In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the archdiocese of Cincinnati assumed a more imposing and consolidating form. Since midcentury its churches and schools had doubled. Though the missionary character that the church once had in Ohio had lessened, it nevertheless continued its missionary and community outreach. It attended to the spiritual needs of African American Catholics in the inner city and the new immigrants from Eastern Europe as well as becoming more involved in the labor movement. But at the same time that the Catholic Church grew, church leaders feared religion was losing its influence on society and that parishioners were becoming too worldly. In response, parishes formed devotional organizations and lay men and women gradually become more involved in social issues.

As the chancellor’s office exercised greater episcopal control over archdiocesan matters, it legislated against church fairs, picnics, and bazaars on Sundays. Not unlike in other dioceses, most parishes were supported in part by these activities, which were usually the work of parish women. When Elder arrived in Cincinnati in 1880 it was not uncommon for individuals in some of the parishes to organize church entertainment independent of the pastors. Detecting excesses, he prohibited Catholics in the archdiocese from taking part in any parish picnic or excursion unless approved by the pastor. Moreover, he ordered that no money be accepted for the benefit of any church or school unless the entertainment had previously been sanctioned by the pastor and was under his control. It was commonplace in this period for ordinaries to restrict parish entertainments. Both Elder and Moeller also admonished the faithful not to go to those public places where night dances
were held. "You know our rule," Elder said, "there is to be no dancing after dark." During Moeller's tenure the local church continued to regard dancing as a "dangerous diversion." It advised organizations like the Knights of Columbus "to exercise great vigilance" at their dances.¹

As archbishop, Moeller was also particularly critical of those parishes that found it expedient to sponsor fairs, picnics, and excursions to secure funds to help build and maintain their buildings. He felt it was inconsistent "with the dignity" of the Catholic religion "to resort to methods for raising money which foster the inclinations of pleasure seekers." Moeller repeatedly urged pastors to induce their people to contribute directly to works of charity and religion solely for the love of God and for the sake of charity, because it was "far more dignified and meritorious." In that same spirit Moeller directed the Catholic Telegraph not to publish notices of fairs, bazaars, or "any of the other catch-penny devices for obtaining money from the faithful."²

The local church also forbade the practice of some pastors of charging an entrance fee at the door of the church. Moeller reminded the pastors in his January 1905 pastoral that to exclude the faithful from the church because they could not or did not wish to pay the amount asked was strictly forbidden by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884. He also considered it "indecorous" for a priest to stand near the door of the church either to collect money for mere entrance or for a seat in the church. Though the archbishop approved of pew rents and felt that persons should be assessed according to their means, most parishes did not adopt the pew-rental system. They felt it discriminated against the poor.³

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Elder and Moeller often expressed concern over declining morality in society. High on the list was their concern over the broken family. During their administrations they helped regularize the institution of marriage. In compliance with the laws laid down in the synods of 1886 and 1898, marriages were now solemnized at Mass, rather than taking place in the afternoon and evening, as had often occurred, and funerals were also conducted with the solemnities of the Mass, rather than conducted in the afternoon. During his term Moeller published two significant pastorals on marriage. Concerned over the fact that the divorce rate nationally more than doubled between 1880 and 1910 and that one out of every nine marriages in the United States ended in divorce, Moeller reiterated that the church forbade divorce. His pastoral letters on these doctrinal matters were considered classics in their genre and were used as texts in many seminaries.⁴

In keeping with the teachings of the official church, mixed marriages, which were in the Elder-Moeller years on the rise nationally, were also forbidden. The church advised Catholics not to become engaged with
non-Catholics without first ascertaining from the pastor if there were sufficient reason for obtaining dispensations.

The archdiocese also opposed any form of sexual activity outside of marriage, birth control, and abortion. In anticipation of a talk by Margaret Sanger, president of the American Birth Control League, at the first Ohio Conference on Birth Control at the Hotel Gibson in Cincinnati in 1922, the Catholic Telegraph editorialized that Sanger “should not be permitted to spread her disgusting teaching in our city.” Two days before her talk, Moeller issued a mandate forbidding Catholics, “under grave censure,” from attending the lecture.

As the archdiocese waged a battle against what it defined as declining morality, it protested strongly against blasphemy and intemperance and established rules for the conduct of Catholic societies. In 1898 Elder and other religious leaders in the community were asked by a local newspaper to write an article on Cincinnati’s needs from a moral and spiritual point of view. When asked to delete his critical remarks on the press, Elder refused and published his piece in the Catholic Telegraph. He articulated his vision of what may appropriately be called, as one later twentieth-century historian aptly put it, a “new urban Gospel for Catholics.” Elder insisted that what Cincinnati needed was a reformation of its daily papers and saloons, “suppression” of immodest theatres and sensational posters, and “good” citizens in public office and in its schools. Those theaters and posters that exhibited immodest pictures as well as acts of violence had a “sad effect,” he argued, on the children. “[T]heir young plastic imaginations,” he wrote, “get filled with scenes of wickedness or coarseness, that obscure . . . their sense of what is beautiful and true.” To help counter those effects every morning, after the usual prayers at the beginning of school, the children recited the versicles—short sentences usually spoken by a priest and followed by a response, given as an act of reparation for profane language.

The Catholic Telegraph also often reminded its readers of the principle that the political and social prosperity of a community was in direct “proportion to the morals of the people” and that the “cultivation of literature and industry” was an essential “safeguard of morality.” It argued that in terms of intellectual activity American Catholics were weak. Studies showed that Catholics had little influence on the community by their writings. Though they counted by far the largest number of members of any single religious denomination in the United States, they exercised less influence in the affairs of the country than did any of the smaller denominations. In the archdiocese the Jesuit Francis J. Finn, who presided for many years over St. Xavier school in Cincinnati and wrote juvenile fiction, was an exception. His books, especially Tom Playfair (1891) and Percy Winn (1891), received a very wide reading
throughout the country and the world, being translated into many foreign languages. The heroes tended to be boys of good family who combined piety and industry and either joined the Jesuit order or dedicated themselves to Catholic good works as laymen. Concerned over the low quality of secular literature generally available in the community, Elder urged the faithful to supply their families with Catholic newspapers and books. In 1885 George A. Pflaum, Sr., began in Dayton the Young Catholic Messenger, a general magazine for youth. In time the magazine reached more than a million Catholic pupils every week. Eight years later the Franciscans began St. Anthony Messenger, the second Franciscan periodical during Elder’s tenure.8

At the Fourth and Fifth Cincinnati Provincial Councils of the 1880s, Elder and his suffragan bishops, who were concerned over declining morality in society, identified intemperance as “one of the great evils” of the time. Not opposed to the moderate use of liquor, they disassociated themselves from the “fanatical advocates” who tried to do away with all liquors. They sought, instead, to restrain the abuse by appeals to reason. Church officials applauded efforts of parishes that formed temperance societies. Elder fully supported the Total Abstinence movement. As a total abstainer, he was a member of his own cathedral society. In keeping with the directives of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, the archdiocese also criticized those who sold any intoxicating liquors at social events. Elder made clear in his pastorals to the laity that the pastor was to be held personally responsible for such incidents. In the summer of 1889 he removed a pastor from his pastoral charge for a week for allowing beer to be sold on the occasion of the blessing of his new church. When he learned that the St. Aloysius Orphan Society had also sold beer at a social event, Elder directed the Society to get his permission before sponsoring any entertainment in the future. Furthermore, the Cincinnati ordinary frowned upon the opening of saloons in the vicinity of cemeteries. He appealed to all Catholics not to patronize those saloons when going to or returning from a funeral, as well as when making visits to the graves of relatives or friends. In his address at the 1896 convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union, the seventy-six-year-old Elder also supported the idea of working for appropriate legislation. “By the enacting and enforcing of good laws,” he said, “we can hinder the selling of liquor to men who are drunk, we can preserve the sanctities of the home, we can hinder the destruction of the children. All this is the work of Catholic societies. Politics is only to be influenced by organization.”9

Moeller also recommended the formation of total abstinence societies and opposed prohibition. To drink alcohol “with moderation is not wrong,” he wrote to the Ohio Temperance Union in the fall of 1915, “nor is a respectable saloon a public nuisance.” Though he praised the total abstainer and advised
his priests to become such, he opposed the use of compulsion to enforce total abstinence. "I am as much of a total abstainer . . . as any one," he wrote in 1917, "yet I am not a prohibitionist." To impose prohibition on the community, he thought, was a violation of man's liberty. Like Purcell and Elder, Moeller urged his clergy to induce people to practice abstinence "voluntarily."\(^3\)

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Cincinnati ordinaries helped enhance the role of the laity in activities outside of parish management and diocesan hierarchical affairs. Catholic laymen, due in part to growth in the Catholic middle class, formed several fraternal societies. Generally national organizations, these societies, which had ethnic, cultural, and religious dimensions to them, had local chapters based in individual parishes. Germans generally belonged to the Central Verein, whereas the Irish tended to belong to The Ancient Order of Hibernians. Adult males joined these societies with some regularity. Increasingly, the local church also realized a need for the establishment of societies for Catholic young men. Though there were a number of young ladies' sodalities, those of the young men were comparatively scarce. In January 1886 the Young Men's Sodality of St. Xavier parish established the Xavier Lyceum. Under the leadership of its first president, James L. Keating, it sponsored debates, and literary and musical exercises. The following year the Springer Institute in Cincinnati hosted the fourteenth annual convention of the Catholic Young Men's National Union.\(^1\)

In his Provincial Council pastoral of 1889 Elder proposed "a flying battalion of Apostolic men." Archbishop James Gibbons of Baltimore liked the idea. "We need such a force," he wrote to Elder, "which would fill a place not occupied by the local clergy or regular missionaries." In the 1890s several Catholic organizations in the archdiocese supported the movement for an American Federation of Catholic Societies (AFCS), enthusiastically promoted by Bishop James A. McFaul of Trenton, New Jersey. In little time the AFCS, which held its first national convention in Cincinnati on December 10–12, 1901, established a bond of close friendship among the Catholic societies and gave them unified strength in protesting against anti-Catholic measures and affirming Catholic principles. In the early 1900s, the Catholic Telegraph editorialized that "[L]ay co-operation on the part of the men of the church is of the first importance, if our religion is to grow and flourish." Building upon the rich tradition in the archdiocese, especially among the German Catholics, the diocesan paper argued that men's "heads just as well as their hearts should be enlisted in the holy cause of religion. Utilize their business abilities, interest them in the active work of the parishes, place responsibilities upon them, let them manage the temporalities and they will surprise you with the results." During his tenure Archbishop Moeller also
expressed publicly the need for a Catholic lay ministry of “fairoined, fearless and prominent laymen.” In his address on the “Layman’s Duty in the Church” to the Knights of Columbus in 1917 he argued that a “staunch Catholic will take a manifest and active interest in all that concerns the welfare of the church.”

Moeller also thought that the laity could refute many accusations hurled against the church “more effectively than either the Bishop or priests.” More aggressive than Elder he proposed the formation of a “vigilance committee” in order to help reduce immorality in the community. Moeller, who like his predecessor subscribed annually to the local Society for the Suppression of Vice, personally felt obligated to publicly condemn whatever was potentially detrimental in society. “This duty,” he argued, was “incumbent on all authority. . . . [A]nything that is indecent, anything that is vulgar, anything that is food for man’s unruly appetites, they should not only never countenance, but with all their energy and power stop.” Moeller was hopeful that the committee would advise the public not to patronize “indecent plays” as well as “induce the owners of theatres not to rent their houses to companies” that would put them on the stage. Catholic laymen, through the American Federation of Catholic Societies, responded to Moeller’s proposal by establishing a Committee on Public Morals in 1913. This committee, which reflected the sentiments of the AFCS’s national crusade, called for a national crusade against public immorality, gathered information on plays and shows, and reported anything objectionable to civil authorities.

Though he urged cooperation between laity and clergy in parish and diocesan affairs, Moeller thought at times that he was “walking on the ashes that cover a smouldering fire.” He realized there was “some danger when undue power of directing ecclesiastical affairs” was placed in the hands of the laity. But he insisted that “just as much harm will come to the Church from the apathy and supineness on the part of the laity in this important matter.” In his mind there was no doubt that the laity were in a position to give prudent advice and much needed help in those things that “concerned the material good of the parish.” More lay people began to take a more active role in parish organizations as well as to help raise money for church and school. This helped relieve pastors from performing some of those functions, thus enabling them to spend more time attending to the spiritual needs of the parishes. Though the pastor remained solely in charge of ecclesiastical affairs, he and the laity were expected to work side by side on temporal matters. Moeller maintained that such “united effort will bring the clergy and laity more closely together, . . . will produce a community of interest and aims, and will tend to unity and harmony, so important for the peace and welfare of the parish.”
As a consequence, the local church witnessed the birth of a number of grassroots lay ministries. Significant among these groups was the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade (CSMC). Mount St. Mary's of the West seminarians, who constituted a unit in the national movement of the CSMC, were among the founders of the Students' Crusade in Illinois in 1918. Under the leadership of Father Francis J. Beckmann, who later became bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska, and archbishop of Dubuque, Iowa, after his years in Lincoln, Mount St. Mary's of the West Seminary became the cradle of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade movement. The organization, with its national headquarters at the Crusade Castle in Cincinnati, helped generate thousands of vocations to the priesthood, the religious life, and service to the church. The success of the Crusade may be attributed in part to its constitution as a society of students. The students passed their own laws at national conventions and elected their own national officers. Through The Shield, the official magazine of the CSMC, "Mission Crusaders" sought to awaken the Catholics' consciousness to the myriad ways lay people may "know the missions" and lend a helping hand to them. Moeller likened the interest in the missions implanted in the hearts of the students of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade "to the mustard seed, of which Christ spoke, that grows into a large and mighty tree, whose branches reach out into many lands."

Related to the missionary work of the CSMC was the American Board of Catholic Missions (ABCM), organized in December 1920 under the chairmanship of Moeller, who held the office until his death. Inspired by the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter of 1919, the ABCM, designed to coordinate all American mission activity under one body, made a special plea to Catholics to do missionary work at home and abroad. Through this board the entire hierarchy now supervised the missionary projects of the country.¹⁵

As more and more lay people and parish organizations became involved in social programs, there developed in the archdiocese a lay ministry to counter the resurgence of organized anti-Catholicism in the Midwest. The hard times and unemployment that accompanied the national panic of 1893 helped foster religious bigotry. Some people attributed much responsibility for the high level of unemployment and low wages to foreign immigration. In February of that year the Catholic Telegraph reported that the pre-Civil War anti-Catholic sentiments were returning through the work of such inflammatory and "un-American" organizations as the American Protective Association (APA). Founded in 1887 at Clinton, Iowa, it was committed to stopping immigration. The APA also tried to keep Catholics out of politics and Catholic teachers out of the public schools. It developed considerable strength in the Midwest. "We are keeping tabs on your movements," the APA wrote to Elder, "and that of your Romish Scoundrels of cut throats of
priests.” Partly in response to the bigotry, Catholics in the archdiocese formed a number of social organizations that stressed the defense of the Catholic faith and compatibility of Catholicism with American life. In 1898 Thomas E. Gallagher, an insurance salesman who came to work in Cincinnati from New York, sowed the seed of the Knights of Columbus Cincinnati Council No. 373, with fifty-eight members. This fraternal organization developed an extensive educational program aimed at religious and civic education. The Irish Ancient Order of Hibernians, designed to help support and defend Catholic priests, also proved quite active.16

A local incident that agitated a number of Catholics occurred in 1903. In the spring of that year, Moses Goldsmith, a Cincinnati businessman, gave a reception in honor of his son and his son’s bride. Several prominent Cincinnati politicians and judges were present. Ballet dancers, robed as religious sisters, acted as ushers. When the party was at its height the dancers threw off their sisters’ habits, appeared in pink tights, and performed Oriental dances. Catholics in the archdiocese were outraged. Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis were equally upset by the Goldsmith scandal. A Jewish delegation made a formal apology to Elder, and through him to their “Catholic fellow-citizens.” Elder wasted no time exonerating his Jewish neighbors for all responsibility. He was hopeful that Catholics and Jews would “live together in the future in the same peace and amity that they have until now.”17

By the time of Moeller’s tenure as archbishop, education and experience had driven much political bigotry from the country. In contrast to earlier times when Catholics were practically barred from holding political office, by the turn of the century more and more Catholics held political seats. In November 1905 Edward J. Dempsey, a Catholic, was elected mayor of Cincinnati, the first Catholic elected to that office. What helped dispel much of the prejudice was the growing acquaintance of Protestants with Catholic principles, as well as the cooperation of Catholics and non-Catholics in social work and in mutual business and social relations. Many Catholic officials, moreover, had proven themselves exceptionally well in their posts.18

Though bigotry had abated, anti-Catholic sentiments and suspicions of foul play by Catholics were still current. In July 1906 an article in a local political newsletter accused Moeller of entering into an agreement with Mayor Dempsey to have a voice in the city’s political appointments. More specifically, it accused the archbishop of having ordered the mayor to appoint a Catholic to the Board of Trustees of the University of Cincinnati. Moeller denied both allegations. There was no foundation to the charge. At times, Protestants openly attacked the candidacy of Catholic candidates, such as in 1914 when they opposed Ohio Attorney General Timothy S. Hogan for the
U.S. Senate. Both the diocesan paper and Moeller acknowledged the benefits Catholics brought into politics. "Catholics are bound," the Catholic Telegraph wrote, "to bring their religion with them into politics, just as well as they are bound to bring it into every phase of family, social and business life. The principles of Catholic morality . . . apply in the street as well as in the home, in political office as well as in private trust." In Moeller's judgment America had nothing to fear from the Catholic Church. "Even if it should come to pass that a Catholic were to occupy the Presidential Chair," he wrote in 1914, "the Pope would not meddle in the political and temporal affairs of this country." American church leaders consistently argued that they were not pawns of a foreign potentate.19

As Catholics constituted an integral part of the local war effort in 1917 and 1918, Moeller was upset that the Red Cross, which he claimed "had not been friendly to Catholics," had no Catholic on the committee, even though Catholics constituted approximately forty percent of the Cincinnati population. Similarly, he was disappointed that the May Festival Association excluded the Knights of Columbus from participating in the May Festival in Cincinnati's Music Hall. What made it "more strange," he noted, was that Reuben Springer, a Catholic, was one of the main supporters of Music Hall, and that Mrs. Bellamy Storer, one of the founders of the May Festival, was also a Catholic.20

Partly in response to the resurgence of nativism since the 1890s, representatives of parishes in the various deaneries met in early 1921 to form a diocesan branch of the National Council of Catholic Men (NCCM), a national federation of organizations of Catholic laymen. A year earlier Bishop Joseph Schrembs of Toledo had invited parish societies of Catholic men to send delegates to a conference in Chicago in May 1920. That group scheduled a national convention held in Washington, D.C., four months later, out of which was formed the NCCM to promote the development of the lay ministry. "Our enemies," Moeller wrote in 1922 to A. M. Boex, secretary of the new Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men, "are very active and we must organize on principle to frustrate their villainous [sic] and organized assaults." Though the archdiocesan branch of the NCCM helped fight the Ku Klux Klan and resist the political proscription of Catholics, its agenda was much broader. As one of the most vibrant branches in the country, it helped develop and coordinate the Catholic resources of the archdiocese. With a view to enhancing the Catholic presence in the community, it sponsored talks on labor issues, countered attacks against parochial schools, and addressed taxation issues related to church property. When Cincinnati hosted the Third Annual Convention of the National Council of Catholic Men in mid-October 1923, Moeller, who tried to draw more interest in the organization, argued
that a “thorough organizing of our Catholic forces is imperative [in order] to protect our civil and religious rights.”

DEVOTIONAL CATHOLICISM

In the wake of the First Vatican Council the Holy See’s direction of the internal life of local churches advanced steadily. The decree Pastor Aeternus, issued in 1870, affirmed the pope’s power over all churches. Over a forty-year period Leo XIII and Pius X used the powers of their office to increase devotional activities in local churches by means of encyclicals and other decrees. In addition, Pius X’s policy of promoting frequent communion helped enhance religious life in local churches.

To late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Catholics, ritual as part of religious life continued to be very important, and the most important ritual was the Mass. Then followed the rituals of the sacraments of baptism, communion, confession, and marriage. Next in importance was devotion to the saints, who occupied an important place in the lives of Catholics. In the archdiocese of Cincinnati, as in other urban dioceses at the time, the Irish tended to honor St. Patrick, the Germans, St. Boniface, and the Polish, St. Stanislaus. During this period devotional Catholicism, which supported tradition and authority in the church, was also rampant in the local church. The faithful manifested their faith in the parishes, and the devotional confraternity or sodality was the most important parish society. Some of the more popular services were the Marian, Sacred Heart, and Rosary devotions; during Lent, the Way of the Cross; the Forty Hours devotion to the Eucharist; the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; devotion to particular saints; and novenas, recitations of prayers and devotions for nine consecutive days. Every first Friday the churches were filled with monthly communicants. The priests of the archdiocese often preached the need for Catholics to go to confession and receive communion. Shortly after the founding of St. Clare parish at College Hill in Cincinnati in 1909, John Stein, the pastor, and the trustees helped organize four lay groups to promote monthly reception of communion. In many parishes, like at St. Monica’s in Cincinnati, the Men’s, Young Men’s, Ladies’, and Young Ladies’ societies had their monthly or quarterly group communions. At St. Louis Church at North Star, every society had a Communion Sunday each month. On the appropriate Sunday the members of the society were the first to receive communion in a group followed by the rest of the parishioners. Moreover, a number of Catholic homes in the archdiocese, especially in those parishes where Mass could not be celebrated weekly, had “prayer rooms” for private devotions. This made it possible for families to come together to pray the rosary.
After the turn of the century Roman authorities helped revive the church’s inner life by initiating religious practices that encouraged more frequent confession and communion by the mass of American Catholics and reforms in church music. Catholics in the archdiocese became a more disciplined population with regard to religion. Following Moeller’s return from a four-month trip to Europe in 1910, the bishops of the Cincinnati Province issued a joint pastoral letter on the importance of the First Communion. Earlier that year the pope had issued a decree instructing pastors to admit children to communion at the “age of reason.” The following year Catholic children in the archdiocese now received their First Communion at the age of seven, allegedly the time when they began to reason. One of the reasons it had been delayed until the children had attained the age of twelve or thirteen was to prevent parents from withdrawing them from the Catholic schools before their religious instruction had been completed.

In July 1916 the Archdiocesan Music Commission, which had been instituted during Elder’s administration and helped revive the Gregorian chant—a vocal chant used in musical worship—in the churches and seminaries, opened its first Musical Institute at St. Xavier College. More than three hundred people, consisting of priests, members of various sisterhoods, organists, and directors of choirs and singers, attended the Institute. Its purpose was to help bring church music in the archdiocese into closer harmony with the liturgy of divine service. The archbishop and clergy had long criticized some of the music that had been allowed to creep into church choirs, which led eventually to the banishment of choirs from religious services. Just as “liturgical vestments, worn by the priests, are entirely different from the common garments, worn at home or on the street,” Moeller said in his address at the Institute, “...so also is it most desirable and befitting that the music for the Sacred Liturgy should be distinct in character from that used and heard in concert halls and temples of profane music.” The following summer the Society of St. Gregory was formed and held its first convention in the cathedral. Under the guidance of John Fehring, organist and choirmaster at the cathedral, the Society published in its official organ, The Catholic Choirmaster, a list of compositions for church use.

Part of the devotional revival in the second half of the nineteenth century was the growth of tabernacle societies. Through the Tabernacle Society in Cincinnati, Catholic laywomen provided material assistance to more than fifty poor churches and missions in Cincinnati. In February 1897 a large and enthusiastic crowd attended the first general conference of the Tabernacle Society at “Our Lady’s Summit” in Walnut Hills, run by the Sisters of Notre Dame. Father Francis X. Lasance, who compiled various devotional volumes, prayer books, and retreat manuals, and who was the resident chaplain
at the sisters’ convent and academy, helped firmly establish the Tabernacle Society. Three months later the diocesan conference of the Priests’ Eucharistic League, founded in Germany in 1879, convened at the cathedral and began using their influence toward the personal sanctification of the priest and the revitalization of the faith among the laity. In 1887 Father Beder Maler, a priest of St. Meinrad Abbey and Seminary in southern Indiana, started the movement in the United States. The first convention, attended by six ordinaries, including Elder, and 150 priests, was held at the University of Notre Dame in 1894. Through the League, the priests encouraged the people to spend at least one hour a week in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Cincinnati’s diocesan branch of the League was one of the first of its kind in the country. In early spring 1897 Elder, who was one of the main episcopal supporters of the Eucharistic League, was the first U.S. ordinary to appoint a local director, Henry Brinkmeyer, then president of St. Gregory Seminary. During the next two decades the work of the League expanded. In the fall of 1911 Cincinnati hosted the Fifth National Eucharistic Congress. Seven archbishops and more than ten thousand people participated in the solemn benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the closing ceremony. Through the procession Archbishop Moeller carried the Blessed Sacrament, and a body of uniformed knights from various parishes formed the guard of honor. Parish outdoor religious processions, such as those in honor of the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary, were an outward expression of religious piety. An event of note every year for the Catholics in Cincinnati and from outlying communities, and which has continued to the present, was the Good Friday pilgrimage to the Church of the Immaculata on the brow of Mount Adams. Whether in the cold, bleak, and wet weather or in warm sunshine, the two long flights of steps were crowded with Catholics reciting the rosary as they climbed slowly to the shrine.20

During Elder’s administration a number of parishes established Holy Name Societies. The Society, whose object was to discourage profanity, indecency, and vulgarity in speech, “and to cultivate a greater reverence for the name of Our Savior,” was originally founded in the thirteenth century. In the 1890s the American Dominican, Father Charles McKenna, began the spread of the parish-based societies in the United States. It grew so rapidly in the late nineteenth century that in 1900 a National Headquarters for the Holy Name Society was established in New York City. As a special activity of the Dominicans, the Societies spread rapidly in the early twentieth century. This organization was for men only. Until that time devotional societies were largely the sphere of women, and mutual-aid and charitable societies were largely under men’s rule. The first Holy Name Society in the area was organized in January 1900 in the Immaculate Conception parish in Newport,
Kentucky. Shortly thereafter the Passionist Order established one in the Holy Cross parish in Mount Adams. As more and more pastors and parishioners realized the amount of good being accomplished, Holy Name Societies began springing up throughout the archdiocese. Growing numbers of middle-class men were drawn to the disciplined piety associated with the Society. On the eve of the First World War there were more than seventy units in the archdiocese.27

The first Holy Name rally on record in the archdiocese was held in 1907 in Mount Adams when members from four parishes conducted a march from Holy Cross school to the church for benediction. Three years later the Catholic Telegraph observed that there was probably no Catholic organization, among the wide variety of fraternal organizations, which had taken a stronger hold on the affections of the laity of the archdiocese than the Holy Name Society. That fall some six thousand men participated in the city's Holy Name rally. The parade formed on Auburn Avenue and marched to the grounds surrounding Holy Name Church, where the archbishop and other dignitaries addressed the crowd. In 1911 twelve thousand men marched in the rally. Reporting the event, the Catholic Telegraph noted that black Catholics from St. Ann parish, joined by their pastor, Edward T. Cleary, “turned out one hundred strong and . . . attracted considerable attention.” One of the benefits of the Holy Name rallies and other popular devotions was to help serve—at least on the surface—to unify a Catholic population divided by ethnic and racial differences. In 1912 Holy Name Societies of Dayton held their first rally on Pentecost Sunday. By this time there were Holy Name rallies in large cities across the country. In the fall of the following year it was estimated that thirty-five thousand men marched the streets of Cincinnati to Redland Field where, together with thousands of others that filled the stands and grounds of the Cincinnati Reds Baseball Park, they joined in the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.28

During America’s involvement in the First World War there were no annual rallies. In the fall of 1919, when the war clouds had finally passed away and the Holy Name rally was resumed, Cincinnati witnessed the single largest gathering of Catholics at an event ever in its history. It was perhaps the largest demonstration ever witnessed in the city up to that time. Moeller led the march of more than forty thousand Catholics to Redland Field. Four years later more than thirty thousand men, representing about eighty parishes, marched eight abreast in the Holy Name parade. The parade stopped momentarily at St. Augustine Church in the west end where Moeller left the head of the procession with his escort. There he vested and waited until the last parish division arrived, followed by hundreds of little boys and girls carrying lighted candles. From this point on the men marched
in fours, and in this formation they entered Redland Field where the grandstand, pavilion, and bleachers were filled. Once inside, each section circled the field and then escorted the Blessed Sacrament to the platform and altar in the center. It took close to two hours for the procession to enter the park. Moeller was hopeful that these rallies, which helped bring thousands of men to the sacraments on a regular basis, would “stir up” the Holy Name Society members’ “enthusiasm, rekindle their love, and make them staunch, living, active members.” In the judgment of the Catholic Telegraph, the rallies reflected an “increase of religious zeal” and were a public manifestation of the Catholics’ religious faith.29

NEW IMMIGRANTS AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a wave of new immigrants from southern and eastern European countries flowed into the United States, many of them settling in the Midwest. Italians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Syrians, Greeks, and other Catholics of the Oriental rite poured into Cincinnati. Building upon the institutions of the immigrant church, the new immigrants brought a rich ethnic diversity to the local Catholic population.

When the first group of Italians arrived in Cincinnati in the 1850s and 1860s, the archdiocese was not prepared for them. They were expected to worship in existing church buildings. As their numbers increased, Italian Catholics wished as early as 1860 to have a church of their own where they could worship in their native language. They resented being second-class members in a parish. Besides, they were not always well received. On occasion the Catholic Telegraph came to their defense. “[T]here is none,” the paper wrote in 1888, “that has been the butt for more accusations and aspersions than the Italian.” Slowly, efforts were made by the Italians to organize themselves into a parish. By the closing decades of the century more Italians from other provinces of Italy migrated to Cincinnati.30

It was not until 1890 that an Italian parish in the archdiocese began to take form. That year Father Angelo Chiariglione, a member of the Pious Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles, commonly called the Scalabrinians, founded in Italy in 1887 for the spiritual and social care of Italian emigrants, came to Cincinnati at the request of Archbishop Elder. Obtaining the ordinary’s permission to organize the Italians of the city into a special parish, he held religious services for them in the basement of St. Chara’s chapel of the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis at Third and Lytle Streets. Before long, Chiariglione said Mass for the Italians in the basement of St. Peter in Chains Cathedral and then in the chapel of the Sacred Heart Home on Broadway. “The little Italian Congregation is doing well,” the social worker Margaret
McCabe wrote to Elder. "The chapel is well filled, and the members seem to be in earnest." In 1893 Sacred Heart Church for the Italians was built on Broadway, between Fifth and Sixth Streets. As more and more second- and third-generation immigrant Catholics were moving out of the city into the economic middle class in the suburbs, Italians largely settled where the Irish once lived. By this time there were approximately four thousand Italian immigrants in Cincinnati. For them, Sacred Heart parish became far more than a place of worship. It became the major cultural and social center in the neighborhood. In preparation for the dedication of their new church, a delegation of Italians went to Washington, D.C., and invited Archbishop Francesco Satolli, apostolic delegate to the United States, to come to Cincinnati and bless their new church. He accepted their invitation and officiated at the dedication on August 27.  

In the summer of 1897 Mother Superior Mary Blanche Davis of the Sisters of Charity combined Christian education with industrial and domestic training for the Italian youth of the archdiocese. With Elder's approval, she commissioned Sisters Blandina Segale and Justina Segale, Italian immigrants themselves and sisters by blood, to do mission work among the Italian Catholics. As young girls, Blandina and Justina had seen Sisters of Charity working among the poor, the sick, and the orphaned. Now their intention was to help their own people and to counter the Protestant proselytism among the immigrants by preserving the true faith among the Italians. In the fall the two Italian sisters, with the assistance of vicar general John Albrinck, started a class at the Holy Trinity school in the western part of Cincinnati for the Italian children. By the end of the year, one hundred girls and boys were enrolled in the kindergarten and primary classes. In time, branches of the school were established at the St. Xavier's and St. Edward's parochial schools and at the Springer Institute. Besides caring for the children, the two sisters attended to the sick and provided instruction in domestic economy. 

As their welfare work expanded, Sister Blandina, regarded by a representative of Cincinnati's secular Associated Charities as "the very best social worker in Cincinnati," organized the Willing Workers. This group consisted of Catholic laywomen whose primary goal was to help raise money for the sisters' work. On December 8, 1897, "The Santa Maria Italian Educational and Industrial Home," more popularly known as The Santa Maria Institute, was incorporated. The Santa Maria, the first Catholic settlement house in the country, became the pioneer Catholic social center of Cincinnati, providing a multiplicity of services primarily for Italians, but also for Hungarians, Poles, Syrians, Mexicans, Germans, Irish, Syrians, and blacks. Two years later the two sisters took possession of the former convent of the Sisters of St. Francis at Third and Lytle Streets and established permanent residence. The following
year the Sacro Cuore school was opened for Italian children in the eastern portion of Cincinnati.13

By 1904 there were some four hundred Italian families in Cincinnati, with a few scattered families in other parts of the diocese. This led to the establishment of several Italian colonies, whose members were of the poorer classes and almost all of the Catholic faith. By the turn of the century the German and Irish Catholics, who had constituted the Catholic working class poor half-a-century earlier, had achieved greater economic and social mobility. Situated below them were the new Catholic immigrants. "The poverty of [the Italian] colonies," the Catholic Telegraph wrote, "make them a tempting field for Protestant proselytizers." It was argued that notwithstanding the good work performed by the Sisters of Charity, there had to be an increase in the ranks of the Willing Workers. "The danger of 'leakage' from the Church," an annual report of the Santa Maria Institute read, "is greatest when among strangers, not understanding the language of the country, . . . [they] discontinue the practices of religion, and finally drift away with the crowd of the indifferent." By 1920 there were approximately sixteen hundred Italian families in Cincinnati. Nine hundred belonged to Sacred Heart, attended by two priests from Italy, and five hundred and two hundred to the Italian missions in Walnut Hills and Fairmount, respectively. In 1922 a small group of Italians, led by Sisters Blandina, Justina, and Euphrasia, established San Antonio di Padova parish in Fairmount in Cincinnati. They raised $3,400 and bought a building on Queen City Avenue. The parishioners took up collections among themselves and bought statues, chairs, and carpeting. Two years later Italians in Walnut Hills founded Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish.14

Conducting welfare work among the new immigrants in the congested districts of the city, the Sisters of Charity in the early 1900s established a temporary home for stranded working girls. In addition, they formed an employment bureau, a domestic service department, a kindergarten, a day nursery, a boys' club, a girls' club, and Sunday Schools. Complementing the work of the parishes, which sponsored classes that taught the immigrants how to read and write, Santa Maria's activities included night school with classes in Americanization, English and Italian languages, sewing, dress-making, and art craft. At the same time that the Sisters of Charity ran a day nursery at the Institute, a day nursery at the east end of Cincinnati flourished under the directorship of a Jesuit and the Ladies' Aid. The Children of Mary Sodality at Sacred Heart Academy in Clifton also established one for the northwestern portion of the city.15

Among the new immigrants in the see city at the turn of the century were the Syrians. Upon the arrival of Father Kayata in 1910, they organized a
parish and struggled to establish a church of their own. For some time the
Syrians had petitioned Moeller for a priest, and he had endeavored since 1905
to obtain one of the Maronite Rite. The Maronites, who had first come to
Cincinnati around 1895, did not celebrate Mass in their own rite until Kaya-
ta’s arrival. With the increasing Syrian population living in the depressed
areas of Pearl Street and Central Avenue, the diocesan paper appealed to the
faithful to come to their aid. Their greatest single source of help came from
the Sisters of Charity of the Santa Maria Institute. A number of Catholic lay
women assisted the sisters in the work. Moreover, the Sacred Heart parish
generously placed the basement of their church at the disposal of the Syrian
Catholics until such time as they would have a church of their own. A num-
ber of the Syrian children were placed in parochial schools.⁶⁶

An unexpected problem arose when Moeller learned that Kayata had a
wife and three children in Syria. Though the Maronites were accustomed to
seeing married priests in Syria and would not be surprised to find the same
condition in the United States, local Catholics of the Latin Rite were scan-
dalized. In accordance with the wishes of the U.S. bishops, who did not want
to receive into their dioceses priests who were married, Moeller requested the
newly arrived Syrian priest to leave. By the summer of 1911 Moeller secured
a replacement, Father Tobias Dahdah. Once again Moeller encouraged the
faithful to assist the Syrian Catholics in their effort to have a church of their
own. Some of the pastors gave permission to Dahdah to take up a collection
for this purpose in their churches. By the year 1913 the Atonement Church on
Third Street, which had been closed, was given to them. They remained there
until 1920, when they occupied their new church on Third and Ludlow.⁶⁷

By the late nineteenth century, Cincinnati, like other major cities in the
country, had become increasingly more segregated residentially along ethnic,
class, and racial lines. As Catholicism had also become more divided along
those lines, the local church reached out to African Americans. The “colored
people,” Purcell had written in 1877, “are not favorably received in the midst
of the congregations of the whites.” More specifically, the Jesuit Francis
Weninger, associated with St. Ann Church since its founding in 1866, noted
that “neither the Irish nor the Germans like to see their children mixed up
with colored children in schools; adults, too, are neither welcomed . . . in
the churches of the whites. Nay, many whites have a natural aversion of the
colored race.” To help raise money for St. Ann parish, Weninger turned to
diocesan officials for assistance in order to secure a “continuous and regular
source of revenue” for the parish. Funds provided by the parish’s St. Peter
Claver Society were not enough. The archdiocese took up an annual collec-
tion in every church, with half of the proceeds going to St. Ann. Weninger
continually urged Elder to support the parish. “Have mercy with those needful
"negroes!!" he wrote. Hoping that other bishops would patronize the St. Peter Claver Society, Weninger also urged Elder to launch a national collection for the poor blacks and Native Americans in the United States. Under Elder's leadership, the bishops at Cincinnati's Fourth Provincial Council in 1882 agreed to take up a special collection each year for missionaries working with them. In October 1884 Weninger sent Elder a copy of his text on "The Care of the Indian and African Races," which the archbishop more than likely shared with his episcopal colleagues at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore the following month. The Council ordered that on the first Sunday of Lent a national collection should be taken up in all the churches to assist the missionary efforts for African Americans and Native Americans. Weninger, who became a national spokesman for the cause, later wrote with some pride that "St. Ann's was the chosen 'point de départ' for the whole movement in regard to the most consoling and energized stepps [sic] taken by the Council in regard to the Colored." Despite these efforts, most bishops were unenthusiastic about this collection and amounts raised nationally were small and a failure in contrast with the generosity of Protestants at this time.
Weninger also urged Elder to transfer St. Ann to the diocesan clergy or to some order that could oversee the parish on a full-time basis with a resident pastor. Acknowledging that what the Jesuits had done for the blacks in St. Ann parish "was no doubt very useful," Weninger did not think it was "sufficient to answer the wants of the colored race. They want their own Pastor. . . ." In the early 1890s Elder explored the possibility of turning over the parish to the Holy Ghost Fathers, whose mission was the evangelization of the poor, in Pittsburgh, but nothing came of it. He continued to rely on the services of the Jesuits.9

Archbishop Elder also supported the pioneer efforts of Daniel A. Rudd in sponsoring national Black Catholic Congresses in the 1880s and 1890s. Born of slave parents in Kentucky, Rudd moved to Cincinnati after the Civil War. Besides emphasizing the importance of devotion, education, and racial pride, the black Catholics at their assemblies protested against segregation and discrimination in church and school. Disappointingly, few American bishops endorsed their work. The national African American congresses praised only two ordinaries between 1890 and the 1920s, John Ireland of Minnesota and Elder. Rudd personally thanked the Cincinnati archbishop for his support of the publication of the black newspaper, American Catholic Tribune. "It was your approval," he wrote, "that gave us standing among the prelates and clergy of the country." Notwithstanding the efforts of the black congresses and of the Tribune, separate Catholic institutions for the blacks remained intact.10

Though during this period the Catholic Telegraph wrote extensively in support of the blacks in the community, there were times when it reflected a general cultural bias. In 1909 the diocesan paper criticized Harvard University's President Charles Eliot for "having characterized the Irish in Boston as constituting a racial problem comparable" to that of blacks in the South. "When Dr. Eliot put the intelligent, law-abiding, and virtuous Catholics of Massachusetts on a level with the lazy, ignorant, depraved Negroes that have given rise to the race question in the south," it editorialized, "he uttered a deliberate and malicious lie." But this editorial was not typical. Even though the diocesan paper generally endorsed segregation, it did not as a rule write condescendingly or derogatorily of blacks.41

In the fall of 1907 during Moeller's administration, workers building the Heekin Can Company in a lot adjacent to St. Ann seriously damaged the church's foundations, causing the city inspector to condemn it. As trustee of St. Ann parish, Moeller appealed to the Heekin Can Company for relief. With settlement money received from the company and a grant of $11,000 from Katherine Drexel, Mother Superior of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters in Pennsylvania, and heiress to the Drexel banking fortune, Moeller searched for a new site for St. Ann. But the archbishop was not enthused about relocating
the parish. He doubted “whether or not the work among the colored people . . . [would] succeed.” Wanting some assurance that he could “get the money back” if the parish should fold, he made certain that the new combination church and school, built in 1909 on John Street in the west end, could without much expense be converted into an apartment house. Though Moeller had preferred property on Eighth Street for the new church, he rejected it partly because the residents in the neighborhood “would be highly incensed at me for securing it for a Colored Church.” As much as Moeller wanted a new church for blacks, he insisted the school was more important. He doubted much could be done for the “old folks. If we can get hold of the young,” he wrote, “and thoroughly drill them in their faith, there is hope that we will have after some years a good Catholic Colored Population.”

The status of St. Ann parish came up again when the Jesuits began to make plans to move their college out of the city as well as establish a new parish out in the suburbs. The downtown location, surrounded by office buildings and factories, restricted the development of the college. In March 1905 Albert J. Dierckes, president of St. Xavier College, met with Moeller to discuss the idea. The archbishop, who had no intention of allowing the Jesuits to expand their operations in the archdiocese, informed Dierckes that a new college was “scarcely necessary.” But unable to find anyone to take charge of St. Ann parish, Moeller was willing to consider the relocation of their college on the condition that a more effective priest be put in charge of St. Ann. Though Moeller found the current pastor to be a “very good man,” he was, in his judgment, “old and not able to do the work that is required to make the colored folks do their duty. Besides, he thinks it is useless to try to convert the darky.” The Jesuit Provincial informed Moeller that the terms were acceptable and that he had a priest that understood “the negro character” for St. Ann parish.

But in the end, Moeller appointed Edward Cleary, a white diocesan priest, pastor of St. Ann. When Cleary took over St. Ann parish in 1909, it had approximately seventy-seven adults as members and sixty-two children in its school. Within four years St. Ann’s membership grew to about three hundred, with one hundred students enrolled in the school. The parish also introduced several innovations, including a free luncheon program in the school, sewing and cooking classes for the girls, and a dramatic club. Moeller was pleased with Cleary’s work. “He likes the Darkies,” he wrote to Drexel, “and they like him.” He noted that the parish had shown its appreciation by increasing its contribution on Sunday from four dollars to nine. Hoping to obtain additional funds to help carry on the work in the parish, Cleary also reorganized the St. Peter Claver Society. During Easter Week in 1914 there was a Bazaar in Holy Trinity hall on Fifth Street for the benefit of St. Ann.
Moeller directed the pastors of Cincinnati parishes to announce the Bazaar at all the Masses and urge their people to patronize it.

For almost fifty years St. Ann school had been conducted by the Sisters of Notre Dame. Owing to the inability of these sisters to visit the African Americans in their homes, Cleary met with Mother Drexel and worked out an agreement. In 1891 Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament had established a national home missionary movement to assist blacks and Native Americans. In addition to teaching school, they worked among the black residents, visited the elderly and the sick in their homes, and conducted evening classes for adults and instruction classes for converts. In the summer of 1914 five Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament came to Cincinnati to replace the Notre Dame Sisters at St. Ann. St. Ann parish saw an increasing number of neophytes coming for instruction to the Sisters of Blessed Sacrament as well as an increasing number of baptisms. Within six months after the sisters' arrival, fifteen black adults were baptized. By October 1914, 115 pupils were enrolled in the day school. At the end of Moeller's term the parish had increased to 547 and the enrollment in the school to 237. In 1915 two members of the St. Ann parish volunteered their services to the Juvenile Court to help black Catholic children. Moreover, a group of young white women organized a club for the purpose of aiding the Blessed Sacrament Sisters in their work. At first they taught Sunday school; by 1924 the lay women were conducting evening classes in typewriting and shorthand for the seventh and eighth graders.

Notwithstanding the gains made in St. Ann parish, church officials encountered problems in trying to attract blacks to the Catholic Church. The Catholic policy toward blacks as they moved into the northern cities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Cincinnati was no exception, had been to segregate them into their own separate parishes. This hardened the color line separating blacks and whites. There were blacks who viewed St. Ann as a symbol of segregation and criticized local church authorities for not encouraging black Catholics to attend the churches and parochial schools closest to their homes. At the end of Moeller's term in 1925 only a few blacks attended white parishes in Cincinnati. Henry J. Richter, the new pastor of St. Ann in the early 1920s, warned the archbishop "there is much agitation among non-catholic [sic] colored about this and some of the Catholics are bound to be affected. The less said to them about this the better as little good and much harm would come of it." Another problem facing the local church was the substantial number of black Catholics who left the church. Richter observed in 1920 that many of them were former stranded inmates of the Good Shepherd Convent. He knew "personally of nearly one hundred," he wrote, and according to former inmates in the convent there were "probably several hundred."
Throughout his tenure Moeller had to deal with charges of abuse levied against the Sisters of Good Shepherd. In addition to their convent in Price Hill, the sisters had their motherhouse and school at Carthage. There the sisters had about two hundred black children in their St. Peter Claver Industrial School, allegedly the largest institution of its kind in the country for black girls. In the “reformatory department” the sisters had more than one hundred younger adults, ranging in age from twelve to twenty-six. At Carthage the sisters had two principal means of support, the charity of the laity and workshops operated by the sisters and the black girls. To sustain their operations the sisters relied on public charity and on revenue from their commercial laundry and sewing rooms where the inmates and the sisters produced shirts for various businesses.¹⁷

Not unlike the anti-Catholic propaganda aimed at the House of the Good Shepherd in Detroit during the First World War, the Good Shepherd school at Carthage came under attack in 1916. In the spring, The Cincinnati Times-Star published a letter signed by A.K.N., condemning the State of Ohio for sending delinquent girls to private sectarian schools where they were treated as virtual slaves. Five days later the paper published a rebuttal letter signed by “Fair Play.” When Francis A. Gressle, director of the Bureau of Catholic Charities, also sent a letter to The Cincinnati Times-Star to refute the charges against the Sisters of Good Shepherd, the paper refused to print it on the ground that it did not want to perpetuate the debate. Furious over the denial, Moeller issued an ultimatum to the paper. He threatened the loss of Catholic advertisements if Gressle’s letter were not published. Charles P. Taft, the paper’s owner, assured Moeller that he had agreed to the publication of A.K.N.’s letter without taking into consideration “its hidden import.” Though he felt his paper could not succumb to threats, he nevertheless agreed to print Gressle’s statement. Expressing his gratitude to Taft, Moeller admitted that in his “exasperation” he was perhaps “a bit hasty. But calumnies of the nature of the letter,” he wrote, “... have been so frequent of late, that I was highly incensed.”¹⁸

In his letter in The Cincinnati Times-Star Gressle denied the allegation that the girls in the convent had to work late at night. Thirty years earlier Elder had put a stop to any night work in the convents. Gressle also argued that “A.K.N. does not seem to have the welfare of the colored race at heart.” Pointing out that Ohio had no refuge home for black girls, he argued that the “wayward and incorrigible colored girls sent from every section of the State” would have no place to go if places like the convent at Carthage did not exist. Both Gressle and Moeller invited “any fair-minded person” to inspect “every nook and corner” of “any of the Catholic institutions anytime.” What Moeller did not make known publicly, however, was that both he and Elder
had received a number of complaints about the conditions in the Good Shepherd Sisters' convents. Though many consisted of anonymous letters, some came from some Good Shepherd Sisters themselves, usually complaining about the poor relationship with their superiors and the carelessness or exploitation of the inmates entrusted to them. When in 1913 Moeller had learned that the sisters operated their convent laundries on holy days, he informed the Mother Superior that "working on a day of obligation in a Catholic institution would give disedification and scandal." Two years after the A.K.N. incident, Moeller reminded the Good Shepherd Sisters that the girls should not work "like slaves." If "the girls have to work very hard and nothing is done to bring any sunshine into their lives," he wrote, "... I fear there will be serious trouble. These girls when they leave the institution will surely speak of the harsh treatment they received." 59

LABOR

In the 1870s and 1880s Catholics, who were predominantly a working-class people, became increasingly involved in the labor movement. At the time most U.S. bishops and priests were suspicious of labor organizations. They were especially critical of their secrecy and propensity to violence. Gradually, however, some clerics warmed up to the cause of labor. Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore became one of organized labor's strongest supporters. Believing that it should be on the side of the workers, the local church eventually supported labor unions. The "strong arm of the poor man and the skill of the mechanic," the archdiocesan council of 1882 argued, "is as much his stock in trade as the gold of the rich man, and each has a right, as he pleases, to sell his labor at a fair price. Men have also a right to band together and agree to sell their labor at any fair price within the limits of Christian justice." The Council Fathers, led by Elder, acknowledged the right of workers to form voluntary unions. The Catholic Telegraph, moreover, often wrote of the responsibilities of the employer to his workers. There was, it editorialized, "a moral bond between the employer and the laborer ... which, while it obliges the one to work faithfully and industriously for his master, obliges the other in turn to provide for his servant the possibility of keeping a home and bringing up his family decently." Elder and his staff generally favored a reduction of the hours of labor, improvement in working conditions, and an increase in the workers' wages. This concern about social justice and the lives and rights of the working people would become one of the special marks of Catholicism in the history of the archdiocese. 50

Because of ongoing controversy and violence involving labor, American bishops called upon Roman authorities for guidance. Elder echoed the
Shortly after Dietz in his November 29, 1920, letter to the Cincinnati Times-Star criticized the local Chamber of Commerce for not being more supportive of his plan to form an industrial council, Catholic businessmen met with Moeller and charged that Dietz’s work harmed the best interests of the Catholic Church. Moeller quickly reprimanded Dietz, pointing out that he had acted “imprudently” in writing the letter. Fearing that Dietz’s writings “might fan into mighty conflagration the flames of excitement existing between employers and employees,” Moeller forbade him in the future to publish in the papers any article without first getting his approval. From this point on Dietz’s actions were suspect. Moeller, furthermore, found him to be “stubborn, self-willed,” and impulsive, rushing “into projects that are beyond his reach.” On December 15, 1920, the archbishop requested him to leave the archdiocese.37

Dietz ignored Moeller’s request, and took steps to become more firmly established in the archdiocese. As friction between Dietz and Moeller intensified, the archbishop incurred the odium of the local unions. Though Moeller attempted to assure the unions that his action was “not prompted by any hostility to organized labor,” their protests persisted. When Moeller learned that Dietz intended to appeal to Archbishop Giovanni Bonzano, the apostolic delegate, he immediately informed Bonzano that the “labor priest” had “been the cause of some friction.” Though he had no evidence that Dietz taught any erroneous doctrines or advocated unsound principles, Moeller considered him to be an “enthusiast,” not “easily governed,” and “too intensive in his support of the labor organizations.” By April 1922 Moeller, after conferring with his diocesan consultors, commanded Dietz to leave the archdiocese. As late as March 1923 Father John A. Ryan, a highly respected national social reformer, tried unsuccessfully to meet with Moeller on behalf of Dietz. The following month Archbishop Sebastian Messmer called Dietz to Milwaukee.38

WOMEN’S SPHERE

During Elder’s and Moeller’s administrations there was considerable concern by the Catholic hierarchy over the changes in the woman’s sphere and their likely adverse effects on the family and society. In the process the archdiocese presented mixed and at times conflicting views on women’s issues. This was especially apparent in the publications of the Catholic Telegraph. Though the diocesan paper disapproved of what it regarded as the extremes of the “Women’s Rights” position, it adopted a more understanding view of the working woman. It argued in 1888 that since women often had to earn bread for themselves or as single mothers for their children as well, “they should
receive as much pay as a man would receive for the same work." Although it advocated equal pay for women, it expressed concern in 1899 that the young woman "does not promise to equal her mother in scarcely any woman trait." Reflecting the sentiments of the official church that a woman's primary place was in the home and that her main obligations were to her husband and children, it suggested in 1902 that women were "somewhat at fault." The diocesan paper further contended that the dislike for housekeeping sent "great numbers of girls to seek employment as saleswomen and office work[ers] which unfit them for the duties of wives to the industrious workingmen, who would in other circumstances give them a comfortable home which they could make happy." That view was consistent with Catholic moral theology at the time, which subordinated the wife to the husband.  

Though the Catholic Telegraph expressed concern over the increasing presence of women in the workplace, it nevertheless took the stand that women should be well educated. It criticized those individuals who believed "that the only training necessary for the gentler sex is such as would fit the fair daughters of Eve to be . . . capable housewives, patient and loving mates, tender and watchful mothers. . . . This sentiment," it wrote, was similar to "the degraded position of slave occupied by the weaker sex among the uncivilized races." In 1889 the diocesan paper proudly observed that the intellectual life was becoming increasingly more attractive to women than to men. "The weaker sex," it editorialized, "appears to be becoming the more intellectual sex," based on the fact that a greater number of local Catholic women were attending lectures, summer schools, and pursuing higher education than Catholic men.  

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Catholic Telegraph also supported the effort to organize Catholic women. Out of the Catholic Women's Congress, held in Chicago in the early 1890s, grew a National League to promote the involvement of Catholic women in temperance activities, day nurseries and kindergartens, protective and employment agencies for women, and social clubs and residences for young working women. The diocesan paper argued that there was no reason why Catholic women's societies, like their non-Catholic counterparts, could not continue to unite among themselves for mutual support. For many years Catholic women in the archdiocese had rendered distinguished service to the National Red Cross, the League of Service, and various parish organizations. The power of Catholic women, the Catholic Telegraph editorialized, "is ineffectual without organization."  

Archbishop Moeller, on the other hand, doubted the "advisability" of having a federation of Catholic women societies. Besides arguing that it would "draw them away from household duties," he insisted that it would
“be difficult” for the women “to keep it up.” But if there were to be a federation of women societies, Moeller wanted it totally separate from the male organizations. Notwithstanding the archbishop’s reservations, in 1913 several fraternal organizations of women formed the Federation of Catholic Women Societies of Cincinnati. Helping to bring Catholic women and Catholic women’s societies into closer union, the Federation’s main object was to foster works of religion, education, and charity. By this time the chancellor encouraged the pastors “to see to it that their Women’s Societies join the Women’s Federation.” In the spring of 1921 a small group of women also established the Cincinnati Catholic Woman’s Association. This Association, which sponsored two large social events yearly, a theater party in the winter and a card party in the spring, got involved in various religious, educational, charitable, and humanitarian activities in the archdiocese.62

The social issue that received most attention in the secular and religious realms during Moeller’s term was women’s suffrage. Although some church leaders, such as Archbishop John Ireland of Minneapolis and Bishop Bernard McQuaid of Rochester, supported it, the majority of the hierarchy was opposed. In an official letter read in the archdiocesan churches in the spring of 1914, Moeller publicly opposed women’s involvement in politics and the ballot. He implored Catholic women to sign antisuffrage petitions. Moeller was concerned that the voting franchise would “lower” rather than “uplift” women. “It is a movement that does not apply to Us,” he wrote, “because We feel that it will bring women into a sphere of activities that is not in accord with their retiring modesty, maidenly dignity and refinement.” Reflecting the opinion of the official church that a woman’s primary place was in the home, Moeller feared paradoxically that if the woman suffrage movement were successful, women “would cease to be the Queens of the House. Let the women,” he argued, “devote themselves, as far as their duties will permit, to works of charity for which Nature has so well fitted them.”63

Shortly after the woman suffrage amendment was ratified in August 1920, there was a complete reversal of attitude about it by Moeller and his staff. “We have always been opposed to female suffrage,” the diocesan paper wrote in September, “and, in principle, we are as much opposed to it as ever; but, now, that the vote has been given to the gentler sex, we are convinced that Catholic women should qualify themselves to exercise their franchise intelligently and for the best interests of home and country.” Previously opposed to the ballot, the chancellor now entreated Catholic women to vote. When various sisterhoods inquired whether the sisters should also vote, Moeller urged them to make use of the privilege. Partly in response to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and the need for higher education for women, the Sisters of Charity established the College of Mount St. Joseph
on the Ohio for Women in 1920. It was an outgrowth of Mount St. Joseph Academy, which had been offering pre-collegiate courses for several years. The few Catholic women's colleges that had opened by this time had started as an extension of secondary academies, which had provided in Cincinnati, as was true of other private female academies in the country in the nineteenth century, the only Catholic secondary education available to Catholic girls. As more Catholic women were going to college, and many were attending state or secular institutions, there was a perceived need for Catholic women's colleges. Mount St. Joseph was the second Catholic women's college in Ohio. Even though women's colleges under secular and Protestant rule had been thriving since after the Civil War, their Catholic counterparts in the United States developed mainly after 1920. This might be due in part to the fact that Catholics, largely because of their poverty, were slower to come to the realization that higher education could benefit women as well as men.

By the mid-1920s more Catholic women, like their male counterparts in the archdiocese, were actively engaged in various religious, educational, and charitable programs. Notwithstanding the growth of episcopal and clerical authority during the Elder-Moeller years, the laity—though less involved in decision-making in the management of the local church—gave birth to a number of grassroots lay ministries. Doubtlessly, the growth of the Catholic middle class and more educated laity helped expand the local ministry. Increasing concern about social justice became one of the distinctive characteristics of Catholicism in the history of the archdiocese of Cincinnati.