

## **Unit 2: Mark McGowan: Introduction / What was the Anglo-Catholic division in Canada? / What relationships did other Catholics in Canada have?**

A: So my name's Mark McGowan. I'm a professor of history at the University of Toronto, and I teach both at the university and at St. Michael's College. I specialize in Canadian immigration history, history of religion in Canada, education and communication. Currently, I'm researching a number of projects, one on the intersection of religion and broadcasting in Canada in the 1920's, '30s, right through to the '60s. I'm finishing off a study on Irish Famine migration to Canada, and I've just completed a book on Irish Catholics and the Great War in Canada and their participation or lack thereof.

**Q: What was the Anglo-Catholic division in Canada? What relationships did other Catholics in Canada have?**

A: The Catholic Church in Canada was not a monolith. I mean initially it was primarily French-speaking and focused in Quebec and then a few other of the Atlantic Provinces. And eventually as a minority in what is now Ontario, but within the church, there were many peoples and by the mid-to-late 19th Century, you have a church that's majority French speaking with a very sizable minority who are English speaking. And there are Gaelic speakers and there are First Nations languages that are spoken because of the mission that had been undertaken since the early 19th Century. So, for example, Ojibway speaking Catholics, Metis in the west, who would've also been nominally Catholic and certainly spoke both French and English. So what happens in a church where you have this increasing diversity of language and culture? And I haven't even mentioned German migration which brings its distinctive flavour in places like Western Ontario, Polish migration that brings its presence in the Upper Ottawa Valley, Acadians who are in Atlantic Canada. So how does the church manage this balance, particularly as the great issues of the day? So, for example, the imperial issues come to the fore in the late 19th century. Who will own the West, for example? Will it be English or will it be French? I mean how does the Catholic Church try to navigate itself through its own cultural politics? So, for example, in 1869, '70 with the birth of Manitoba and the insurrection at Red River or the resistance, so to speak, to the imposition of Canada on a population that is majoritarian French-speaking and Roman Catholic and Metis. Well, it's interesting because there, the bishops see this as a religious issue. They see this as a natural

extension, as French Canada had hoped, of seeing a little bit of itself implanted in the Canadian West. As opposed to the mass migration that was going to New England and to the mills of places like Rhode Island and Massachusetts. They were encouraging French-Canadian migration, and rather unsuccessfully, to the West, but they still saw the West as one of those areas that would be essentially an area shared by both Catholics and Anglophone-Protestants. And the English-speaking bishops, who at this point were primarily Irish and some Canadian-born, supported this religious agenda. In fact, they were supportive of the Quebec bishop speaking out against any infringement on Catholic rights, particularly for education in Manitoba. When Riel has the insurrection in the 1880s, ironically it's an Irish-Catholic lawyer who's part of his defense team, Charles Fitzpatrick, who will eventually go on to Laurier's cabinet and then become a supreme justice or the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. So in a sense, there's a time when the cultural piece is kept by putting the religious issues to the fore within the church. As anxiety grows among largely Irish-Catholics and Scottish-Catholics west of the Ottawa River about how far will Quebec essentially spread itself, there is a growing feeling among bishops that here is a case where we really should take control of the church in the West. And this becomes complicated, of course, by new immigration by the turn of the 20th Century. Where will the new Ukrainians and the new Poles and the Hungarians and the Germans, where will they side in this uneasy balance between French-Canadian-Catholic and English-speaking Canadian-Catholic, mostly Irish but some Scots. Where will the Italians who settle in Montreal in Toronto, where will they sit in this uneasy arrangement? And what happens is we see the formulation of two very different Catholic visions of Canada: the French-Canadian vision that sees Canada as essentially a country that includes a French-Catholic presence in the West as well, and that's manifested in the Manitoba Act so that the schools are preserved there for Catholics and Francophones and in the Northwest Territories where schools are held the same way. English-speaking Catholics find that over time, they've had more in common with English-speaking Protestants than what they thought initially. There's a strong imperial sentiment among English-speaking Catholics, and there's a strong sense even in Rome that English may be the language of the future of the church. Why? Because here you are in Canada, the confluence, so to speak, of British and American cultures. If evangelization is going to take place, in what language will it take place? And even the apostolic delegates, the nuncios that are sent to represent the Vatican in Canada, are siding increasingly with this English vision of a Catholic Canada, but evangelized and institutionalized through the English

language. And so even the missionary organizations, the home missions that are sponsored in Toronto and supported by the English-speaking Catholic bishops have as this idea, we'll evangelize or, in a sense, we will bring the church and its infrastructure to these new peoples: the Italians, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Germans. And we'll do it in their own language, if we can; but if we can't, then we'll use English because that will be the vehicle for their success. And so we begin to see church split quite seriously along linguistic lines. And when schools in Ontario become a question as to whether they'll be French language or English language, the same principles then apply. And so it's ironically the English-speaking Catholic bishops, Michael Francis Fallon in London, Fergus Patrick McEvay in Toronto, that really support the government's position of no French language education beyond the second grade. And so now we have a cleavage that makes French-Canadian Catholics look at what they called the 'maudit irlandais' as really Orangemen in disguise. And we have quite an ironic twist, then, in Canadian history. And these ethnic tensions, French/English, do play themselves out in the Atlantic Canada as well as the Acadian population and the Irish population struggle for control of the church in New Brunswick. We see it, of course, in the West, as with a huge immigrant population now squashed between these French interests out of St. Boniface and the English interests that are being increased because of the fact that Eastern Canadian priests are being appointed to the bishoprics of the West: Calgary, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria. And they're not just Irish, they're Scots as well. And it almost appears as though the English are taking over by the time the First World War runs around.