

CHAPTER 4

The Struggle for the Church: Popular Anticlericalism and Religiosity in Post-Franco Spain

Ruth Behar

IN THE summer of 1987 the priest of Santa María del Monte, a village in the Cantabrian foothills of Spain, told me the following story:

I remember I once scandalized a man, scared him. I was in charge of a village in the mountains, very far from here. And there was a saint, the work of a popular saint-carver, and it was very badly made; it was horrible. It was made of wood, but just because it was made of wood doesn't mean it had any art to it. Because it didn't have any. It was horrible. So we ordered another one, of plaster. Now I don't like images made of plaster, because artistically they have no value, but at least they look more normal. So we ordered another one. Someone agreed to donate it. What were we going to do with the other one? I said, this is so ugly that it's a degradation, and what we need to do is burn it. Because it's not good enough to take to a museum or anything. It has to be destroyed. So I burned it. I burned it one day. I went to the cemetery and I made a bonfire there and burned it. The president of the village saw a fire in the cemetery . . . and rushed over . . . and found me there, burning Saint Tirso. He turned white. He froze. And he said, "If they gave me two million I wouldn't do it." "Well, look, I'm doing it and it's nothing. Don't worry. We have another, better one. Don't worry." But the man was left dry. And maybe the thing was that he was attached to that saint and his faith did not go beyond the image. . . . It was hard on him, seeing Saint Tirso there, burning, it was hard. But it had to be done.

I begin with this story because it provides, quite literally, a revealing set of images with which to embark on an analysis of the changing relationship between the institutional church and popular religion in Spain since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s and the death of General Franco in 1975. This changing relationship, as viewed from the perspective of both local priests and peasant villagers in and around the community of Santa María del Monte, will be the subject of my paper.

Santa María, today a village of just over one hundred people at or near

retirement age, forms part of the constellation of small farming and cattle-raising villages clustered near one another in the central valleys of León (cf. Behar 1986). In these villages, ranging in size from fifty to four hundred people, the land, traditionally fragmented into minute fields, has been owned and worked by peasant proprietors, communal institutions of reciprocity and work exchange have been strong, and every community has, until recently, been considered a parish with its own priest. Santa María is located in the most Catholic and rural region of Spain, today known as the autonomous region of Castile-León, where anarchist ideas never took root, large landowners are scarce, and where, despite pious anticlericalism, there is the highest rate of church attendance in Spain.¹ Today in Spain only about 15 percent of the population still works on the land, a significant drop from 1950, when nearly half the population was employed in farm work (Tezanos 1986:52–53).² Thus in this paper I offer an analysis of the religious beliefs and practices of a very small minority of rural people, most of them "on their way to their tombs," as they themselves say, whose views are of interest to few in modern, urban Spain.³

To understand the meaning, impact, and implications of the religious changes occurring in places like Santa María—to understand, in other words, why that villager turned white at seeing the priest burn a saint's image—we need to view these changes from a historical perspective, taking a look at the rhetoric and reforms of the new "young church" (*la iglesia joven*) which has developed in contrast and opposition to the religious ideology and style of religiosity of the Franco period. This history, in turn, forms part of the larger history of Spanish Catholicism, which has played a central role in the formation of the Spanish state and Spanish national consciousness.

The point I want to argue here, following Joyce Riegelhaupt (1984), is that the relationship between the priest and his parishioners, especially in the village setting, is one rooted in struggle, a struggle for the church, for the "ownership" of the church. Since the struggle for the church is a struggle for power, I will focus this interpretation on the relationship between religion and power. With its hierarchy, priestly domination, and long history of disciplining the people about their faith, Catholicism seems to lend itself especially well to the perspective that religion needs to be studied not only as an expressive system but, in the words of Talal Asad, as "forms of thought and action that are taught and learnt" (1983:251). In particular, one needs to ask "what are the historical conditions (movements, classes, institutions, ideologies) necessary for the existence of particular religious discourses and practices? How does power create religion?" (1983:252).

While I am in basic agreement with this perspective, I also think we

have to be cautious about attributing too much power to the church, making our model of power relations between official religion and popular religion too top-heavy. Village people not only unlearn and reinterpret what they are taught by the church; they have, for centuries, found ways of resisting clerical control over religious belief and practice. Thus popular religious traditions, which the clergy devalue by terming them “superstitions,” have often been maintained long after the church presumed them “extirpated” (cf. Schmitt 1983; Riegelhaupt 1985). And the church has long had to struggle with the “magic” of its own practices (cf. Thomas 1971:25–50; O’Neil 1984). On the other hand, it is unquestionable that in the dialogue between a clergy ever bent on reform and village practitioners bent on maintaining continuity with the past the clergy has frequently succeeded in producing drastic changes in the discourse of popular religious cultures (cf. Ginzburg 1983). My aim here, therefore, will be twofold: while considering the particular ways in which power has created, and continues to create, religion in a local Spanish setting, I also want to pay close attention to the ways in which this power is subverted and destabilized by villagers through a complex discourse of pious anticlericalism rooted in the idea that the people themselves, and not the priests, are the bearers of the true faith.

The kind of anticlericalism I will describe here is not new nor unique to rural Spain. The reader who is familiar with Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms* will see parallels between the critique of priests made by people in Santa María today and the critique of Menocchio, the sixteenth-century Italian miller who was not afraid to tell the Inquisition that the Pope “is a man like us,” that the priests work at a “business,” and that the sacraments of the church are so much “merchandise” created for the profit of the priests. “Against this enormous edifice built on the exploitation of the poor,” Ginzburg remarks, “Menocchio set forth a very different religion, where all members were equal because the spirit of God was in all of them” (1980:17; cf. Davis 1982:326). This same notion of clergy and laity being equal before God—with the clergy actually faring worse for their hypocrisy—likewise animates religious thought in Santa María, as does a deep-rooted resistance against the hierarchical structure of the church.

While we can draw out such parallels, religious cultures are obviously not static and need to be seen in a contextual, comparative, and relational light, set squarely and fully within the milieu of a particular time and place. In particular, as Natalie Zemon Davis points out, “a religious culture should be seen in a two-way communication with the structures of authority around it” (1982:324). It is this two-way communication I hope to get at here. In the first part of the paper I focus on the discourses of the new “young church” and the Francoist church that preceded it, look-

ing at the ways priests trained in each of these religious ideologies have interacted with village people. Then, in the second part of the paper I turn to the village discourses of anticlerical critique and religious practice, letting many different informants speak so as to create a multivocal text. Finally, in a brief conclusion I set forth some theoretical statements for understanding the meaning of this two-way communication in the rural Spain of the recent past and the emerging present.

POST-CHRISTIAN PAGANISM AND THE YOUNG CHURCH

Let us return now to the burning of Saint Tirso by Don Laurentino, the priest of Santa María. Don Laurentino told me this story in the context of a discussion about the difference between internal and external images. He feels that village people grab hold too much of external images; their religiosity is based on the “fixed image,” the “petrified sacredness” of their patron saints and their processions and not enough on internal images based in deep faith in and knowledge of the Gospels. Don Javier, a Franciscan monk who used to lead the Holy Week missions to the villages, expressed much the same view, saying that village people believe fervently in the rites of Catholicism, but they don’t know why they be-



An ex-voto painting in the sacristy of the parish church of Barrillos. The text reads: “Angel Mirantes, resident of this place, without hope of living, being sick with dropsy, by the mercy of this miraculous Holy Virgin of the Assumption, may I regain my health. Year 1793.”

lieve. The faith of the peasant, in their view, is a mechanical, hollow faith, tied to forms rather than profounder realities. It is the task of the priest, in Don Laurentino's view, to help people go beyond the forms to those profounder realities: "The saint of wood is nothing more than a form. If we get stuck on it, we can get stuck on an idol, a fetish, an empty figure. This is what we have to combat."

While the Catholic church, both in Europe and in missionary outposts, has for centuries fought battles against forms of popular religion that it defined as "idolatry," Don Laurentino is here speaking very much as a post-Vatican II priest. The concern to separate religion from what is viewed as a magical view of the world in order to purify the faith is evident in the various changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council. These included the switch from the Latin to the vernacular mass, which the priest now celebrated facing the congregation rather than the altar; the new ruling reducing the fast before Communion from midnight the night before to a single hour previous to attending mass; and, finally, the major transformation in the appearance of the priests themselves, who were no longer marked by the tonsure (a shaved spot on the back of the head) nor required to wear the soutane except when performing religious obligations. These rationalizing reforms were, from the point of view of the Vatican, an effort "to divest Catholicism of much of its mystery and mysticism" (Brandes 1976:25), thereby stripping away the ritualistic accretions concealing the pure faith.

Holy Mother Church thereby hoped to make the religion more relevant to a modern, urban world turned critical of the faith by the advances of science, technology, and industrialism and turned both richer and poorer by the contradictions of late capitalism (cf. Second Vatican Council 1966). But what she did not envision, nor perhaps even think to take into account, was the reaction of the few remaining pockets of peasants. In the small agricultural communities of central and northern Iberia peasants greeted the work of reforming priests schooled in Vatican II ideas with resistance, shock, and resentment, accusing them of taking away their religion (Brandes 1976:23; cf. Christian 1972; Riegelhaupt 1973, 1984). These reforms have served to further thicken the peasant discourse of pious anticlericalism.

Don Laurentino's disposal of the Saint Tirso image—which he describes as too repulsive to engender any sort of devotion, so repulsive that it is not an image but an idol—is in keeping with a ruling of the Second Vatican Council calling for the careful but insistent removal of those images "which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or by lack of artistic worth, mediocrity, and pretense" (Second Vatican Council 1966:57). The notion that images can be judged for their "artistic" value, and destroyed if not found up to par, is certainly foreign to the

village setting; it calls for a radical departure from the traditional view of images as repositories of, and intercessors with, the holy. And, further, in allowing for desacralizations of things once holy it smudges the line separating the sacred and the profane.

Don Laurentino feels that village people are ignorant about the artistic value of the images in their parish churches. Like other priests, he has taken it upon himself to bring any images he considers worthwhile to the recently created Diocesan Museum of León; in general, for these priests popular religion is more palatable if turned into an object that one can admire from a distance, as a spectator.⁴ In one village where Don Laurentino discovered what he described as fair but not outstanding images that, if taken to León, would have ended up in the basement of the Diocesan Museum, he created a parish museum and gave the village elder a series of lectures about art history. He culminated these lectures with a tour of the village museum as well as a visit to the museums of religious art in León. For Don Laurentino, as for other priests trained since Vatican II, the priest is, above all, a teacher; he, in fact, also teaches school in addition to being parish priest of Santa María and three other villages. Don Laurentino extends his mission to teach the flock to the wider world beyond the parish, acting as a kind of tour guide on the excursions he is constantly arranging to Barcelona, to Cuenca, to Fatima, to Lourdes. He takes pride in the fact that he was the one who showed many of the retired villagers the sea, which not even their own children had done.

Village people are aware that they are at a comparative disadvantage to the priest with respect to education, and they are his eager students on excursions. While they may also accept his opinions about the artistic value of the images in their churches, they still object to the loss of the images. Frequently it is suspected that priests steal the images in order to sell them. Villagers believe that the images belong to the community. They are part of the history of the community, and priests are seen as overstepping their authority in removing them from the church. Villagers object, too, when priests change the arrangement of the images in the church, as when the former priest of Santa María, Don Efigenio, moved the image of Saint Roch, protector against the plague, from the main altar to a side altar in order to make more room for images of Mary and Jesus, which the post-Vatican II church would like to see supplant the pantheon of the saints. This action was particularly resented by the brotherhood of Saint Roch, which had helped to pay for the renovation of the main altar and expected their saint's image to be placed above it. The rulings of Vatican II caution priests against allowing an excess of statues and pictures to remain in local churches and state that "their relative positions should exemplify right order. For otherwise they might provoke astonish-

ment among the people and foster devotions of doubtful orthodoxy" (Second Vatican Council 1966:57). The images of saints, like the cults of saints, have historically been major points of contention between village people and their priests (cf. Christian 1981a), and it is part of the struggle for the church that rural people continue to wage in Spain, though the church is clearly gaining the upper hand.⁵

Lauded for, among other things, expressing the kind of social consciousness that made liberation theology possible, Vatican II is still symbolic of the church's power to create religion, in this case to change the meaning of religion; it is in this sense a worthy successor to the Council of Trent. Don Laurentino felt no need to consult with villagers before burning the image of Saint Tirso, as though burning it had been a moral imperative, something, as he says, that had to be done. He took it upon himself to desacralize the holy, shocking the villager who said he wouldn't do it for any amount of money and taking on powers that, from the village perspective, only God, and not humans, should have.⁶ The church as a whole has likewise carried out, or in the village setting imposed, the major reforms of Vatican II, radically redefining the meaning of the holy and the practice of religion in accordance with its current vision of what constitutes the true faith.

It is significant that Don Laurentino destroyed the image of Saint Tirso in the village cemetery. As he explained to me, burning it in a sacred place was a dignified way of destroying it; had he whacked the image to pieces and used it for firewood, that would have been a profanation. The death of the image in the cemetery, in the company of the souls of the village dead, can be taken as a metaphor for the mission of the Vatican II church to put popular rural religion to rest, tactfully and with dignity if possible, or otherwise enshrined in a museum case, but to rest nonetheless.

The Spanish church has responded actively to this mission, as can be seen in the proceedings of the national conference held in Madrid in 1985 bearing the title "Evangelization and Man Today" (Congreso de Evangelización 1985). The new Spanish church presents itself as a youthful church, a church full of optimism, energy, and courage; a church that is opening up its shutters and letting in the fresh and revitalizing air of change, which, in the words of the bishop of León, "we old communities need to be cured of our myopia" (Angel 1985:271). Among the programmatic changes suggested at the conference were the need to reevaluate and change religious practice when necessary in order to keep the faith in Christ alive and grounded in the realities of our historical epoch; the notion of faith as a personal choice rather than a taken-for-granted part of the world of established ideas; and, finally, the idea that, with democratization, authority is no longer conceived of as absolute and that, there-

fore, "the faith must no longer be imposed but proposed." While seeking to disentangle itself from the discourse of power and domination, the new church continues to call for evangelization or, more exactly, reevangelization, since secular trends have created indifference and incredulity and brought into being a strange kind of phenomenon: namely, what the bishop of León has called "post-Christian paganism."

Most Spaniards, notes the bishop, continue to consider themselves Catholic, whether practicing or not, almost as a matter of identity; many participate in the sacraments and rites of the church but do so "with a pagan spirit," remaining untransformed by the Christian message (Angel 1987:29). These nominal Christians, like those who have been totally dechristianized, need to be reevangelized, led by their local priests toward a more "adult faith" than that based on a catechism that ended with their First Communion. In all this there is an implicit rejection of what is perceived as the old, "myopic" popular Catholicism of the villages, based on historical traditions and social conventions.

There is, too, an explicit rejection of the outmoded orthodoxy of the National Catholicism of the Franco period. The image of the young church is being forged in dialectical opposition to the religiosity of Francoism and its particular model of the relationship between religion and power. Thus Don Laurentino, for example, blames the legacy of National Catholicism, with its "theology of fear," for instilling in people an adherence to external religious forms. From the modern church, then, let us turn back now to the church that preceded it, using once again a local perspective. Here I want to consider the conflicts that emerged in a very different historical moment between the people of Santa María and the priest who ministered to them during the later part of the Franco period.

NATIONAL CATHOLICISM

Don Efigenio was parish priest of Santa María for twenty-five years, from 1956 until 1981, in the very years when the "economic miracle" catapulted Spain, a nation where nearly half the population still lived and worked on the land in 1950, into the world of late capitalism. For Don Efigenio the public expression of religious unity and orthodoxy mattered above all else, and in particular he viewed attendance at mass as the crux of Catholicism. This attitude contrasts sharply with that of Don Laurentino, who even tells his parishioners in mass that going to mass is not the crucial thing but rather living the Gospels: "We can't go around thinking, I'm a very good Christian because I go to mass on Sundays. That's not enough. We shouldn't be content just with forms." But Don Efigenio, schooled in the enforced Catholicism of the Franco period, demanded 100 percent attendance at mass. He would often ring the bells for mass



Former parish priest of Santa María and his sister posing with a late medieval Virgin and Child in the church of Barillos.

and then, to the irritation of everyone, force people to wait in silence until he felt that a large enough group had shown up to begin. At mass he would announce how many people had been missing the previous week, and his sermons, harshly critical of the villagers' neglect toward the concerns of the spirit, went on sometimes for as long as two hours; then, during the offertory he would ask God to forgive the young for their "excesses."

Wanting his parishioners to go to Sunday mass at all costs, even if by force, Don Efigenio precipitated a major conflict between himself and the people of Santa María in the early 1970s. At that time many people were beginning to make their living from selling milk to the growing urban market in León. The problem was that the self-employed milkman arrived to collect the milk on Sundays at the very hour of the mass. To Don Efigenio's irritation a number of people would stay home waiting for the milkman rather than go to mass. He wanted the milkman to change his schedule, and the people wanted Don Efigenio to change his. When Don Efigenio learned that the milkman did not have the proper license to drive a truck, he promptly denounced him to the civil guards, who came to arrest him one Sunday. By a ruse the milkman slipped into the church, where he remained until the mass was over. When he came out, the guards were waiting for him, surrounded by the people of Santa María. The guards announced that they had come to arrest the milkman.

People immediately responded that the milkman wasn't going anywhere. Then the president of the village, in Venerable Prieto's version of the story, spoke up, saying: "The *pueblo* will take responsibility for him. If it's anything to do with the priest, take the priest before anyone. We will take responsibility for this man." And then the priest came out. And the people surrounded him. He [the president] said, 'Let's see if you tie up your shoelaces and get moving, because the one who gives us our bread is this man. Not you.'

While such defiance would not have been possible in the early years of the Franco regime, by the 1970s the village could defy both the priest and the civil guards, both of whom, in their respective uniforms, had represented the oppressiveness of that social order. The village, in this case, allowed neither priest nor civil guards to exercise their power, making it clear that when it came to defending their daily bread—in fact, the only steady flow of cash sustaining village families—they stood united. In their defense of the milkman they showed that when it came to a choice between religion and bread, they would choose bread. As the popular saying puts it, "Mass, sermon, and pepper are of very little sustenance" (*La misa, el sermón, y el pimienta son de muy poco alimento*). On the less triumphant side we can say that this defiance showed just how dependent people had become on the expanding capitalist market that had undermined the logic of their peasant economy (cf. Behar 1986:38–40).

Don Efigenio had a penchant for comparing his parishioners to animals—a use of primordial metaphors to make comment on their moral qualities (cf. Fernandez 1986:3–14) that revealed his proximity to the peasant world of his parishioners. (In fact, he is a native of the neighboring village of Barrillos, where he is now parish priest.) In his sermons Don Efigenio frequently compared villagers to pigs and calves, criticizing them, in an era of newfound prosperity, for being "fatted up with too much of the material and too little of the spiritual." When, at one particular sermon, he went so far as to compare the villagers to burros, a riot nearly broke out in the church. On that occasion one of the men, among the most devout in the village, shouted back to Don Efigenio that he should be quiet and go on with the mass. Angered in turn, Don Efigenio pulled off his soutane, stepped down from the altar, and would have headed for the choir had he not been stopped in his tracks by two women sitting near the altar. A number of people walked out of the church on this occasion. After the mass many of them were waiting to confront him, but he ran off in the other direction. In the street Don Efigenio was mild-mannered and incapable of arguing; it was only in church that his desire for religious orthodoxy would get the better of him and make his tongue fly in wild insults that he always regretted afterwards.

Don Efigenio, it is true, was fanatical to the point of neurosis, having

suffered from “nerves,” as he admits and others note, all of his life. While such theocratic priests are extreme cases (cf. Ott 1981), Don Efigenio embodied a religious ideology and style whose script was ever ready for performance during the Franco period. Don Efigenio played the part of Francoist parish priest to the hilt, and he played it as tragedy and as farce—as tragedy because he longed for a religious orthodoxy that was no longer enforceable, and as farce because, in trying to enforce religious orthodoxy by nagging and insulting villagers, he made himself ridiculous.

The Francoist style of religiosity, later disparaged by the liberal, Vatican II priests as “National Catholicism,” was based on the public display of faith in processions, solemn masses, and elaborate ceremonialism reminiscent of the Counter-Reformation church. Reacting against the overt anticlericalism of the previous Republican state (1931–1936), in which burnings of churches and persecutions and murders of priests, monks, and nuns had been tolerated, Francoist religiosity encouraged the sort of adherence to external religious forms that the reforming priests, like Don Laurentino, later criticized and sought to replace with a more internal faith. Similarly, all the changes legislated by the Republic, from the separation of church and state and the creation of secular education—symbolized by the removal of crucifixes from schools—to divorce, were undone by Franco (to be brought back again only after his death, under the Constitution of 1978).

In parts of the rural north and center, where peasants felt their moral universe threatened by the Republican government’s political anticlericalism, there had been much uneasiness and even fear about what the new secularism meant. A native Santa María woman who emigrated to Madrid after the Civil War, Polonia Robles, remembered how shocked people were in Santa María during the Republic when the schoolteacher, acting under state orders, gathered up all the religion books and burned them in a bonfire at the doorstep of the village council meeting house. She also recalled how the women gossiped around the fountain about “the new law” that decreed that one could not say “Adios” but had to say “*Salud camarada*,” because “if they heard, they would take one prisoner.”⁷ In the Basque country apparitions in 1931 of the Virgin, who admonished “Pray the rosary daily,” and later, “Save Spain,” testified to rural people’s fears about the loss of religion (Christian 1987a; cf. Harding 1988).

After the Nationalist victory in 1939 Franco consciously modeled his regime on that of Isabella and Ferdinand, the great defenders of Catholic orthodoxy, who brought the reconquest against Islam to a close with the defeat of Granada, ordered the first expulsion of the Jews, oversaw the inception of the Inquisition, and consecrated their empire, as far as the New World, to the salvation of souls (Payne 1984:177; cf. Elliott 1963;

Herr 1974). For the Nationalists their *movimiento* had been “nothing less than a holy war or righteous crusade—*cruzada* being the term they favored—on behalf of Christian civilization, with the Spanish Reconquista and Inquisition as its guiding precedents” (Lincoln 1985:245). While there were no longer Jews and Moors to crusade against in the twentieth century, in the Francoist view the Spanish body politic had been smothered by the accumulated weight of modern European thought that “had been borne, by trickery, to our soil,” as one Leonese journalist put it in 1939. “The Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, Progress, Democracy, Marxism—had poisoned Spain,” he went on to say, and through the Civil War “Spain saved itself. And it saved Christian Europe, the Christian World, Christianity. Saving itself, Spain has saved the universe. Understand it once and for all; Spain is the flower of the universe, because it is culture, because it is Spirit, because it is Catholicity” (cited in Sen Rodríguez 1987:345–346).

This fusion of Catholicism with *patria* meant, in practice, that religious rites became the rites of statehood on both national and local levels. Always, in the churches of the cities he visited, Franco made a point of entering under the pallium like the Eucharist itself. Orthodoxy was imposed on people through numerous injunctions, reminiscent of Inquisi-



General Franco entering the Sanctuary of the Virgen del Camino in León under the pallium, like the Eucharist itself. Church and state power were closely allied in the early Franco period, and religious symbols were used to legitimate the regime. Reproduced from *Diario de León*, series on “La Guerra Civil Española en León,” part 2, fascículo 8 (1987), p. 275. (Courtesy of *Diario de León*)

torial concerns, that included prohibitions against working on Sundays and against uttering blasphemies in public.⁸

In Santa María during the postwar period the village was served by the priest of neighboring Barrillos, Don Germiniano. The priest's uncle, Maximino, a well-off peasant and fervent Francoist who had married into Santa María, acted as informer for Don Germiniano, keeping a record of all those who uttered blasphemies or didn't go to church on Sundays. Until the late 1950s one had to ask the priest for permission to bring home a cart of hay after Sunday mass; and those who were heard saying "I shit on God" or "I shit on the Virgin" had to listen to mass on their knees for several weeks in the front row of the village church or pay a costly fine. This image of the priest brandishing a moral whip contrasted sharply with the previous priestly style, exemplified by Don Simón, village priest during the Republic and Civil War. When the Nationalists took power during the war and came asking for "Reds," Don Simón is always quoted as having replied, "I am more of a Red than anyone here, and I say mass." While enforcing religiosity with zeal, the Francoist approach, as village people pointed out to me, was not necessarily in accordance with Christian ideals. Don Simón had always let passing families of Gypsies sleep in the portal of the church, but Maximino always threw them out. On one occasion Justa Llamazares, a devout Catholic in her eighties, remembered how Maximino coldly locked out a Gypsy woman who had just given birth and was hemorrhaging; taking pity on the woman and her family, she herself had brought them to her house.

The Francoist glorification of Catholicism, with its explicit forging of a link between religion and power, was tied to the glorification of rural life and the image of rural traditionalism. An article entitled "The Countryside in the New Spain," which appeared in 1937 in a Leonese daily, spoke of how "the new Spain has to reorganize itself by returning to the countryside. The city no longer has anything to give. It has given what it had: vice, desperation, frivolity, and revolutionary dreams. . . . Spanish life has to be disinfected with the healthy airs that blow in the fertile valleys of our mountains and in the ample horizons of our plains. . . . Tomorrow's peasant Spain will be the source of our greatness and of our virtues" (cited in Sen Rodríguez 1987:349).⁹

One of the greatest ironies of the Franco regime is that this ideological praise for rural life culminated, after the postwar hunger and scarcity, in a program of rapid industrialization, which led to a massive exodus from the villages to industrial centers at home and abroad. Under Franco's authoritarian regime, with the aid of foreign investment (mainly from the United States in exchange for four naval bases), tourism, and the remittances of emigrants gone to work in northern Europe, Spain took a dive into the seas of world capitalism (cf. Carr and Fusi Aizpurua 1979). By



Justa, a religious virtuoso from Santa María, with her rosary.

the 1960s and 1970s the *pueblo* had become marginalized and dependent on the world beyond its borders for money, entertainment, and models of how to live a good, middle-class life, while the society as a whole, in an act of resistance against the previous social asceticism, took refuge in rampant consumerism (cf. Pérez Díaz 1987:404, 442).

At the same time that village life was being undermined, the base of village culture—religion—was being changed and ultimately undermined as well by the reforming Vatican II priests anxious to undo the damages of National Catholicism. As Stanley Payne observes, "In no Catholic society did the dramatic new doctrines of Vatican II have such a marked effect as in Spain" (1984:195). By the end of the 1960s, under the influence of Vatican II and desiring to clear its own guilty conscience, the Catholic church in Spain underwent a "political reconversion" (Pérez Díaz 1987:454), distancing itself from the Franco regime, to which it, like the Vatican, had initially granted legitimacy, and supporting the transition to democracy. Many priests, especially from the Catalan and Basque clergy, were at the forefront of domestic political protest by the early 1970s, and a special jail was even created for such priests in Zamora (Payne 1984:196–204). Following in the spirit of Vatican II, the church in Spain relinquished its adherence to the notion of religion as a monopoly

and accepted the existence of an open market for religious beliefs (Pérez Díaz 1987:415).

Thus, in a matter of fifty years the Spanish church went through an extraordinary process of change. Observing this process, one has the sensation, as Victor Pérez Díaz remarks, of seeing a drama unfold in various acts, "with changes in scene, argument, characters, and even emotional tone": from the persecuted church of the 1930s, to the exultant church of the 1940s and 1950s, to the politically reconverted church of the last three decades (1987:42). What conclusions about the church, priests, and religion have rural people drawn from this drama? I turn to this question now.

THE DISCOURSE OF POPULAR ANTICLERICALISM

Priests versus Religion

People in and around Santa María draw a sharp dividing line between religion and God, on the one hand, and the clergy, on the other. When I asked Isolina de la Puente, a sixty-year-old Santa María woman still actively farming, whether priests had any special powers, she said that a priest is a person who has studied for a particular career, like a farmer or a schoolteacher, and that they have no special powers, and certainly not supernatural powers.¹⁰ "Now who has the power? The one who is up there has it always, and will always have it. The one you have to pray to, when something happens, I bet you don't pray to the priest? 'Oh, priest, I'm suffering, save me from this! [laughing] Help me in this task, in this affliction! You ask the Lord.'" In mass, as Monserrat Verduras, a farming woman from nearby Vegas del Condado, said, one thinks about God, the Virgin, the Gospels, not about the priest. Camino Aller, a schoolteacher in her late twenties from Villamayor, went so far as to say that anyone could say the mass as well as the priests; there is nothing holy about them.

Priests are men like any other men. They are viewed as functionaries of the church and of the state, a product of the long historical connection of the two in Spain. They are men with a career, whose business is religion. As an anticlerical chant from the Republic puts it:

La iglesia es un comercio	The church is a business,
el cura un comerciante.	the priest a businessman.
Al toque de la campana	The ringing of the bells
acuden los ignorantes.	calls out the ignorants.

People are not even willing to grant priests a higher status, viewing them as their equals. Venerable Prieto, a farmer of sixty-five who has long been retired because of his rheumatism, says, referring to priests: "It's a career

like any other, and nothing more. They depend on that to earn their food and we depend on this [agriculture] to earn ours."

This feeling of equality with priests stems, in large part, from two factors: first, that in small, egalitarian communities like Santa María there is a disinclination to accept the hierarchical model of society offered by the church; and second, that parish priests in rural León are native sons from the villages, who often share the mentality of their parishioners, rather than outsiders from a different milieu or social class. In the past, young men from the villages went to the seminary in León because it was the only way to get an education, to become a professional, to better oneself. As Monserrat Verduras said, "It was like going abroad," the only way to escape the village and cease to be a peasant. Priests paid for their nephews to study, as was the case with Nicéforo Carral who went off to the seminary during the 1930s. When he returned to the village for a visit, everyone admired his nice suit; but then his uncle died suddenly, and the following day he was back, working the land. The seminaries in León were full of such young men of peasant stock. As a result, priests are not put up on pedestals, even if they are among those few in the professional class who are given the title "don." Their task is to attend to their "business": to provide the sacraments, lead the flock, and say mass, with a minimum of interference in the other domains of social life. Today, more than ever, people resent any intrusion of the priest in their private lives or in the activities of the community.

It is said that in church all priests are good and that when judging priests you have to consider what they do in church, not what they do in the street. In the street a priest is a person like any other: a man. Several people remembered how priests used to say in church: "Do as I say and not as I do." Leonardo Mirantes, a retired farmer of eighty-one who lived in Madrid for twenty years, noted: "A priest perhaps preaches one thing and then does another. Well, that's up to his own conscience. If there is anything, if there is a God, or there is something, well, then he will be held to account for whatever he has done." Or, in the words of seventy-year-old Sixto Mirantes, a farmer who still works in agriculture: "The priest's prayers are always valid. No matter what sort of person he is."

Sexuality of Priests

Aware of the humanity, mortality, and frailty of priests, people don't deny their sexuality either. María Ribero, a retired widow of sixty-five who manages the recently installed village telephone, put it bluntly: "If they have balls, if they haven't been castrated, then they can't be very different from other men." And, she went on to note, it is only when dogs are castrated that they have no sexual appetite. For this reason she felt



Nadie nos ha visto.

Francisco Goya, "Nadie nos ha visto" (No one has seen us), 1799, in the *Caprichos* series of etchings. Anticlerical satire: priests drinking and partying. (Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America, New York)

that it would be better if priests could marry. To this effect there is a popular saying: "The priest doesn't have a wife, so someone has to give him one" (*El cura no tiene mujer y alguien la tiene que poner*).

In the nearby village of Villamayor the priest who was there around 1915 had an ongoing affair with a young woman; the local children used to watch the pair kissing and hugging from a tree that looked into the courtyard of the priest's house. After the woman had a miscarriage people found the priest by her side, gathering up the blood in a bucket. In response to my question about whether anyone complained to the bishop, a Villamayor woman in her eighties, Delfina Aller, said that no one did because people felt that if he was going to have affairs that was his own responsibility. The next priest assigned to the parish also had an

affair with a woman from the village, and after that, Delfina said, the bishop punished the village by not allowing it to have its own parish priest. For decades now, before the current decline in numbers of priests, Villamayor has been attended by visiting priests from other parishes. Thus, while the priest's doings may be his own responsibility, people feel that a village can be "punished" because of a bad priest.

Resistance to the Priest's Powers over the Sacraments

Since priests are men like any other, there is a great deal of resistance against their power to hear confession, provide Communion, and give the sacraments. At present much popular, pious, anticlericalism focusses on the confession. As Venerable Prieto, among many others, put it: "Confession is a tall tale. Why do I have to go to that man who is just like me and tell him what I've done? If I tell it to him, will he forgive me?" Still, Venerable says he likes mass, and for him a Sunday is not a Sunday unless he goes to mass. But confession remains a major point of contention with priests and can even lead to a complete rejection of the role of the priest.

José Antonio Llamazares, a forty-year-old contractor born in Santa María, who has a weekend house in the village, thinks that the way to approach religion is "to take the good and discard the absurd," confession being one of the absurd things. Even Communion in church verges on the absurd—Why not drink wine and eat bread in your own house? Can things be made sacred only by the priest? In his words: "The body and all that, and when there is no body, you eat a piece of bread in your house as though you had taken Communion. . . . The water that I drink everyday, I have faith that the God in which I believe will continue to provide me with this water that is the blood, if you want to interpret it this way. Without having to go there [to church]."

Ana Mari Gigante, a native of the wheat and wine lands of southern León and José Antonio's wife, said that she doesn't believe in the act of confession because the wrongs you have committed must be revealed to another person who, being human like you, also commits wrongs. In particular she casts doubt on the ability of priests to maintain the secrecy of confession, which amounts to a superhuman injunction to rise above gossip. She recalled how her mother was raised in the house of an uncle who was a priest, and when the time came for the yearly Easter duty confession he would get together with other priests and laugh and joke about the things people had told them: "People before were so ignorant that I think if they had to make love to their husbands they would go and tell the priest how many times they had done it. And then the priests would get together, as my mother told me, and have a great time. 'Well, what

do you think, that dummy told me this, and the other one told me that.' They made fun of what people told them."

Confession, like other aspects of official religiosity, is viewed now as an institution that has been maintained in part by force and in part by the ignorance of the people, who did as they were told because they did not know any better. Much anticlerical critique today stems from the desire of people to disassociate themselves from what they perceive to be the unquestioning religious traditionalism of the past. People want to assert their modernity, a modernity that is equated with an awakening of critical consciousness. Leonardo Mirantes, the elderly retired farmer we heard from earlier, spoke of how he had little faith in the idea that if you missed mass and confessed you could be "forgiven" by whatever "penance" the priest told you to fulfill. "Do you think that because they tell me to fulfill a penance, say, to go to twenty rosaries, that with rosaries I'm going to get anywhere? If I kill someone . . . I will carry that responsibility with me always." Rather than seeking the priest's pardon, he prefers to think about the notions of conscience and forgiving expressed in the Lord's Prayer, which emphasizes the relationship between God's pardoning of us and our pardoning of one another: "Listen, if we don't forgive our debtors, how are they going to forgive us? Just reciting that is enough. I have a bit of faith in these things. I'm not one of those who goes everyday to confess."¹¹

Sin, says José Antonio, is to do a wrong and to take cognizance of it and feel repentant: "A moment comes in which you say, I did this, but I won't do it again, because it was wrong. Fine. That is your repentance and your confession. . . . It doesn't seem logical or just to me to go tell you about it. Or someone else. If I tell you about it because I want to tell you about it, but not for you to forgive me—you are like me." Only the person you hurt can forgive you, or you yourself must repent within yourself. The mere act "of humbling yourself and kneeling before something," says Balbino Llamazares, a Santa María farmer just turned sixty-five, "that's enough already. Even if you haven't confessed properly. If you go with a true faith, wanting to repent and be as good as you can, simply by that act you have done enough."¹²

If traditional confession is rejected, the whole chain—sin, confession, Communion—starts to fall apart, as José Antonio nonchalantly notes in his remarks. It seems to be the case here, as in northern Portugal, that people resist, and even deny, the priest's authority "as the sole disseminator of the sacraments," which, as Riegelhaupt had noted, "is built into the structure of the religion" (1984:106). People seem unwilling to grant the priest any sort of power over them, and especially "the power to condemn or forgive" (Riegelhaupt 1984:109), which is God's alone, *if* there is a God.

Priests versus Christ

The rejection of the role of the priest is taken to its furthest extreme in comments often made about the way priests—in this case, Jewish religious leaders—persecuted and ultimately rejected Christ. There is a fundamental mistrust of the priesthood as an institution. Leonardo Mirantes explains: "Jesus Christ didn't preach evil. He always preached good. Love of one's neighbor. Why was such a man punished? Because, my friend, the priests themselves who existed then, Sanhedrin and all of them, well, they were the ones who punished him, because, of course, he threatened them. It's the same thing now with priests. Why do they preach religion? Because if you take away all of that [if you take away] religion, well, they're left without anything."

Similarly, in a conversation about the apocalypse Balbino Llamazares said that this time "the world would end in fire," just as in the time of the Flood it ended in water, because there are so many sophisticated weapons now that we will end up destroying the world. Manuel Llamazares, a fifty-year-old bachelor farmer and distant kin of Balbino, responded that the world would end only if God wills it; though the Holy Scriptures say that there will be an end, no one can know when it will be. Balbino was more skeptical and said, "But the Scriptures, who do you think wrote them? Well, the priests did, and then it turns out that they killed Christ and now they believe in him." Manuel, who tends more toward religious orthodoxy, immediately responded that the Scriptures were written under the inspiration of God and that they are the teaching of Christ. But Balbino was not convinced.

It is interesting that Balbino and Leonardo equate Old Testament (Jewish) and New Testament (Christian) priests, treating them essentially as playing the same structural roles in relation to religion. Insofar as priests—making no distinction between Jewish or Christian priests—found Christ a threat to their institutional religion and now act as his ministers, they are hypocritical in their faith. If we follow Balbino, the priests, who once abandoned Christ, are perhaps not even worthy of the religion they profess. The implication of both Balbino's and Leonardo's comments is that it was the people who recognized Christ as the Messiah, while the priests themselves, the religious authorities who had special interests and a hierarchy to protect, failed to do so.

Given this conceptual separation of the priests from the religion they represent—this mistrust of priests as bearers of the true faith—there is a sense (especially among those brought up before Vatican II) that the priests have no right to change anything within the religion. Saturnina Llamazares, a sixty-year-old devout Catholic who never married in order to care for her widowed mother, remembered a conversation at the foun-

tain between two older women after the introduction of Vatican II changes. Commenting on the switch to the mass in Spanish and the new norm allowing women to go to mass without wearing a veil, Saturnina recalled how one of them exclaimed, "But who was the Pope to do all of this?" Saturnina pointed out that those were things people could change but that the religion remained the same. Yet she could not convince these women, true religious virtuosi, who continued to fast on Christmas Eve and Holy Thursday and continued to ask scornfully, "Who were they to change things?"¹³

More than mere resistance to change, these views are based on the idea that religious practices are divine and eternal (cf. Brandes 1976:24), not a creation of human beings with an authority structure of their own. Bene Verduras, from Vegas del Condado, whose father was the Republican mayor of the municipality during the 1930s, noted, as many others have, that religious faith has been lost because too much has been changed: "Since everything has changed, people believe less in ecclesiastical things. They say, these people [the priests], when they want to, change everything. So what remains?"

This resistance to change is not a question of mystification or false consciousness but of power: Who has the power to know what God really intends for his church? While the Pope, and consequently the priests, often act as if they "own" the church, people resist this intervention by treating it as "their church" (cf. Riegelhaupt 1984:101), finding ways to circumvent clerical control over religious belief and practice. People even doubt whether priests know everything about the religion they profess to be authorities of. They note that priests don't understand all the mysteries of Catholicism, either, like the virginity of Mary or the unity and separateness of the Trinity, which are mysteries that are beyond human understanding. Priests, therefore, are not even conceded a superior wisdom; the religion, which is greater than the priests, rises above, overshadowing and engulfing them.

RECIPROCITY AND POPULAR RELIGIOSITY

A Doubting Faith

According to the philosopher-novelist Miguel de Unamuno, only a doubting faith is a living faith. Unamuno, who was fond of quoting the Gospel passage "I believe, help my unbelief!" (cf. Unamuno 1930:34) felt that this tragic, "agonic," sense of life was characteristic of popular Spanish Catholicism. Yet in his novel *San Manuel Bueno, Mártir* (1979) he created the character of a parish priest, "the saint," who tragically kept secret the fact that he could not believe, so as not to sow discontent in

the hearts of his parishioners, for whom the opium of religious certainty gave them the will to go on living and the peace to die well. Unamuno, like many of the reforming clergy today, underestimated the doubting, contradictory quality of peasant faith. The truth is that even students of folk Catholicism have not focussed sufficient attention on the question of peasant faith (Freeman 1978). Here I will try to shed some light on this question by briefly looking at peasant ideas of death and salvation and the practices surrounding the cult of Saint Anthony.

While the discourse of pious anticlericalism would seem to make priests completely irrelevant to the practice of religion, there is one point in the life cycle of the individual when a priest is thought to be absolutely essential: at the moment of one's last agony, when one is on the threshold between life and death.¹⁴ People both fear and doubt that there is a God and they are skeptical of Catholicism's promise of an afterlife, the doctrine at the heart of the official religion (cf. Schneider and Lindenbaum 1987:2). They want to believe and yet they cannot believe. Asked in catechism class, "What is death?" Amabilia Mirantes responded, "To stretch out your legs and grit your teeth." Rather than a blind faith, people have an earthy conception of life and death, and they take a very practical "just in case" attitude toward the measures provided by the official religion for gaining personal salvation.

This attitude is given expression in the numerous stories told about nonbelievers asking for a priest in their last agony. In one story told to me by Sixto Mirantes three friends agreed over coffee that it was foolish to believe in priests and religion. Among themselves they affirmed that when one dies that is the end; there is nothing more. Then one of the friends became ill. When the other two went to visit him, they found him on his deathbed, asking for a priest to make his last confession. Hearing this, the two friends turned to him and said, "Don't you remember the agreement we came to, while we drank coffee? And he said to them, "Yes. Yes, I remember. And there may not be anything, but just in case—. Just in case. There may not be anything. But just in case, I'm going to prepare myself."

It is with this cautionary attitude toward the fate awaiting the Christian after death that many village people who grew up before Vatican II go to mass. For them the core of Catholicism is the Sunday mass and the uncertain expectation of personal salvation that being present at the weekly sacrifice of Christ may bring should there, indeed, be an afterlife and a God who judges and condemns. In the words of Balbino Llamazares: "If it turns out there is nothing, then you have lost nothing. . . . Who knows if there is or isn't something? No one. So what I'm saying is, by doing it, if there's nothing, nothing is lost. And if there is something, then one can be recompensated for it, right? In the other world." Thus, while people



Francisco Goya, "La última Comunión de San José de Calasanz," 1819. Reproduced from *Goya en las Colecciones Madrileñas* (Madrid: Amigos del Museo del Prado, 1983). While fiercely anticlerical, Goya here captures a key element of popular religiosity. There is one point in the life cycle of the individual when a priest is thought to be absolutely essential: at the moment of one's last agony, when one is on the threshold between life and death. (Courtesy of Amigos del Museo del Prado)

have accepted some of the features of official religion as taught to them during the Franco period and before, such as the importance of going to mass and of dying within the church, they have reinterpreted these doctrines in such a way that the meaning given to them by the institutional church is subverted. Here, for example, salvation is not the key idea but "recompensation," a notion of exchange or reciprocity—of attendance at mass traded for a good afterlife.

This notion of reciprocity has two sides to it. On the one hand, faith in God and the saints and proper participation in the rites and cults that honor them are repaid with the promise of a good afterlife or a request fulfilled; on the other hand, acts of profanation against the holy put the individual at the mercy of the divine hand, which is powerful when it punishes. Again, much wisdom about these matters is contained in stories "about things that really happened" and in the commentaries people make after telling the stories. Hilaria Carral, a sixty-year-old Santa María woman, told me a story about three friends who, one night after a fiesta, stopped in front of a Christ shrine and profaned it by uttering blasphemies against Christ and throwing stones and bullets at the door. Soon afterwards one of the men died, the second went blind, and the third was paralyzed. People began to wonder what had happened to make these three friends suffer such a fate so suddenly and all at once. Finally, one of the men confessed what they had done, and everyone understood that they had been punished by God. Hilaria commented:

That was a punishment. It is one thing not to have faith. You don't have faith, well, you don't have faith. But to go there and say there is neither Christ nor anyone. And boom, bullets. And stones. That is to say, I am more than you. I always heard my father say that God forgives, that God is very good. But when he gets angry and tired, he punishes. Without a stone or a stick. He would say, you got this far, but you won't go any further. Look, we are not more powerful than them. We don't understand that. That, we don't understand.

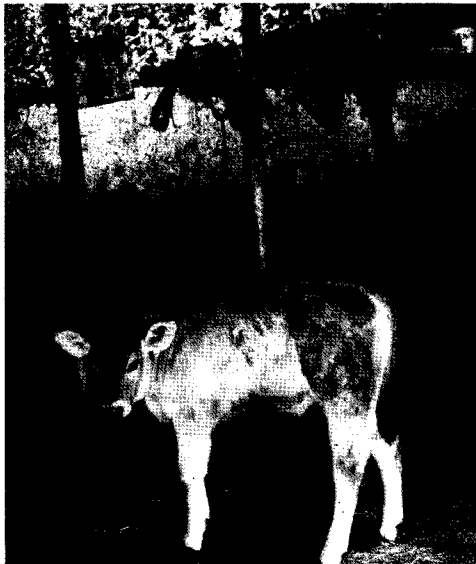
As we saw earlier, people feel that it is God that has power and not human beings; to ridicule or profane the faith is to invite God to use his power to reassert the proper order of things. Don Laurentino's burning of the Saint Tirso image, while not a profanation in his view, was from the village perspective just such an audacious taking on of power. It is for this reason that the villager claimed he could never have gotten up the nerve to perform such an act.

The Cult of Saint Anthony

In viewing their relationship with God as a reciprocal relationship people are expanding upon the kind of reciprocity that has existed for centuries between local communities and their local saints and that is vibrantly dramatized in yearly village fiestas honoring the patron saints (cf. Christian 1972, 1981a). Here I would like to discuss one particular cult, that surrounding Saint Anthony, to whom people are very devoted in the Santa María area. The cult of Saint Anthony has been given a thoroughly agricultural basis, and it fuses, in a creative synthesis that local priests scorn, belief in the two Saint Anthonys recognized by the church: Saint

Anthony, the Abbot, whose feast day is celebrated on 17 January, and Saint Anthony, the Preacher of Padua, whose feast day is celebrated on 13 June. The first Anthony left his material possessions and went to live in the desert in A.D. 285, founding the first community of monks; in Christian art he is often depicted undergoing the test of temptation with a pig by his side, and he is known as a protector of animals. The second Saint Anthony was a Franciscan renowned for his sanctity and his teaching who died in 1231; he is always depicted with the Christ child in his hands and is popularly viewed as an intercessor for lost people (especially children), lost animals, and lost things, as well as for helping women find mates.

There are three different aspects to the local cult of Saint Anthony. First, people will recite the prayer to Saint Anthony when an animal is lost or otherwise in trouble. Several people told me the story of Victoriano's burro, which got lost in the woods and returned the following day with a chunk of its hind parts bitten off by a wolf; Saint Anthony had come to its rescue but a little late, they said, because Victoriano had not recited the prayer right away. As a protector of the health and welfare of farm animals, a picture of Saint Anthony (but Saint Anthony of Padua rather than the abbot), torn from an old calendar of the Capuchin magazine *El Santo*, which almost everyone subscribes to, hangs in most of the stables. Sixto Mirantes told me about his prayer to Saint Anthony when a cow of his was having difficulty giving birth on the day that an anniversary mass was going to be said for a former neighbor:



Calf in a Santa María stable, watched over by a Saint Anthony image posted on the wall above.

The cow, nothing, there was no way. And then I recited the prayer to Saint Anthony and had faith as I've told you, the faith I have in him. I went from here to there. I took off my clothes, put on slacks to go. To the funeral mass, the anniversary mass for Emilio. I hardly took any time. When I returned to the stable, the cow was already giving birth. I just had to clean up, the cow had already given birth. All I know is that the cow was at it all day and there was no way. And nothing, nothing, nothing. And nothing was wrong with her. The cow was giving birth and it was going badly. It's going badly and we have to call the veterinarian. And that was when I tried that.

With Saint Anthony, too, the same notion of reciprocity holds that does with God. To challenge the saint's ability to care for animals is to challenge his power and provoke him to manifest it. Hilaria Carral and Balbino Llamazares told me about a man who, after losing his burro, went out into the street and rather than saying the prayer to Saint Anthony properly, did so in jest, saying, "You animals who roam the woods, with your mouths open and your tails stretched out, eat the burro which this evening has gotten lost!" The next morning, sure enough, the burro was found dead, eaten by the wolves. As Balbino explained: "He wanted to prove that the saint doesn't perform miracles. To make it reappear or to save it. Let's see if my little animal, my *burra*, my cow, will reappear. And you say the prayer the correct way and it reappears the next morning. But he said it making fun of the saint." Here, too, what is punished is not only the profanation of the holy but dissension against the religious customs of the *pueblo*.

In the recent past another facet of praying to Saint Anthony was to promise him a pig's ear or foot on his feast day and go around the village collecting more pig parts for him on the eve of his day if he interceded in one's request for help—and especially if he cured a sick pig. This custom, known as *pedir para San Antonio*, was part of a group of food-sharing or commensal customs that involved gathering offerings of food from the whole village.¹⁵ Here the social organizing principle of circular rotation so common in northern Iberian communities was followed, as occurs today with a Virgin image that is circulated around the houses. The pig parts that were gathered from all the houses were auctioned by the *concejo* (the village council) following the mass for Saint Anthony on 13 June, and the money was used to pay the priest for the mass. Thus an individual food offering to Saint Anthony was turned into a collective one, with the village as a whole entering into a kind of contract with the saint. While it is Saint Anthony the Abbot who is represented accompanied by a pig in the desert, the offerings of pork were made on the feast day of Saint Anthony of Padua—in popular religious practice the two Anthonys



Jerónima posing with a Virgin and Child that circulates around the houses of the village. The image was brought to Santa María in the 1950s by a priest born in Santa María.

have been fused into one who both protects and cures animals and brings them back home when they are lost.

On the feast day of Saint Anthony of Padua people don't yoke their cows or work with any of their animals. It is a day of rest for the animals, of thanks and veneration for the services they provide their keepers; it is their "Sunday." To work with one's animals that day is to risk having something happen to them or to oneself. Saturnina Llamazares said that once when her uncle Láutico yoked his cows and took them to gather hay on Saint Anthony's Day, a gust of wind blew down on the field and carried all the hay away, not leaving anything. Devotion to Saint Anthony is such that no villager misses the mass on his feast day, and in addition masses are requested for him throughout the year by individual families. Both Don Efigenio and Don Laurentino have sought to teach people that a Sunday, as the Lord's Day, is more important than Saint Anthony's Day; that Saint Anthony is only an intermediary with God and not the source of supernatural power, and therefore should be seen as the "cup and not the spring"; that the saints are not vengeful nor should they be treated as dispensers of miracles; that people are confusing the two Saint Anthonys; and that, finally, that sort of veneration for one's beasts of bur-

den verges on superstition. Among those older farmers who still work the land, or have worked it until recently, these scoldings are heard and even repeated. Nevertheless, the beliefs continue that give magical powers to saintly priest figures while disparaging the political and religious powers that contemporary priests dare to take on.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

Until Vatican II the Catholic church, as a hierarchical institution based on priestly domination, taught the faithful that it was the eternal receptacle of Christ's teachings. What was radical about Vatican II was that it offered, as a new orthodoxy, a historicist outlook on the practice of religion. This meant that practices or traditions that had become anachronistic in the eyes of the church could be "modified or even eliminated" (O'Malley 1974:689). There was a new recognition that religious doctrines and practices grow out of a given culture and a given historical moment, that, for example, the Immaculate Conception of Mary was not an eternal truth but a dogma that was unknown to early Christians.

To the peasant populations of Santa María and other small farming communities in northern Iberia, this new outlook was a strange kind of heresy, uttered by the church itself. Their initial shock, followed by resistance and resentment, stemmed from the fact that so many aspects of religious practice had become for them an integral part of an undisputed life-world, a taken-for-granted part of daily life, the doxa of Bourdieu (1977:159-171). While they questioned the very existence of the institutional church, the rites of Catholicism, on the other hand, as they had always seen them practiced, were eternal and divine and not something to be changed by mere humans.

With Vatican II rite and belief were moved from the domain of doxa to the domain of the contestable. For older people in the Santa María area it seemed that the church was changing everything, that nothing was being left of religion as they had always known it. This led, initially, to resistance in the form of angry statements and efforts to continue practicing religion as they had always practiced it. More recently it has led to a certain self-consciousness about religious practice that has brought about disenchantment and, on the positive side, a critical political awakening.

Leonardo Mirantes recounted how, when he took his First Communion in 1916, he went home in tears because the Host had stuck to the roof of his mouth and he didn't dare move it with his tongue for fear of biting down on it. "We used to view the Host as something sacred. Body and blood of Jesus Christ. They used to fill us with such fear, that you couldn't touch it with your teeth, that you couldn't bite it. . . . Oh, what worries. And what fear. There I was, during the entire mass, with the

Host stuck up there. Today one laughs, but at that time one didn't laugh." His aunt gave him a glass of water and he gulped down the Host, glad that he had finally swallowed the body of Christ. "We had faith, such faith in all those things."

The recognition of this loss of faith stems from a new consciousness that the church adapts itself to changing political situations and that religion and power, therefore, are inextricably linked. Juan Robles, a bachelor farmer in his forties who returned to work the land after an extended stay in Paris, remarked: "The Gospels used to be preached to create fear, so that people would be afraid, and in the past there was more fear because the political system was also based on fear." Can we say that a long history of spiritual conquests, inquisitions, and national Catholicisms has left a legacy of faith based on fear? At least in this corner of Spain many people still go to mass *just in case* there is a God who judges and condemns. As William Christian notes, the "notion of a stern God subsisted in that part of rural Spain which remained Catholic, nursed by missions, well into the twentieth century. Indeed, in the depths of the post-Civil War period it was once again dominant" (1981a:264). This conception of the "terrible God" meting out punishments, which Jean Delumeau suggests was behind "the revolt against Christianity" that began in the seventeenth century (1977:230), is today being contested in Spain by a younger generation of priests and lay people who are calling for a transformation of the "theology of fear" into a "theology of love." Juan's mother, Julita Llamazares, who has lived and farmed in Santa María all of her life, gives voice to this change in rhetoric: "Now the priests have to open up, too. They have to explain the Gospel with more love. With more freedom. So that whoever wants it will truly want it."

The current discourse in Spain about the "theology of love" stems from the church's relinquishing of a monopoly over the faith and its acceptance of a market for religious ideas. Younger priests now say that they make an "offering" of the faith to people, and everyone is free to take it or leave it. Since religion has become contestable, since one can say yes or no, many in Spain today, especially the young, are saying no to religion and declaring it irrelevant to their lives—even as the new "young church" struggles to make it relevant. To the shock of village elders unprecedented numbers of young people from the area are no longer marrying by the church, and consequently they are not raising their children in the body of the church, a state of affairs that earlier in the century was mainly typical of those who held radical anarchist ideas (cf. Mintz 1982). These elders blame the church for having lost the young by changing too much too quickly, thereby tearing down the scaffolding that kept religious faith in place.

For, despite the pious anticlericalism of peasant people in Santa María

and elsewhere, they view themselves, profoundly, as Catholics. Their discourse of anticlericalism is not an indication of a loss of religion but of a deep questioning of the institutional church as an arena for the practice of the true faith (cf. Freeman 1978:120). Theirs is, as Joyce Riegelhaupt noted, "a balanced stand-off in the acceptance and rejection of Catholicism" (1984:111). In this account I have tried to show how both the Francoist church and the new "young church" asserted two different visions of the relationship between religion and power and how people have resisted both of these visions of official religion by subverting their meaning, refusing to participate, and by developing alternative religious practices that help them contend with the problems of their own social reality.

In focussing on the relationship between religion and power, I may appear to be placing "the church" too much in the position of being "that which asserts" and "the people" in the position of being "those who resist." Obviously the interaction of clergy and laity has always been more complex and circular than this division between active and passive agency might suggest. Nor should the clergy and the laity be viewed as solid blocks of social structure but as loosely linked groups of actors who represent a broad spectrum of attitudes, styles, and ideologies. This is clearly seen in the contrast I made between the religious ideologies and priestly styles of Don Laurentino and Don Efigenio as expressed in their interaction with village people.

By downplaying the importance of attendance at mass and the cult of the saints, Don Laurentino shares and gives voice to the religious ideology of a younger, urbanized generation of village people, for whom external forms of religiosity are secondary to a deep inner faith. Older villagers, schooled in a pre-Vatican II religiosity, on the other hand, criticize Don Laurentino for being away on excursions a bit too often, rather than paying serious attention to his religious obligations. They appreciate the fact that Don Laurentino meddles less in village affairs (largely because he does not reside in the village), keeps his masses short, and does not attempt to enforce religious unity. But, at the same time, they admit to feeling spiritually and ritually shortchanged. While Don Efigenio said daily mass and rosary and celebrated all the fiestas, novenas, processions, and litanies, these villagers point out that Don Laurentino has not led a rosary since his arrival in the village. Yet even as they express their regret that religious practice is being watered down, they recognize that Don Laurentino represents a modern style of religiosity more in accord with modern life and that Don Efigenio represents a style that is as backward as harvesting wheat with the sickle, and should, likewise, be superseded. In this case, as in others, we find not a simple dichotomy of people versus priests but a slowly changing relationship. It is

a relationship set in a historical moment, rather than a dichotomy, that I have tried to highlight here.

This relationship between village people and the priests who minister to them seems to me to be based on mutual misunderstanding and a mutual devaluation of each other's religious practice.¹⁷ On the part of the people there is a continuing mistrust of priests as the "owners" of the church, and of the church itself as a power structure. On the part of priests, even those trained in Vatican II ideas, there is still an attempt to maintain an intellectual distance, a separation between the "simple" faith of the people and their "post-Christian paganism," and the "adult" faith of the priest.

We have seen how Don Laurentino continues to construe a model of "peasant religion" that represents "an 'other' against which both orthodoxy and civilization can be measured" (Christian 1987b:273). As we have also seen, village people are much more radical in their religious beliefs (I almost want to say, theology) than such priests imagine. Theirs is not at all a hollow faith tied only to external images. Aware more acutely than ever before of the larger world beyond the village, the elderly peasants of Santa María, as elsewhere in northern Spain, have internalized the modern chastisement of traditional religious practices; they experience a form of "bicultural insecurity," such that these practices become "other" to them, too (Christian 1987b:273). Interestingly, however, those aspects of traditional religious practice they find most anachronistic are not the same ones that the priests do. Energized by the religious freedom granted the laity by Vatican II and the political freedom of a democratic government, they openly question the notions of sin, confession, and Communion so fundamental to the official religion because of the excessive power over the holy that they give a particular group of human beings who are just like them. With their anticlericalism they take the precepts of the church and the desire for reform a step further than the priests themselves and make the case that, indeed, they, and not the priests, are truly the bearers of the faith.

Notes to Chapter 4

This paper is mainly based on interviews about religious belief and practice carried out among residents and priests in and around the Leonese village of Santa María del Monte during the summer of 1987. I am grateful to all the participants for speaking so frankly with me; I hope I do not betray their confidence here. My long-term research in Santa María, which began in 1978, has been funded over the years by grants from the United States-Spanish Joint Committee for Cultural and Educational Cooperation, Fulbright Hays, the American Association of University Women, the Society of Fellows at the University of Michigan, and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. I thank all these organizations for their support of my work. Finally, for extremely helpful comments and criticism on earlier drafts of this paper I would like to thank Ellen Badone, William Christian, Juan Diez, James Fernandez, David Frye, Carmelo Lisón-Tolosana, Bruce Mannheim, Mary Elizabeth Perry, Teofilo Ruiz, William Taylor, and the Anthropology Colloquium of the University of Michigan.

1. The high rate of church attendance in Castile-León has been attested to by several surveys on religious attitudes and practices that have been carried out in Spain in the 1980s. Table 1 details the results of one survey, which was conducted among farmers in six major agricultural regions. Similar results can be seen in surveys conducted among people of all walks of life, such as that on "The Church, Religion, and Politics" carried out by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas in 1984. The latter survey also elicited responses to questions about Catholic belief which seem to indicate that the difference between Castile-León and the other regions lies more in the realm of practice than in that of belief (see Table 2). For most of the questions the number of "believers" is only slightly higher in

TABLE 1
Farmers' Religious Attitudes and Relations to the Church by Region, 1983

	<i>Practicing Believers</i>	<i>Nonpracticing Believers</i>	<i>With Relatives in the Clergy</i>
Duero Basin (Castile-León)	85%	12%	48%
Rioja and Navarre	73	12	36
Lerida	42	42	27
Levante	44	38	11
Almeria	34	55	10
Lower Andalusia	28	46	10
Total	51	34	25

Source: Pérez Díaz 1987: 497.

TABLE 2
Do You Believe in the Following Dogmas of the Catholic Church?

	<i>Yes, Completely</i>	<i>With Doubts</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>Don't Know/ No Answer</i>
God Created the World	59 (63)	19 (17)	13 (6)	9 (14)
Jesus Christ is God	56 (57)	19 (20)	14 (9)	11 (13)
Existence of Heaven	50 (52)	21 (21)	18 (14)	11 (13)
Existence of Immortal Soul	46 (48)	20 (19)	19 (15)	14 (17)
Virginity of Mary	46 (52)	18 (14)	22 (13)	14 (18)
Existence of Hell	40 (41)	20 (23)	28 (19)	12 (17)
Ressurrection of the Dead	41 (42)	20 (21)	25 (19)	14 (16)
Infallibility of the Pope	37 (47)	18 (18)	31 (19)	14 (15)

Source: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 1984:309-313.

Note: The first number in each column is the percentage for all Spain, and the number in parentheses is the percentage for Castile-León only.

Castile-León. On the other hand, the number of "nonbelievers" is significantly lower, while the number not answering is significantly higher—which leads one to suspect that those who do not believe are more likely to keep their views to themselves in Castile-León, at least in a survey setting.

2. In 1985 the Spanish farming population consisted of .3 percent farm owners who employed salaried workers, 12 percent farm owners without salaried workers, and 4.9 percent salaried farm workers. The decline in the farming population has been taking place steadily: in 1950, 48.5 percent of the population was involved in farm work; in 1960, 39.8 percent; in 1970, 24.5 percent (Tezanos 1986:52-53). Also relevant is the decline in population in small communities; by 1981 only 8.6 percent of the population was living in municipalities of less than two thousand inhabitants (*ibid.*).

3. Even within the rural scene, diminished as it is, there are tremendous variations in religious beliefs, practices, and histories, and in the relationship between priests and their parishes. Similarly, within northern Spain itself there is a great deal of variation. In Galicia any description of religious life would have to take into account the elaboration of witchcraft beliefs and concepts of death linked to the house, lineage, and ancestors found there (Lisón-Tolosana 1979). In the Basque country, priests have been politically involved in the struggle for autonomy since the Franco period, so that the clergy have enjoyed much popular support (Payne 1984:196-197). In Asturias, where cattle herding and mining have coexisted for decades, there is both political anticlericalism and a keen sense of being situated in "the cradle" of Christian Spain (Fernandez 1986 and personal communication). In Santander traditional forms of religiosity embedded in the local landscape have remained strong (Christian 1972). Towards the east and south of Spain, in the more stratified towns of Aragon and Andalusia, traditions

of religious practice, anticlericalism, and antireligion have been linked to class tensions and class consciousness (Lisón-Tolosana 1983; Driessen 1984; Gilmore 1984; Maddox 1986), to involvement in political movements such as anarchism (Mintz 1982), and to the elaboration of folk saint traditions (Slater, *in press*).

4. Pulling the saint images out of the local context, they become things to behold for the price of an admission ticket to the museum, at once tied into the consumer market and lifted above it. The images cease to be vessels for dialogues with supernatural intercessors, reciprocal exchanges, and urgent requests for help and become fossilized as "art." In this sense their quality as external forms is, ironically, emphasized even more; demystified, they can be seen for what they are: just wood.

5. In former missionary outposts in Latin America the cults surrounding locally canonized "saints" not recognized by the official church have blossomed into popular religious movements. The cults surrounding Niño Fidencio in northern Mexico (*cf.* Macklin 1974) and Padre Cícero in northeastern Brazil (*cf.* Slater 1986) are two interesting examples.

6. One is reminded here of how the priest of the Portuguese village where Riegelhaupt did her fieldwork, to the shock and disdain of villagers, reburied the bones of the village dead in a football field to make room for a meeting hall that he built and controlled (Riegelhaupt 1984:108).

I wonder whether the shock of the village president might also have stemmed from the strange inversion posed by a priest destroying a religious image. At the start of the Civil War anticlericalists seeking to create a new social order not only exhumed the bodies of priests, nuns, and saints long-buried in churches but destroyed devotional objects, including works of art. Nationalist writers focussed on this "martyrdom of things," and among their most effective forms of propaganda were photographs of severely damaged religious art (Lincoln 1985:256).

7. León, during the Republic and the Civil War, was divided into two regions: the area south of the mountains from La Vecilla, taken early by the Nationalists, was basically conservative, rural, and orthodox, except for the city of León, where anticlerical magazines flourished from the turn of the century and throughout the Republic; north of La Vecilla, in the mountains near Asturias, where herding and mining coexisted, anticlericalism was stronger, and at the start of the war this area was still under Republican control. In the mountain region priests were persecuted and churches burned during the war; in the foothill region around Santa María, many who had displayed Republican loyalties were killed or persecuted, but in Santa María no one died as a result of the war.

8. Gregorio Boixo, the veterinarian for Santa María and surrounding villages, remembered how signs saying "Blasphemy is Forbidden" were posted up in bars and bus and train stations; of course, as he noted, this didn't keep people, men especially, from uttering blasphemies, at least in private, far from earshot of the priest or other watchful authorities. He found especially striking the various injunctions concerning female modesty, which enforced a strict dress code for women in the street, on the beach, and in church; in this sense, he says, Spain during the Franco period was rather like Khomeini's Iran.

9. This and the previous quote from the Leonese newspaper *Diario de León*

have appeared in the same newspaper in a series of Sunday magazine articles reevaluating the impact of the Civil War on the province of León. They form part of the critical reappraisal of the Civil War and the Franco period now taking place in Spain.

10. The Leonese image of the priest as lacking supernatural powers contrasts sharply with the Irish and Breton view of the priest as having special supernatural powers to cure as well as to harm. For these contrasts see the chapters by Taylor and Badone in this volume. Similarly, in the Alto Minho region of northern Portugal "*bruxo* priests" in remote hamlets use white witchcraft to cure diseases caused by envy, just as "old-fashioned priests" until recently used the spiritual power they gained through esoteric knowledge to exorcize "souls in pain" with Latin prayers (Pina-Cabral 1986:206–207). Throughout Spanish history priests probably always appeared similar to functionaries because of the way in which the church has long served virtually as a branch of the state bureaucracy. It may be for this reason, at least in part, that the Spanish sensibility about priests emphasizes their "business" as opposed to "magical" functions.

11. In the village setting people who are too orthodox, too *beata* (a holy person), who insist on confessing constantly and hanging around the church, are viewed with suspicion. There is a fine line between being too religious, so that people begin to say, "That one is a friend of the priest," and not being religious enough, for even while voicing anticlerical ideas people will still go to church regularly. To hang around the church too much is to set oneself up above the community, as being better than others, and the community responds by pointing to the hypocrisy of the ultrareligious person—just as it points to the hypocrisy of priests. In illustration of this point Leonardo Mirantes told me about a woman named Gregoria, who used to confess and take Communion every day, but "when she came home she would open the door so that all her chickens could go eat the cabbage belonging to others. . . . We, as children noticed this. You know, children are children, but they are always aware of what goes on. And, damn, going to Communion so much, and then she would let her chickens out to eat other people's cabbage." When two villagers argue, the first insult to be cast at the devout Catholic is always, "You who take Communion are the worst!" In line with these ideas people generally find the Jehovah's Witnesses who come to the village seeking new converts both ridiculous, because they take their beliefs so seriously, and suspect, because they are so self-certain about where lies the path to the true faith.

12. Not everyone is critical of confession. A few people suggested that it allows you to take Communion with a cleaner spirit. María Ribero says that confessing to a crucifix or image is not the same as confessing to a priest because you need to be shamed in front of another person in order to feel the sinfulness of what you did. Maribel Llamazares, a single nurse from Santa María who is thoroughly immersed in base community work in the city of León, says that she has her particular confessor, to whom she talks about whatever is on her mind every day. Clearly, however, those in favor of confession are in the minority, and, as Camino Aller points out, the church may in the future have to do away with it completely.

13. A number of people in Santa María, now in their sixties and seventies,

remembered how their grandmothers, the religious virtuosi of the past, were often more fervent about religious practice than the priests themselves. In particular, these virtuosi emphasized abstinence and penance. Hilaria Carral recalled how her maternal grandmother was constantly dizzy and faint throughout Lent because she fasted mornings and barely ate. Instead of gaining indulgences she was actually sinning, the priest would say to her, because she was damaging her health. But her grandmother, who had her own ideas, paid no heed to the priest's scoldings.

14. Lisón-Tolosana found a similar view of death and religion in his native Aragonese town: "Nobody, not even the most miscreant, dies without receiving the Sacraments unless death is sudden. To receive the last Sacraments at the hour of death is the best technique of all for securing salvation and everlasting life. The desire to survive after death, to continue existing, makes them at the moment of dying cry out passionately: 'The priest, the priest!' because he alone can satisfy that yearning for personal endurance, for transcendence. This tragic sentiment of life—thus Unamuno names one of his books—when faced by its inherent poverty and the *mysterium tremendum* of death, makes the religion of salvation the fundamental and intimate expression of religious belief in the *pueblo*" (Lisón-Tolosana 1983:310). Or, as an informant of William Christian's put it, "Those who do not die in the grace of God die like animals" (Christian 1972:139).

15. A related custom is that of *pedir para las animas*, to collect for the souls, which used to be a weekly collection of pieces of bread that were auctioned off after Sunday mass; the money went for masses for the village dead. *Pedir para los lobos*, while not a religious custom, is also similar: when a wolf was caught in the woods by a group of hunters or by the shepherd, it would be taken around from house to house hung to a stick and people would give eggs, bread, and sausage as a token of thanks for having spared their animals. These commensal customs, involving food sharing and an identification of community with food, recall the close association between feasting and religious practice that was common before the Counter-Reformation (Bossy 1970:61–62). For a recent account of commensal customs viewed within the context of Iberian rotation systems see Freeman (1987).

16. For the most part the younger people from the villages (age thirty-five and under), all of whom have either been raised or schooled in urban centers, place little faith in the saints, or even in Mary. If asked about the saints or the Virgin, they will say that in moments of distress they appeal directly to God. While the God-centered view of religion is gaining strength among the older generation as well, men and women who grew up in the pre-Vatican II era have an easy familiarity with the lore and calendrical cycle surrounding the saints and their cults that is simply lacking in their offspring. I have found that in this part of Spain age rather than gender is the key differential of religious belief and practice. While religious virtuosi tend to be female, both men and women of the older generation attend mass and take Communion about as frequently and share equally in the elaboration of discourses about the miraculous powers of saints.

17. In contemporary urban settings the relationship between the clergy and the laity appears not to be based on this kind of antagonism. Even in the village

setting the relationship between urban-educated village youth and Vatican II parish priests tends to be much more harmonious. Parish priests, even though they come out of the same rural milieu as their parishioners, acquire in their seminary training certain prejudices about the "pagan superstition" of peasant religion in contrast to the learned concept of "theology." With education, by means of which they gain a wage, priests rise to a higher status and essentially become part of a middle class, even though they may maintain some aspects of a peasant mentality. Part of the conflict between priests and village people has to be seen as a product of class conflict and class consciousness. Educated village youth become part of the same social class as the parish priest because by virtue of their education they likewise move into the middle class, leaving behind, or becoming ambivalent about, their peasant identity. But the conflict between village people and their priests needs to be seen from another perspective as well. In a peasant village, where the control of the community comes under two overlapping structures—the parish, on the one hand, and the village community, on the other—more is at stake than in the city, where the question of control is superseded by the fact that local authority is subsumed under larger structures of power beyond the province of the priest or the people. In the village setting the real stakes are political; thus the struggle for the church is played out with greater intensity.

CHAPTER 5

Pilgrimage and Popular Religion at a Greek Holy Shrine

Jill Dubisch

THE Roman Catholic church and the Eastern Orthodox church, officially separate for over nine hundred years, differ in ecclesiastical organization and points of doctrine, as well as in the geographical distribution of their adherents. The Orthodox church has no single prelate with authority over the entirety of the church but is organized into a number of self-governing local churches, some of which coincide with states and some of which do not (Ware 1963:15). Followers of the Orthodox faith are found worldwide, but the greatest concentration of adherents, and of churches, is in Eastern Europe, and within the variety of nationalities and cultural traditions represented in Eastern Orthodoxy "the primary cultural influence has been that of Greece" (Ware 1963:12). Hence the Orthodox church is sometimes termed "Greek Orthodox." Orthodoxy, in turn, played an important role in the formation of the contemporary Greek state in the early nineteenth century. Although within Greece today there is a small percentage of Greeks of other faiths, to be Greek and to be Orthodox are very nearly synonymous. Moreover, "Greece is now the only country in the world that is officially an Orthodox Christian country" (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:189). This does not mean, however, that the church and the laity are always in harmony. As in the Catholic countries of Europe, conflicts and discrepancies occur between official and popular practices and beliefs.¹

This paper explores some of the aspects of this complex relationship between nationalism, official religion, and popular religion in Greece by focussing on a particular ritual setting—the church of the Annunciation (*Evangelismós*) on the Cycladic island of Tinos, home of a miracle-working icon of the Madonna (*Panayía*)²—and upon a particular incident that occurred during fieldwork at the church—the folk exorcism of a woman possessed by the devil. The paper is not concerned so much with contrasting "official" beliefs and practices with those of the "folk," or with a discussion of anticlericalism and attitudes toward the church. Rather, it draws on fieldwork observations in order to suggest some of the ways in which "folk" or popular practice is carried out in the context of an "offi-