

Zeitschrift: Theologische Zeitschrift
Herausgeber: Theologische Fakultät der Universität Basel
Band: 33 (1977)
Heft: 6

Artikel: Jansenists and Enlightenment : the Attitude of "Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques" toward Josephinist Religious Toleration
Autor: O'Brien, Charles H.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-878523>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 27.04.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Jansenists and Enlightenment

The Attitude of “Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques” toward Josephinist Religious Toleration

In the eighteenth-century controversy over the right of religious dissent, Jansenism and Enlightenment would appear to be mutually exclusive positions. The coeditor of the *Encyclopédie*, Jean Le Rond d’Alembert, implied as much in a brochure written after the suppression of the Jesuits in 1765. Speaking for most Philosophes, he warned that if “the wretched posterity of Port-Royal” were in power, they would surely “exercise over books, minds, discourses, and morals the most virulent kind of inquisition”.¹ The century’s humane spirit, however, had touched Jansenists more than d’Alembert could be expected to notice. Their quasi-official voice, *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, expressed genuine tolerance in its comments on a religious crisis in the Habsburg monarchy. The journal revealed a perspective on religious dissent that was neither fanatical nor virulent, but “enlightened” in a manner appropriate to its theological tradition.

Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques was led to the issue by its significance for the church.

1.

The *Habsburg monarchy* was the only Roman Catholic country with a large, powerful *Protestant minority*, especially in the Kingdom of Hungary, which had long enjoyed civil toleration. The Austrian-Bohemian Crown Lands, moreover, belonged to the triconfessional politico-religious system of the Holy Roman Empire. They also harbored a considerable number of hidden Protestants. Hence, when serious agitation for religious freedom broke out in 1777, the journal turned attentively to the efforts of Maria Theresia and her son, Joseph II, to find a solution which pacified the Protestants while preserving the state church’s essential prerogatives. The editors realized that the resolution of this issue in a major Catholic state was likely to affect the Catholic church as a whole.

The same issue also agitated France. The kingdom’s small Huguenot minority, outlawed and politically impotent, benefitted from the progress of “enlightenment” among the privileged, ruling classes. A mounting flood of *Philosophe* literature, such as Voltaire’s defense of Jean Calas, influenced public opinion in favor of civil toleration of Huguenots or at least legal recognition of their marriages. This development disturbed French Jansenists mainly because it seemed rooted in re-

¹ Jean Le Rond d’Alembert, *Sur la Destruction des Jesuites en France . . .* (1765), quoted in Dale Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits from France, 1757–1765* (1975), p. 216.

religious indifference or anti-Catholic bias.² *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*' interest in Austrian developments was prompted partly by repercussions they might have in France.

In contrast to concerns which Jansenists might share with other Catholics, the editors were also drawn to a special instance of religious dissent involving members of their own movement in Holland. In the 1770's, as the Society of Jesus declined and fell, the journal mounted a campaign for reconciliation between the Church of Rome and the Church of Utrecht, theologically Jansenist but schismatic since early in the century. The editors' arguments for toleration of Dutch Jansenists touched at certain key points the broader issue of toleration among Christians.

These several diverse reasons predisposed *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* to pay close, generally favorable attention to Joseph II's civil toleration of Lutherans and Calvinists in his Austrian and Bohemian lands. But the theological "enthusiasm" peculiar to Jansenism inclined the journal to train a wary eye on the justifications of the Emperor's reform, presented by its partisans.

In 1777 *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* took up the issue for the first time, reporting the beginning of a crisis in Moravia, an open declaration of Protestant belief by thousands of peasants provoked by a perfidious local inquisition.³ Maria Theresia rejected the suggestion, proposed by several prelates, that troops force the mutinous peasants to profess the Catholic religion. Instead she commissioned Marc Anton Wittola, author of the journal's account, two enlightened priests, Kindermann and Hay, as well as Baron Kressel, a State Councillor, to try persuasion. They adopted the view that the peasants were not true heretics, that schism was a greater evil than error and that threats and violence should be replaced by instruction, patience and good example. After several months in the province, the commission could reassure Maria Theresia that the peasants were pacified if not converted. During the last three years of the Empress' reign, however, there was little else to report. The peasants remained irreconciled to the Catholic church, while the government balked at toleration, the only alternative to force.

Shortly after Joseph's accession to the throne in November, 1780, the journal turned its attention again to the problem of religious dissent, alluding with approval to his tolerance in Hungary.⁴ It also reported ironically the plea by Cardinal Frankenberg, Archbishop of Malines, June 20, 1781, against the forthcoming toleration of Protestants in the Austrian Netherlands.⁵ It would contribute to the growth of heresy, contended Frankenberg, since zeal for the true religion is weakening only too visibly. The editor turned this argument against the cardinal: "Bish-

² See Clément du Tremblai to Dupac de Bellegarde, June 11, 1778, Rijksarchief Utrecht, Port Royal (= RAU-PR) 2207-3, concerning agitation in Paris for legitimizing Protestant marriages.

³ *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, February 6, 1778. The article was drawn from two letters from Wittola to Dupac, October 28, 1777, and January 17, 1778. RAU-PR 2583.

⁴ *Ibid.*, August 14, 1781. Cf. Wittola to Dupac, February 10, 1781.

⁵ *Ibid.*, February 6, 1782.

ops speak about the feebleness of their churches as if they were strangers or were not themselves responsible.”

The promulgation of the Emperor's Edict of Toleration in October, 1781, prompted the journal to offer its own point of view on the treatment of dissenters, May 15, 1782, under the heading, “Vienna”.⁶ The author first identifies “civil tolerance”, allowing non-Catholics to worship together privately and exercise civil rights. “Even the most enlightened Catholics would not object”, he remarks, “so long as it is not pushed too far.”⁷ Citing the Gospel and the history of the church, he contends that the true spirit of Christianity calls for good example and other means of working upon the heart instead of violence in dealing with peaceful and loyal citizens, “separated from the true church”.

The author also reaches this conclusion from historical experience and empirical psychology rather than from contemporary concepts of natural law or respect for the human person. Nature as a universal, prescriptive norm is ill-suited to the Jansenist cast of mind, inclined to consider nature under its operative, fallen aspect. Furthermore, as unredeemed, it cannot serve as a claim to “personal dignity”. Sanctifying grace alone makes a person truly worthy, a quality essentially lacking in anyone separated from the true church. Finally, nature in the prescriptive sense was inappropriate because Jesuit theologians and philosophers had given it a false connotation of relative or absolute autonomy. The Jansenist author, therefore, argues for civil tolerance on the pragmatic grounds that coercion is an ineffective means of conversion. He does not entirely exclude its use.

While *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* readily endorses civil tolerance under suitable circumstances, it adamantly condemns “ecclesiastical or theological tolerance”. This “false point of view”, explains the author, “attributes to everyone the faith, sanctifying grace and eternal happiness which Christ has promised only to those incorporated into His unique and legitimate spouse”. The journal directs the principal thrust of its argument against the Jesuits, whose position on the two kinds of tolerance is precisely contrary to the mind of Christ and the Church. The author claims, “No one has ever been more willing than the Jesuits to accord salvation to all sectarians, and at the same time more ardent in persecuting whoever does not think as they do.” Jesuits teach theological toleration through the concepts of “in-

⁶ Only the last two factual columns of the article are from the local correspondent, Abbé de Terme. The preceding five analytical columns are probably by Dupac, the journal's editor for central Europe since 1779. Cf. Dupac to Clément du Tremblai, October 4, 1779. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 4985.

⁷ Jansenists connected with *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* thought privately that the Emperor had conceded more civil rights than necessary or desirable. In a letter from Louvain to Dupac, October 7, 1781, Josse Le Plat hoped that Protestants would not be granted employment in the magistracy. RAU-PR 2344. The same concern was expressed by Abbé Pressigny, writing from Liège, to Dupac, January 10, 1782. RAU-PR 2476. He feared that this concession would upset especially the people of the Austrian Netherlands “whose privileges and customs are firmly opposed to such arrangements”. In a letter to Dupac, October 18, 1781, Clément du Tremblai airs his anxiety concerning the Edict's unsettling effect on the rural population; he expects “un grand cahos”. RAU-PR 2207.

direct communion” and “implicit faith”, which they acknowledge in idolaters, infidels, schismatics and heretics. In fact, the Jansenist author observes, such “faith” is at best the self-satisfaction of those who imagine that they have done everything they should, “the effect of voluntary ignorance and a corrupt heart”. Opposed to this lax theology of toleration are the Fathers of the Church, as well as modern authors, such as Johann Zeinsmeister, Canon of Spalt in Franconia, who adhere strictly to the principle, “extra ecclesiam nulla salus”. Jesuit theologians, claims the journal, implicitly reduce the church to a confraternity, perhaps more privileged than schismatic societies but not necessary for salvation.

This attack upon the suppressed society’s position on religious dissent is a polemical function of deeper seventeenth-century theological conflicts concerning grace and free will. An unpublished dissertation from the 1760’s echoes the opposing viewpoints on the principle, “extra ecclesiam nulla salus”, closely related to the issue of religious toleration. Probably written by Dupac to expose semi-Pelagian reasoning in the Sorbonne’s condemnation of Rousseau’s *Emile*, his work could well have served as a basis for the journal’s editorial position on Joseph’s policy toward Protestants.⁸ By allowing for the author’s Jansenist bias, it is possible to construe correctly the main lines of Jesuit doctrine. It is distinguished from other schools of thought by its stress on human freedom and God’s universally salvific will. Jesuit theology teaches that God offers sufficient actual as well as habitual graces to enable everyone to be saved. The damned are fully responsible for their fate for they reject God’s offer. Protestants and other schismatic Christians present a special problem. Although baptized into the church as infants, they would seem to fall away when they reach adulthood. The Jesuit theologian, however, has God give them the opportunity to remain in “indirect communion”. If they reject His offer, they commit the crime of schism, which formally separates them from the church, and they are lost. The idea of “material schism” is virtually subsumed by that of implicit membership in the church.

Against the Pelagian implications of the Jesuit position, the Jansenist theologian argues that God provides truly sufficient, efficacious grace only to those whom He has chosen for salvation through His church, a visible community of faith and sacrament. It has no “implicit” members; anyone outside will be damned. “Simple” schismatic Christians might indeed be innocently ignorant of the church’s teaching. But they suffer damnation nonetheless because they lack the efficacious graces necessary for fallen man to live in a manner pleasing to God. That necessity, argues the Jesuit, is simply extrinsic, i.e. required by divine positive law. Salvation is possible for non-Catholics inculpably unaware of God’s command. The Jansenist, however, asserts that the necessity is also intrinsic. Outside the visible church man has no choice but to live according to his fallen nature.

These theological differences helped to determine the attitudes of Jesuits and Jansenists toward the Emperor’s policy of religious toleration. True, they shared

⁸ The unsigned manuscript in Dupac’s hand is found among his papers. RAU-PR 1876. Its argument fits well into his theological system.

certain reasons for opposing toleration or limiting its extent. Both feared that it would expose the faithful to dangerous errors and might undermine respect for the church. But in virtue of his theological position a Jesuit could use much more easily than a Jansenist the principle that criminal schism should be punished rather than tolerated. For the Jesuit, the crime of schism is a question of fact: Is the non-Catholic culpably ignorant of the divine positive law to join the church? Since empirical investigation was scarcely feasible, a Jesuit theologian might raise or lower the presumption of guilt depending on needs of the church or the Society of Jesus or on personal inclination. Hence he could be either rigidly intolerant or virtually indifferent. In contrast, a Jansenist could not regard simple schismatic Christians as "criminal" since he repudiated the idea of efficacious grace outside the church. They are outside because God has not called them in. It was inappropriate, therefore, to "compel them to enter" or to punish them for remaining outside.

In the controversy aroused by the Emperor's Edict of Toleration Jesuit spokesmen without exception opposed civil tolerance. Among their strongest voices was the Augsburg polemicist, Alois Merz, whose writings were reported to *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* by de Terme. The journal criticized Merz for arbitrary judgment motivated by personal fanaticism. In other instances the journal attributed Jesuit intolerance to arrogant, corporate self-interest. For more than a century Bohemian and Moravian hidden Protestants had been subject to visitation by Jesuit missionaries and had been served by Jesuit-educated clergy. Hence, the journal implies, Jesuits opposed toleration lest it expose their failure.

Whatever its motives, the Society of Jesus in late eighteenth-century Central Europe resisted every effort to lessen the necessity of joining the church. While arguing for "implicit faith" and "indirect communion" at the level of theological principle in order to "save" God's justice from seeming purely arbitrary, Jesuits applied severe restrictions to the possibility of erring in good faith. Non-Catholics, especially Protestants, who heard the truth from the church but did not accept it, were presumed to have sinfully rejected.⁹ The Jansenist journal conceived its position, however, as a middle way between the Scylla of theological indifference and the Charybdis of unchristian zeal for persecution. On the one hand, strict construction of the principle "nulla salus" was the only way to make Catholics resolute in their faith and to bring dissidents back to the church. On the other hand, charity as well as respect for the common good and for the laws of the prince obliged Catholics to live with tolerated dissidents according to the rules of civil society and to avoid shocking them with odious names and offensive actions.

⁹ Cf. Alois Merz, *Was ist die Kirche?* (1785), pp. 27, 48–49. This view was not peculiar to Jesuits. Pius VI expressed it, May 16, 1787, in a letter to Bishop Herberstein of Laibach, in F. Maass (ed.), *Der Josephinismus*, 2 (1953), p. 477. See also the anti-Josephinist tract, *La Tolérance chrétienne opposée au Tolérantisme philosophique* (1785), p. 52, by Canon Jean Pey.

2.

Since the Emperor's *Edict of Toleration* had been described by many secular newspapers, the Jansenist journal dealt only with its effects upon the church.¹⁰ To counteract false reports of Catholic defection, circulated by ex-Jesuits, *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* pointed out that most of those taking advantage of the edict were hidden Protestants: "The edict merely unmasks their hypocrisy and prevents their profanation of holy things."¹¹ The journal again placed most of the blame for discontent with the Catholic church especially in Bohemia and Moravia on ex-Jesuits, whose influence over the local clergy kept the Bible from the people in spite of a royal mandate.

The editor did more than reassure his readers that the Edict was not hurting the church. Reviewing Cardinal Frankenberg's pastoral letter for Lent, 1782, the Jansenist discovered an opportunity to point out positive benefits of the new civil tolerance. Viewing the matter from its best side, the archbishop observed that contact with religious dissenters tests the Catholic's zeal, charity and love for religion. But, he added, it also provides opportunities "to manifest the gentleness, the moderation and the charitable sentiments of that tender mother the church, toward those children whose misfortune she deploras and whose loss she regrets".¹² In a rare gesture of unqualified approval *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* applauded the Cardinal: "Tolerance could not be presented in a more favorable light nor more true and conformable to the spirit of the church."

Two months later, August 7, 1782, the journal discussed the proper limits of tolerance, arguing in favor of the new policy, not as desirable in itself, but as the lesser of two evils. Since all other remedies had failed, the only alternatives to tolerance were emigration, sedition or continued hypocrisy among the hidden Protestants.¹³ The journal was pleased that the Emperor had set reasonable restrictions on the new liberty. The mandatory procedure for changing religion offered magistrates an opportunity to dissuade people from hasty or capricious decisions. A minimum number of 500 persons was required for organizing a congregation and building a "temple". The congregation had to build at its own expense, as well as continue to pay the Catholic pastor customary stole fees. These modifications of the Emperor's policy, observed the editor, were designed to hold the "prétendus réformés" subordinate to the "religion dominante". Hence, if the Catholic clergy fulfilled its duties, it had nothing to fear from civil tolerance.

¹⁰ Dupac was regularly and accurately informed about the Emperor's ordinances on toleration by Msgr. Dominicus Bettini of Passau, his business agent in southern Germany. Cf. their weekly correspondance in late 1781 and early 1782. RAU-PR 2074.

¹¹ *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, May 29, 1782. In this article, Dupac paraphrases closely a dispatch from Brünn, Moravia, November 24, 1781, by Wenceslaus Schanza. Also, March 26, 1782. He reassured Dupac, March 1786, that the thousands "leaving" the faith in Bohemia had for generations merely simulated it. RAU-PR 2516.

¹² *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, June 5, 1782.

¹³ *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* follows closely Schanza's report to Dupac, March 26, 1782. RAU-PR 2516.

Episcopal response to the Edict disappointed the Jansenist editor, who found prelates wrecked in both the Charybdis of intolerance and the Scylla of indifference. Count Chorinsky, Bishop of Brünn, provincial capital of Moravia, did nothing to implement the new policy or to remedy abuses. A friend of the defunct Society of Jesus, he merely issued a "pitiful" pastoral letter, wringing his hands in anxiety. At the other extreme, Johann Nepomuk Hay, Bishop of Königgrätz in Bohemia, wrote a scandalous pastoral letter in favor of tolerance. To court the Emperor's favor, asserts the journal, Hay has exceeded all permissible limits in the concessions he has made to heretics and even to heresy. Rightly offended by "this criminal adulation", the Emperor has strongly disapproved the pastoral letter and reprimanded the prelate. Furthermore, Joseph has ordered all bishops to advise their clergy to strive with prudent charity to bring back the erring, to visit sick Protestants without waiting to be called, but to refrain from harshness and indiscreet solicitations, which alienate hearts rather than win them.

The highly uncomplimentary references to Hay's pastoral letter are puzzling. Why did the journal publish a personally injurious, exaggerated report concerning one of the few prelates whose pastoral ideals were akin to its own? The passages were drawn essentially from Schanza's dispatch to Dupac, March 26, 1782, from Brünn. Neither this letter nor the rest of their correspondence, which never otherwise refers to Hay, offers any explanation for the attack. The editor was aware that this was the same Hay who had accompanied Wittola, Kindermann and Kressel to Moravia in 1777 to pacify the peasants agitating for religious liberty.¹⁴ Maria Theresia had rewarded his excellent service by raising him to the vacant see of Königgrätz, a diocese that was also troubled by religious unrest. Wittola, who enjoyed the editors' confidence, held the new bishop in high regard, referring to him as his proselyte. On February 5, 1783, Wittola informed Dupac that the journal was entirely wrong in reporting that the Emperor reprimanded Hay for his pastoral letter. Since this account doubly offends the "good bishop", it should be repudiated. However, the journal seemed to place greater trust in Schanza than Wittola, for it never retracted the statement.¹⁵

The editors and associates of the journal were also most likely influenced by a copy of the pastoral letter which Dupac circulated among them prior to Schanza's dispatch.¹⁶ From their theological position on tolerance they would have found the

¹⁴ In an fifteen-page report to Dupac on this mission, 1777, Melchior Blarer refers to Hay several times with respect. RAU-PR 2076. Blarer's judgment usually enjoyed great credit in Jansenist circles.

¹⁵ In a letter to Clément du Tremblai, February 25, 1782 (Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, ms. 4985), Dupac indicates that he first learned of Hay's "scandalous" pastoral letter displeasing Joseph from a friend in the Empire, writing in Latin, February 9, 1782, who called Joseph a "second Henry VIII". This unflattering analogy is used by only one of Dupac's correspondants, Kaspar Karl, July 5, 1786, and October 15, 1786. With Schanza at Brünn and Olmütz from the 1770's until 1785, Karl must have known the bishop. Dupac wrote to Schanza probably seeking confirmation of the story.

¹⁶ February 24, 1782, Josse Le Plat, professor of canon law at Louvain, asked Dupac for a copy of the pastoral letter, translated in Holland. March 17, 1782, Le Plat acknowledged receipt of the translation. RAU-PR 2516.

letter reprehensible. First, it might well appear to be “an effort to court the Emperor’s favor”. Its opening passages could have come from an author in the German school of *Camerawissenschaft*, perhaps from Joseph Sonnenfels, Hay’s brother-in-law. The bishop explains that the Edict should gather together the previously divided citizens of the monarchy into one Christian family. He also stresses divinely prescribed “unlimited obedience” to rulers but overlooks the submission Catholics owed to the laws of the church. The Jansenist editors might indeed conclude that the bishop implicitly denies that the church is a perfect society.

The journal secondly objects that the letter made excessive concessions to heretics. The editor alludes to a passage enjoining the Catholic clergy from visiting sick Protestants uninvited. Shortly after the letter was published the Emperor permitted the practice as the journal correctly reported. It seems excessive, however, to regard this concession as a personal rebuke to Bishop Hay. It is consistent with Joseph’s other measures to reassure the Catholic clergy and laity that the new policy would not injure the church. Finally, Hay’s pastoral letter is accused of concessions to heresy as well as to heretics, for it suggests that the Roman Catholic church is not the sole custodian of divine revelation.¹⁷ Hay never refers to a tolerated confession as “false”, as an orthodox Catholic would have done, but merely as “a religion different from ours”, as “people who think differently from us”.

The significance of this incident lies in the contrast it offers between Jansenism’s keen sensitivity to theological issues raised by civil toleration and the more pragmatic Josephinian mentality. Hay and other Josephinists manifested the quality of their faith by the way they addressed themselves to pastoral care. At their best, in the spirit of Ludovico Muratori’s “True Devotion”, they tried to improve the common Christian’s religious understanding, schooling him in fraternal charity and other essential moral practices.

The first comprehensive expression of the journal’s point of view is an editorial *homily*, January 2, 1783, probably by *Dupac*.¹⁸ During the preceding two years the journal had pursued mainly a negative objective, to refute indifference and other false ideas of tolerance. It now attempted to construct a specifically Christian rationale. In the introductory text, Luke 9, 54–56, Jesus reprimands the apostles James and John for wanting to call down fire upon a Samaritan city which refused to listen to the Gospel. He reminds them that He has come, not to destroy souls but to save them. His followers, the Jansenist author observes, must remember this lesson. Loving even their enemies, they should lead men to salvation by no other means than “exhortations, beneficence and patience”. The first preachers of the Gospel were filled with a gentle, charitable spirit. But, after the conversion of the emperors, the homily continues, the church was flooded by carnal-minded persons

¹⁷ The verdict was not unanimous. In a letter to Clément du Tremblai, March 11, 1782, Dupac reports that a colleague read the pamphlet for theological accuracy and found it good, except concerning administration of the sacraments and burial. Paris, Bibl. de l’Arsenal, ms. 4985.

¹⁸ The homily was “very well-received” in Vienna. Henri Koeune (for de Terme) to Dupac, February 8, 1783. RAU-PR 2303.

“more Jewish than Christian”. Its discipline changed to severity and constraint, expressed in the crusades, the military religious orders and the inquisition. Pastors exercised toward the faithful a domination and rigor which Christ expressly forbade in his disciples. The faithful consequently forgot filial obedience and became rebellious. Christian princes felt obliged to force people to submit to the church’s authority, hence their penal laws against heretics, apostates and even true children of the church. The true duty of Christian princes, however, is to exercise “paternal rather than royal power”. They must not render religion odious by supporting it in a manner opposed to its nature. Out of respect for St. Augustine, who held ambivalent views on coercion, the homily concedes that moderate penal legislation can help to persuade the erring to listen to the truth. History teaches, however, that the church probably benefits most when princes are content with preserving justice and public order.

The homily leans on the authority of Jansenism’s principal modern theologian, *Antoine Arnauld*, who reduces the problem of dealing with heretics to four maxims. First, the death penalty for heresy is contrary to the spirit of the church. Second, other penalties are reasonable and just only when based on a legal verdict, preceded and accompanied by instruction, and applied only in cases of culpable error and when the erring wish to force their false doctrine on the faithful. Third, this penal authority is rooted simply in the sovereign’s right to protect “integrity of morals” and public tranquility. Fourth, persons “seduced” or raised in a heresy already established and legally tolerated should be treated more gently than “sectarian leaders or seducers”. Had these rules been observed in the past, contends the editor, there would be fewer complaints about Catholic bitterness and hostility. The erring would be less obstinate and have fewer pretexts for sedition and revolt.

Countries where Catholicism alone is professed publicly are fortunate. Sovereigns should preserve such an important advantage for their subjects as long as possible. For religious diversity leads to indifference. The heterodox lose any incentive to seek instruction, while Catholics become insensitive to the predicament of those outside the church. Catholic doctrine, insists the editor, excludes from salvation those who die in schism or in heresy. Hence, nothing is more desirable than to unite Christian tolerance toward those in error with wise, enlightened zeal to save them. The faithful should cultivate in themselves these religious incentives rather than the human motives which lead sovereigns to establish civil tolerance.

This sharp distinction between political and theological tolerance appears to have been prompted by Josephinist concessions to dissenters in the Habsburg monarchy. The homily’s warning against indifference recalls Bishop Hay to mind, the only prelate criticized for professing “human” rather than theological reasons for tolerance. The editor also implicitly compares the Habsburg monarchy with France, contrasting the former’s religious diversity which justifies civil tolerance, with the latter’s more fortunate exclusive public profession of the Catholic religion. The Emperor’s policy should not serve as a model for France.

3.

A clear *echo* of Dupac's homily can be detected in an article, January 30, 1783, repeating many phrases within the same conceptual framework. The Jansenist author refrains from discussing the Habsburg government's policy of civil tolerance: "This arrangement concerns politics more than theology, and its legitimacy depends a great deal on local circumstances with which we are insufficiently acquainted."

He judges, however, the growing literature defending it, notably the rather lengthy, diffuse Latin treatise by Johann Nepomuk *Bartholotti*, a minor Josephinian intellectual.¹⁹ He draws essentially the same parameters of tolerance as the Jansenists: it should not endanger orthodox doctrine or the salvation of souls. These should be safeguarded with measures appropriate to circumstances of time, place and person, as well as to the well-being of church and state. He recognizes therefore that the necessity of tolerance is conditional rather than absolute. It should cease when it is no longer required.

Although generally favorable to the treatise, the Jansenist editor objects to its ambiguity on the use of force against the heterodox. In a passage critical of St. Augustine's sanction of moderate coercion against the Donatists, Bartholotti appears to reject any use of coercion. Elsewhere, however, he allows it against the founders of sects who disrupt religious unity and against those who disturb public order or violate society's moral conventions. Hence, concludes the editor, Bartholotti is really in agreement with St. Augustine.

The journal's strongest criticism is directed against Bartholotti's rejection of the maxim, "extra ecclesiam nulla salus". In the treatise he calls it "theologically false and rash". He further contends that it leads the faithful to consider civil tolerance illicit and damnable. It also obliges Catholic sovereigns to violate the consciences of the heterodox, inspiring hatred of Catholicism and provoking seditions. The Jansenist editor retorts that Bartholotti's argument is groundless and contrary to fact. The united voice of Christian antiquity attests to the truth of the maxim, as well as to its compatibility with civil tolerance. Furthermore, its affirmation should arouse fraternal solicitude for the heterodox, just as its denial is likely to lead to indifference among Catholics and a false sense of security among the heterodox.²⁰

Shortly after reviewing Bartholotti's treatise the journal found a more acceptable Josephinian justification of the Edict of Toleration in a pastoral letter by Count

¹⁹ *Exercitatio . . . de libertate conscientiae et de . . . religionum tolerantia . . .* (1782). Jansenist opinion on Bartholotti was divided. Some regarded him as an apostate. Initially uncertain, Dupac adopted a favorable attitude. Cf. Henri Koeune (for de Terme) to Dupac, December 8, 1782. RAU-PR 2303. The Viennese readers of *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* were "very satisfied" with its review of Bartholotti's book. *Ibid.*, February 28, 1783.

²⁰ Six months later, July 31, 1783, the journal pursued a similar argument against a remonstrance signed by two prominent Louvain professors, Vandervelde and Nelis. Like Bartholotti, but from a conservative standpoint, they argued that the maxim made civil peace impossible between Catholics and Protestants. Hence, they concluded, civil tolerance was unsound policy in a Catholic country.

Karl von *Herberstein*, Bishop of Laibach.²¹ Jansenists were favorably disposed toward the bishop because he shared their concept of episcopal authority, church-state relations and pastoral care. He also earned their good will by publicly supporting reconciliation with the Church of Utrecht.²² The journal's esteem for Herberstein, however, was not uncritical.²³

The Jansenist editor observes that the issue of civil toleration of Protestants is "singularly well-treated" in the pastoral letter. Herberstein argues for the political utility of civil tolerance without compromising his theological integrity. Moreover, he demonstrates effectively that civil tolerance need not produce religious indifference. The editor concurs with Herberstein that Christ teaches us to tolerate the erring but not their errors and to try to win them with charity, gentleness and the example of a virtuous life. There are two objections, however, to the bishop's presentation. The editor suggests that Herberstein flatters the Protestants by asserting that they make a serious effort to reach the truth and to remain faithful to their consciences.²⁴ The choice of religion, the editor asserts, is generally very lightly made for base, often hidden reasons. He presumably aims this uncharacteristic cynicism at the thousands being registered under the new edict in Protestant confessions. The second objection concerns the bishop's use of natural law. Herberstein argues that, in virtue of their natural right to the peace and security which the state must assure to all its members, Protestants should be allowed the untroubled exercise of their religion. Granting the principle for the sake of argument, the editor turns it against the bishop's approval of the Emperor's suppression of the contemplative religious orders as useless to the state:

"One can ask . . . if the contemplative orders merit less than the Protestants to participate in the benefits of tolerance, and if it is permissible to deprive subjects of a way of life which they have embraced in good faith under the protection of the laws."

Neither the bishop nor Joseph adverted to the monks' right to "untroubled exercise of their religion".²⁵

²¹ *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, April 3 & 10, 1783.

²² Prompted by Wittola, Bishop Herberstein addressed a public letter to the hierarchy of the Church of Utrecht. Henri Koeune (for de Terme) to Dupac, December 8, 1782. RAU-PR 2303.

²³ Austrian Jansenists were privately much more critical of the bishop. In response to a question from Dupac, Kaspar Karl warned, January 9, 1788, not to publish a eulogy of Herberstein of Laibach. He passed for pious, wrote Karl, but his intimates say he was unworthy. They give details which Karl feels he cannot repeat. He concludes, let Herberstein's death pass in silence. RAU-PR 2109. *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* followed this advice.

²⁴ Pius VI also singled out this point for criticism. Seeking an excuse for thwarting the Emperor's elevation of Herberstein to archepiscopal rank, the pope construed his words to mean that one religion was as good as another. If the bishop had implied this, *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* would certainly have objected. The conflict grew eventually into a serious confrontation between Emperor and Pope. On June 5, 1786, *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* again found Herberstein's views on Christian and civil tolerance to be exemplary. See also, *ibid.*, July 17, 1786, April 3, 1787, July 23, 1788, and November 19, 1788.

²⁵ This critique pleased the journal's Viennese readers. Even the bishop's "best friends" endorsed its critical observations, admitting that Herberstein had mixed some flattery of the

The review of Herberstein's pastoral letter concluded the Jansenist journal's close scrutiny of Josephinian tolerance. In the following years Wittola's *Wiener Kirchenzeitung* assumed for Austria the principal responsibility for providing information and a Jansenist point of view on ecclesiastical issues.

Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques, however, occasionally commented on topics of special interest to its readers outside the monarchy, such as the Emperor's persecution of the so-called *Bohemian Deists* in 1783.

This incident, insignificant in itself, attracted an enormous, adverse publicity throughout Western Europe. Shortly after the Edict of Toleration was promulgated in Bohemia, a few hundred peasants in Bishop Hay's diocese of Königgrätz ceased attending the Catholic church but refused to join either tolerated confession. Since the peasants professed a simple faith in one God and in the immortality of the soul, while denying the Trinity, the divine nature of Christ and the authority of the Bible, their bishop called them "deists". This name conjured up in the minds of secular humanists throughout Europe the image of rustic, simple and good people, seeking to worship close to nature.²⁶ Perhaps because of this impression the Emperor hesitated to demand full compliance with the law. But, in March 1783, concluding that the Deists were either latently seditious fanatics or cleverly using the cloak of religious liberty to escape church fees and taxes, Joseph ordered their transportation to the Unitarian communities in Transylvania. When this proved too expensive, he allowed them to remain in Bohemia but subject to a sound thrashing if they professed their beliefs publicly.

In contrast to most secular, enlightened journals, *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* did not condemn the Emperor's policy. Drawing chiefly upon de Terme's report to Dupac, March 20, 1784, the journal printed a brief summary of the problem.²⁷ De Terme had presented the peasants unsympathetically as a few "méchants entêtés". The journal, however, simply reported what had happened without passing judgment on either the peasants or the Emperor. Its concluding remark, however, can be construed as favoring Joseph's policy: "Since this edict [of March 11, 1783] has raised a stir, and evil-minded persons have presented it under false colors, we feel obliged to make it known exactly." The "evil-minded persons" are Mirabeau and other Philosophes exploiting this incident in order to undermine the position of true, revealed religion in society.²⁸ The journal rejects implicitly their phantasies concerning the peasants' natural goodness as well as their argument for religious liberty based on natural law. It seems likely, therefore, that the article was mainly

government into the pastoral letter. Henry Koeune (for de Terme) to Dupac, May 1, 1783. RAU-PR 2303.

²⁶ E.g. Count Mirabeau, *Schreiben des Herrn Grafen von Mirabeau . . . über die Deisten in Böhmen und deren Verfolgung im Jahre 1783* (1786). For a full description of this literature see C. H. O'Brien, *Ideas of Religious Toleration at the Time of Joseph II* (1969), pp. 68–69.

²⁷ *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, February 13, 1785.

²⁸ Cf. Dupac to Clément du Tremblai, February 5, 1783 (Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, ms. 4985), condemning a recent book for arguing in favor of natural religion at the expense of Christianity.

intended to curb the growth of deism in the educated French public. Why the journal chose not to support more openly the government's policy, is obscure. Perhaps its coercive measures seemed arbitrary or did not directly involve theological principle or the interests of the church.

The last significant demonstration of the Jansenist journal's interest in Josephinian tolerance is its support for Pietro *Tamburini's* Latin treatise, *De tolerantia ecclesiastica et civili*, published in 1783. Professor of theology at the University of Pavia in Austrian Lombardy, Tamburini was the soul of the monarchy's most vigorous center of Jansenist activity. In a special audience at the university, February 17, 1784, the Emperor honored Tamburini and another leading Jansenist, Joseph Zola, rector of the seminary, with gold medals.²⁹ Although published under the name of a student, Thaddeus Trautmannsdorf, the treatise was universally recognized as an authoritative statement of the Jansenist position on religious toleration, as well as a plea for the Church of Utrecht's reunion with the Church of Rome.³⁰

Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques devoted an entire issue, January 9, 1784, to the author's position on "ecclesiastical tolerance", the church's patience with erring persons especially in its own ranks. The journal approves Tamburini's critique of relativism, "the monstrous dogma of the libertines of our century", which puts all religions on the same level. The journal also supports Tamburini's attack on an analogous point of view held by modern Protestants, according to which all Christians who share certain "fundamental articles of faith" are on the way of salvation.

The church's tolerance of error in her midst rests on a principle of unity dear to Jansenists. The editor agrees with Tamburini that the church should not only "preserve the sacred deposit of doctrine, but in addition take care not to break the bonds of unity". For this reason the early church delayed a long time before it condemned semi-Pelagianism. The history of the church shows that it is always "the friend of peace, full of condescension, gentleness and goodness". Intolerance, sometimes erroneously ascribed to the church, is "the vice of persons or of the age". The church holds back its condemnation of error, if possible, until passions subside and the danger of schism lessens. Once condemnation is pronounced, the church takes the steps necessary to protect the good sheep from danger of infection, while at the same time trying to bring the lost sheep back into the fold. Tamburini draws an invidious contrast between the early church's readiness to forgive even the violent, heretical Donatists, and the Church of Rome's uncharitable, obdurate rejection of communion with the orthodox Church of Utrecht.

The treatise offers the Jansenist journal an opportunity to reaffirm its stand on the church's use of coercion. The editor supports Tamburini's argument that the phrase, "force them to enter", Luke 14, 23, means to urge or entreat rather than to coerce persons to come to the wedding feast. The journal also approves his con-

²⁹ *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, July 2, 1784.

³⁰ For an extended discussion of this treatise, as well as the critical reaction to it, see O'Brien (n. 26), pp. 53–56.

demnation of the Inquisition, as well as his defense of St. Augustine's approval of moderate force against the Donatists. The review halts at the end of Tamburini's treatment of ecclesiastical tolerance, observing that the second part, the last three chapters on civil tolerance, "contains principles susceptible of great difficulty". *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* never returned to those "difficult principles", perhaps because they might be construed in France to favor toleration of Huguenots.³¹

The journal's article on Tamburini's treatise is significant mainly as part of a Jansenist campaign to win support from Joseph II and other influential Catholic statesmen and clerics for the Church of Utrecht.³² There was no other issue in the Habsburg monarchy that the editor could have had in mind. By the end of 1783 the journal had dealt sufficiently with the civil tolerance of Protestants. On the other hand, Tamburini's arguments in favor of ecclesiastical tolerance bear indirectly upon the Emperor's edict and support his efforts to apply it. For this reason he was pleased with the book and rewarded its author. It did not move him, however, to do anything for the Church of Utrecht.

*

Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques' treatment of Josephinian tolerance is an unusually significant expression of late eighteenth-century Jansenism's theological perspective. The Emperor's Edict of Toleration raised controversial issues which tested Jansenists' commitment to their traditional principles. In contrast to the hesitance and ambiguity of Josephinian theologians, *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* held firmly to the positions on grace and free will taken in the seventeenth century by Antoine Arnauld. It vigorously reaffirmed an *Augustinian concept* of the church as the sole way of salvation. It limited discreetly but substantially the state's exercise of coercive power on behalf of the church. Belying the caesaropapism sometimes attributed to Jansenists, *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* adhered implicitly to a Gelasian distinction between the spiritual and temporal orders.

The Emperor's reform also challenged Jansenists' capacity to react constructively to growing secular humanism among educated classes of Catholic Europe. The journal's firm defense of Catholic positions should not obscure its ability to find theological resources within Jansenism to cope with new religious problems raised by the Enlightenment. While rejecting the epoch's naturalistic rationale for

³¹ For other brief references to Tamburini's book, see *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, August 27, 1784, and October 15, 1784.

³² Wittola helped augment the treatise's impact by summarizing it in German. *Wiener Kirchenzeitung*, 1784, pp. 89–92, 98–100, 153–154, 391–392. De Terme wrote Dupac, March 30, 1784, that he could dispose of thirty to forty copies of *de tolerantia* and as many copies of an abridged edition. Charles Schwarzl, professor of polemical theology at the University of Freiburg i. Br., ordered a dozen copies of the treatise for his students. Schwarzl to Dupac, March 22, 1784, April 25, 1784, and August 27, 1784. RAU-PR 2524. He directed his students toward preparing theses on issues raised in the treatise. *Ibid.*, January 7, 1785. Schwarzl's own textbook in polemical theology, 1783, contained a lengthy chapter on tolerance, expressing views similar to Tamburini's. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1784.

“toleration”, the Jansenists were prodded to discover a specifically Christian alternative. They based tolerance on the evangelical law of love rather than the contemporary idea of autonomous nature. Out of respect for the mysterious movements of divine grace they rejected punitive coercion of simple dissenters. This alternative’s effectiveness in the Habsburg monarchy is difficult to assess. At the least, the articles on toleration were read attentively by Emperor Joseph and other influential persons in public life.

Charles H. O'Brien, Macomb, Illinois