ROUTLEDGE

Devout Laywomen in the Early Modern World

Edited by

ALISON WEBER

WOMEN AND GENDER IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

DEVOUT LAYWOMEN IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Devout laywomen raise a number of provocative questions about gender and religion in the early modern world. How did some groups or individuals evade the Tridentine legislation that required third order women to take solemn vows and observe active and passive enclosure? How did their attempts to exercise a female apostolate (albeit with varying degrees of success and assertiveness) destabilize hierarchies of class and gender? To the extent that their beliefs and practices diverged from approved doctrine and rituals, what insights can they provide into the tensions between official religion and lay religiosity?

Addressing these and many other questions, *Devout Laywomen in the Early Modern World* reflects new directions in gender history, offering a more nuanced approach to the paradigm of woman as the prototypical "disciplined" subject of church-state power.

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Acknowledgments

The idea for this volume arose from two sessions, “Semi-Religious Women before and after Trent: Continuities and Change,” which I organized for the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference Meeting in Forth Worth, Texas, in 2011. Most of the papers for these panels centered on Spain and Italy. In the discussions that followed, it became clear that the topic was in need of a wider geographic range and comparative focus. I am grateful for the patience of the original conference presenters that allowed me to solicit essays on England, Germany, Japan, and the New World. I am also grateful for generous comments and suggestions from Anne J. Schutte, Jodi Bilinkoff, and Elizabeth Rhodes and for the support and encouragement of Erika Gaffney.

A Note on Texts and Translations

One of the goals of this volume has been to promote scholarship on devout laywomen in a transnational and translinguistic context. Ideally, the essays would have provided full transcriptions of sources in the original language. However, the authors were sometimes obliged to make difficult choices between citing the original language *in toto* and developing their arguments fully. In these cases, selected passages in the original language, which the authors deem particularly important to highlight the style, the ambiguities, or the multivalence of the source material, have been provided.

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Introduction

Devout Laywomen in the Early Modern World

The Historiographic Challenge

Alison Weber

"Aut maritus aut murus." Until relatively recently, historians of the post-Tridentine Catholic world were inclined to take this maxim at face value, accepting that women were obliged to choose between marriage or the convent. The minority of women who did in fact persist in leading an uncloistered life of charitable service, it was assumed, were remnants of a late medieval lifestyle that was largely suppressed after Trent. In approximately the last twenty-five years, however, a body of scholarship has demonstrated that significant numbers of women continued to choose an unofficial third vocation—living out their lives in the spaces between marriage and the convent. These women's lifestyles were as diverse as their names: *beatas*, *recogidas*, beguines, *bizzoche*, *emparedadas*, *mantelle*, *pinzochere,* spiritual virgins, and tertiaries. Most, but not all, took non-binding vows of chastity and poverty, supplemented in some cases by a similarly non-binding vow of obedience to a confessor or female superior. Some lived with relatives or in communities and still others lived in hermitages. Some performed care work, while others acted as spiritual intermediaries, teachers, and missionaries. There were those who wore special habits to indicate their affiliation with a mendicant order; others eschewed distinguishing dress.[1] In the following remarks, I draw extensively on examples from Spain—a reflection of my own area of expertise as well as the comparatively mature state of scholarship on pious laywomen in the Hispanic world. This is not to claim that Catholic Spain should be considered the baseline for laywomen's religious experience or the choices they faced. Rather, my hope is that my introduction and the essays that treat Spain and its empire in this volume will promote future comparative analyses.[2]

It is difficult to find a satisfactory inclusive term for a group of women whose lifestyles varied so widely.[3] From the thirteenth century, "penitents" was one term among many regional variants used to refer to men or women who engaged in various kinds of Christian service but without separation from the secular world.[4] By the seventeenth century in Spain and France, however, "penitent" referred to someone who did penance, whether of his own will or because of an imposed punishment.[5] Gabriella Zarri suggests "the third status" (*il terzo stato*) to describe the "institutions developed in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that allowed women who did not wish to or could not marry or enter a convent to

live unmarried with their families or in a community."[6] After much reflection, I have settled on "devout laywomen" to designate those who saw their lives in terms of a secular vocation to serve God in the world—whether collectively or individually. This is admittedly an imprecise term that seems to be the best of less than satisfactory options.

The semantic challenge of finding a label that is sufficiently broad and sufficiently restrictive is in itself instructive. It suggests that devout laywomen conform to Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblances"—a class based on overlapping similarities rather than a set of necessary and sufficient characteristics. I offer the following composite picture, with the caveat that one or more of these features may not be represented in each case: 1) Devout laywomen self-identified with a vocation distinct from that of married laywomen or nuns. 2) This vocation implied a call to sacralized service. 3) Their extra-official status, depending on local circumstances, might lead to structural adaptation or conflict with church or state authorities. 4) Their lifestyle frequently embraced extreme penitential practices. 5) Communities sometimes attributed thaumaturgical and/or prophetic powers to heroically penitential women. 6) Alleged charismata, on the other hand, could be a source of conflict between these women and their communities, or between these women and the church.

Is such a composite category too broad to be useful? Was the piety of a noblewoman who eschewed marriage and devoted herself to poor relief equivalent to that of a woman who sought escape from poverty through a career as a hospital worker? Were the choices of young women who lived in open congregations equivalent to those of women who defied their families to perform spectacular penances in a hermitage? If the spectrum of motives of pious women (largely inaccessible to historians) was wide, so, too, was the range of reactions to them. The archives of the Inquisitions (Roman, Spanish, Venetian, and Portuguese) house hundreds of documents related to trials of laywomen suspected of religious fraud or heresy; libraries and convent archives also hold scores of biographies extolling the piety of aspiring saints.[7] I propose, however, the following counter-argument: the diverse lifestyles of these laywomen (and their equally diverse reception) invite us to reexamine crucial questions in early modern religious history: With what means did the Counter-Reformation Church control or direct lay piety in general and women's piety in particular? Were women targeted preferentially for social and religious discipline? What were the consequences—intended and unintended—of the Catholic Church's insistence on the spiritual superiority of virginity?

These questions fall under the rubric of the confessionalization thesis. Originally formulated independently by Reformation scholars Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling, confessionalization posits that the church and state in early modern Europe collaborated in efforts to transform the laity, through religious instruction and moral reform, into pious and obedient Christians.[8] Dissatisfied with the laity's ignorance of their faith and erratic compliance with its obligations, it is argued, sixteenth-century churchmen increasingly turned to the state for aid in enforcing the piety and morality of their flocks. The state, in turn, proved a willing

ally in a project that promised to create more tractable and peaceable subjects. Thus, despite their irresolvable theological differences, "both reformations helped bring about an indispensable prerequisite of absolutism: the transformation of subjects into the willing objects of state domination."[9]

The confessionalization thesis is closely associated with the concept of social discipline—the recognition that state and church had at their disposal an array of techniques for shaping a pliant, disciplined subject, whether through coercion (incarceration, corporal punishment, or threats of coercion) or through indoctrination (education, preaching, public spectacles, and so forth).[10] Both Catholic and Protestant authorities sought to control social behavior, although they had different sets of institutional structures to implement their agenda. As scholars of early modern Catholicism have addressed the question of gender in the context of this paradigm, they have come to different conclusions. Broadly speaking, we can point to a body of scholarship that stresses a dynamic of men's oppression of women and women's submission to men or their efforts to subvert male oppression. According to this line of argument, as the Catholic Church prepared to meet the threat of Protestantism, it sought to reaffirm the exclusive sacramental and apostolic prerogatives of the clergy, and thus drastically curtailed late medieval traditions that had accorded significant power to women as monastic leaders, prophets, and living saints. Similarly, the diffusion of medical and religious discourses emphasizing women's susceptibility to delusions and demonic influence undermined women's charismatic authority. Women, lay and religious, were also subjected to sexual and spatial discipline, that is, they were excluded from activity in public either through monastic enclosure or the imposition of social norms that defined women's public presence as wanton. As Elizabeth Rapley remarked, "Reform in the Catholic church tended to be accompanied by a hardening of its attitude toward sexuality. . . . The discrediting of sexuality meant, in general, the discrediting of women."[11]

Although research continues to confirm and extend aspects of this overall framework, recent studies have tended to move away from a unidirectional model of power in gender relations. This attenuated disciplinary model recognizes negotiation and collaboration between men and women despite marked efforts to restrict women's apostolic authority.[12] Pious laywomen, whose relative freedom from ecclesiastical or familial authority destabilized hierarchies of class and gender, can therefore serve as particularly appropriate test cases for exploring the extent and limitations of Counter-Reformation gender discipline. The ambivalence toward devout laywomen can also serve as a lens through which to examine the fault lines in a religious ideology that simultaneously denied the significance of gender for spiritual perfection and insisted on the intellectual and moral imperfection of women.

Although the essays in this volume attend particularly to the experiences of women, the authors are very much aware that these women lived in a world with men. Whether objects of praise or blame, devout laywomen inevitably interacted with ecclesiastics. As a number of the essays show, some churchmen saw them

as partners in reform or, under their guidance, potential saints. Furthermore, laywomen, *qua* women, were "doubly lay." Consequently, their interactions with clergy provide opportunities—to the power of two—for considering important questions about lay spirituality during the Counter Reformation: How successful was Rome in emphasizing the separation of clergy from laity? How determined was the church to control local religious enthusiasm? Did the Counter Reformation reshape women's spirituality—and lay spirituality generally—in significant ways or did the laity continue to inhabit a spiritual universe that would have been familiar to the laity of the previous two centuries?[13] It is to be hoped that these essays will stimulate not only further research on the interactions between Catholic men and women but on the dynamics of gender as a relational concept.

The Question of Authority

From the origins of the *Frauenbewegung* or "women's movement" in the thirteenth century to the resurgent waves of female piety in the eighteenth century, some laywomen felt called to Christian service. The concept of service was extraordinarily broad: it encompassed prayers of suffrage, spiritual guidance, teaching, and concrete aid to the poor and infirm. In some cases (such as accompanying the dying) there was no clear distinction between material and spiritual service. Some women and their supporters believed that their exercise of Christian *caritas* was divinely authorized, if not socially legitimated. As one Jesuit argued, devout laywomen were the heirs of the first religious "of the ancient law," that is, Christ's first female apostles and the Virgin Mary herself, who wore a lay habit and lived in the secular world.[14]

Despite support from some ecclesiastics, the indeterminacy of these women's relation to male authority troubled secular and ecclesiastical forces alike. Open communities of women were often organized, at least initially, around female leadership, although collaborations with clerics were not uncommon. Pious laywomen were encouraged to seek guidance from clerics and they often did so, but they were free to choose—and dismiss—their spiritual directors. Although these alliances conformed to the ideal of female subordination to clerics, an especially strong bond between confessor and penitent challenged the authority of husbands and fathers. As one inquisitorial examiner complained in a letter to Philip II, "[Spiritual directors] take as their own those whom they deal with and confess, separating maidens from the service of their parents, married women from the service of their husbands, and female slaves from obedience to their masters; thus they disrupt all estates and are pernicious to the life of the Christian community."[15] Furthermore, the physical freedom of pious laywomen unsettled gendered norms of decorum, as a letter from the Seville tribunal to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Madrid makes clear: "[I]t is very inappropriate for such women to live without enclosure, because we know from experience that they wander about the villages where they live, with more ease than other women

of their quality, and because they wear a habit they dare to go in and out wherever they please."[16] When active charity was combined with some version of religious instruction, blessing, or spiritual exhortation, pious laywomen appeared to trespass on the apostolic privileges of the priesthood. For these reasons, from the time of the rise of the first open female communities in the late Middle Ages to the Council of Trent and beyond, the third status had the real or imagined potential to subvert male authority.

The twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent has long been interpreted as a watershed moment in the history of female monasticism, and not without reason. As is well known, in 1563 the Tridentine fathers mandated that all nuns observe strict active and passive enclosure: henceforth, no nun was to leave the convent without the permission of the bishop, and likewise no visitors were allowed to enter the convent. Research, however, has shown that enforcement varied widely.[17] In France, regal privilege over Rome delayed the promulgation of Tridentine decrees until 1615. We know, too, that throughout Europe the papal constitution *Circa pastoralis* (1566), which compelled tertiaries to make solemn vows and observe enclosure, was enforced irregularly at best. The norms adopted by the provincial council of Toledo in 1582 provide an example of local ambivalence toward *Circa pastoralis*: beatas who had not made solemn vows were be encouraged to do so; those who refused were permitted to continue living in their communities, but the communities could not accept new members.[18] In sum, the repressive impact of *Circa pastoralis* has probably been exaggerated. On the one hand, some women were forced make solemn vows or abandon their association with religious orders; but on the other hand, it was not unusual, long before Trent, for communities of pious laywomen to seek to become cloistered nuns.[19]

Given the church's commitment to defending the holiness of the monastic state and establishing clear boundaries between the laity and religious, what explains the irregular enforcement of the Tridentine decrees at the local level? We might look to the demographic situation in Spain for one answer. In the sixteenth century certain regions of the peninsula, especially Andalusia and Extremadura, lost a significant proportion of their male populations to imperial wars and emigration to the New World, leaving behind large numbers of women with few prospects for marriage. Many of these women became beatas (the most common term in Spanish for devout laywomen), whose economic survival depended on performing a variety of social and spiritual services in their communities. In the city of Baeza, in upper Andalusia, there were reportedly one thousand beatas out of a total population of twenty-five thousand in the 1570s; twice that number lived in Jaén, Andalusia.[20] Whatever services they performed, because of their numbers and their relative freedom from supervision, beatas alarmed ecclesiastic and secular authorities. Diego Pérez de Valdivia, a professor of theology at the University of Baeza, voiced common complaints about beatas in *Aviso de gente recogida* (*Advice for the Recollected*; 1585): "They are women and most of them are young; they have as much freedom as they want; they have no superior; they do not observe enclosure; they do not have a fixed rule; . . . each one is a law unto herself."[21] Yet

he also recognized that the problem of these surplus women could not be easily solved:

> They cannot all become nuns, nor according to Saint Paul [1 Cor. 7:20–24] can one with good conscience force marriage on those who are called to chastity; nor can all marry well, even if they wanted to; nor do all of them have a calling or talent to be nuns or wives. For this reason it is necessary to find a means through which those whom Our Lord calls to this estate may live in a secluded and safe fashion.[22]

Pérez's statement points to a relation between a demographic dilemma and an economic one. First, there simply were not enough convents to absorb all the beatas; nor were communities willing or able to support new convents.[23] Second, there was the issue of the monastic dowry. Although monastic dowries were not as high as marriage dowries, they nevertheless were often beyond the reach of women from the lower and middle social orders. Third, as Pérez states, even if they wanted to, not all beatas could "marry well," that is, marry men of suitable social status. He may have been alluding to another problem facing unmarried women—the inflation in dowries, which, by the end of the sixteenth century, outstripped inflation in the rest of the economy, a factor that contributed to a dramatic decline in marriage rates during this period.[24]

These examples come from Spain, where male emigration is well documented, but similar factors were at work elsewhere in Catholic Europe. A shift toward primogeniture in the latter half of the sixteenth century in Italy, for example, increased the number of young women who could neither "marry well" nor become nuns. As an anonymous author argued in support of the Ursulines, a female lay congregation, "And to tell the truth, should not every father of a family nobly born, with few resources or many daughters (being unable to marry them all or even make them nuns), welcome the fact that there is a praiseworthy third status, in which those who feel themselves disposed to it can quietly stay in their own homes serving God in virginity . . .?"[25]

It would be reductive, however, to attribute the survival of devout laywomen solely to a demographic crisis. They were tolerated not only because enclosure was often economically unfeasible (whether for individual women or their communities) but also because they performed valued material and spiritual services. Their vows of virginity, especially combined with penitential practices, further enhanced their esteem in the eyes of their contemporaries. Perhaps most important, churchmen at all levels saw in devout laywomen potential allies in inspiring religious fervor in the laity. Reforming bishops like François de Sales, Juan de Ribera, and Carlo Borromeo, missionary reformers like Juan de Ávila and Vincent de Paul, and countless parish priests were willing to see laywoman as agents for Catholic reform.[26]

Devout Laywomen as Agents of Religious Renewal

In important ways, pious laywomen exposed a critical fault line between two imperatives of the Catholic Reform: on the one hand the desire to bring lay

religiosity under the purview of an educated clergy, and on the other hand the need to shape a charitable, devout, and hardworking laity. In some cases, the latter objective trumped the former. The awareness that third status women could not only support themselves but also contribute to the health of the parish allowed some open communities to thrive. The Daughters of Charity, women of modest social origins, performed the onerous labor of tending the sick in hospitals; they also served the poor and brought food and comfort to prisoners.[27] Parish priests and the French government recognized the value of their professional skills, and this recognition afforded them the space they needed to develop and expand their organizations. The Company of Saint Ursula, founded in Brescia in 1535 by Angela Merici, offers another example of the way churchmen channeled women's piety to the goals of Christian service. Merici's original charism was closer to a spiritual apostolate than to a charitable organization—she imagined a lifestyle for women who, through prayer and penance in their own homes, might intercede with God to obtain forgiveness for the living and the dead.[28] Despite early opposition, by the beginning of the seventeenth century the Ursulines were established in almost every important Italian city. As the Company came under the direction of post-Tridentine bishops, Merici's charism was transformed: the spiritual apostolate was curtailed as the Ursulines increasingly were assigned the mission of educating young girls. Ironically, the archetypal Counter-Reformation bishop Carlo Borromeo established the Milanese Company in 1567—just one year after the publication of *Circa pastoralis*. However, it is significant that Borromeo removed a key sentence from Merici's original Rule: "[W]herever they are, [the Ursulines] should give to all a good odour of virtue. . . . and seek to spread peace and concord where they are."[29] Devout laywomen also staffed or founded many of the institutions that arose to regulate female sexuality: houses for girls at risk, homes for repentant prostitutes, and refuges for married women fleeing abusive husbands.[30] In short, as Querciolo Mazzonis argues in his essay in this volume, the willingness of reformers like Borromeo and others to support foundations for women who were neither nuns nor tertiaries may have been motivated in part by the conviction that women, when properly supervised, could be excellent agents for social discipline.

Members of congregations like the Ursulines and the Daughters of Charity resisted enclosure for a variety of economic and spiritual reasons, but other women longed for the cloister, and this is also part of the history of lay female piety. The path to regularization was not always smooth, however. The life of Marina de Escobar (1554–1643) provides a case in point. In 1568 Marina approached Teresa of Ávila with a request to join a newly founded Discalced Carmelite convent in Valladolid. But Teresa persuaded her that her true vocation was in the world. Marina went on to become a renowned holy woman and the leader of a community of eighteen beatas who dedicated themselves to making clothes for the poor. In 1615, at the age of sixty-one, Marina once again longed for a cloistered life. Inspired by a divine vision, she wrote the rules and constitutions for an austere, strictly enclosed Brigettine convent, which won the approval of Pope Urban VIII in 1628. She died, however, before she was able to profess.[31]

Francisca de los Apóstoles (1539–?) provides a more salient example of the obstacles to regularization. In the 1570s Francisca and her sister, Isabel Bautista, lived in a small community of beatas in Toledo, where they enjoyed a measure of renown as pious laywomen. In 1573 Isabel journeyed to Rome to secure a patent to incorporate the *beaterio* (community of beatas) as a convent. Meanwhile, Francisca, having remained in Toledo, devoted herself to a variety of penitential exercises in support of the foundation. Francisca's devotion was soon manifested in public visions, raptures, and demonic torments. Despite the support of one cathedral canon, Francisca was denounced to the Inquisition in 1574. Unable to convince the inquisitors that her visions were authentic, Francisca was declared a heretic, blasphemer, and perjurer. In a public auto de fe held on April 14, 1578, she received 100 lashes and was banished from the city for three years. Many factors can be said to have contributed to the failure of her project—her relatively humble origins, the incompetence of her spiritual advisors, and her explicit criticism of local ecclesiastical corruption.[32] But perhaps her failure was to be expected: a monastic foundation required a good reputation at the local level, endowments from trustworthy patrons, skilled clerical advisors, and often support from an established religious order. Marina's long delayed foundation—and Francisca's dramatic failure—underscore the point that although post-Tridentine legislation increased pressure for enclosure, at the local level there were significant counter-pressures, even when women actively sought claustration.

The question of what defines laywomen's role in religious renewal becomes even more problematic when we turn to Protestant Europe. It is well known that in the Holy Roman Empire, Protestant magistrates and princes mandated the dissolution of monasteries and convents or, in some cases, allowed convents to remain open until the last nun died. It is less well known that this policy was far from universally successful—an estimated fifty percent of convents survived in some areas. Many nuns did convert to Protestantism and marry (Katharina von Bora, Martin Luther's future wife, is the most famous example), others converted to Protestantism but continued to live communally as canonesses, and still others refused to leave their convents and resisted Protestantism in word and deed. In cities like Strasbourg, as Amy Leonard has shown, Protestant magistrates not only left convents open, they respected the wishes of some women to remain in the "chaste estate." In the eyes of councilmen the services of the nuns (nurturing and protecting young girls, providing a place for old and infirm women to live) were temporal and utilitarian; in the eyes of some families and the nuns themselves, the distinction between spiritual and secular service was irrelevant. As Leonard concludes her study of three Dominican convents that survived in Strasbourg: "In the end, the main reasons that these Catholic houses did not die out was that neither the nuns nor the people of Strasbourg wanted them to."[33] Clearly, magistrates and the people of Strasbourg had divergent ideas about the role of women in a reformed church.

The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary represents another example of divergent ideas about laywomen's potential role in religious renewal. In 1611

Mary Ward (1585–1645), an English Catholic and former Poor Clare nun, founded a women's congregation modeled on the Society of Jesus. The English Ladies, as they came to be known, wore distinguishing attire and took vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, but did not observe enclosure. In addition to catechizing and educating girls in day and boarding schools, they prepared laypeople for the sacraments and, especially in Protestant England, provided spiritual assistance in the absence of priests. Their semi-sacerdotal activities and apostolic assertiveness confused their contemporaries, alienated secular clergy, and alarmed the Jesuits. After years of controversy, in 1631 Pope Urban VIII pronounced Ward a heretic and disbanded the English Ladies, declaring that "under the pretext of promoting the salvation of souls [they] carried out many works that were least suitable to their sex, its mental weakness as well as womanly modesty. . . .[34] Ironically, Ward's English Ladies met with as much hostility from the church they sought to serve as from Protestants. After Ward's death in 1645, the English Ladies continued to run unofficial colleges and Catholic centers in England, but they had failed in their attempt to be female Jesuits, apostles for the "salvation of souls."[35]

Devout Laywomen and the Question of Charismatic Authority

Some pious laywomen were not only esteemed as Christian exemplars but also revered as potential saints. In the eyes of their fellow parishioners, their chastity, charity, and penitential suffering enhanced the power of their prayers. The greater a pious woman's reputation for holiness, in fact, the more her spiritual services—prayers for the living and the dead or her presence at childbed and deathbed—were valued. In return, she could expect to receive food, gifts, or alms. However, the question of compensation could be contentious. As Fray Juan de los Ángeles, a Franciscan friar and court preacher, wrote in 1595, "Whenever a silly little woman pretends to faint, she is celebrated as a saint and thereafter she can be sure of getting free meals and whatever she wants."[36]

Despite such suspicions, some laywomen did achieve renown—for a time. One of the most celebrated beatas of early modern Spain, Catalina de Jesús, according to Inquisition records, attracted nearly 700 devotees in Seville and from surrounding villages. Her followers attributed miraculous powers to her—healing the sick, converting the wicked, prophesying the future, and saving souls. Catalina de Jesús and her confessor and collaborator Juan de Villalpando, according to one inquisitorial report, exerted extraordinary influence over poor, unmarried women:

> Villalpando taught maidens that in order to fulfill the demands of spiritual exercises he taught [i.e., mental prayer] they should refuse to do what their fathers ordered, saying they were not their fathers, that they had another father who governed them, who was Villalpando. He recommended mental prayer to one maiden, and when she answered that she did not have time, because she needed to serve her poor parents, and she couldn't do so without their permission,

> he told her: Do not obey them, for they are not parents but demons; you do not need their permission to pray; you should instead tread on their mouths.[37]

In 1627 Catalina de Jesús and Villalpando appeared in an auto de fe, where they publicly abjured various *alumbrado* heresies. The cleric was sentenced to imprisonment in a monastery for four years and forbidden forever to preach, hear confessions, and celebrate the sacraments. Catalina de Jesús was sentenced to six years' reclusion in a convent.[38] Whether or not the report cited above accurately reflects the teachings of the beata and Villalpando, it nevertheless underscores how the intimate relations between beatas and charismatic leaders and their influence over unmarried women challenged traditional familial and church hierarchies.

The alleged spiritual gifts of pious laywomen posed other unsettling questions: Were their spiritual sacrifices sufficient to warrant the status and gifts they received in return? And were their spiritual services authentic or feigned? By the end of the sixteenth century devout laywomen in Spain, Portugal, and Italy were appearing more frequently in inquisitorial tribunals, charged with the offense of pretense of sanctity.[39] Others avoided censure in part because they could count on support from their communities or from powerful ecclesiastics.[40] But as in the case of open congregations, devout laywomen with a reputation for holiness confronted churchmen with difficult questions. Could women's piety (and the people's devotion) be safely controlled and directed toward the goals of Christianization? Would the feminization of certain practices—such as taking daily communion—devalue the sacred? Would the popularity of local holy women help promote the doctrine that the age of miracles, despite Protestant claims to the contrary, had not ended? If they were shown to be clever frauds, would this promote incredulity or support the Protestant doctrine of the cessation of miracles? As churchmen grappled with these questions, they arrived at different answers.[41] It is important, however, to note that not all laywomen investigated for pretense of sanctity were penanced. Indeed, as Anne Schutte's essay in this volume shows, sometimes a brush with the Inquisition was considered a routine trial for a potential saint.

Devout Laywomen and the Apostolic Mission

As we have seen, according to post-Tridentine ideals, laywomen were expected to be reclusive but also charitable to their fellow parishioners and exemplary in public, ritual observance. The church communicated an even more contradictory gender message: although men were its legitimate leaders and defenders, Catholicism was in such great peril from Protestantism that it needed the help of all Christians, even women. Counter-Reformation ecclesiastics were not the first to argue for a suspension of ordinary gender roles during a state of siege. Raymond of Capua had justified the public role played by Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) by declaring that in troubled times, God conferred divine grace on "the weaker sex" in order to humble proud men.[42] The twin challenges of combating Protestantism

and propagating Catholicism in the New World and Asia gave new life to a pro-woman exceptionalism, which granted some women roles as missionaries and evangelists. Pious laywomen were more than eager to respond to the call, despite opposition from their families. The Spanish noblewoman Luisa de Carvajal (1566–1614) provides a case in point. Carvajal was born into one of the richest and most powerful families in sixteenth-century Spain. Refusing to marry or take the veil, at the age of thirty-nine she traveled to London, where, with the support of the Jesuits, she proselytized and ministered to recusant Catholics. Carvajal was a prodigious author of numerous letters, memoirs, a corpus of fifty poems, and a rule for the group of semi-religious women who lived with her in London.[43] Barbe Acarie (1566–1618), a member of a prominent Parisian family, and her circle of *dévotes* in seventeenth-century France represent a similar dynamic of elite women who fashioned an unenclosed life of apostolic piety.[44] These women clearly were responding to the conviction that the church needed their public efforts. As Luisa de Carvajal wrote in her letters to Rodrigo de Calderón (one of the favorites of King Philip III), the threat posed by Protestantism required the "strong piety" of active female congregations, not the "soft piety" of cloistered nuns.[45]

In the missionary context churchmen sometimes viewed devout laywomen as powerful agents of conversion. Pious laywomen in New France like Marie Madeleine Chauvigny de la Peltrie (1603–1672), Jeanne Mance (1606–1673), and Marguerite Bourgeoys (1620–1700) followed diverse spiritual paths, devoting themselves to education, medical and social care, and the promotion of devotions and prayers. These women and others like them became subjects of biographies intended to serve their causes for canonization. As Dominique Deslandres remarks, "[I]f the settlers of New France applauded the projects and exploits of these saintly women, it was because they needed them, practically and spiritually."[46] Their extraordinary piety could also have an important propagandistic function: it confirmed that the colonies were lands where transplanted Catholicism could thrive. Indeed, America's first saint, Rosa de Santa María (1586–1617), was a *criolla* (a Spanish woman born in the New World) of modest origins who took simple religious vows but did not observe enclosure. In sum, distance from the centers of ecclesiastical power, local chauvinism, the urgent need for care workers, and missionary zeal in colonial lands interacted to produce an unusual if perilous degree of freedom for charismatic laywomen.[47]

Women "in Between"

A recurrent theme in the following essays is the realization that pious laywomen moved "in between," and not only between the two officially sanctioned vocations of wife and nun. Many inhabited the borders between material and spiritual service, veneration and suspicion, Catholicism and Protestantism, authority and submission. The essays are arranged according to clusters that challenge these binaries. The first section, "Service," examines how pious laywomen attempted to negotiate the

conflicts generated by their participation in local material and spiritual economies. As stated earlier, after Trent women continued to perform valued community services. However, disputes over compensation for these services could bring care workers into conflict, not only with the institutional church but also with their neighbors. Amanda L. Scott's contribution, "Community, Conflict, and Local Authority: The Basque *Seroras*," centers on the *seroras* of Navarre in northeastern Spain, whose services ranged from cleaning religious shrines to tending to the diseased and indigent. In compensation for their labors, they received gifts, salaries, or living quarters. However, their position—at once highly visible and poorly defined—frequently brought them into conflict with parish priests, other *seroras*, and the parish community itself. Querciolo Mazzonis, in "The Company of St. Ursula in Counter-Reformation Italy," analyzes the changes imposed on the Ursuline organization after Trent, including the implementation of teaching in the Schools of Christian Doctrine, a more hierarchical structure supervised by men, and a less mystical and penitential spirituality. Nevertheless, he finds that the Ursulines enjoyed support from bishops and succeeded in maintaining key aspects of their pre-Tridentine religiosity. Mazzonis suggests that these churchmen were aware that women could be agents of conversion and, if properly controlled and directed, could serve the goals of orthodox Christianization. Susan Dinan's essay, "Nursing as a Vocation or a Profession? Women's Status and the Meaning of Healing in Early Modern France and England," contrasts the nursing care systems developed by the Daughters of Charity in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France and the female parish-based nursing structure of England after the suppression of religious houses. In France, the Daughters of Charity and some similar groups avoided enclosure and established themselves as nurses, teachers, social workers, and hospital directors. In England, parishes responded to the loss of semi-religious nurses by paying local women to provide care. In comparing the two systems, Dinan shows how, despite legal and religious obstacles, women built organizations of care that their cities and towns could not live without. Both Dinan and Mazzonis instructively remind us that the agendas of pious laywomen, their families, local communities, and the church hierarchy interacted in complex ways: power ebbed and flowed in more than one direction.

The essays in the second section, "Perceptions of Holiness," look at devout laywomen within the context of the construction of sanctity. In "Historicizing the Beatas: The Figures behind Reformation and Counter-Reformation Conflicts," Maria Laura Giordano argues for the need to consider the history of beatas in Spain over the *longue durée*, not only to appreciate the variations in their beliefs and behavior but also to recognize the church's ambivalence toward the third status. The diverse fortunes of beatas—some were embraced as allies of the institutional church, others punished for their alleged heterodoxy—call into question the notion of a monolithic Counter-Reformation Church intent on repressing beatas. In fact, as Giordano demonstrates, the long-term trajectory of the claustration campaign ends in acceptance of the third status. Anne Schutte's essay, "*Ecco la santa*!," similarly challenges the idea that devout laywomen were invariably at odds with the

institutional church. Schutte examines the cases of five laywomen who, between 1625 and the end of the Old Regime, were the subjects of vernacular *vite* written, in many cases, to pave the way for their official recognition by the Congregation of Rites.[48] She notes that extreme penitential practices figure prominently in the *vite* as do reported thaumaturgical powers. Overshadowed by scholarship on hagiographies of nuns, these biographies constitute a largely untapped source of information about the perception of laywomen's piety.

In "Flying in Formation: Subjectivity and Collectivity in Luisa de Melgarejo de Soto's Mystical Practices," Stacey Schlau explores the case of one of the most notable disciples of Rosa de Santa María, more commonly known as Rose of Lima (1586–1617). Unlike Rosa, who was beatified in 1668 and canonized in 1671, Melgarejo was caught up in the web of inquisitional trials and was incarcerated for many years before her trial was suspended. Although Melgarejo enjoyed privileged social status and the protection of the Jesuits, the citizens of Lima questioned the authenticity of her reported favors—visions, ecstasies, and knowledge of souls in purgatory. Unlike Rosa, Melgarejo did not engage in extreme penitential practices. Schlau concludes that Melgarejo's failure to imitate Rosa's ascetic behavior, along with divisions among the Jesuits, were important factors that undermined her credibility as a visionary. Despite being tried by the Inquisition, however, Melgarejo continued to enjoy a reputation as a holy woman in some sectors—a fact that suggests that there was more than one viable model of female sanctity in colonial Peru.

An indigenous beata from the seventeenth-century Philippines is the subject of Jessica Fowler's "Illuminated Islands: Luisa de los Reyes and the Inquisition in Manila." The question of Reyes's alleged holiness split members of the Jesuit community in the Philippines: some declared that she was a new St. Catherine of Siena; others denounced her and her devotees as alumbrados. Although the model of holiness represented by the beata was clearly convincing for a small group of Jesuits, her unenclosed lifestyle (and the opportunities it provided for male-female interaction) eventually brought her and her devotees before the Holy Office. Together, Schlau's and Fowler's essays indicate that despite great distances and delays, the Inquisition sought to maintain control over local cults. Still, the relative restraint shown toward the accused (Reyes, as an indigenous woman, was declared exempt from prosecution; Melgarejo's cases ended in dismissal) suggests that neither the Suprema (the Inquisition's high court located in Madrid) nor the colonial tribunals were eager to call too much attention to these failed saints.

Part III, "Confessional Crossings," turns to the question of women who, in different ways, put into question the divide between Catholicism and Protestantism. In "Elastic Institutions: Beguine Communities in Early Modern Germany," Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane finds substantial evidence that béguinages (uncloistered group homes), assumed to have been dismantled during the Reformation, continued to thrive throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in post-Reformation Germany. From Lübeck to Lake Constance and Cologne to Leipzig, gatherings of devout women continued to fill the longstanding, locally embedded needs for prayer,

social service, and social belonging for single women. While some communities survived by forming closer affiliations with mendicant or monastic orders, others persisted as mixed-confession béguinages. Examples of confessionally mixed houses abound in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Germany—and so do cases of fully reformed evangelical houses. In "Neither Nun nor Laywoman: Entering Lutheran Convents during the Reformation of Female Religious Communities in the Duchy of Braunschweig, 1542–1655," Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer finds that the political situation in Lower Saxony (1542–1634) also produced a complex mix of old and new customs and doctrines. Although the female religious houses in these regions officially accepted the Augsburg Confession and Lutheran church regulations by the late sixteenth century, the character of each community reflected the outcome of negotiations between rulers and local communities, with the result that in some cases, the inhabitants of the reformed houses were neither recognizably nuns nor laywomen, Lutheran or Catholic. Doris Moreno Martínez's essay, "Marina de Saavedra: A Devout Laywomen on a Confessional Frontier (Zamora, 1558–1559)," similarly documents the history of a woman "on a confessional frontier." Moreno Martínez traces the spiritual itinerary of Marina de Saavedra, a well-connected married woman who embraced Protestant (*sensu lato*) ideas that were circulating in mid-sixteenth-century Castile. The new ideas, Moreno Martínez shows, did not represent a complete break with Saavedra's Catholic piety. Indeed, she used traditional parish institutions and charitable networks to disseminate the new ideas before she was denounced to the Inquisition as a Lutheran.

Ellen Macek's essay, "Devout Recusant Women, Advice Manuals, and the Creation of Holy Households 'under Siege'," focuses on married women caught between two confessions: Catholics in Protestant England who, in defiance of legal restrictions on their faith and often in the absence of male heads of household, formed "holy households." These households functioned as sacralized spaces for catechizing children, servants, and neighbors and for performing the corporal works of mercy. Rather than seek refuge in convents on the Continent, as many did, these recusant women creatively adapted traditional forms of female piety to create an active, semi-covert evangelical vocation. They worked closely with spiritual directors, but when this was not possible they assumed roles of spiritual leadership themselves. In ways unimagined by the Tridentine fathers, they devised a new, temporary vocation for pious women living "under siege."

Whether they lived alone, with families, or in communities, pious laywomen were closely connected to their communities. The collaborations they formed with ecclesiastics and laypersons of various social strata are the focus of the final section, "Alliances." Although these collaborations could sometimes result in conflict, they also show that devout women did not always have to confront the Church, subvert male authority, or alienate their kin and neighbors in order to make room for a spiritual vocation, in deed if not in name. In fact, the spirit of the Catholic Reformation in some cases expanded the opportunities available to women of different social backgrounds.

Robert E. Scully, for example, shows how, in the anti-Catholic environment of late Elizabethan England, where convents were banned, recusant women and priests collaborated in devising an unofficial but crucial vocation for women between the cloister and marriage. Scully's essay, "The Lives of Anne Line: Vowed Laywoman, Recusant Martyr, and Elizabethan Saint," centers on the relationship between Anne Line (?–1601), a widowed convert to Catholicism, and John Gerard, a Jesuit priest with whom she operated a safe house. In 1601 Anne was found guilty of harboring priests and sentenced to death. Although theirs was in many ways a traditional confessor-penitent relationship, Anne's heroic service to the recusant cause and willingness to suffer martyrdom resulted in a spiritual reversal of roles: in Gerard's mind, Anne became his saintly model and protector.

Jennifer Haraguchi's essay, "Convent Alternatives for Rich and Poor Girls in Seventeenth-Century Florence: The Lay Conservatories of Eleonora Ramirez di Montalvo (1602–59)," recounts how a married Florentine noblewoman, Eleonora Ramirez di Montalvo (1602–1659), founded two conservatories in which *ancille* (handmaidens) took non-binding vows and observed a modified form of enclosure. Montalvo's conservatories were unconventional in several respects: ancille lived in *eremi* or microcomunities within the larger institution, they had a closely protected degree of freedom to choose a religious vocation—or not—at the age of fifteen, and servants were incorporated into the devotional and educational life of the community. Crucial to Montalvo's success in resisting pressure to conform to strict enclosure was her alliance with the Grand Duchess Vittoria della Rovere. Montalvo's piety thus challenged class divisions from above and below—she attempted to break down barriers between servants and ancille and enlisted a powerful aristocrat in her cause.

María J. Pando-Canteli describes a different but similarly broad range of alliances in her essay, "Letters, Books, and Relics: Material and Spiritual Networks in the Life of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza (1564–1614)." By circulating letters and books, sponsoring translations, and collecting and gifting the relics of recusant martyrs, Carvajal developed a female apostolate *sui generis*—one that helped consolidate a Catholic community that transcended class and national barriers. As this essay shows, "letter writing" encompassed a range of politically and religiously charged exchanges and illustrates how a pious woman might "make things happen" despite a relatively limited presence in so-called public spaces.

In "Women Apostles in Early Modern Japan, 1549–1650," Haruko Nawata Ward examines the alliances formed between Catholic missionaries and Japanese women during Japan's "Christian century" (1549–1650). Although the Society of Jesus discouraged its members from forming close ties with women, the cultural circumstances in Japan made it necessary for Jesuits to collaborate with female converts, entrusting them with important roles as catechists, proselytizers, leaders of confraternities, baptizers, and underground missionaries during times of religious persecution. Comparing a wide variety of documents by Spanish and Portuguese missionaries, Ward concludes that these churchmen not only accepted

Japanese women's help as expedient, they also revered them as partners in evangelization, as spiritual mothers, and as holy martyrs.

My essay, "Jesuit Apologias for Laywomen's Spirituality," considers the ambivalence within the Society of Jesus regarding the wisdom of pursuing an apostolate to laywomen. I analyze three works by Jesuits that ponder this issue: two are cautionary and one enthusiastically apologetic. My conclusions complement those of Ward and Schlau: despite awareness that close relations with laywomen, especially ecstatic laywomen, were perilous to their mission, many Jesuits were reluctant to exclude women from their original charism of conversion, that is, inspiring individuals to live a life of greater Christian devotion. In an important sense, the Jesuits' ambivalence toward beatas was a symptom of the larger tension between their non-discriminatory Pauline spirituality and their determination to "think with" and serve the church militant.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

Lay/religious, medieval/early modern, Catholic/Protestant, secular/sacred: the lives of the women described in these essays encourage us to question these traditional binaries. As Deane observes in her essay, devout laywomen and the communities they formed transcend traditional divisions of time, purpose, and confession. The history of devout laywomen also underscores the need to refine the paradigm of woman as the prototypical subject of church-state discipline. By emphasizing the interplay between institutional imperatives and individual agency—and the gaps between ecclesiastic prescriptions and lived religious experience in the context of local circumstances—the contributors provide further evidence that the dynamics of power between women and men in the early modern world were not always predictable or unambiguously oppressive for women. As we have seen, if some ecclesiastics saw third status women as threats to social order and divine hierarchies, others recognized the value of laywomen as potential vessels of the Spirit, model parishioners, and partners in the Catholic reform. Many women enthusiastically embraced this mission, and some found men to be willing collaborators and devotees. This volume similarly questions the notion that pious laywomen were primarily viewed as social parasites or religious hypocrites. To be sure, disputes over these women's role in the material and spiritual economies of their communities are not lacking, but the studies presented here offer abundant evidence that the model of the chaste single woman in prayerful and caritative service to her community had enduring power—in Protestant and Catholic lands.

Rather than viewing the persistence of a third status simply in terms of strategic concessions on the part of the church or the triumph of the periphery over Rome, we might also think in terms of the unintended consequences of an ideology that, though developed in late medieval Christianity, found new urgency in the Counter-Reformation Church. The spiritual superiority of virginity over marriage, insistently reaffirmed as a fundamental doctrinal difference from Protestantism,

conceded perhaps an unexpected degree of status to laywomen who made vows of virginity. A state-of-emergency consciousness, which fueled women's desires to serve and suffer for their fellow Catholics, justified a female apostolate in missionary and colonial contexts—contexts in which it was often difficult to constrain this authority once granted. Finally, the Counter-Reformation defense of the persistence of miracles, Protestant claims to the contrary, assured the continuity of female exceptionalism—the possibility that a laywoman who sacrificed herself for her brethren or martyred her own flesh might indeed be a living saint. These were not new doctrines, but their reaffirmation in the context of Catholic Reform worked against assumptions about the moral and intellectual inferiority of laywomen and, in some cases, undermined the imperatives of sexual discipline.

Most of the essays in this volume focus on single language areas; the Hispano-Italian axis is prominent. Nevertheless, my hope is that the thematic organization will suggest avenues for analysis across geographic and linguistic borders. For example, the connection between devout laywomen and heterodoxy in Spain and Italy is well established; were there parallels further north? Did an unfavorable marriage market have a similar impact on women's vocational choices outside Spain and Italy? What local or regional factors determined bishops' willingness to accommodate unenclosed congregations of women? What was the role of third status women in episcopal campaigns against concubinage and prostitution beyond Spain and Italy? To what extent did virginity maintain its value as spiritual capital in Protestant lands? We have seen that the model of sanctity based on Catherine of Siena's extreme asceticism was powerful in Italy, Spain, and the Spanish colonies; a comparative study of the geographic and confessional reach of this model is much to be desired. The split among the Jesuits over close associations with devout laywomen also lends itself to transnational analysis. In sum, the opportunities for further exploration of the circumstances surrounding the lives of devout laywomen and their relations with church and society are manifold.

Notes

1. For a guide to the wide-ranging terminology, with an emphasis on movements in pre-Tridentine Italy, see entries for "pinzochere" and "terz'Ordine secolare" in Guerrino Pelliccia and Giancarlo Rocca, eds, *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, 10 vols (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1975–2003). For analogous late medieval movements, see Elizabeth M. Makowski, *A Pernicious Sort of Woman: Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the Later Middle Ages* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005); Alison More, "Institutionalizing Penitential Life in Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Third Orders, Rules, and Canonical Legitimacy," *Church History* 83.2 (2014): 297–323; Walter Simons, *City of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200–1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). See also the following entries in Adriano Prosperi, Vincenzo Lavenia, and John Tedeschi, eds, *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione* (Rome: Edizioni della Normale, 2010): Maria Laura Giordano, "*Beatas*, Spagna," 1: 161–65; P. Vilas Boas Tavares, "*Beatas,* Portogallo," 1: 158–61.

2. Representative studies on early modern Spain include Ángela Muñoz Fernández, *Beatas y santas neocastellanas: ambivalencias de la religión correctoras del poder (ss XIV–XVII)* (Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid, 1994); Jodi Bilinkoff, "A Saint for a City: Mariana de Jesús and Madrid, 1565–1624," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 88 (1997): 323–37; Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Adelina Sarrión, *Beatas y endemoniadas: Mujeres heterodoxas ante la inquisición* (Madrid: Akal, 2003); Ángela Atienza López, "De beaterios a conventos. Nuevas perspectivas sobre el mundo de las beatas en la España Moderna," *Historia social* 57 (2007): 145–68; Francisco Pons Fuster, *Místicos, beatas y alumbrados* (Valencia: Ediciones Alfons el Magnànim, 1991). For Italy see Gabriella Zarri, "The Third Status," in *Time, Space, and Women's Lives in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anne Jacobson Schutte, Thomas Kuehn, and Silvana Seidel Menchi (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2001), 181–99; Mario Sensi, *Mulieres in ecclesia: Storie di monache e bizzocche*, 2 vols (Spoleto: CISAM, 2010). For France, see Thomas Worcester, "Neither Married Nor Cloistered: Blessed Isabelle in Catholic Reformation," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30.2 (1999): 457–72; Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990). On the Netherlands, see Marit Monteiro, "Power in Piety: Inspiration, Ambitions and Strategies of Spiritual Virgins in the Northern Netherlands during the Seventeenth Century," in *Gender, Catholicism and Spirituality: Women and the Roman Catholic Church in Britain and Europe, 1200–1900*, ed. Laurence Lux-Sterritt and Carmen Mangion (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave, 2011), 115–30; Silvia Mostaccio, *Genre et identites aux Pays-Bas meridionaux: L'education religieuse des femmes apres le Concile di Trente* (Louvaine-le-Neuve: Editions Academia, 2010). For an overview and selected bibliography on open communities and teaching orders in England, France, and Italy, see Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also Marina Caffiero, "From the Late Baroque Mystical Explosion to the Social Apostolate, 1650–1850," in *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Gabriella Zarri and Lucetta Scaraffia (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 176–204; Laurence Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in Seventeenth-Century Catholicism* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005).

3. Some scholars have used "semi-religious" to indicate "persons who are nominally not religious [that is, members of monastic orders] but consider themselves as such"; Laurence Lux-Sterritt and Carmen Mangion, eds. *Gender, Catholicism and Spirituality: Women and the Roman Catholic Church 1200–1900* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2011), 190.

4. More, "Institutionalizing Penitential Life." More uses "penitents" as the collective term but adds, "This way of life can also be called 'quasi-religious,' since their way of life met some, but not all of the requirements for canonical religious life"; 299.

5. Sebastián Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, ed. Felipe Maldonado and Manuel Camarero (Madrid: Castalia, 1995), s.v. penitente. Similarly, the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (lst edition 1694) defines penitent as one doing penance for an offense against God.

6. Zarri, "The Third Status," 181.

7. Atienza López instructively observes that the abundance of studies that rely on inquisition sources may have led to an overemphasis on the autonomy and the heterodox tendencies of the Spanish beatas; "De beaterios a conventos," esp. 146.

8. See Wolfgang Reinhard, "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment," in *The Counter-Reformation*, ed. David M. Luebke (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 107–28; Wolfgang Reinhard, "Pressures towards Confessionalization? Prolegomena to a Theory of the Confessional Age," in *The German Reformation: The Essential Readings*, ed. Scott C. Dixon (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 177–82. For an excellent overview of the thesis see David M. Luebke, "Editor's Introduction," in *The Counter-Reformation*, ed. David M. Luebke, Blackwell Essential Readings in History (Malden: Blackwell, 1999), 1–16. See also Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, ed. Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen, and Mary Laven (Farmham, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 33–53. The thesis was originally formulated in the context of the Protestant Reformation and subsequently adopted by historians of Catholic Europe.

9. Luebke, "Editor's Introduction," 11.

10. Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World. Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Paolo Prodi, ed. *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tramedioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994).

11. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, 4–5. Representative examples of what might be called the "hard discipline paradigm" from an extensive bibliography include Perry, *Gender and Disorder*; R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007). For an overview of these issues, see Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "Society and the Sexes Revisted," in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. David M. Whitford (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 396–414. On spatial discipline and early modern convents, see Amy E. Leonard, *Nails in the Wall: Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), esp. 153–54. For a review and critique of the paradigm with an emphasis on Spain, see Alison Weber, "Locating Holiness in Early Modern Spain: Convents, Caves, and Houses," in *Attending to Early Modern Women: Structures and Subjectivities*, ed. Joan Hartman and Adele Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 50–74.

12. Representative examples of what might be called a negotiation paradigm include Keith P. Luria, " 'Popular Catholicism' and the Catholic Reformation," in *Early Modern Catholicism. Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.*, ed. Kathleen M. Comerford and Hilmar M. Pabel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 114–30; Jodi Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors, Female Penitents, and Catholic Culture, 1450–1759* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Barbara B. Diefendorf, "Rethinking the Catholic Reformation: The Role of Women," in *Women, Religion, and the Atlantic World (1600–1800)*, ed. Daniella Kostroun and Lisa Vollendorf (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 31–59; Ulrike Strasser, "Embodying the Middle Ages, Advancing Modernity: Religious Women in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe and Beyond," in *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World*, ed. Charles H. Parker and Jerry H. Bentley (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 231–51. See also the essays in Part I, "Religion," of Allyson Poska, Jane Couchman, and Katherine A. McIver, eds, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Hants, UK: Ashgate, 2013). By the same token, recent studies have paid attention to the ways subordinate men were subjected to patriarchal power. See, for example, Anne

Jacobson Schutte, *By Force and Fear: Taking and Breaking Monastic Vows in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

13. For a defense of the latter position, see Nicholas Terpstra, "Lay Spirituality," in *The Ashgate Research Companion*, ed. Bamji, Janssen, and Laven, 261–80, esp. 278.

14. Alonso de Andrade, *Libro de la guía de la virtud y de la imitación de Nuestra Señora. Segundo Libro: para religiosas, beatas, terceros, religiosos y religiosas* (Madrid: Francisco Maroto, 1644), 139.

15. "[T]oman por suyas las personas que tratan y comunican, . . . apartando las doncellas del servicio de sus padres y las casadas del servicio de sus maridos, y las esclavas de la obediencia de sus señores: con lo cual desconciertan todos los estados y son perniciosos a la vida política cristiana"; cited in Álvaro Huerga, *Historia de los Alumbrados (1570–1630)*, 5 vols (Madrid: FUE, 1978–1994), 1: 374. The letter is from 1575.

16. "[E]s de mucho inconveniente vivir fuera de clausura y comunidad, porque por experiencia se ve que de ordinario andan vagando por los pueblos donde moran, con más soltura que las otras mujeres de su cualidad, y por traer aquel hábito se atreven a entrar y salir donde les parece"; ibid., 4: 100. Jaffary cites legislation from late eighteenth-century Colonial Mexico that attempted to restrict the physical freedom of beatas who "are found roaming from church to church and from house to house"; Nora E. Jaffary, *False Mystics: Deviant Orthodoxy in Colonial Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), qtd. at 92.

17. Francesca Medioli, "The Dimensions of the Cloister. Enclosure, Constraint, and Protection in Seventeenth-Century Italy," in Schutte, Kuehn, and Menchi, eds, *Time, Space, and Women's Lives*, 165–80; Susan E. Dinan, "Spheres of Female Religious Expression in Early Modern France," in *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds*, ed. Susan E. Dinan and Debra Meyers (New York: Routledge, 2001), 71–92; Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (London: Viking, 2002); Concha Torres Sánchez, *La clausura imposible: Conventualismo femenino y expansión contrarreformista* (Madrid: Al-Mudayna, 2001). See also the essay by Jennifer Haraguchi in this volume. For an example of local response to the Tridentine decrees, see Elizabeth Lehfeldt, "Discipine, Vocation, and Patronage: Spanish Religious Women in a Tridentine Microclimate," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30.4 (1999): 1009–36.

18. Muñoz Fernández, *Beatas y santas*, 82.

19. Gabriella Zarri, "From Prophecy to Discipline, 1450–1650," in *Women and Faith*, ed. Scaraffia and Zarri, 83–112. See also Atienza López, "De beaterios a conventos."

20. Andalusian cities were severely affected by male emigration, but this problem beset wide areas of Spain. For numbers in the Castilian city of Zamora, see the essay by Doris Moreno in this volume.

21. Diego Pérez de Valdivia, *Aviso de gente recogida*, ed. Álvaro Huerga (Madrid: FUE, 1977), 146. Pérez, nevertheless, defends the viability of the third status. With remarkable subtlety, he analyzes a variety of social and economic factors contributing to the bad reputation of beatas. See Alison Weber, "Between Ecstasy and Exorcism: Religious Negotiation in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23.2 (1993): 221–34.

22. "Y no pueden ser todas monjas, ni, conforme se colige de san Pablo [1 Cor. 7:20–24], se puede con buena conciencia hacer que se casen por fuerza las personas a quien Dios llama a la castidad; ni todas, aunque quisieren, se pueden bien casar; ni tampoco todas tienen llamamiento o talento para monjas o para casadas. Por lo cual es necesario

dar medio con el cual las que nuestro Señor llama para este estado pueda vivir recogida y seguramente"; Pérez de Valdivia, *Aviso de gente recogida*, 146.

23. For example, Teresa of Ávila, the Carmelite foundress and reformer, encountered strong local resistance to new monastic foundations. See Jodi Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), esp. 137–51. Teresa was also reluctant to accept beatas as postulants in the convents she founded.

24. The first half of the seventeenth century saw a 20 percent decline in marriage rates in New Castile. See Sara T. Nalle, "Women's Status, Family Systems, and Marriage in a Time of Economic Crisis: Cuenca, 1500–1650," in *Perspectives on Early Modern Women in Iberia and the Americas: Studies in Law, Society in Art and Literature in Honor of Anne J. Cruz*, ed. Adrienne L. Martín and María Cristina Quintero (New York: Escribana Books, 2015), 167–76. In 1584, the diocese of Vizcaya used similar socioeconomic arguments—the inability of poor noble maidens to marry in conformity to their rank—to object to the implementation of *Circa pastoralis*; Atienza López, "De beaterios a conventos," 168.

25. Zarri, "The Third Status," qtd. at 189. See also her discussion on the Dimesse, an open congregation of widows; 192–94. Dimesse did not take vows; they could leave the houses to become nuns or to remarry.

26. On the alliances between these men and pious laywomen: for Juan de Ávila see Rady Roldán-Figueroa, *The Ascetic Spirituality of John of Ávila (1499–1569)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010). For Juan de Ribera, see Benjamin A. Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos: Juan de Ribera and Religious Reform in Valencia, 1568–1614* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), esp. 67–72. For Borromeo, see the essay by Mazzonis in this volume; for François de Sales, see Elizabeth Rapley, " 'Un trésor enfoui, une lampe sous un boisseau': Seventeenth-Century Visitandines Describe Their Vocation," in *The Cloister and the World: Early Modern Convent Voices*, ed. Thomas M. Carr (Charlottesville: Rookwood, 2007), 155–66.

27. Susan E. Dinan, *Women and Poor Relief in Seventeenth-Century France: The Early History of the Daughters of Charity* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006).

28. Querciolo Mazzonis, *Spirituality, Gender and the Self in Renaissance Italy: Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula (1474–1540)* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2007), 110.

29. Cited in Querciolo Mazzonis, "The Italian Ursulines after the Council of Trent," Paper read at *Sixteenth Century Society and Conference Meeting*, Forth Worth, Texas, 2011.

30. Such services did not necessarily protect these women from inquisitorial scrutiny. See, for example, Anne Jacobson Schutte, ed., *Cecilia Ferrazzi: Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

31. Elizabeth Lehfeldt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 174–208; Luis de la Puente, *Vida maravillosa de la venerable virgen doña Marina de Escobar, natural de Valladolid* (Madrid: Francisco Nieto, 1665).

32. Gillian T.W. Ahlgren, ed., *The Inquisition of Francisca: A Sixteenth-Century Visionary on Trial* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 1–36, esp. 35.

33. Leonard, *Nails in the Wall*, esp. Chapter 4, 149–51, qtd. at 155. On *Damenstifate*, the free imperial abbeys where former nuns lived communally, see Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "Ideology Meets Empire: Reformed Convents and the Reformation," in *Germania Illustrata: Essays on Early Modern Germany Presented to Gerald Strauss*, ed. Andrew C.

Fix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 1992), 181–96. See also the essay by Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer in this volume.

34. Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life*, qtd. at 216. Mary Ward established her first house in the Spanish Netherlands; within a few years houses opened across the continent. In England, they operated in a semi-clandestine manner.

35. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining Female Religious Life*, esp. 4–6, 160–70.

36. "En fingiendo una mujercilla cuatro desmayos, la celebran por santa y tiene segura la comida y cuanto ha de menester"; Juan de los Ángeles, *Diálogos de la conquista de los reinos de Dios* (1595), ed. Angel González Palencia (Madrid: Aguirre, 1946), 216.

37. "Villalpando enseñaba a las doncellas que, por acudir a los sobredichos ejercicios, dejasen de hacer lo que sus padres les mandasen, y dijesen que en cuanto a aquello no eran sus padres, que otro padre tenían que las gobernaba, que era el dicho Villalpando. A una doncella aconsejó la oración mental, y respondiendo ella que no tenía lugar, por servir a sus padres pobres, y sin su licencia no podía, le dijo: No les obedezca ni haga cuenta que lo son, sino demonios; que para tener oración no tiene obligación a obedecerlos, sino pisarles la boca"; "Memorial de la secta de los alumbrados de Sevilla" (1624), in Huerga, *Historia de los alumbrados*, 4: 455–75, qtd. at 67.

38. *Alumbradismo* (Illuminism) refers to a loosely defined complex of philo-Protestant beliefs condemned as heretical by the Spanish Inquisition in 1525. The early adherents emphasized interior spirituality and disdained the rituals and ceremonies of the church. By the late sixteenth century, alumbradismo was increasingly identified with antinomian sexual license and pretense of sanctity. See Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). Catalina and her spiritual director were also charged with claiming that the estate of beatas was superior not only to that of married women but to that of nuns, because of the imperfections of monastic life; Huerga, *Historia de los alumbrados*, 4: 200–237, esp. 206–8. See also Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 107–17.

39. Representative studies on women charged with pretense of sanctity include Stacey Schlau, *Gendered Crime and Punishment: Women and/in the Hispanic Inquisitions* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Andrew Keitt, *Inventing the Sacred: Imposture, Inquisition, and the Boundaries of the Supernatural in Golden Age Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Jaffary, *False Mystics*; Bryan Givens, *Judging Maria de Macedo: A Female Visionary and the Inquisition in Early Modern Portugal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011). Although some nuns were charged with this offense, inquisitors preferred to leave the correction of aberrant nuns in the hands of their religious orders.

40. A signal example is that of a visionary beata from New Spain who claimed the carisma of bilocation; she enjoyed consistent support from the people of Queretero during two inquisitorial trials. See Ellen Gunnarsdóttir, *Mexican Karismata: The Baroque Vocation of Francisca de los Angeles, 1674–1744* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

41. For an excellent analysis of the issues related to the spirituality of beatas in seventeenth-century Madrid, see Keitt, *Inventing the Sacred*, esp. 87–113. By the seventeenth century in Italy and in Spain, the inquisitors meted out harsher sentences to spiritual directors than to their spiritual daughters; Sarrión, *Beatas y endemoniadas*, 242–48; Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*, esp. 201–2 and 223–24.

42. Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, trans. Conleth Kearns (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1980), 3 and 311. I am grateful to Daniel Bornstein for calling my attention to this text.