more meticulous search of the Wester correspondence and the files of the *Intermountain Catholic* may turn up even a few more examples. See the itinerary for Cardinal George's visit (as well as the text of his speech), Feb. 22–24, 2010; Vance Theodore and Allen Blake Boatright to Wester, June 21, 2012; Itinerary for Wester's UVU visit, Sept. 18, 2012; Richard E. Bennett to Wester, Apr. 4, 2013 (thanking him for their visit to the cathedral during Holy Week); Wester to Elders L. Tom Perry and Quentin L. Cook, Apr. 26, 2013 (thanking them for their invitation to speak to the Twelve and presidents of the Quorums of the Seventy about the Catholic diocese and possible ecumenical activities); and Kent Hunter to Wester, Apr. 29, 2013 (thanking him for the tour of the cathedral by Orem Institute students led by Deacon Lynn Johnson). Some of these events are reported in the *Intermountain Catholic*, Apr. 9, 2010; Jan. 30, 2015; Mar. 18, 2016; and Apr. 1, 2016.