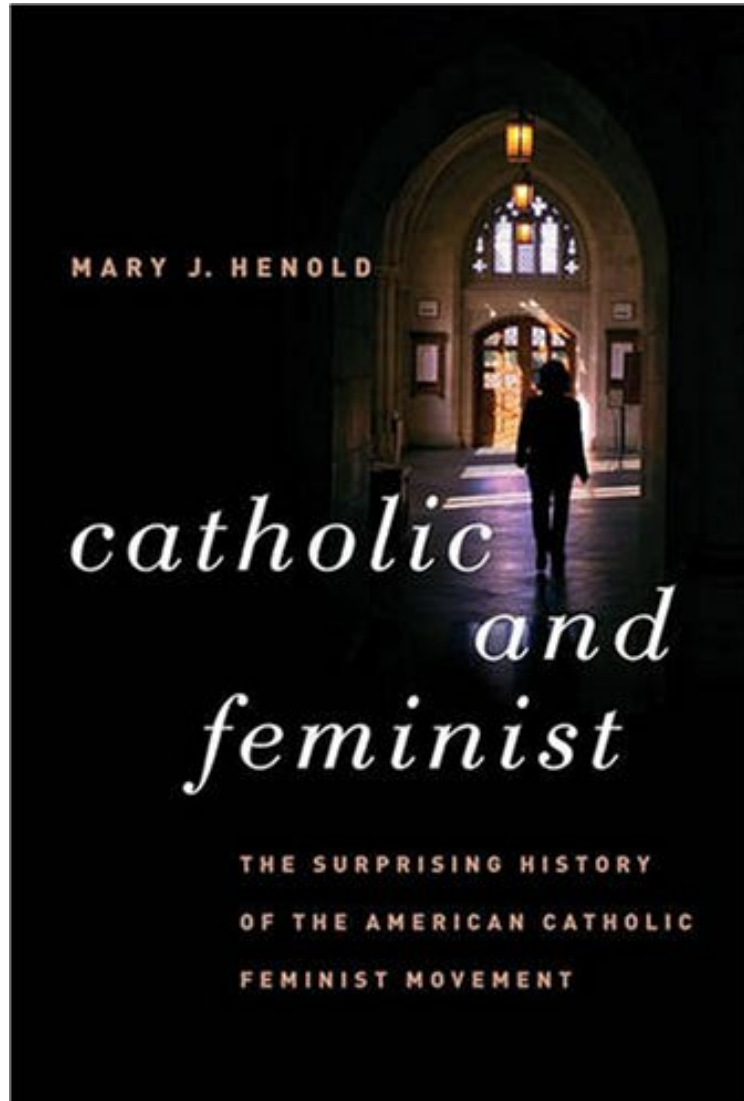


[Pdf free] Catholic and Feminist: The Surprising History of the American Catholic Feminist Movement

Catholic and Feminist: The Surprising History of the American Catholic Feminist Movement

From The University of North Carolina Press
**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#2744147 in Books .93 x 6.44 x 9.44l, #File Name: B005MWSF4E | File size: 77.Mb

From The University of North Carolina Press : Catholic and Feminist: The Surprising History of the American Catholic Feminist Movement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Catholic and Feminist: The Surprising History of the American Catholic Feminist Movement:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A MARVELOUS, COMPREHENSIVE HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE MODERN "CATHOLIC FEMINIST" MOVEMENTBy Steven H ProppNo, "Catholic Feminist" is NOT an oxymoron... as Mary J. Henold (professor of history at Roanoke College) shows in this wonderful, enlightening 2008

book. She explains in the Introduction, "I choose to approach the subject of Catholic feminism... as a historian. From this perspective, Catholic feminist viability is a very straightforward issue. The historical records of the sixties and seventies ... provides more than ample evidence that Catholic feminists existed, that they articulated a strong connection between their faith and their feminist principles, that they formed organizations to forward feminist agendas, that such organizations were networked into a larger movement of Catholic feminism, and that this movement had connections with the much larger American feminist movement.... this study asks not just IF or WHY women were Catholic feminists, but HOW and thus analyzes the nature and significance of Catholic feminism as a distinct branch of American feminism." (Pg. 3) She adds, "this book traces the first two decades of the Catholic feminist movement in America from the emergence of Catholic feminist writers in 1963, through the development of the first major Catholic feminist organizations in the seventies, to a major strategic and ideological shift that occurred at the close of the seventies. This entailed... an increased emphasis on establishing separate women's communities on the church's 'margins.'" (Pg. 9) She acknowledges, "Reluctance to believe in the existence of Catholic feminists is understandable. The worldwide institutional Catholic Church is openly hostile toward feminism and feminists. The Roman Catholic Church was and is patriarchal and androcentric; despite refusing to admit women to ordained ministry and to major positions of authority, the church does not acknowledge that it perpetuates sexism against women. Why would any feminist want to associate with it?... American feminism has tended to be led by secular feminists who have shown considerable skepticism about the feasibility of a joint feminist/religious identification. Moreover, since 1963, the Catholic Church has at times been enemy number one of American feminism... Even I, a historian of American feminism and American Catholicism, a cradle Catholic, and a Catholic feminist, had to approach my first day of research with the most basic question, was there a Catholic feminist movement in America?" (Pg. 2) She explains, "The history of this movement is not simply the story of women applying feminist principles to the reform of their faith tradition, and its institutional structure... many feminists asserted a causal relationship between their faith and feminism... Evidence from the Catholic feminist movement overwhelmingly indicates that feminism could originate in, be justified through, and be motivated by faith and religious tradition." (Pg. 6) She adds, "Catholic feminism... is not, as many in the church would like to claim a contagion brought in from outside to corrupt the faith... Rather, Catholic feminism was born of women's experiences as Catholics, their wrestling with the injustices, inconsistencies, and inspirations of their own faith traditions... They were not just feminists who happened to be Catholic. Their feminism itself was Catholic." (Pg. 15) She observes, "For some, the first choice was the most difficult: 'now that I've become a feminist, do I still want to be Catholic?' A small number of women decided, early on, that being both a Catholic and a feminist was infeasible. But for the majority... this question was less troubling ... because their feminism was growing directly from their experiences of Catholicism. This movement built its organizations on Catholic foundations by choice... by adopting ordained ministry as a major objective, the movement bound itself to the institution." (Pg. 115) She notes, "Catholic feminist spirituality was less separatist and far more overtly political than the feminist spirituality movement. Many liturgies in the seventies... appeared to be open to men... Catholic feminists ... believed they could offer new models for a renewed church as they demanded liberation within the institution.... they were still strongly tied to the institutional church." (Pg. 145) She adds, "Ultimately, liturgy provided the space where feminists could challenge, compromise, commune, and create as they nurtured the faith that gave them strength and their lives purpose." (Pg. 165) She says of the 1978-1980 period, "The era when Catholic feminists could put their hope and energy into dialogue and reform was drawing to a close." (Pg. 228) Sister Theresa Kane's personal challenge to Pope John Paul II in 1979 to approve ordination of women "marks the culmination of an era, not the beginning of one. Kane's choice of action, her message to the pope, and the way she delivered it were all characteristic of the dialogue strategy, of the kind of loyal opposition common at mid-decade... A Catholic feminist had reached the highest possible heights of dialogue; she had spoken her truth to the pope. There was nowhere else to go from there. The journey to the margins continued... Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt, the movement's most enthusiastic champion of dialogue... would no longer struggle with the institutional church. An era came to a close with her farewell... 'Goodbye, boys. You can have your church back.'" (Pg. 232) She concludes, "I suggest that the Catholic feminist legacy to the larger movement is threefold. First, the Catholic movement undeniably channeled thousands of other unreached women into the feminist sisterhood. Second... Catholic feminists were instrumental in helping secular feminists see that religious faith did not somehow make a feminist suspect.... Third... Catholic feminists illustrate for the larger movement the process of claiming a feminist identity when a woman has divided loyalties... Finally, we must turn to the movement's impact on the church itself. In the case of the institutional church, the question of legacy can be a depressing one. For those who hoped to see concrete changes... the past few decades have been disheartening... But despite its failure to move the upper echelons of the institutional church, the movement's impact has been clear... Catholic feminists slowly, quietly assumed leadership roles as pastoral associates, pastoral administrators, theologians, liturgists, directors of religious education, and seminary instructors. As the numbers of priestly vocations plummeted... Catholic women, feminist or not, took up the slack... None of these gains would have been possible without the movement's struggle in the sixties and seventies..." (Pg. 242-243) The confines of a review do not allow adequate space to mention all of the people and organizations that Henold adroitly presents; for anyone

with even the slightest interest in Catholic feminism (even if opposed to it), this book will be "must reading."

In 1963, as Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* appeared and civil rights activists marched on Washington, a separate but related social movement emerged among American Catholics, says Mary Henold. Thousands of Catholic feminists--both lay women and women religious--marched, strategized, theologized, and prayed together, building sisterhood and confronting sexism in the Roman Catholic Church. In the first history of American Catholic feminism, Henold explores the movement from the 1960s through the early 1980s, showing that although Catholic feminists had much in common with their sisters in the larger American feminist movement, Catholic feminism was distinct and had not been simply imported from outside. Catholic feminism grew from within the church, rooted in women's own experiences of Catholicism and religious practice, Henold argues. She identifies the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), an inspiring but overtly sexist event that enraged and exhilarated Catholic women in equal measure, as a catalyst of the movement within the church. Catholic feminists regularly explained their feminism in terms of their commitment to a gospel mandate for social justice, liberation, and radical equality. They considered feminism to be a Christian principle. Yet as Catholic feminists confronted sexism in the church and the world, Henold explains, they struggled to integrate the two parts of their self-definition. Both Catholic culture and feminist culture indicated that such a conjunction was unlikely, if not impossible. Henold demonstrates that efforts to reconcile faith and feminism reveal both the complex nature of feminist consciousness and the creative potential of religious feminism.

The relationship between feminism and religion is clearer now that Henold has written this important book.--Louisiana History
The first substantive history of Catholic feminism.--American Catholic
A sympathetic, well-constructed history. . . . Scholars of the American women's movement and the American Catholic Church will welcome this enlightening study.--American Studies
Superb . . . at tracing and analyzing the history of Catholic feminism in the United States. . . . Henold's research is impressive, relying on extensive archival research and a variety of fascinating oral histories. . . . An important contribution to the fields of religious history and women's studies and should be required reading in those areas for years to come.--American Catholic Studies
This book is carefully researched and engagingly written and tells a story that needs to be told. This should be required reading for any history of Catholicism in the twentieth century, as well as the history of feminism.--The Journal of Religion
Well-written and superbly researched. . . . [Catholic and Feminist] takes religion seriously and demonstrates Catholicism as an active and underappreciated force in the history of American feminism.--Maryland Historical Magazine
[Henold] is to be commended for taking several thousand bits of information and weaving them into an engaging and informative narrative without masking the complexities of interpreting a period of enormous change.--Journal of American History
A splendid history of the American Catholic feminist movement. . . . Highly recommended for all seminary, academic, and public libraries.--Library Journal
An example of feminist scholarship that deserves the name: professional yet personal, documenting assertions without hedging and offering a vision that balances the real and the ideal. . . . [Henold's] scholarship is careful, her writing style clean.--America
A noteworthy and exciting contribution to emerging studies on post-Vatican II Catholicism in America as well as gender studies and religion. . . . Catholic and Feminist is an important historical study that exposes the debates over social reform, power, politics, and religion.--Church History
Compelling reading. . . . Provides a lively, cohesive narrative for non-Catholic feminists and readers from Generation O. . . . This concise, lively, carefully prepared volume will be useful to Catholics who want to know more about their own recent past and to students of American history, women's history, and religious history. . . . Highly recommended.--Choice
In her stimulating and well-researched book, Mary Henold proves decisively that there has indeed been a vibrant movement of Catholic feminism since the 1960s. It has changed with the frustration of its original reformist goals, but it still impacts Catholics who continue to pursue a vision of an inclusive church on the inside and outside edges of institutional Catholicism.--Rosemary Radford Ruether, Claremont Graduate University and School of Theology
Catholic and Feminist captures the important story of how Catholic feminists in the 1970s and 1980s formed new relationships with a church that had given them both inspiration and pain in equal measure. Henold's writing is as animated and compelling as the women whose stories she documents. It is sophisticated yet accessible, thorough yet lively. This important study lays a fresh foundation for understanding the post-conciliar trajectory of American Catholicism.--Amy L. Koehlinger, Florida State University, author of *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s*
This engaging study reveals the unexpected sources of modern feminism in Catholic faith, as well as the centrality of feminism to the faith of many Catholic women. Anyone who thinks they know the story of the American women's movement or of modern American Catholicism should read Mary Henold's book.--Ann Braude, director of the Women's Studies in Religion Program at Harvard Divinity School and author of *Sisters and Saints: Women and American Religion*
Henold deftly interweaves cultural context, the history of the American feminist movement, individual experiences, and organizational histories, providing a multi-faceted approach that layers the story. For many people, scholars included, the label 'Catholic feminist' is still an oxymoron. Because the topic challenges stereotypes and provides new, interesting material on a little-known group of feminists, this book will appeal to a broad audience both inside and outside the academy.--Carol K. Coburn, author of *Spirited Lives: How*

Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920
Feminists are the hope of the Catholic Church. I applaud Mary Henold for her scholarship, her insight, and her vision. Catholic and Feminist shows the way that women can take the best of our traditions to shape our church and make it the moral anchor that we need.--Kathleen Kennedy Townsend
About the Author
Mary J. Henold is associate professor of history at Roanoke College.