

AMERICAN CATHOLICS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Edited by Margaret O'Brien Steinfels

The American Catholics in the Public Square series is a joint effort between Sheed & Ward and the Commonweal Foundation with special funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The result of a three-year study sponsored by Pew aimed at understanding the contributions to U.S. civic life of the Catholic, Jewish, mainline and evangelical Protestant, African-American, Latino, and Muslim communities in the United States, the two volumes in this series gather selected essays from the Commonweal Colloquia and the joint meetings organized by the Commonweal Foundation and The Faith and Reason Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington. Participants in the Commonweal Colloquia and the joint meetings—leading Catholic scholars, journalists, lawyers, business and labor leaders, novelists and poets, church administrators and lobbyists, activists, policymakers, and politicians—produced approximately forty-five essays presented at ten meetings that brought together over two hundred and fifty participants. The two volumes in the American Catholics in the Public Square series address many of the most critical issues now facing the Catholic Church in the United States by drawing from the four goals of the colloquia—to identify, assess, and critique the distinctive elements in Catholicism's approach to civic life; to generate concrete analyses and recommendations for strengthening Catholic civic engagement; to encompass a broad spectrum of political and social views of Catholics to encourage dialogue between Catholic leaders, religious and secular media, and political thinkers; to reexamine the long-standing Catholic belief in the obligation to promote the common good and to clarify how Catholics may work better with those holding other religious or philosophical convictions toward revitalizing both the religious environment and civic participation in the American republic.

Volumes in the American Catholics in the Public Square Series

American Catholics and Civic Engagement: A Distinctive Voice
American Catholics, American Culture: Tradition and Resistance

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Volume 2

American Catholics in the Public Square

Edited by
MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS



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PREFACE

American Catholics in the Public Square was a three-year project (2000–2002) supported by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. It was part of a Pew-funded family of studies aimed at understanding the contributions to U.S. civic life of the Catholic, Jewish, mainline and evangelical Protestant, African-American, Latino, and Muslim communities in the United States.

The Catholic study was undertaken jointly by the Commonweal Foundation, which publishes *Commonweal* magazine, and The Faith and Reason Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington. The two partners in this enterprise conducted much of it in parallel but separate tracks addressing various aspects of Catholic social thought, of the church’s institutional activities, and of individual Catholics’ presence in politics and civil society. The Latino project was organized independently and includes both Catholic and evangelical partners. The two volumes in this series gather selected essays from the Commonweal Colloquia and the joint meetings organized by the Commonweal Foundation and The Faith and Reason Institute. The publications of The Faith and Reason Institute are available from its Washington office.

American Catholics in the Public Square was designed to examine and explore Catholic participation in the nation’s civic life. Its four major goals were:

1. To identify the distinctive elements in Catholicism’s approach to civic life; to explore the strengths and weaknesses of this tradition in the American context; to discover how (and how successfully) this tradition is being transmitted; to identify obstacles within the Catholic church itself and the Catholic community to a more robust