

*A Catholic in the
White House?*

*Religion, Politics, and John F.
Kennedy's Presidential Campaign*

Thomas J. Carty

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A Catholic in the White House?

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2004 978-1-4039-6252-2

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First published 2004 by

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN™

175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010 and

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England RG21 6XS.

Companies and representatives throughout the world.

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ISBN 978-1-4039-6253-9

ISBN 978-1-4039-8130-1 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-4039-8130-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Carty, Thomas (Thomas Joseph)

A Catholic in the White House? : religion, politics, and John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign / Thomas Carty.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index

1. Presidents—United States—Election—1960. 2. United States—Politics and government—1961-1963. 3. Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963. 4. Presidential candidates—United States—Biography. 5. Catholics—United States—Political activity—History—20th century. 6. Religion and politics—United States—History—20th century. 7. Anti-Catholicism—United States—History—20th century. I. Title.

E837.7C37 2004

324.973'0921--dc22

2004044578

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Portions of chapter four were previously published as "The Catholic Question: Religious Liberty and JFK's Pursuit of the 1960 Democratic Presidential Nomination," *The Historian* 63, no. 3 (spring 2001), pp. 577-599. Reprinted with permission.

Design by Autobookcomp.

First edition: September 2004

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*To Marisol Louise Carty, who carries our hope for
the future*

Acknowledgments

My maternal grandfather, James B. Murphy, discouraged me from discussing religion and politics in public. I hope the subject of this book does not show blatant disregard for this advice, especially because his memories of John F. Kennedy greatly inspired my study of the 1960 campaign's "Catholic issue." Mr. Murphy, known to me as "Fafa," sponsored Kennedy's admission into the third and fourth degrees of the Knights of Columbus, a lay Catholic fraternity organization. Fafa and his wife, Catherine Louise ("Gram"), attended the 1961 inaugural, and he told me some stories, although not enough (I should have asked more questions), of this experience.

Agnes Carty ("Nana") and Thomas J. Carty, my paternal grandparents, may have seen Fafa and Gram at that ceremony. As captain of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts, Mr. Carty, who died prior to my birth, marched in the inaugural parade with this organization, within which Kennedy also held membership. Nana did not live long enough to engage a budding historian with stories of Kennedy's inauguration.

While my family did not have pictures of Kennedy in every room, these close links with the nation's first Catholic president made an impression on me. My grandparents and parents handed down to me a sincere and strong religious faith, and I have sought to imitate this example. Kennedy's Catholicism surely contributed to the fascination and admiration that my wife, a native of predominately Catholic Peru, and her family hold for the former U.S. chief executive.

This book reflects my effort to understand how the 1960 presidential election affected both my ancestors and the Catholic and American context in which they lived. John Kennedy and Richard Nixon proved most obviously significant, but I learned that many other U.S. citizens participated in defining religion's role in this campaign. I hope that future generations can benefit from my research and analysis of the complicated subjects, religion and politics, that Fafa warned me to approach with caution.

In preparing this work for publication, I incurred several economic, intellectual, professional, and personal debts. Financial support for this project came from many sources. Grants from the University of Connecticut, University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library, Herbert C. Hoover Presidential Library, and John F. Kennedy Library facilitated my research. My parents provided me with the best education that I could seek without worrying about the cost. Several research librarians and professors promoted my efforts with enthusiasm and understanding. Dr. David J. O'Brien and Dr. Richard M. Fried extended generous advice and ideas at crucial early stages. Professors at the University of Connecticut nurtured me through the growing pains of graduate study. My advisor, Dr. Bruce M. Stave, offered me a model of professionalism, and inspired my efforts to produce worthy scholarship. The supportive comments of many individuals at Springfield College have furthered my ambition to reach this goal. I also thank the staff at Palgrave Macmillan, especially Debbie Gershenowitz and Brendan O'Malley, with whom I worked most closely.

Personally, I gained a lot during this period of my life. My wife granted me an international family in Lima, Peru, and I strengthened my bond with my extended family in the United States. My parents, Janice and Thomas Carty, have unfailingly supported my goals. I cannot express the joy of meeting and growing closer to my wife, Rosamaría, who has sacrificed both the comfort of family and the familiarity of her native country for a challenging role as my best friend, underappreciated advisor, and loving soulmate. Rosamaría's example and encouragement have challenged me to seek improvement as a teacher, scholar, and person. The unfolding miracle of our daughter's birth and development further defies words. We dedicate this book to her, Marisol Louise Carty. We pray that she will share our passion for learning, that she will understand our boundless love for her, and that she will find comfort in God. And I hope she listens when I tell her not to discuss religion and politics in public!

Springfield, MA
February 24, 2004