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VISITOR AND VILLAGER: COMMUNAL DYNAMICS AND
THE STATUS OF LOCAL RELIGION IN THE DIOCESE OF
GENEVA-ANNECY DURING THE TIME OF CATHOLIC REFORM 1579-1640

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

The results of the implementation and impact of the decrees and canons of the Council of Trent on the parishes of Europe have yet to be explored fully by scholars. This dissertation is a study of Early Modern Catholicism in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy over the tenure of three bishops (1579-1640). Located in the Alpine region of Savoy and France, the diocese was a crossroads for the political and religious strife of the period. Using ecclesiastical visitations of the parishes, correspondence of the diocesan officials, and documents of the secular authorities, I explore the impact of the reform movement, which resulted from the Council of Trent, on the parish communities of the diocese. These documents allow me to investigate the interaction between various members of a community both religious and secular, male and female, Catholic and Protestant and how these relationships influenced the implementation of reform practices.

The study explores the Counter Reformation in the diocese, the efforts to convert the Protestants of the region. An analysis of the Forty Hours celebration, which was a crucial missionary activity, offers important insight into the dynamics of biconfessional communities, the role of the preaching orders in the Counter Reformation, and the level of participation by secular rulers in religious reform. The missionary activity within the diocese, which included the introduction of new religious orders such as the Jesuits and the Capuchins and extensive efforts to convert the Calvinist populations of the region,
was a slow and often difficult process. Catholic reformers faced opposition from both Protestants and secular authorities.

The Catholic Reformation was the revitalization of both the clergy and laity who remained loyal to Rome. The reform of both the regular and secular clergy was a central goal of the diocese, but the methods used by diocesan officials to revitalize the parish priest were in many ways quite different from those used with the religious houses. Diocesan officials went to great lengths to introduce new practices and to reform old ones within the parish structure. Yet these measures had only limited success. This study reveals how diocesan officials, monks, parish priests, and parishioners all participated in the reform process.

Religious reform was a complicated and multi-faceted process. Neither laity nor clergy blindly accepted new rules or practices imposed from above. The support of secular authority was crucial to the success of reforming efforts especially for those measures directed at the Protestant populations. The diocese lacked the manpower to provide the oversight essential to suppress practices deemed inappropriate if cooperation did not exist at the local level. Flexibility remained in the enforcement and implementation of new religious observances, and few oppressive measures were used to halt existing rituals. The religious ideals that emerged from the Council of Trent failed to overcome the local realities of a region.
Dedicated to my Parents
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

With the advent of the Reformation, Western Europe lost the religious homogeneity that many believed was crucial to the stability and prosperity of Christendom. Leaders of Catholicism convened at the Council of Trent between the years 1545 and 1563 to develop a plan of action which responded both to Protestantism and to problems within their own confession. Out of this reform movement emerged new religious orders, lay confraternities, seminaries, and regulations for the administration of dioceses. These new measures were important to the evolution of secular and religious power, as well as to the relationship between these often-competing powers in Europe. The results of these developments have yet to be explored fully by scholars. This project focuses on the implementation and impact of the decrees and canons of the Council of Trent on the parishes located in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy (an area that overlays portions of modern-day France and Switzerland) between 1579 and 1640. Few historians would deny that the early modern period was a time of transition for European culture, but a closer examination of the communal religious practices encouraged, tolerated or censored by Catholic officials reveals greater diversity than has been found by other
scholars. When and how were new religious practices introduced into a community? What specific religious rituals were suppressed at the village level? How were the Protestant members of a community treated? Was a transformation of local society ever the intended goal of the diocesan officials? If it was, how successful were the officials in attaining this goal? What roles did the parish priest and the missionary friar play in the community during this period of Catholic renewal? Finally, how did secular authorities participate in this process? By directing these questions toward one region over a significant period of time, a clearer picture emerges of the changes and continuities in local religion as a result of the Catholic reform on the early modern world.

The religious revival known as the Reformation overshadows the study of the Catholic Church during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Beginning with the term Counter Reformation, shortcomings exist within the scholarship of the Catholic Church's religious revival. Counter Reformation was first coined by Leopold von Ranke and is the most enduring term applied to the movement, but it implies a response or reaction to the Reformation, and fails to take into account that the Catholic Church had internal reform movements, some of which can be traced back to the years prior to Martin Luther. Hubert Jedin attempted to remedy the problem with a seminal article that called for the use of Counter Reformation for the movement against Protestants and Catholic Reform for the revival and renewal within the Roman church. More recently John W. O'Malley has called for the more inclusive term Early Modern Catholicism to be used in conjunction

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with the other terminology because “it has a scope and a flexibility the others lack.” My study uses Catholic Reformation to identify reform directed at the Catholic populations of the diocese, Counter Reformation to identify the efforts to convert Protestants, and early modern Catholicism to include all activities in the Roman Catholic world. This debate over semantics signals that the study of Catholicism after the Middle Ages is now viewed as worthy of investigation in its own right and not just as an offshoot of Reformation studies.

For the first half of the twentieth century scholars addressed the Counter Reformation primarily in comparison to Protestantism. Hubert Jedin, a German Catholic theologian, almost single-handedly sparked a new interest in the Catholic reform movement. Jedin explores the conciliar movement that he sees culminating with the Council of Trent. Beyond the theological issues, Jedin analyzes the complicated relationship between church officials and competing secular powers that vied for influence during the course of Trent.3 Jedin’s work on the Council provides an early example that Catholicism of the early modern world needed scholarly attention independent of the Protestant Reformation and remains a crucial study. For the most part Jedin complimented Rome’s efforts and accomplishments but his work signaled a new scholarly interest in Catholic reform.

Responding to the harsh treatment in many studies of the Protestant Reformation, scholars of the 1950s and 1960s attempted to show how the Catholic reforms were a success. Most were general surveys that outlined the achievements of the Catholic Church and came off as defenses of the faith not unlike Protestant scholarship of the nineteenth century. Pierre Janelle viewed the Catholic Reformation as a "revival of traditional piety" that began in the fifteenth century and continued into the seventeenth century. He asserts that when the Catholic Church was at its lowest point under Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), the men who would lead the Council of Trent were receiving their early training. According to Janelle, these men knew first hand the changes that needed to be made. He also explores the influence of the Catholic revival on art, literature, and education and views the education system created by the Jesuits as the greatest and most enduring accomplishment of the reform. Overall, he finds little wrong with the movement.

Henri Daniel-Rops asserts that the Catholic Church did not have a counter-Reformation and chooses to almost ignore the influence of Protestantism. The goal of Ignatius Loyola was not to combat Protestantism but to renew the fervor of the Catholic faith. Daniel-Rops claims that a spiritual revival began at the end of the fifteenth century, but a body of doctrine emerged much later. The spiritual renewal led by mystics such as Saint Teresa of Avila was as crucial to the movement as the decrees and canons of Trent. According to Daniel-Rops, the most beneficial result from the reform of the

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5Janelle, 264.
Catholic Church was the withdrawal of the Papacy from political matters, and the return of its focus to spiritual ones. Daniel-Rops views this return to spiritual matters as the victory of Catholicism over the secular world.

The works of both Janelle and Daniel-Rops emphasize the spiritual nature of Catholicism and trace the impetus of reform to the fifteenth century and not to the actions of reformers who split from Rome. They also downplay any negative effects the Catholic Reformation had on either Catholics or Protestants. However, the two writers do acknowledge that the spiritual revival did not last forever. Both authors see the enthusiasm for renewal taper off in the seventeenth century. Janelle sees the Jubilee of 1650 under Innocent X as the close of a mostly successful reform movement, and Daniel-Rops places the end of the renewal even earlier in 1622 with the death of François de Sales and the canonization of four leaders of the reform movement including Ignatius Loyola and Teresa of Avila. While both these works provide useful narratives of the events and biographical information of the people connected with the Catholic Reformation, neither offers any explanation of why the movement played itself out the way it did.

In the 1960s Counter Reformation scholarship began to offer more critical analysis of Catholicism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Henry Outram Evennett aided this move with a series of lectures presented at Trinity College of Cambridge University. These lectures provided an outline on how to approach the study

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7Daniel-Rops, 328.
of the Counter Reformation, and Evennett raised questions that earlier works failed to address. Through his lectures Evennett attempted to offer an assessment of the influence and significance of the Catholic movement on the early modern world. He asserted that the Counter Reformation must be seen as a deeply felt religious movement and not just as a resistance to "progressive" forces of the Renaissance and Reformation. According to Evennett, a new spirituality within religious reformers played a greater role in spreading the Counter Reformation than any institutions or ordinances. As he viewed it, this "reinvigoration of Catholic spiritual life" manifested itself in a new clergy educated in seminaries, and new pastoral duties that passed down the new religious vigor to the laity.

An example of this new Catholic leader was Ignatius Loyola who Evennett claimed was the embodiment of the new reforming spirit. Ultimately Evennett argues that this revitalization of Catholicism allowed the Church of Rome to continue into the modern world. With a study that was more analytical than narrative in nature, Evennett emerged as a champion of the Catholic faith.

Evennett's work signaled a new direction for Catholic scholarship. Two other works from the late 1960s and early 1970s attempt to combine a general chronological survey of the Counter Reformation with a more critical examination of the movement's results and delve into some of the problems of terminology and gaps in the scholarship. A. B. Dickens and G. W. Searle both take up the question of terminology that Hubert

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8 Janelle, 263; Daniel-Rops, 393.
9 Henry Outram Evennett, The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation, edited and postscript by John Bossy (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), 2, 4, 24. First given in the 1950s, these lectures were published posthumously by one of Evennett's students, John Bossy.
10 Evennett, 3, 43, 45.
11 Evennett, 21, 125.
Jedin had addressed several decades before. Dickens asserts that the term Catholic Reformation should be used when referring to what he calls "spontaneous manifestations" of spiritual renewal, while Counter Reformation is for actions or decrees whose goals were "resistance and reconquest." G. W. Searle points out that most historians no longer believe the movement was simply a response to Protestantism even though the term Counter-Reformation endures. Acknowledging the ambiguity of the term, Searle provides a useful working definition for his survey of the reform movement. He states, "Thus, primarily, the Counter Reformation was a readjustment by the Catholic Church to meet the changing conditions of the early modern period and, as such, although profoundly affected by Protestantism, it ran parallel to the Protestant Reformation."

The most original conclusion of Dickens' work is that he does not see a division in European culture accompanying the split of Western Christendom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even with the institutionalization of the Protestant faith, knowledge in the areas of science, art, and philosophy continued to cross religious boundaries. Dickens is critical of some of the results of the renewed vigor of Catholicism. He asserts that the proliferation of new religious orders may have "distracted Catholicism from its greatest practical problem: the need to train parish priests and hence provide the laity with better and more frequent Christian teaching." Successful implementation of Tridentine decrees, like establishing a seminary in every diocese, varied between regions.

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14 Dickens, 195.
and bishops. Dickens encourages other historians not to minimize the problems associated with the Catholic Church during the late medieval and early modern periods. Only then can scholars begin to understand the historical context of the reform movements of the period. Despite all the upheaval within Christianity, Dickens sees most people of the early modern world as resistant to change. Society and culture changed very slowly. While Dickens does not deny the importance of the Catholic reforms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he attempts to weigh the successes against failures.

Both authors attempt to place the Catholic reform movement in the context of the early modern world. Searle acknowledges the influence princes played in the success or failure of Catholic reform. He attempts to tie the events within the Counter Reformation with the political changes occurring in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For example he explores how Philip II's personal fear of heresy influenced the highly traditionalist and often-repressive Catholicism which emerged in Spain. Overall, Searle sees the doctrine that emerged from the Council of Trent as very conservative. The decrees of Trent caused the Catholic Church to lose much of the flexibility Searle claims existed within the medieval church. The church became more intolerant of those who differed from the norm. He cites the persecution of Galileo and the witch-hunts as examples of this growing conservatism. Many of the reforms handed down by the Catholic leaders denied the laity the participation in worship that they desired. Searle acknowledges that there

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15 Dickens, 182, 187-188, 197.
16 Dickens, 199.
17 Dickens, 189.
18 Searle, 8, 116.
was a spiritual revival within the church, but denies it came from Trent.\textsuperscript{19} He too sees a reinvigorated spirituality emanating from the individual reformers like Ignatius Loyola and Vincent de Paul who touched many of the laity and clerics through their writings and reforming efforts. The positive results of the Catholic Reform movement originated in the religious beliefs of the people not from the institutions.

Scholars had begun to see Catholicism critically yet much research, especially archival, remained to be done. With the notable exception of Jed\textsc{in}, the previous works rely mostly on published sources and secondary research, and none address the reformers' methods and the institutions. Only Evennett makes any serious attempt to explore how the Catholic reforms change overall religious beliefs or spirituality. They do all seem to agree that there was a new spiritual vigor that went much further in reforming than any doctrine. As far as periodization, all the surveys place the decline of the revival in the mid-seventeenth century at the latest. While the authors allude to a decline in the religious motivation for change, none of them explore the issue much further.

Scholarship of the 1970s took a dramatic turn as historians embraced the approaches of social scientists to aid in the study of culture.\textsuperscript{20} Scholars began to investigate the role early modern reform movements played in changing the religious culture of Europe. One of the most influential was Jean Delumeau who explores what he views as a transformation of culture during the early modern period. He asserts that prior to the Protestant and Catholic reform movements of the sixteenth century, most of Europe

\textsuperscript{19}Searle, 95, 118, 169.
was pagan, and it was only after the rural and superstitious religious practices were suppressed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did Europe become truly Christian. Delumeau offered fresh perspective by looking at both confessions together and sparked a new interest in the study of religious culture. While most historians who have come after Delumeau challenge this pagan view of Europe, his work helped spark a new interest in the Catholic side of reform, especially in what has become known as "popular religion."

John Bossy also addresses the Counter Reformation's influence on European piety and culture. Like Delumeau, Bossy sees a more uniform Catholicism after the implementation of the reforms of Trent, but he does not view late medieval religious practices as pagan. Instead he views pre-Reformation Christianity as more communally oriented and bound by kinship ties. A more recent work by Bossy attempts to explore the religious change of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as two movements responding to the same issues. He examines how Protestants and Catholics tried to reform the late medieval church. He sees the two camps as more similar than different and so asks the same questions of both reform movements. Dickens touched upon the idea of shared culture when he claimed that art and science continued to cross confessional boundaries, but Delumeau and Bossy embrace the concept as a cornerstone of their work.

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Bossy argues that both confessions were trying to resolve the issues of penance and salvation, and both faiths used similar tools to reform their followers including most importantly, the catechism. In addition, both groups faced similar resistance from their parishioners, especially when it came to reforming popular practices like devotion to saints.\(^24\) Protestants and Catholics both relied on the written word to defend and clarify their theological positions, but Bossy argues that Catholics did not become successful at using print until the seventeenth century.\(^25\) In conclusion, Bossy sees an end of Christendom by 1700 because of the reforms by both faiths. Christianity went from meaning a "body of people" to a "body of beliefs."\(^26\) With this type of scholarship there is a danger of minimizing the differences in order to study the two faiths concurrently. Nevertheless, Bossy's work does display how the two confessions evolved in and reacted to a similar religious climate.

Current scholarship generally agrees that during the period following the Council of Trent, the hierarchy of the Catholic church united with favorable secular authorities to ban or to alter religious activities that were popular with the wider population and replaced them with more solemn, less gratifying spiritual rituals. Many influential scholars argue that religious practice became less fulfilling.\(^27\) Such an interpretation begs for a further look at why many people willingly remained Catholic or returned to the faith. With so much focus on the Protestant Reformation, the fact is often lost that much of Europe stayed Catholic. What appeal did Catholicism continue to hold? Too often

\(^{24}\)Bossy, *Christianity in the West*, 118-119.
\(^{25}\)Bossy, *Christianity in the West*, 100.
\(^{26}\)Bossy, *Christianity in the West*, 171.
scholars make sweeping generalizations for a wide geographic region or a long period of
time; this regional study allows for better identification of subtle continuities and
variations.

While the works of the past few decades have greatly increased the understanding
of the Catholic reform movement, much work remains. One of the crucial issues that
needs to be dealt with is periodization. While this seems like a very basic issue for the
historian, the time frame for the Catholic reform movement remains ill defined and there
is no consensus on when the Catholic Reformation began. There were reform efforts
before and after Luther, so does the Catholic Reformation predate the Protestant one?
How long did the reform movement last? Most of the earlier works claim the reforming
spirit had diminished by the end of the Thirty Years' War if not earlier, but more recent
studies assert that the implementation of Tridentine reforms continued into the later
seventeenth century and the eighteenth century. Some scholars like Peter Burke
maintain that the reforms of Catholicism began in the second half of the sixteenth
century, while others, such as Keith Luria do not see significant changes in parish
religious practices until well into the seventeenth century. Scholars of the Protestant
Reformation have found it useful to divide the movement into early and late phases since
conditions changed as the reforms became more institutionalized. Perhaps students of the
Catholic reform should follow this example.

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27See the works of John Bosby, and Philip T. Hoffman, Church and Community in the Diocese of
28See Hoffman, Keith P. Luria, Territories of Grace: Cultural Change in the Seventeenth-Century
Diocese of Grenoble (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991); and Marc Forster,
The Counter-Reformation in the Villages, Religion and Reform in Bishopric of Speyer, 1560-1720 (Ithaca:
Recent studies explore the Catholic reforms through analysis of individual dioceses and rely on evidence obtained from extensive archival research, especially pastoral visitations. Regional studies have the potential to reveal more clearly how Tridentine reforms varied between dioceses and over time. A related theme is the exploration of continuity versus change in Catholic practices between the Middle Ages and the implementation of Tridentine reforms. Early modern scholars too often ignore what came before 1500.

Two of these works focus on individual dioceses in France and explore how religion changed due to the application of Catholic reforms. Philip Hoffman focuses on the Lyon region and attempts to understand the impact of the Counter Reformation at the parish level. Looking mostly at the later seventeenth century, Hoffman argues that through the implementation of the reforms from the Council of Trent, the church hierarchy and its agents, most often the local elite, suppressed and remade popular religious practices. He cites confraternities, processions and saints' devotion as examples of practices that were stifled.\textsuperscript{20} Hoffman paints a rather stark picture of the reforming process at the local level and asserts that the reforms caused great upheaval within the parish. According to Hoffman, the Counter Reformation significantly altered the role of the priest. In the late medieval church, he was usually a native of the village he served and learned his duties by apprenticing under another curé. The Council of Trent called for a better educated and disciplined priest who was willing to impose reforms upon his


\textsuperscript{30}Hoffinan, 72.
flock even if the changes were unpopular. Dioceses established seminaries and the post-Tridentine curés were often sent to regions where they were strangers because bishops wanted the local priest to live apart from society. Where the parish priest had been a member of the community, he became an outsider. Hoffinan asserts that the reformers destroyed the religious practices that allowed parishioners to participate together in joyful celebrations. Communal religion lost the spontaneity and emotion that villagers valued.

Also focusing on the later seventeenth century, Keith Luria uses the visitations conducted by Bishop Etienne Le Camus of his diocese of Grenoble to probe the "nature of cultural change in early modern villages." Luria explores the variety of belief symbols inspired in early modern communities. He quantifies saints' cults from 1497-1728 to show how communities embraced new objects of devotion introduced during the Counter Reformation while older saints fell out of favor. Luria views rural population as typically conservative, but religious culture did change slowly over time. He sees religion as a potential source of communal unity and conflict. He asserts that the harsh directives imposed by the reform-minded Bishop Le Camus changed popular religious practices; however, he does not see the reforms as destructive as Hoffinan. Local parishioners modified the new requirements imposed on their community after Trent.

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31 Hoffinan, 48, 70, 75, 82.
32 Hoffinan, 72, 87, 96, 129.
33 Luria, 2.
34 Luria, 106, 125.
35 Luria, 75.
In addition, where Hoffman concluded that local elites were the main ally of the reforming church officials, Luria finds the group much less monolithic. There were those who embraced the new practices and those who resisted.\(^{36}\)

Shifting to Germany, Marc Forster examines the impact of the Counter Reformation on the Bishopric of Speyer. He does not find the same intolerance of local religious practices as Hoffman found in Lyon, and Speyer also lacked a reforming bishop like Grenoble's Le Camus. Forster sees the scrutiny of reform-minded church officials fall more on the clergy than the laity. Beginning in the 1560s, church leaders began remaking the clergy of Speyer into a more celibate, educated, and competent group. He views the visitations primarily as a tool to monitor the property of the parish and the performance of the clergy. According to Forster, by the 1620s most priests in Speyer were without a mistress and were holding services on Sundays and holidays. Ultimately, Forster concludes that reform of the parishioners was left to the local priest, who was unwilling to repress popular practices that would alienate those with whom he lived.\(^{37}\) While the reform movement did little to alter local practices, Forster does acknowledge that the Catholic reform movement in the midst of a Protestant region caused Catholics to become more aware of their own confession.

While all three of the above books focus on a small region only Forster confines his conclusions exclusively to his particular region. Luria and especially Hoffman tend to project their conclusions on the whole of France and for the entire Counter Reformation. One of the major contributions of local or regional studies is showing the significant

\(^{36}\) Luria, 7, 18-19.
variation in religiosity. Historians need to be cautious with their conclusions and not place too much emphasis on evidence for one locality. Only with more regional studies can scholars obtain a general picture of the impact of religious reform.

Another important direction more recent scholarship of early modern Catholicism has taken is exploration of the institutions, orders, and practices born of the reform movement. Louis Châtellier focuses on the growth and evolution of the Marian congregations, which developed under the leadership of the Jesuits. He explores these organizations throughout Europe, focusing on France and Germany, as they grew and evolved from their beginnings in the fifteenth century to their decline and ultimate suppression in the eighteenth century. Châtellier asserts that the Jesuits used these Marian congregations to organize and educate the clergy and the laity at all levels of society. According to Châtellier, these reformers wanted to remake the religious landscape by including all Catholics in this new brotherhood. Ultimately, he argues that these congregations went a long way toward accomplishing the Jesuits' goal of a new Catholic society. He believes that the Catholic communities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries embodied many of the qualities first handed down by the Jesuits three hundred years before. Châtellier gives the impression that no Catholic remained untouched by the Jesuits' influence. It is a bit hard to believe that these congregations had as much influence as Châtellier claims considering the relatively small

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\[37\] Forster, 38, 58-59, 78, 96, 116.  
\[39\] Châtellier, 16, 150.
number of Jesuits in relation to the population of Europe as a whole. Still, it is useful to explore the Catholic Reformation through the institutions and practices the movement inspired.

Several scholars have applied a theoretical framework in the exploration of religious orders and movements. Elizabeth Rapley uses gender as a way to approach Catholic reforms in her examination of the many groups of women, both secular and cloistered, who wanted to serve God through active works. She argues that these women were inspired by a new religious fervor, and the church hierarchy was forced to deal with them. These women were not part of the Catholic vision of the framers of Trent. Many of the new orders, like the Visitation established under the guidance of François de Sales, were forced to become cloistered after their charitable activities out in the world disturbed church officials. However, the cloistered nuns continued active service through the education of young girls while other women “accepted secular status, so as to remain free to pursue their active vocation.” Rapley views this dynamic female piety as a fundamental change emerging from the new spirituality of the Counter Reformation. These devotes contributed a great deal to the immense growth of female education and charitable institutions in France and gave Catholicism a new and more feminine face.

Rapley’s study is very useful for gaining a fuller understanding of one aspect of the Catholic renewal. Yet the spirituality of women must still be looked at within the context of the time and the Catholic Church as a whole. For the most part Rapley does a

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41Rapley, 34-35, 7.
good job of placing religious women within the church hierarchy of seventeenth-century France, and her work has helped spark a new interest in the study of nuns and a reexamination of early modern Catholicism that includes the issue of gender. The works of Châtellier and Rapley represent a recent trend in the study of Catholicism to focus on specific threads of reform within the larger movement and their influence on society and culture. This scholarship coupled with the diocesan studies is starting to reveal the many protagonists that participated at every level of reform. This study of Geneva-Annecy combines elements of both approaches in the hopes of revealing the multi-faceted program of reform that existed in one geographic area.

Located in the Alpine region of the Savoy, Geneva-Annecy is worthy of exploration in part because the diocese lived in the shadow of Protestant Geneva, a powerful religious adversary. Many of the parishes of the region were greatly affected by the Calvinism emanating from Geneva which forced the Catholic bishop to abandon his See and migrate to Annecy in 1535. Like so many turbulent places in the world today, the region’s religious minority, in this case Calvinists, was viewed with suspicion by the Catholic majority. The Calvinists were suspect not only because of their faith but also because they were seen as a potential source of sedition through their ties to Swiss Protestant cities. One such area in the diocese, the duchy of Chablais, was the subject of intensive missionary activity by Catholic clergy in the 1590s. Additionally, the area merits study because François de Sales, who was one of the leading figures of post-Tridentine Catholicism, was bishop of this diocese from 1602 to 1622.
In addition to its compelling religious landscape the diocese was in the center of notable political activity during the early modern period. The region was a battleground between the monarchy of France and the house of Savoy during much of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century. At various times, the border between France and Savoy shifted position across the area of the diocese. While not a large region, this political frontier was strategically very important. It was vital for the security of France's eastern border as it contained a corridor used by its Spanish Habsburg enemy to reach its holdings in Northern Europe. Spain was allied with the duke of Savoy during much of the period under investigation. The shifting national boundaries that resulted from the region's role in international conflict led to the diocese, a religious entity, becoming a site where political adversaries fought for greater influence. Although a diocese composed mostly of many small and isolated parishes, its religious and political landscape provides an important subject for the study of competing religious and secular powers during the early modern period. The intersection of diplomatic, political and religious agendas is a central concern of this study. Furthermore, this study examines the methods used by local populations to cope with religious reforms. Finally, this investigation explores the interaction between various members of a community both religious and secular, Catholic and Protestant, male and female and how these relationships influenced the implementation of reform practices. A better understanding of the process of religious indoctrination during the early modern period will be helpful to the exploration of religious change in any period.
The pastoral visitation is one of the best historical documents for inquiring into local religion and how it changed over time. The documents reflect the singularity of their particular region, epoch, and initiator. André Latreille views the move toward interdisciplinary studies as central to the growing interest in visitations for the medieval and early modern periods. Visitations are quantifiable and can reveal changes in religious institutions and mentalities over time. In addition they may provide insight into moral attitudes of a locality and public expressions of faith. Visitations have the potential to offer details of a community or region absent in other official documents. The bishops’ visitation records from the diocese of Geneva-Annecy are exceptionally rich for the years 1579-1640. Thus, I am comparing François de Sales’ supervision of the diocese with that of his predecessor Claude de Granier and his successor Jean-François de Sales. The visitations allow me to trace processes and practices through the same parishes over five decades. The research based on the visitations is supplemented by the surviving correspondence of the bishops. François de Sales left behind a large corpus of work including letters, sermons, and reports concerning the state of the diocese. In addition, I am using other diocesan records such as charters, foundations, and synodal regulations, as well as supporting civil documents such as notary and legislative records which are helpful in revealing the extent to which the region’s elite and secular authority participated in implementing and enforcing Tridentine ideas.

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Another aspect of my research that I believe is crucial to a better understanding of early modern Catholicism is finding an alternative framework to the theory of separate “popular” and “elite” religious activities that dominates much of the relevant historiography. When scholars began exploring village religious practices, they viewed popular and orthodox religion as almost separate belief systems. For the small, primarily rural parishes of Geneva-Annecy only sporadically in contact with their bishop, the popular/elite dichotomy is not a very useful interpretation. Natalie Zemon Davis points out the danger of identifying a religious ideal and labeling anything different as an "aberration." Historians too often view rural populations as passive recipients of doctrine from the clergy. This view does not take into account the role of lay people in the creation of new shrines, the performance of religious plays, and the formation of heretical movements as well as practices of worship later accepted by the hierarchy. Instead Davis argues that historians should be examining “the range of people's relation with the sacred and the supernatural.”

One alternative to the popular/elite dichotomy is the use of the term "local religion" as employed by William Christian. He claims that “each village had its own calendar of sacred times, marked on the village memory by plagues and divine signs, part of solemn contracts with advocates of heaven.” Christian concludes that the Catholic Reformation reinforced local religion, and the clergy only tried to curb perceived

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excesses. Other scholars of Spanish Catholicism in the early modern period have adopted Christian's approach including Allyson Poska who explores the impact of reform on the parishes in the diocese of Ourense. Several scholars have suggested defining orthodoxy more broadly to include a wider range of beliefs or even multiple orthodoxies in a single belief system. These approaches offer an alternative with the potential application to the situation in Early Modern Geneva-Annecy. Social psychologist Jean-Pierre Deconchy provides a definition of an orthodox system based on the expectation of individuals in the system. He calls a person "orthodox if he accepts or even requests, that his thoughts, his language and his behavior be regulated by the ideological group to which he belongs." Such an expansion of the idea of orthodoxy could do more to explain the success of Catholicism in a fractured place like this diocese than would a theory of separation between elite and popular religion.

My dissertation will be arranged in the following manner. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the project and explores the scope and significance of the research. Chapter 2 introduces the protagonists of reform including the various individuals, institutions, and processes that influenced the course of reform. Included in this chapter are brief biographies of the three men who were bishop during the period under investigation which reveal how each man approached the diocese with his own unique

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background, education, and goals. This chapter offers a brief history of the visitation process, examines the ecclesiastical visitation as a reform tool, and explores how the Catholic Church used the process after the Council of Trent. There is also a description of the parish visits in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy, noting unique aspects of the process in the region.

Chapters 3-6 focus on how the Council of Trent was carried out in the parishes. In chapter 3, I offer competing accounts of a crucial missionary activity, the Forty Hours. A fresh analysis of this Eucharistic celebration offers important insight into the dynamics of biconfessional communities, the role of the preaching orders in the Counter Reformation, and the level of participation by secular rulers in religious reform. This chapter includes a discussion of the use and power of religious ritual as an important counter reform measure in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy. Chapter 4 examines the missionary activity within the diocese which included the introduction of new religious orders such as the Jesuits and the Capuchins and extensive efforts to convert the Calvinist populations of the region. This chapter explores the methods adopted and the problems faced by the Catholic clergy in the missionary process. Chapter 5 demonstrates that while the reform of both the regular and secular clergy was a central goal of the diocese, methods used by diocesan officials to revitalize the parish priest were in many ways quite different from those used with the religious houses. In chapter 6 there is an examination of how diocesan officials introduced new practices and reformed or repressed old ones within the parish
structure. These chapters show how diocesan officials, monks, parish priests, and parishioners all participated in the reform process and how the implementation of reform impacted these various members of the communities.

An overarching theme of my project is the role of secular authority in religious affairs. As secular leaders played a crucial role in the success or failure of reform and influenced the process of religious change within the diocese, the actions of the French monarchy and the house of Savoy in conjunction with their agents cannot be ignored. Many early modern historians often view the Reformations, both Catholic and Protestant, as political movements as much as religious ones. Lay and clerical elites are seen as forces that were often united against their common foes, which ranged from the opposing confessions to ignorance. In addition, many scholars downplay genuine religious motivation and search for underlying political reasons for the ostensibly religious actions of both secular and church leaders. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia summarizes this view in his recent survey of Catholic Reform stating “Counter-Reformation goals coincided with the interests of Catholic dynasties in centralizing the early modern state; the fervor of Catholic reform was sustained by a social/spiritual elite that staffed both the ranks of the new religious orders and the administration of the confessional state.” By investigating the nature of the relationship between the diocesan officials, especially the bishops, and

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48 For the Protestant side see the work of Steven E. Ozment, The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); and Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Communities, Politics, and Reformation in Early Modern Europe (Boston: Brill, 1998).


the secular powers of the region, a clearer understanding of the complex interaction of all the parties who participated in the reform of the diocese will emerge. The situation in Geneva-Annecy demonstrates that while the ultimate goals may have been similar, the sources for religious and political inspirations were often very different.

This study contributes to our understanding of Reformation era Catholicism, concepts of community, and local religion in Early Modern Europe by exploring how religious practices changed and were adapted over the tenure of three bishops. After the Council of Trent, the bishop asserted greater authority over his diocese. By taking into account each bishop’s singular qualities, a greater understanding can be reached of how individual reformers changed parish religiosity. It also helps pinpoint the entrance of a reinvigorated Catholicism into this French-speaking region. Overall, I intend to provide a fuller picture of the religious landscape in the early modern world.

There remains a great deal of research to be done. Only in the past few decades have historians undertaken extensive archival research of early modern Catholicism. Further primary source research of individual dioceses, religious orders, mission projects, and the many institutions of the papacy should yield a better understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the movement and aid historians in tracing continuities and variations at all levels of Catholic Reform. The actual implementation of doctrine and practice need to be explored further, including how different reforming groups and different regions applied the decrees from the Council of Trent. For example, how did the Jesuits' methods of reform differ from the Capuchins or from the bishops and what impact did they have at the parish level? There is always a danger of overstating the
influence of the reforming agents and efforts when in reality the number of agents of the Counter Reformation remained small in comparison to the Catholic population as a whole. As more regional studies emerge, scholars are uncovering great diversity between countries and even dioceses. Only after there is scholarship approaching the level of the Protestant Reformation, can historians begin to assess the full impact of the Catholic Reformation - the rejuvenation of Catholicism - and the Counter Reformation - the suppression of Protestantism on Western Christendom.
CHAPTER 2

PROTAGANISTS OF REFORM

Religious reformation is never accomplished or squelched in isolation but is the result of numerous individuals, institutions, and processes acting in concert and conflict. In the case of the diocese of Geneva-Annecy, secular authorities from Savoy, France, Geneva, and Berne, the papacy, preaching orders, and the bishops, all participated in and influenced the process of reform including mission activities directed at Protestant populations and efforts to reinvigorate the Catholicism of existing communities. The bishops oversaw the visitation process but people from all levels of the clergy and the laity participated in the process and influenced the ultimate success or failure of a bishop’s reform program. The sacred and the secular worlds were so intertwined during the early modern period that looking at the diverse participants in Catholic reform will bring about a better understanding of the process.

Secular Authorities

The diocese of Geneva-Annecy found itself at the center of both religious and secular turmoil in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Savoy had the misfortune of lying both politically and geographically between France and the Habsburgs territories. During the reign of Duke Charles III (1504-1553) this position became very destructive for the region, and the 1530s saw dramatic changes in its religious and political makeup.
In 1535 Geneva banned Catholicism, driving out the religious and secular clergy of the town, including the bishop, making them refugees in need of a new home. The following year the Bernois decided to aid their religious compatriots in Geneva and increase their own influence in the region by invading and occupying the pays de Vaud and the pays de Gex. Francis I of France took the opportunity to occupy Savoy proper and Piedmont to ensure access to Milan; the French occupation lasted twenty-three years (1536-1559) and introduced important innovations in the political process including the establishment of a French parlement in Chambéry. Savoy historian Roger Devos views this occupation as crucial to the evolution of Savoy into a modern state as the period sees the decline of feudal institutions.¹

When Emmanuel-Philibert (r. 1553-1580) became duke he set out to restore the former holdings of the house of Savoy. He distinguished himself in the imperial army of the Habsburgs and was able to regain some territory through the combination of his marriage to Marguerite de France, daughter of Henry II, his military exploits, and his willingness to negotiate and compromise.² The treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, signed in April 1559 between France and Spain, returned the lands occupied by the king of France to the young duke.³ He established the Senate of the Savoy in Chambéry to replace the French-style parlement.⁴ While the nobles gained important legislative power with the Senate in Chambéry, they lost political power when Emmanuel-Philibert moved his

²Devos, "Un Siècle en Mutation," 233.
capital to Turin in 1563 and turned his focus to Savoy’s Italian interests. Yet Emmanuel-Philibert regained more of Savoy’s northern territory when in 1564 he signed with Berne the treaty of Lausanne which returned much of the duchy of Chablais to the duke but did not allow him to reintroduce Catholicism to the mostly Protestant area. The issue of confessional composition was left to his son and successor.

Charles-Emmanuel I (r. 1580-1630) continued to involve the house of Savoy in intrigue with the powers of Europe during his fifty-year reign. He envisioned returning Geneva to Savoyard control and entered into several wars with the Calvinist City and her allies. In 1589 a war with Geneva coincided with the assassination of Henri III of France and the potential succession of Protestant Henri of Navarre. Charles-Emmanuel made a claim to the French crown with the support of Catholic Leaguers and set his sights on at least adding Provence and the Dauphiny to his territory. But Henri of Navarre aided his Genevan allies and Charles-Emmanuel, even with support from the Spanish, could not attain his goals. France and Savoy called a truce in 1593 but it was short-lived and fighting continued sporadically until 1598 with the signing of the treaty of Vervins. The truce between the duke and the Swiss Protestant cities of Berne and Geneva lasted longer and allowed the Catholics to introduce missionaries into the duchy of Chablais in the summer of 1594. King Henri IV of France occupied Savoy in 1600 due to a dispute over the Marquisat of Saluces and the treaty of Lyons between the two countries in 1601 redrew the boundary of the countries making all the parishes west of the Rhône river permanently part of France. Charles-Emmanuel tried again to take back Geneva in the

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5Devos, “Un Siècle en Mutation,” 233; Martin, 48-51.  
6Martin, 66.
Escalade of December 11-12, 1602 but was forced to recognize the city’s independence in 1603. The duke spent much of the first three decades of the seventeenth century focused on Italy, a move that led him into conflict with his former ally Spain and to closer ties with France. This alliance with France culminated in 1619 with a marriage between the duke’s son Victor-Amadeus and the sister of Louis XIII, Christine of France. Yet in 1630 the year of his death, Charles-Emmanuel found much of his domain again occupied by his old enemy France.

The seven-year reign of Duke Victor-Amadeus I (r. 1630-1637) found Savoy again caught between imperial aspirations of Spain and France in Italy as the Thirty Years War widened. The new duke’s primary goals were to maintain an independent Savoy and retain close ties with France without angering the Spanish. He managed to keep Savoy out of much of the expanding conflict in Europe but his sudden death in 1637 left a five-year-old heir with his wife as regent. The house of Savoy was plunged into civil war as Christine of France tried to hold on to the regency for her sons as her brother-in-laws Prince Thomas of Savoy and Cardinal Maurice of Savoy, who had defected to the Spanish camp, challenged her for control. Only the diplomatic and military intervention of Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu saved the regency of Duchess Christine. The diocese of Geneva-Annecy truly was a crossroads for much of Europe and every move made by the many secular powers with interest in the region reverberated through the parishes.

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7Devos, “Un Siècle en Mutation,” 245-246, 263.
8Roger Devos and Bernard Grosperrin, La Savoie de la Réforme à la Révolution Française (Rennes: Ouest France, 1985), 100.
The Papacy

The period covered by this study coincides with a papacy that was trying to reassert itself as the spiritual leader of Christendom in the face of Protestantism and the growing centralization of secular states. The reform of the curia included increasing the power of some administrative bodies, changing the focus of others without dramatically altering the basic foundations. Evennett asserts, “The Reforms of the Council of Trent assured without question the maintenance of the existing church structure, constitutional, economic, [and] jurisdictional. The administration of the medieval church had resembled a secular state and this would change little as the curia faced new challenges in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹

The papacy did have some success at promoting reform through curial institutions and the crucial years were 1534-1588 for this internal revitalization. The reform of the College of Cardinals commenced under Paul III (Alessandro Farnese) as a body of active reformers emerged within the College including Gasparo Contarini and Reginald Pole. Where the Cardinals had been a source of intrigue and unrest during the later Middle Ages, they became a mostly loyal instrument of the papacy serving as a bureaucracy of the pope.¹² The use of strategically placed nuncios in royal courts encouraged local implementation of the Council of Trent and over the course of the sixteenth century, nuncios became permanent diplomatic representatives in the royal courts of Europe.¹³ A. D. Wright sees “the promotion of reformed and observant branches of religious orders, at

¹⁰Devos, La Savoie de la Réforme à la Révolution Française, 107-117; Victor-Amadeus’ heir François-Hyacinthe died in 1638 leaving his four-year-old brother Charles-Emmanuel II as duke.
¹¹Evennett, 90, 96.
¹²Evennett, 109, 112-115
the expense of conventuals" as a crucial part of post-Conciliar papal policy despite [the papacy’s] conflicts with groups such as the Jesuits. Some of the popes, such as Paul V (Camillo Borghese), even tried to combine religious and secular policies by encouraging Catholic rulers to take up arms against Protestant states. The application of these measures was inconsistent and produced uneven results but for the most part the post-Tridentine papacy tried to increase the power of the Roman Church through its secular and religious policies.

Ugo Boncompagni who became Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585) attended the Council of Trent from 1561-1563 as an expert of canon law. He spent his tenure as pope promoting Tridentine decrees, and it was under Gregory XIII that nuncios emerged as important agents of church reform where previously they had served mostly as diplomats. He was zealous in his anti-Protestants sentiments, which led him to support the Jesuits, the French Catholic League, and political plots against England and the Protestant Netherlands. He celebrated the news of the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre with Te Deums and church services in Rome. A great patron of the arts and literature Pope Sixtus V (1585-1590) né Felice Peretti transformed Rome into a baroque city. Sixtus further reorganized the College of Cardinals through the establishment of fifteen congregations of Cardinals that were to advise the Popes on spiritual and secular matters.

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14 Wright, 30, 45, 274.
including the Inquisition, implementation of the Council of Trent, and administration of the papal holdings. These congregations were a lasting innovation and remained largely unchanged until the Second Vatican Council.  

Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605) was born Ippolito Aldobrandini to a prominent barrister family of Florence which had fallen into disfavor with the Medici and fled. Through the support of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, Aldobrandini studied law at Padua, Perugia, and Bologna. He began his career as an administrator in the papacy of Pius V (1566-1572). As Clement VIII he was active in reform and personally lived a devout and austere life. Acting as bishop of Rome Clement VIII instituted visitations of parish churches and religious houses under his jurisdiction and even made some visits personally. He pursued the reformation of the religious houses and revised key liturgical books. Clement is given credit for recognizing the attributes of François de Sales whom he appointed as coadjutor of Geneva-Annecy in 1599. He also increased the number of books on the Index and used the Inquisition to condemn over thirty people to be burned at the stake including Giordano Bruno. Yet Clement could be pragmatic in matters of state; he absolved Henri IV of France and recognized Henri as king, in part to reduce the power of Spain over the papacy.  

Pope Paul V (1605-1621), formerly Camillo Borghese of Siena, had a very contentious tenure as bishop of Rome. He strongly asserted papal supremacy, which led him to place Venice under interdict and to clash with the French crown. His condemnation of Gallicanism in 1613 was partially the cause for the calling of the Estates

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16 Kelly, 271-272; Evenett, 114-115.
17 Wright, 45; Kelly, 275-276.
General in October 1614. The estates refused to promulgate the decrees of the Council of Trent and thus denied any nation wide program of Catholic Reform. The clergy did allow for the publication of the Tridentine decrees in provincial councils, which led to pockets of reforming vigor throughout France. The failure of Paul V’s political policies ensured that Tridentine reform would lose momentum over the course of the seventeenth century. After 1625 popes increasingly lacked the ability to enforce ecclesiastical privileges concerning fiscal and judicial exemptions if the secular authorities refused to acknowledge them. This impotence was painfully evident in the failure of both Clement VIII and Paul V to overcome France’s defense of Gallican liberties and its continued refusal to promulgate Tridentine decrees despite the favor both men extended to the nation. Notwithstanding continued involvement in the Bourbon/Habsburg struggle in Europe, the papacy found its influence in secular affairs primarily confined to Italy.

The papacy took steps to gain greater control over the rapidly expanding missions with the establishment of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in 1622 during the brief pontificate of Gregory XV(Alessandro Ludovisi). This new congregation was well funded and given oversight of the Catholic missions throughout the world. Its membership included cardinals and bishops, and the Propaganda Fide had the lofty goal of providing “...uniform religious character to all the missions and to bind them closely to the authority of Rome.” The curia continued to assert itself in spiritual matters even as it was losing influence in the affairs of secular states.

18 Kelly, 277-278.
19 Wright, 287, 289.
20 Evennett, 122-123.
After a long and controversial conclave Maffeo Barberini became Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644). He was from a prominent Florentine commercial family and received his early education from the Jesuits there. He trained in Rome and received legal training at the University of Pisa. He served the papacy as a special envoy to Henry IV and later became the papal nuncio in France. His sympathies toward France influenced his policy throughout his long reign, and his desire to appear as the leader of all Christendom never overcame his fear of Habsburg dominance. Urban VIII’s tenure as pope coincided with the Thirty Years War, where he typically sided with France, and his actions in the political arena hastened the decline of the church reform movement. He encouraged the spread of new religious orders including the Visitation and those of Vincent de Paul; he also personally oversaw revisions of the breviary (1631), and supported the spread of missions. He reaffirmed the Tridentine decree that bishops, including Cardinals, had to reside in their dioceses and like Clement VIII he oversaw pastoral visitations in Rome. Urban could be authoritarian, rarely consulting his cardinals, and he extended lofty positions to his relatives. He condemned his old friend Galileo Galilei forcing him to denounce the Copernican system. He spent excessively on building projects to glorify Rome including the new St. Peter’s, and his later years were taken up with petty conflicts over the Italian peninsula. At his death, the people of Rome celebrated.

The reorganized administration of the curia lefts its mark on the course of Catholic renewal and reform, especially through the more activist roles of the College of Cardinals and the papal nuncios. Popes impacted reform in Rome through their presence,

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21 Wright, 45.
22 Kelly, 280-281.
but the results of their policies and decrees on the broader institutions of the Catholic Church are harder to discern without exploring the actions of their agents sent into the provinces. The implementation of new practices was left to the curia’s regional representatives on the front lines of the diocese - the preaching orders and the bishops.

**The Preaching Orders**

No groups have been identified with post-Tridentine Catholicism more than the preaching orders. Even though the foundation of most of the orders can be traced to the years before the Council of Trent, their spread north of the Alps and beyond came in the second half of the sixteenth century often in conjunction with the spread of Tridentine ideas. While their memberships were relatively small the preaching orders could be found in the large cities and rural villages of Europe ministering to Catholics and Protestants and in the New World among the native populations. The three preaching orders that participated in the reform process in Geneva-Annecy were the Jesuits, the Capuchins, and the Barnabites.

The Society of Jesus is often synonymous with the Council of Trent even though they were recognized before the first session of the council. These soldiers for Christ were the largest of the preaching orders that emerged from the spiritual revival of the early sixteenth century. Unlike some of the other orders, the Jesuits had a clear founder in Ignatius Loyola who, after the approval of his order by Pope Paul III in 1540, led the Society until his death in 1556. Ignatius Loyola was a Spanish soldier who experienced a spiritual conversion in the 1520s after being wounded. His travels took him on a pilgrimage to the Holy Lands and for training at the Universities of Alcalá and Paris. In Paris Ignatius met his core group of initial followers including Francis Xavier and this
group ended up in Rome seeking the papal bull establishing their order. Ignatius’s influence spread well beyond the Jesuits largely because of his writing of the *Spiritual Exercises* which provided a guide through the process of conversion and introduced the spiritual retreat.23

The Jesuits were unique in that they did not want to be compelled to keep liturgical hours because it would take them away from active ministry. Catholic historian John O’Malley views the methods of the Jesuits as crucial in the evolution of education and preaching. O’Malley asserts that the Jesuits incorporated humanism into the methods of the mendicant orders from the Middle Ages. They taught scripture through formal sermons, lectures, and catechism, and focused on the sacraments of confession and the Eucharist. The Jesuits opened their first school in 1548 in Messina and began the spread of the order’s humanist approach to education. While the Jesuits supported the Council of Trent they preferred to approach reform on their own terms.24 Probably because of this independence, the Jesuits were not universally supported by the papacy and both Clement VIII and Urban VIII approached the order with ambivalence at best.25 They attracted members from throughout Europe and by 1615 the order had 13,000 members.26 They became the most international of the new preaching orders and played a key role in the spread of early modern Catholicism.

The Capuchins emerged in Central Italy in the 1520s and 1530s as a branch of the Franciscans. There was no distinct founder of the Capuchins; rather, a small group of

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25Wright, 44.
Franciscans left their houses with a desire to observe the Rule of St. Francis as literally as possible. In 1528 the small band of religious persuaded Pope Clement VII (Giulio de Medici) to allow them to live as hermits and others soon followed. The Capuchins faced intense opposition from the Franciscan Observants who tried to stop the new group’s expansion, and their progress was dealt a great blow when in 1542 their vicar-general Bernardino Ochino, a popular preacher, fled to Switzerland and embraced Protestantism. The Pope forbade the Capuchins to preach for several years, to which he added the prohibition of accepting Observants into their communities and spreading north of the Alps. The wars of the later sixteenth century provided a chance for the Capuchins to extend their message when they began traveling with the armies as chaplains. Pope Gregory XIII lifted the ban on the Capuchins moving north in 1574, and they quickly seized the opportunity to establish missions first throughout the rest of Europe and then the rest of the world. They were given full independence as a third branch of the Franciscans in 1619.27

The Capuchins had two models for their conduct, Christ and St. Francis, who both placed great importance on preaching to large and diverse audiences. According to Elisabeth Gleason, there was not much innovation in the methods and practices of the Capuchins and their sermons were simple and direct, in a language and style the listeners could easily grasp. Yet the order did establish a program of studies in 1575 to ensure that those who were preaching were properly grounded in scripture. Through their missions

the Capuchins promoted lay confraternities, Marian devotion, and the Forty Hours celebrations of the Eucharist. The Capuchins were critical to the missionary projects in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy. They also sheltered and educated orphans and took young men and women off the streets. Gleason writes, “Capuchin religiosity was rooted in Catholic ritual, practice, and tradition and in Franciscan thought going back to the Late Middle Ages.”

Like so much associated with the efforts to revive Catholicism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Capuchins adapted and reinvigorated much from the medieval church rather than striking out in a new direction.

The Clerics Regular of St. Paul, more commonly known as the Barnabites, never achieved the membership or fame of the Jesuits or the Capuchins, but they too were part of the movement of regular clergy into active service and left their own mark. Antonio Maria Zaccaria was of a noble family from Cremona active in the woolen trade. He studied philosophy, medicine, and possibly law at the University of Padua, and he returned to Cremona where he seems to have worked among the poor and sick. Soon after Zaccaria’s ordination in 1528 the wealthy widow Countess Ludovica Torelli, who would become his lifelong benefactress, introduced him to Battista Carioni, an elderly Dominican friar who would serve as Zaccaria’s spiritual director. In the early 1530s Zaccaria joined the Oratory of Eternal Wisdom in Milan and met others of mostly aristocratic background who wanted to form a new religious community. Pope Paul III recognized the Clerics Regular of St. Paul in 1535, and they soon were referred to as the Barnabites because their motherhouse in Milan was the Church of St. Barnabas. In 1550

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28Gleason, 42-46.
Julius III (Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte) confirmed them as a religious order. The Barnabites originally had two other congregations, the Angelic Sisters and the married couples of St. Paul, but they did not endure largely because of the church hierarchy’s dislike of uncloistered women and its suspicion of lay orders.

Like the Capuchins and the Jesuits the Barnabites faced hostility and accusations of heresy and public disorder in Rome in 1534 and in Venice in 1551. The Dominican Carioni, at the request of Zaccaria, wrote the order’s first constitution based on the Rule of St. Augustine; his writings were placed on the Index of prohibited books. Only after the Barnabites received the personal protection of Carlo Borromeo, who supervised the drafting of a new constitution, did they free themselves from the scrutiny of the Inquisition. The Barnabites were always a small order with only 322 members in 1608. Their influence cannot be discounted. Richard DeMolen asserts that Zaccaria was instrumental in the spread of the Forty Hours Devotion. He adopted and expanded the Forty Hours to include more sermons, processions of both the laity and clergy, and most importantly made the Eucharist visible to all throughout the celebration.

While the Barnabites have been largely forgotten in the wider context of the Catholic revival, their impact on the diocese of Geneva-Annecy should be emphasized as they established several houses there and Juste Guérin, who served as bishop from 1639 to 1645, was a member of the order.

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30DeMolen, 70-83.
The Pastoral Visitation

Almost as soon as the diocesan structure emerged within Western Christendom, ecclesiastical officials realized the need for a process to provide spiritual guidance and correction at the parish level. The pastoral visitation became the primary tool the church hierarchy used to monitor priests, parishes, monasteries, and any other individuals or institutions that came under its jurisdiction. Church officials soon realized that other administrative duties such as confirmation, dedication of altars, and ordination could be accomplished during these visits. The origins of the visitation can be traced back to the sixth and seventh centuries and specifically to a call for frequent visits at the Council of Tarragon in 516. Gratian affirmed visitations in the Decretum with a list of the basic duties, which included examining the clergy, listening to them preach, and correcting errors of paganism and sin found among the parishioners. By the pontificate of Innocent III at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the visitation was a highly developed practice of the Roman church. Evidence from the thirteenth century for both Italy and England reveals that "visitors already followed the lines which are fully described in visitation manuals of the fifteenth century." Even though some standardization emerged within the visitation process, surviving records reveal that the visits never became strictly formulaic. As G. G. Coulton found in thirteenth-century visitation records for Benedictine monasteries, "In spite of great similarity in certain

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32 Binz, 179, 182.
34 Coulton, 28.
details, the same set of injunctions [was] never delivered to two separate houses." The written accounts reveal the unique circumstances or problems present at each site visited.

By the later Middle Ages, the visitation had become an established part of diocesan life. During the Avignon papacy of the fourteenth century, the specie poor popes intervened in the visitation system by taking a portion of the procuration dues traditionally given to the bishop-visitor or his representative. This practice was very unpopular at the diocesan and parish levels and was condemned by both the Councils of Pisa and Constance. The dues were returned to the bishop in the fifteenth century. The direct link in the church hierarchy remained between a bishop and his parish.

The regularity and intensity of visitations ebbed and flowed with the level of reforming vigor within the Catholic Church. While annual parish visits were the ultimate goal of church officials, even the most frequently observed dioceses during the height of reform typically waited five to ten years between visitors. Visitations became even more important for both Catholics and Protestants during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The leaders of both confessions realized that the best way to ensure observance of the faith was through close supervision and inspection of parish practices. After the Council of Trent (1545-1563), a Catholic bishop had exclusive authority to order a visitation of his diocese. A bishop was expected to conduct or oversee regular visits of the parishes under his control. Compliance to this decree from Trent varied greatly between dioceses, but some bishops took this requirement very seriously.

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35 Coulton, 35.  
36 Binz, 184-85.  
37 Binz, 182.  
38 Forster, 62.
Carlo Borromeo established the standard for systematic and thorough visitations for the Post-Tridentine Catholic world during his tenure as archbishop of Milan (1564-1584). Borromeo believed that the diocese was the foundation of the Catholic Church, and that the priests and parishioners were a single unit that shared a common bond of faith. Through pastoral visitations, diocesan synods, provincial councils and the establishment of seminaries, Borromeo began a process of renewal and reform within his diocese. Borromeo wanted neither the papacy, nor secular rulers, nor civic officials to interfere with diocesan activities and administration. He was willing to resist Rome itself to maintain this autonomy. The visitation was the most effective of all the instruments that a bishop had to convey Tridentine Catholicism to the parish level. How better for a bishop to inspire and instruct the priests and the faithful than with his example and his presence? Borromeo believed the framers of Trent wanted an active, austere, and resident bishop in every diocese, and he provided a model for other diocesan leaders to emulate and adapt for their corners of Catholic Christendom.

Borromeo is almost always cited as the inspiration for other reform-minded bishops throughout the early modern period. How widespread was the influence of Borromeo's bishop-visitor outside of Italy? Was he the embodiment of Trent for reformers in the French-speaking regions? It is impossible to know how many people made contact with Borromeo during his tenure as archbishop. Two men whom scholars know to have had direct contact with the reformer from Milan were Alexandre Canigiani

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40 Tomaro, 73.
the archbishop of Aix-en-Provence, and Giovanni Battista Castelli, papal nuncio in France from 1581-1583. Both of these men spent time in Milan while Borromeo was in residence and transmitted his ideas of austerity, rigor and reform to their posts in France.\footnote{Marc Venard, "The Influence of Carlo Borromeo on the Church of France," in \textit{San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century}, ed. John M. Headley & John B. Tomaro (Washington DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988), 208-209.} Borromeo's writings and the accounts of his pious actions influenced other French Catholic reformers. Six thousand copies of the decrees from his first provincial council of 1564 were printed and distributed throughout the Catholic world.\footnote{Tomaro, 77.}

Borromeo's \textit{Acta Ecclesia Mediolanensis} set out a methodology for parish visits. Many dioceses had realized the value of frequent visitations before Borromeo, but his methods were helpful in providing structure for the actual visits and the written accounts of them.\footnote{Marie-Helene and Michel Froeschle-Chopard, \textit{Atlas de la Reforme Pastorale en France de 1550 a 1790} (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986), 8; Venard, 216.} Word of his accomplishments in Milan spread rapidly during his lifetime, and he was canonized in 1610 only twenty-six years after his death.

Borromeo was not the only inspiration for Tridentine reform, just the most famous. In some dioceses reform attempts can be traced back to before the Council of Trent. How much of the diocesan reform beyond Italy was based on Borromeo's model and how much was indigenous? According to Louis Binz, ideas of pastoral renewal were widespread in the fifteenth century and were evident in the diocese of Geneva. The bishops of Geneva conducted regular visitations during the fifteenth century. Six visits were performed between 1411 and 1518. In addition, the surrounding dioceses of Lyon,
Lausanne, and Aix-en-Provence also had visitations at regular intervals during the same period. So at least some of the reform-minded visitors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries entered areas that had been touched by earlier spiritual revivals.

In the diocese of Geneva-Annecy a bishop undertook the parish visitations personally if possible, but if he was unable to go he sent another clergyman in his place. Visiting each parish was a very time consuming and arduous task. Many of the villages were difficult to reach and roads became impassable during the winter months. All three men included in this study toured the diocese during their tenure as bishop, but other duties and failing health forced Claude de Granier and François de Sales to appoint others to visit parishes in their later years. De Sales’ growing reputation as a spiritual guide and reformer placed great demands on his time. Pastoral visitors have been portrayed as outsiders whose status allowed them objectivity and freedom to perform often unpopular duties such as punishing errors and issuing fines. None of the surrogates appointed as visitors were strangers to the region, and all entered a parish with the power of the bishop behind them. All the men who visited the parishes of Geneva-Annecy were local priests who performed their duties well, and the bishop rewarded them with his trust and with offices in the diocesan structure.

It took Claude de Granier six years to visit the ensemble of his diocese because he did the majority of his visiting in the summer months. He visited 360 parishes and forty-three annexes between June 1580 and February 1586. This was the first complete tour of the diocese since Pierre Farfein had surveyed 452 parishes in the name of Bishop Jean de

44Binz, 185, 188-190.
Savoie from 1516 to 1518. Most of de Granier’s visitation accounts are very short, and he often went to three or four parishes a day. Bishop de Granier was primarily interested in the revenues of a parish, the services required of the priest, and the quantity and physical condition of the chapels. The majority of the injunctions he issued ordered the repair of parish properties including the church and the priest’s residence, the inventory of parish property and the purchase of ceremonial linens. For the visits to the newly reestablished parishes in the duchy of Chablais conducted October 21-November 21, 1598, Bishop de Granier sent Claude D’Angeville and a carpenter to evaluate the physical state of parish property and the needed repairs. De Granier set the standard for his successors to follow and expand upon.

When François de Sales became an active agent of Catholicism in the Alpine region of Savoy and France, he was both building on the past and striking out in his own direction. Bishop de Sales visited the French part of his diocese in October and November 1605 and the Savoyard portion 1601-1610. The bishop evoked the name of the Council of Trent in the written records of his visits, but many of his actions centered on traditions that had been followed in the diocese before the Reformation. The written description of each parish toured by François de Sales began with a listing of who was present during the visit. This list usually included the local notables such as the syndics, counsellors, notaries, or châtelains. The document also mentioned the name of the parish priest and any curates, and whether they were present and in residence in the village. If the priest was absent, the reason was also recorded. For example, in the account of the

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45 Répertoire des Visites Pastorales, 324.
visit to the abbey of Notre Dame of Abondance, it is noted that a priest was absent because he was away studying in Chambery. Clergy absenteeism had long been a concern for church officials; the visitors of the Genevan diocese during the fifteenth century were confronted with a large number of nonresident curés. In contrast, at the beginning of the seventeenth century most of the priests appear to have been present during the bishop's visits. Perhaps continued pressure by the bishops and a new mandate from Trent for residence had finally compelled the priests to stay in their parishes.

The visitation records of Bishop François de Sales listed the services that the priest was expected to conduct. This often included the number of weekly masses, feast days, and any other regularly performed ceremonies, followed by a listing of the properties and related revenues of the parish. Most of the parishes of Geneva-Annecy were relatively poor, so small parcels of land that grew wheat or vines were the major source of income. The visitor then recorded the injunctions that he ordered the priest and parishioners to fulfill. These charges included a list of the materials the parish church needed to purchase such as books, linens, or altar pieces. It is here that de Sales ordered numerous churches, including the parishes of Alex, Balmont, and Hottones, to purchase the missal and manual ordered by the Council of Trent. Additionally, a parish was often ordered to make repairs to church buildings including the priest's house. The bishop issued a deadline for the completion of these purchases and repairs that normally ranged from one to six months. The visitor also noted under the injunction heading any requests

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46C.M. Rebord, éd., 
47Binz, 207.
48Visites, 2:24, 74, and 341.
and complaints made by the parishioners. These ranged from special ceremonies the
parishioners wanted to have performed to complaints about the conduct or abilities of the
curé. Finally, the visitation account included a list of any individuals who received
tonsure or orders during the visit. As Binz noted, a parish visit was always a convenient
time for a bishop to conduct administrative business.49

Under a separate heading in the visitation records the bishop listed each chapel
located in the parish along with its patron saint, benefactors, revenue, physical condition,
and the rector's name. Injunctions pertaining to the repair and maintenance of the
chapels were also in this section. Many of the chapels in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy
were in poor condition and possessed little revenue. In 1607 at the parish of Alex, the
rector of the chapel of St. Magdalene, was threatened with fines and excommunication if
he did not improve conditions of the chapel and quality of the services in a month.50
Confraternities or individual sponsors, however, faithfully supported other chapels.
Bishop de Sales followed this pattern for recording the accounts with only minor
variation during the first decade of the seventeenth century when he visited over 400
parishes and annexes. Evidence from the injunctions issued by the bishop reveal that his
primary concern at this point was repairing the church property, obtaining the supplies for
divine services including the manual and missal of the Council of Trent, and ensuring
that the priest was performing all of his assigned duties.

The visitations of the sixty-six French parishes completed between May 25 – June
25, 1614 under the guidance of Bishop de Sales were performed by Jean Rosetain, curé

49Binz, 178.
50Visites, 2:25.
of Charvornay, and vicar general for the French part of the diocese. These visits follow a similar format to those of François de Sales and note injunctions not fulfilled from de Sales’s previous visit in 1605. One noticeable difference is that the visitor gave a copy of the injunctions to the local official of the king. There is no specific reference to the Council of Trent but the visitor did issue injunctions calling for missals, manuals, and rituals, and Rosetain ordered the priest from the parish of Echallon to teach the catechism. Perhaps because of France’s reluctance to promulgate the decrees of Trent, the visitors had to be circumspect in the introduction of those reforms.

Diocesan officials completed an intensive survey of the parishes in the duchy of Chablais where two decades previously missionaries had made a great effort to reestablish Catholic parishes and to convert or drive out the Protestant populations. Many of the villages were visited three times in a five-year period between 1617 and 1622. Jean-François de Blonay, prior of Saint-Paul, Jean Mocand, curé of Abondance, and Claude Cullez, curé of Biot, surveyed the parishes located in the duchy of Chablais in 1617, 1620, 1622 respectively. Even though de Sales delegated the actual visiting to others, he still took an active part in the process. The written reports for each parish have a statement signed by Bishop de Sales describing the injunctions issued. In addition, the visitor forwarded any unusual problems to the bishop for his attention.

The accounts of the visitations to the duchy of Chablais reveal that the diocesan officials made an effort to introduce practices identified with post-Tridentine Catholicism. Confraternities dedicated to the Eucharist or rosary, many newly

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51 Visites, 1: 418.
established, were mentioned often. In addition, injunctions appeared which ordered the parishes to teach the catechism and to build confessionals. These references reveal that de Sales' diocese was in the forefront of reform. According to Marc Venard, Charles Borromeo's Instructions for confessors were not widely available in France until the middle of the seventeenth century. It appears that the parishes in the duchy of Chablais were a testing ground of the reform measures for the diocese of Geneva-Annecy.

Jean-François de Sales spent the summer and fall of almost every year during his tenure as bishop touring his diocese. By 1635 he had visited 272 parishes and forty-five annexes. It is evident from the written accounts that his thorough and precise nature left its mark on his visits. While he followed the general format of his predecessors, he was meticulous in his descriptions of the duties of the priest, revenues of the parish, and descriptions of the chapels, and his accounts provide far more detail than his brother's about the property holdings of the parish and the chapels. Headings to identify separate portions of the accounts such as revenue, chapels, responsibilities of the curé, and dividing the injunctions between priest and parishioners are two notable differences in the recordings of Jean-François de Sales. Regular parish visits did not seem to resolve the problems; on the contrary, the bishops found more to be concerned about.

The visitations certainly reveal that the Catholic Reformation had entered parishes within the confines of Geneva-Annecy in both Savoy and France by the beginning of the seventeenth century. This is significant since the decrees of the Council of Trent were not officially promulgated in France. The accounts of the parish visits provide a glimpse

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52 Venard, 219.
of the richness of village religious life and the vitality of the inhabitants' spirituality during the early modern period. A comparison of the efforts of the three bishops better identifies what aspects of the visitation process were unique to an individual bishop and what were traditional to the diocese. The identification of subtle continuities and variations within the visitations will allow for a much more nuanced view of the Catholic faith as a result of the revival of the sixteenth century.

The Introduction of Reform - Claude de Granier

The Council of Trent strove to give more authority to the bishops but with this power came greater responsibility in the diocese. Trent called for the bishop to oversee his clergy through annual synods, to visit the parishes of his diocese, and to live frugally and morally as an example to others. The introduction of Tridentine reforms had to begin with him, and the three bishops included in this study were all active agents of reform despite coming to the diocese through different channels and from dissimilar educational backgrounds. An understanding of their history is crucial to interpreting how they interacted with the other protagonists of reform, how they administered the diocese, and how they carried out their parish visits.

Claude de Granier is not nearly as famous as his successor François de Sales, yet many of the reform measures credited to de Sales actually began under de Granier. Like his two successors Claude de Granier was born in the Savoy to a noble family. His father served the house of Savoy as a "master of the hotel." De Granier attended school in Annecy before he entered the Benedictine monastery at Talloires where he spent several
years as a novice. He was made prior in 1563 and soon after traveled to Rome to continue his studies. This would have placed de Granier in Rome around the time that Pope Pius IV (Giovanni Angelo Medici) brought the Council of Trent to its conclusion. According to his biographer, Boniface Constantin, de Granier studied philosophy under the Jesuit François Tolet as well as canon law while in Rome. During his studies he may have met Carlo Borromeo, archbishop of Milan. Whether he did or not, Borromeo’s reputation would have been known to the young Savoyard cleric.

When Claude de Granier returned to the priory of Talloires in 1572, he was full of reforming vigor. He spent seven years trying to introduce reform into the monastery with little success. In the meantime the bishop of Geneva-Annecy, Ange Justinian, had run afoul of local elites. In 1579 Pope Gregory XIII took the unusual step of naming Claude de Granier as bishop and Ange Justinian as prior of Talloires. Bishop de Granier began trying immediately to implement the decrees from the Council of Trent. He held diocesan synods where he introduced the Tridentine breviary. Significantly, he placed great value on the visitation process as a way to communicate doctrine and practice to the priests and laity as well as to correct errors.

He faced opposition to his goals of reform from a variety of quarters throughout his twenty-three years as bishop. Constantin asserted that de Granier’s biggest problem was the war between France and Savoy and the resulting destruction of property. He also

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54 Boniface Constantin, La Vie du Reverendissime et Illustrissime Evesque Claude de Granier: Religieux de Saint Benoist, & Predecesseur du B. Francois de Sales, en l'Evesché de Geneve (Lyon: C Rigaud & Philippe Bordes, 1640), 9, 12, 14, 24-26, 28-30.  
55 Constantin, 32, 88-89, 93, 112.
faced outbreaks of the plague. He met resistance from regional nobles when he tried to stop them from appointing curés in their territories, and parish priests opposed his observation of the Tridentine decree ordering their examination before ordination. Bishop de Granier endured a chronic shortage of funds that kept him from establishing more schools and a seminary in the diocese. War, disease, poverty, and ignorance made the diocese difficult to govern.

It was Claude de Granier who sent François de Sales to the fortress in Allinges to begin preaching to the Calvinists of the duchy of Chablais. He also sought and received Duke Charles-Emmanuel I's permission to bring Capuchins and Jesuits into the diocese to help with the mission. While unsuccessful, Bishop de Granier expended a great deal of effort trying to get back the benefices in the Chablais from the Chevaliers of Saints Maurice and Lazare who had held them for "safe-keeping" since the papacy of Gregory XIII. He participated in all three Forty Hours devotions held in the Chablais. One of his last public actions was the celebration of a Jubilee in Thonon in August 1602. While in Thonon de Granier fell ill and died in transit between Thonon and Annecy.

The Embodiment of the Catholic Reformation - François de Sales

If the participants of the Council of Trent had drawn a model for the bishop who would carry the Catholic Reformation to the French-speaking territories of Europe, François de Sales would have come close to the ideal. By all accounts, de Sales was an embodiment of the positive attributes of the Roman church's reform efforts. Born in 1567, the eldest son of a noble family, de Sales was to practice law and inherit the

56 Constantin, 115, 118, 120, 123, 125.
57 Constantin, 162, 164, 168, 181, 228, 248, 251.
family title and estate in Savoy. Instead, he became one of the most important agents of the new piety of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His religious training was done under those leading the spiritual revival of the Catholic Church. François de Sales studied under the Jesuits at the College of Clermont in Paris from 1581 to 1588, and then he studied law at the University of Padua where he placed himself under the spiritual direction of the renowned Jesuit Anthony Possevino, an active reformer and missionary throughout Europe. Returning to his native region in 1592, de Sales received his ordination and became provost of the Geneva chapter of canons which was in exile in Annecy along with the bishop. In 1594 he began active missionary work in the duchy of Chablais. According to legend there were only one hundred Catholics in the Chablais when de Sales began his work, but by 1598 when the bishop came to inspect his assistant's handiwork, almost all the region was again Catholic. This may be an exaggeration by de Sales' hagiographers, but for his accomplishments he received an audience in Rome with Pope Clement VIII. The story goes that "in the presence of eight cardinals and twenty bishops, the Pope arose and embraced the young apostle." François de Sales became coadjutor of the bishop of Geneva with the right of succession in 1599 to the aged and very ill bishop. He became bishop of the diocese in December 1602 at a ceremony in Thorons, his birthplace.

For twenty years de Sales shaped a diocese in a region wracked by political, religious, and economic turmoil. He dealt with the periodic fighting among the kings of

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59 Ravier, 64-65.
60 Ravier, 56-57, 62; Daniel-Rops, 380-381.
France, the dukes of Savoy and the Swiss cities of Geneva and Berne. The region suffered greatly during the wars of religion. The bishop spent his whole tenure in Annecy without adequate revenue since much of the property of his benefice had been lost to Calvin's Geneva. He also felt the constant threat of Protestantism, but he never gave up the hope of returning people to the Catholic fold. He was tireless in his efforts to reform and guide those under his care in what he believed was the revival of Catholicism.

François de Sales sought the reform of all those who were in his sphere of influence including clergy, laity, men, women, and Protestants. He administered rigorous examinations for those who wished to enter the priesthood, and during his tenure as bishop, he ordained almost nine hundred priests. He was one of the first to see the importance of a spiritual regiment for the laity. In his most famous writing the Introduction to the Devout Life de Sales provided guidance for those who desired a closer and more spiritual relationship with God. His regimen was practical and showed lay people how their daily lives offered chances for exercising virtue and communing with God. Both the humanism and mysticism of the age influenced the reforming methods of François de Sales. Pierre Janelle sees "liberty, moderation, and reason," as the qualities that de Sales possessed which made him so successful.

61 Daniel-Rops, 381.
63 Ravier, 92, 123.
64 Ravier, 129-131, 239.
65 Janelle, 244; Daniel-Rops, 383.
66 Janelle, 246.
In addition to his duties overseeing his diocese, François de Sales also maintained a wide written correspondence. Religious individuals from throughout France sought the bishop's advice. Always encouraging and positive, de Sales instructed bishops, priors, and abbesses in their religious lives and on reform. In a 1603 letter de Sales responded to Antoine Revel, the newly appointed bishop of the French diocese of Dol, to discuss the characteristics necessary to hold episcopal office, and to suggest a reading list that Revel should undertake during his first year as bishop. Bishop de Sales suggested standards such as St. Gregory's Morals and Pastoral Care, and St. Bernard's On Consideration. He also recommended more recent authors like Luis de Granada and tells Revel that "Cardinal Borromeo had no other theology to preach with, and yet he preached excellently." Jesuits Costerus and Francis Arias were also on the list, as well as the Life of Borromeo who de Sales wrote was "the model of the true pastor." According to de Sales the most important works to study were the Council of Trent and the catechism, and the most important duty of a bishop was to preach. François de Sales continuously studied the literature that emerged during the period of Catholic reform, and he encouraged those under his guidance to do the same in order to offer the best pastoral care.

Women seemed especially attracted to de Sales' guidance. He maintained an immense correspondence with women seeking spiritual advice including Jeanne de Chantal who, with the bishop's help, founded the order of the Visitation.

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68 According to Elizabeth Rapley, de Sales envisioned the women of this new Counter Reformation order living without clausura and performing good works, but the church hierarchy forced the members of the Visitation into cloisters. Rapley, 35, 40.
corresponded extensively with abbesses who wanted to reform their houses. In a series of letters from 1604, Bishop de Sales instructed the abbess from a Benedictine Abbey in Burgundy how to introduce the Breviary from Trent and reminded her of the Council's rules of confession for superioresses. His advice was very practical. For example, when telling the abbess how to introduce the Breviary, he suggested that she gradually get each sister to say the grace from the end of the Breviary at dinner. He informed her that he always observed the grace when he was home in Annecy. As with his visitations, Bishop de Sales realized that his example was the best encouragement for reform.

François de Sales became one of the most popular figures of the post-Tridentine Catholicism and the Savoy region venerated him soon after his death. His cult was associated with miraculous cures for diseases common to his native region. At the papal hearing for his canonization, one deposition listed over a thousand miraculous episodes connected with his cult. The papacy encouraged his veneration, and he was canonized in 1665, less than fifty years after his death. As a legend, Bishop de Sales remained very much a part of the region he served during his life.

Continuing the Tradition - Jean-François de Sales

Jean-François de Sales was born in the village of Thrones in 1578. Like his elder brother, he appears to have been drawn to the religious life. At the age of seventeen he entered the Capuchin order, but he left after only ten months because, by most accounts,
his health was too poor for him to endure the austerity. Instead he was ordained as a
secular priest in 1603 and promptly moved up the diocesan hierarchy. He was a canon
of the cathedral and held the benefice of Petit-Bornand. François de Sales made his
brother vicar-general, his second in command, in 1615, and Jean-François participated in
the marriage negotiations between the Prince of Piedmont and Christine of France. He
served as his brother’s coadjutor from 1621-1622 and handled much of the administration
of the diocese during the last year’s of François de Sales’s life. He assumed the See of
Geneva-Annecy on December 28, 1622.

As bishop, Jean-François de Sales continued the practices of annual synods and
parish visits established by his predecessors. By most accounts he had a more severe
personality than his brother and has been described as harsh, sour-tempered and austere,
but he was an able administrator. Even his brother François acknowledged this when he
described the three de Sales brothers as a salad with Jean-François as the vinegar for his
strength, Louis as the salt for his wisdom and François as the oil for his mildness. Jean-
François’s meticulous nature is evident in the accounts of his visitations, which are much
more detailed than those his brother’s. He was rigorous in his efforts to continue the
reform of the clergy and his policies led to conflict with his cathedral chapter.

While Jean-François de Sales may not have possessed the same gentle nature as
his brother, he displayed great devotion to his family, to the Catholic Church, and to his

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75 Ganter, 300; Baud, 130.
diocese. He began the beatification process for François de Sales in 1627. In 1633 he became chancellor of the Order of the Annunciation. He demonstrated great concern for the parishes of his diocese during an outbreak of the plague in 1629-1630. He stayed behind in Annecy with local syndics and a cathedral canon his nephew Amédée de Sales to minister to the ill while the rest of the local notables and the cathedral canons withdrew to Thorens. His nephew died as a result of the plague, and Jean-François supposedly sold his own household goods to buy food for the sick. Jeanne de Chantal wrote that his courage and gentleness during the plague were without equal. The tenure of Bishop Jean-François de Sales may have lacked the spectacular accomplishments of his canonized brother, but he was a competent administrator who was committed to continuing the reform and restoration of the diocese of Geneva-Annecy.

It is impossible to know who all participated in the process of reform in the diocese or exactly how the protagonists interacted, but the situation in Geneva-Annecy reveals that nothing was monolithic. Monarchs, popes and bishops approached religious reform with varying goals and preconceived ideas and all wanted to play a leadership role. While the policies and actions of the rulers of church and state could make the implementation of practices easier or more difficult, the bishops, the regular clergy, and the secular clergy were the ones on the ground ministering to Catholic and Protestant populations. The methods employed by the reformers and their results will be explored in the following chapters.

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76 Ganter 300.
Along with new rules and practices, early modern Catholicism saw an unprecedented lavishness in its visual representations. Both the art and theater associated with Catholicism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries took on new color and drama. Nothing is more reflective of this splendor than the Forty Hours Celebration. A reference to the time Christ was in his tomb before the resurrection, the Forty Hours included continual display of the Eucharist, preaching, confraternity processions, theater, and music. Capuchin Joseph of Ferno is credited as the founder of this devotion, and Milan saw the first of such ceremonies in the 1520s and 1530s. It gained popularity with the spread of Tridentine decrees. The Capuchins and later the Jesuits and the Barnabites spread the celebration from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. Pope Clement VIII played an important role in popularizing the Forty Hours when in 1592 he ordained that the celebration would be conducted continuously through the churches in Rome. In other words, when one church of the city finished its devotion, another church began a new Forty Hours.

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The Forty Hours devotion was an important part of preaching orders’ missions. With the Eucharist as the primary focus of adoration, the popularity of the Forty Hours among Catholics only increased the conflict over the real presence of the sacrament with the Protestants. Between September 1597 and October 1598, officials from the diocese of Geneva-Annecy along with the Capuchin missionaries active in the region, celebrated Forty Hours devotions on three separate occasions, once in the village of Annemasse and twice in Thonon. The celebrations served as the culmination of three years of intense missionary work to convert the Calvinist populations to Catholicism.

In the seventeenth century, two different authors provided accounts of these three devotions. Charles-Auguste de Sales included the three Forty Hours in his biography of his uncle that was first published in 1634 which most scholars have dismissed as hagiography and thus not historically accurate. He was very involved in the canonization process of his uncle and François de Sales’s success as a missionary was crucial to him becoming a saint. The Capuchins assigned one of their own, Charles of Geneva, to write about the mission in the Chablais to remedy Charles-Auguste de Sales’ portrayal of the controversial missionary Père Chérubin. Charles of Geneva visited the convents of the province between 1644 and 1650 to collect evidence for his chronicle that he composed between 1651 and 1653. From the many depositions that Charles of Geneva collected, he composed an abridged Latin version in 1657 that another Capuchin translated into French in 1680. However, there is no evidence either was published until the French version was in 1867. It was only in the 1930s that the Capuchins returned to

3Dompnier, 8.
the unabridged version left by Père Charles and took steps to publish it.\(^4\) Although neither was an eyewitness account and one was written to challenge the other, the two texts have strikingly similar narratives of the events. The accounts are also consistent with the surviving documents contemporary to the Forty Hours. Both chronicles should be read very critically, but the narratives are still useful historical sources about what occurred at these crucial mission events.

While primarily religious in nature, the very public devotions had important political and communal functions. The civic devotions in honor of the Eucharist in Annemasse and Thonon celebrated the unique rituals of Catholicism literally in the face of Calvinist Geneva. A close analysis of who participated, who attended, and who was excluded from the celebrations can help answer questions about how confession and community were defined in a region shared by Catholics and Protestants. As Edward Muir has shown in his analysis of ritual and processions in Early Modern Venice, it is important to explore not only how a public ritual was conducted and presented but also how those watching saw it.\(^5\) By looking at the three Forty Hours ceremonies together, but also noting the unique attributes of each event, a greater understanding can be reached of the power and purpose of public rituals in the early modern world. A study of these events can also shed light on how authority was distributed in the community and who possessed it. The Duke of Savoy, Charles-Emmanuel I, whose support of the mission in the Chablais had ebbed and flowed along with his relationship with the Swiss Protestant


cities, financially supported the three Forty Hours and participated in the final one held in Thonon. The active endorsement by the secular ruler made a crucial public statement of his desire for a unified Catholic dominion. Although the clergy and Charles-Emmanuel I sometimes clashed over administration of the mission, these celebrations provided the opportunity for secular and religious goals to dovetail, and allowed the leaders to stand publicly together, united as Catholics.

In 1597, the missionaries active in the Chablais met in Annemasse to discuss the next course of action for the newly reestablished parishes. This group of clergy was made up of two capuchins, Chérubin and Esprit; the provost of the cathedral church, François de Sales; his cousin and cathedral canon, Louis de Sales; a Jesuit, Jean Saunier; and the curé of Annemasse, Jean Maniglier. They explored the possibility of holding a conference with Protestant ministers, the necessary repairs to the parish church, and how to obtain from the duke the tithe from the religious of Bellerive for the parish of Annemasse. The fiery Capuchin Père Chérubin was always attempting to find opportunities to engage in theological debate with the Calvinist ministers in the area. With the approval of the bishop, Chérubin broached the idea of holding the devotion in Annemasse during a meeting with the duke. Charles of Geneva wrote that Chérubin made a resolution to institute the forty hours in Annemasse "to nourish the new converts...and entice them in the preaching and the divine sweetness of the exercises of the Catholic Religion." Charles-Auguste de Sales asserted that the Capuchin decided to make an

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7Les Trophées Sacrés, 84.
oration of the Forty Hours “in order to wake up the ministers of Geneva.”

Certainly Annemasse’s close proximity to Geneva made it an ideal place to celebrate the unique attributes of Catholicism.

Plans quickly took shape with Père Chérubin as the main organizer of the event. The missionaries erected tents and a stage since the church in Annemasse was in such a state of disrepair. An outdoor arena also had the potential to reach more listeners. The duke sent tapestries, carpets, and other articles to decorate the temporary structures. Theater was a central part of these celebrations because of the potential to appeal to multiple senses of an audience and it was also an effective way to expose all within earshot to the broad messages of the missionaries. Charles Mazour in his 1982 article in *Revue Savoisienne* deemed it “catechetical theater.” Charles of Geneva claimed that Chérubin planned the demonstration of mysteries including the three kings in the stable of Bethlehem. Charles-Auguste de Sales wrote that there was a performance of the sacrifice of Abraham with verses written by the two Louis de Sales, François de Sales’s cousin, a cathedral canon and his brother. Why would the two accounts emphasize different biblical stories? Perhaps Charles-Auguste de Sales wanted to highlight the role his family played in the devotions. Mazour points out that the preacher could tie both of these stories back to Christ’s sacrifice and thus the symbol of the Eucharist. The sacrifice

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9 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 188.
11 *Les Trophées Sacrés*, 84.
12 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 188.
of Abraham was a logical drama for the Forty Hours, but the fact that Theodore de Bèze had written a piece of theater on the same subject when he was a professor in Lausanne might have been an added incentive.\textsuperscript{13}

The missionaries held the Forty Hours in Annemasse from Sunday, September 7 until Tuesday, September 9, 1597. It began with a mass by Bishop Claude de Granier and the presentation of the Eucharist. Central to the devotion were processions of confreres from neighboring villages. As each group entered the village, they kept a vigil at the Eucharist as the clergy preached and performed orations. The visual imagery of group after group entering Annemasse dressed in similar robes must have had a great impact on Catholic and Protestant alike. The confraternities served the dual roles of participants and audience. Charles-Auguste de Sales recounted how the Penitents of the Holy Cross, a confraternity established by François de Sales in Annecy, arrived dressed in their robes, holding rosaries, and chanting the litanies of the crucifix. The confreres of the Holy Cross were led by Louis de Sales, their prior, and they all went to the church.\textsuperscript{14}

Other themes beyond the Eucharist played an important role in the overall message presented. Rotating preachers dealt with three subjects: the blood shed by Jesus Christ; the reality of the Eucharist; and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.\textsuperscript{15} These three subjects were areas where Catholics and Protestants held divergent theological positions. The Catholic missionaries knew that the tangible aspects of their faith were popular with the laity, and the priests intentionally highlighted them in the Forty Hours in an effort to attract people.

\textsuperscript{13}Mazouer, 58-59.
\textsuperscript{14}Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 189.
During the Reformation, Protestants committed acts of iconoclasm against churches and images, and the visits conducted of the churches of the Chablais in 1598 reveal that many of the structures and decorations were damaged during the widespread violence in the sixteenth century. According to Charles-Auguste de Sales, a stone cross called the “Cross of Philiberte” which had two statues, one of the Virgin and one of the crucifix, was destroyed in the religious violence of the region. During the Forty Hours in Annemasse the clergy replanted a wooden crucifix in the Cross of Philiberte’s former place. Charles-Auguste de Sales claimed that his uncle, François had the cross made in Annecy and escorted it to Annemasse along with a lay procession from Thonon. Charles of Geneva said that Chérubin placed the cross so that it could be seen from the city of Geneva. The Capuchin proceeded to preach about the meaning of the cross, a symbol whose interpretation was fought over between Catholics and Protestants. Chérubin preached that Catholics did not just adore the symbols with their senses, but they also understood that it was not the tangible nature of the cross but that Jesus Christ was crucified for the sins of humanity. Charles of Geneva wrote, “Man needs physical objects to excite the senses which are doors to understanding in the knowledge of the mysteries of the faith.” Charles-Auguste de Sales also asserted that the Catholics present at the devotion understood that they did not adore stone or wood but God. The explanation for the veneration of the cross was meant as a clear refutation of the charges

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15 Les Trophées Sacrés, 90.
16 Gonthier, (Jean-François), La Mission de Saint François de Sales en Chablais, (Annecy: F. Abry, 1891), Appendix E 238-241.
17 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 190.
18 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 189-190.
19 Les Trophées Sacrés, 87.
20 Les Trophées Sacrés, 91.
of idolatry frequently leveled by the Calvinists against the Catholics. Both accounts assert that the Catholic faithful understood the proper meaning of the images, yet the missionaries also maintained the importance of physical symbols to Catholicism.

From the reactions of those in Geneva even before the event took place, the Forty Hours of Annemasse had an impact on both the Catholics and the Protestants of the region. The registers of the Company of Pastors reveal growing concern in Geneva about the missionary activities in the Chablais from the summer of 1597 onwards. Obviously the preparations for the festivities has not gone unnoticed. The Company was informed at the end of August 1597 that the Capuchins were planning several processions including one in Annemasse that included a “great assembly where they also erect a cross.” The pastors voiced concern that the people would be distracted by the processions. On September 2, the Company viewed two placards made by the Capuchins concerning the adoration of the cross and chose Minister Antoine de la Faye to respond with their own placard. The missionaries in Annemasse had taken the offensive in their efforts to convert the populations and the pastors of Geneva were left to respond.

After the completion of the Forty Hours celebration in Annemasse, François de Sales informed the papal nuncio of the results and began seeking permission for a similar festivity in Thonon. He told the papal nuncio that he and the other missionaries had held the public adoration to the Eucharist “in order to rouse the ministers of Geneva,” and declared the event a success, claiming three thousand people came from Geneva to watch

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21 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 191.
22 Gabriella Cahier & Michel Grandjean ed., Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Geneve VII 1595-1599 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1984), 72-73, hereafter Registres VII.
23 Registres VII: 74.
and there was no place to lodge them. De Sales wrote that some people converted, others had their conscience aroused, and the Catholics were comforted. De Sales, in seeking approval from the papal nuncio in March 1598, promised that they would celebrate in Thonon "with as much dignity as possible." Chérubin also pledged that the services would be done with "dignity." The officials continued to emphasize the reverential nature of the devotion. They wanted the people to understand the sacred nature of the images and did not want the celebration to sink into revelry. Yet at the same time the missionaries knew that these types of events were very popular with the people and could be quite effective in bringing people to the Roman faith.

By August 1598, plans were taking shape in Thonon and de Sales attempted to settle financial responsibilities. Charles-Emmanuel supported the preparations and promised monetary aid. The Duke had let it be known that he wanted the Forty Hours celebration to begin August 15. De Sales informed the fiscal procurer of the Chablais, Claude Marin, that he needed more money to hire musicians and other support people for the festival. He also was searching for appropriate lodging with "good Catholics" for the visiting bishops and clerics. The Eucharistic celebration ultimately took place in Thonon September 20-22, 1598, and a second one October 1-3 because the Duke was unable to attend the first one.

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25 Œuvres, 11: 323.
26 Œuvres, 11: 323-324.
27 Les Trophées Sacrés, 216.
29 Œuvres, 11: 342-345.
Charles of Geneva claimed that Chérubin planned a celebration “such that the people had not seen for seventy years.” Since the people still did not want to enter into the Catholic churches, Chérubin set up a public sanctuary near the church of St. Augustine. The capuchin friar had a carpenter make a large oratory, two altars, and a pulpit for preaching. He decorated the area with rich tapestries of gold brocade sent by the duke for the purpose. As in Annemasse, a theater was set up near the church where processions would end and for the performance of the “Eucharistic mysteries.” Holding much of the celebration outdoors offered a public stage that ensured that even unwilling Protestants would see the activities. It also provided plenty of space for the Catholics attending from neighboring villages who could furnish the proper responses throughout the celebration. Employing the streets was also a way for the missionaries to claim the public space for Catholicism. The pope issued a plenary indulgence for all those who participated in the Forty Hours and it was published in neighboring dioceses. On the one hand the descriptions of the planning emphasize the unique nature of Catholicism including an ornately decorated oratory, a stage for plays, and the issuance of indulgence, all aspects of Catholicism that offended the Protestants sensibilities. Yet by promising that the celebration would be dignified, the missionaries implicitly acknowledged criticism that had long been leveled at Catholicism from within and without.

On Sunday morning, September 20, 1598, the devotion began in Thonon with a mass, a general procession through all the main streets, and the public presentation of the

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30 *Les Trophées Sacrés*, 216-17.
Eucharist. Bishop de Granier carried the sacrament followed by a procession that included the clergy, the regional nobles such as Jérôme de Lambert, governor of the province for the duke, and the confreres of the Blessed Sacrament. Governor Lambert had worked closely with the missionaries throughout their time in the Chablais, so he was a natural secular official to include. People came from all provinces around Savoy and also from Burgundy, Switzerland, the Val d’Aouste and Bresse. Anyone viewing this celebration would have seen a mix of all levels of society from both the clergy and the laity. After the public entrance of the region’s elites came the processions of people from neighboring villages. First there were the penitent confreres from Taninge who arrived all dressed in white and chanted prayers and motets. They listened to the preaching of Chérubin as he discussed the Eucharist, the passion, and vocation of the missionaries. A group arrived from Bellevaux who requested and received “absolution from heresy.” Charles of Geneva claimed that these people wore white robes and had bare feet and they were welcomed back into the Catholic Church. They were a symbol of the penitent Protestant who had realized his error and was returning to the true church who in turn embraced them warmly. This was the public image the missionaries wanted to impart to the region. After all, among missionaries a voluntary conversion was preferable to a forced one and was more likely to convince others to follow suit.

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32 Charles-August de Sales, 1: 203-204; Les Trophées Sacrés, 221. Charles of Geneva wrote that the bishop celebrated mass while Charles-Auguste de Sales claimed there was an oratory behind the church of St. Augustine.
33 Les Trophées Sacrés, 221.
34 See Chapter 4, p. 92 for further discussion of Jérôme de Lambert’s involvement with the mission.
35 Les Trophées Sacrés, 222.
36 Les Trophées Sacrés, 222-223; Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 203. Charles of Geneva claimed there were 500 people from Bellevaux while Charles-Auguste de Sales said 300.
As a confraternity from Boëge entered Thonon, François de Sales preached to them about the “reality and dignity of the holy Eucharist,” and players performed a short piece about manna from heaven. Processes continued each hour as did the preaching, and four preachers oversaw the groups as they waited for their assigned hour. One of the processions was from the parish of St. Sergue which arrived bearing a cross that someone had hidden from the iconoclasm of the Calvinists. Both authors assert that this parish had been the last of the Chablais to leave the Catholic faith for Calvinism. Through their rhetoric the missionaries always asserted that the people of the Chablais had been forced to convert to Calvinism. The implication was that the inhabitants had held on to their Catholic faith as long as they could and had held on to a symbol of it even longer.

Throughout the night the processions and sermons continued. The next morning, many notables arrived including the Monsignor Pobel, Bishop of St. Paul, who led the processions from the towns of Cluses and Sallanches. Some came from the mountains of Faucigny also dressed in white robes with bare feet. Certainly the penitential aspect of the celebration was never forgotten. Charles of Geneva reported that one confrere performed a discourse on the suffering of Christ. The participation of a layperson who understood the tenets of Catholicism was crucial to a display of a united church. Again the missionaries showcased an aspect of Christianity, in this case the crucifixion, that was more central and concrete to Catholics than to Calvinists. The nobles of the Chablais also arrived the second morning led by Jérôme de Lambert, who again as a secular leader

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37 Les Trophées Sacrés, 223; Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 204. The two accounts are almost identical on these events.
38 Charles-August de Sales, 1: 203-204.
39 Charles-August de Sales, 1: 204; Les Trophées Sacrés, 224.
40 Les Trophées Sacrés, 224.
played a prominent role in a sacred ceremony. The afternoon brought a group from Evian who entered Thonon dressed up like angels and carrying the symbols of the Passion. They performed a play about the prophet Elijah as he ate the bread from the angels under a juniper tree while hiding from the cruel Jezebel. All of the theater pieces at this first Forty Hours in Thonon featured the idea of nourishment from God, which could be concretely tied back to the Eucharist. Charles Mazouer said of the Forty Hours in the Chablais, "Nothing was neglected in order to strike the senses and imagination of the faithful." Both accounts make mention of the risk and even danger some faced in coming to Thonon. Charles-Auguste de Sales wrote that while traveling to the celebration some groups were accosted by the region's Protestants. A group from Ternier should have arrived the previous day, but they were detained by the Genevans. He also asserted that some of the attendees feared for their safety so they chose to come under the cover of night. François de Sales and Père Chérubin preached throughout the night to accommodate the late arrivals. Charles of Geneva wrote that the pilgrims endured the insults of the Protestants so bravely that it moved several Huguenots to convert. Both of these authors portrayed the people as religious pilgrims who risked their lives to be a part of this devotion. They were potential martyrs. There is no way to know what actual dangers the people faced but considering the very real religious violence that had been so prevalent in the region for decades, the fears of the people were surely quite real.

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41 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 204-205.
42 Mazouer, 48.
43 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 205.
44 Les Trophées Sacrés, 225.
religious pilgrims believed that they were taking great risks to venture out onto the narrow and rugged mountain roads to come to Thonon. The devotion ended at two in the morning on Tuesday, September 22, 1598.

While all involved in the first Forty Hours of Thonon hailed it a great success, it lacked a key element, the presence of the Duke. In addition, Cardinal Alexander de Medici, a papal legate on his way back from France, was passing through the region, and the duke invited him to stop in Savoy. The cardinal was papal legate to France, a key figure in the absolution of Henri IV, and later Pope Leo XI.\(^{45}\) Plans rapidly took shape to hold yet another one of the three-day celebrations. There were numerous preparations necessary to properly entertain such high-ranking dignitaries.\(^{46}\) The accommodations and the churches had to be appropriately adorned. Both men and their entourages arrived in Thonon at the end of September 1598. According to the accounts the duke met the Cardinal de Medici and took him first to the church of St. Hippolyte and then to his lodgings that had been “sumptuously prepared and decorated in the town hall.” Even the preparations and the arrivals of the guests became public rituals. The church of St. Augustine was decorated with tapestries and drapes of gold, silver, and purple. The pulpit was elevated on scaffolding and the base covered with a Turkish carpet and a gold drape. There were prominent places in the church for the Cardinal and the Duke. Charles of Geneva claimed that the heart of the church was turned into a small chapel with candles that gave the effect of stars in the sky. The altar held a very ornate tabernacle to hold the

\(^{45}\)Kelly, 276-277.
\(^{46}\)Les Trophées Sacrés, 227, 231-232; Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 205.
sacrament. The descriptions of the decorations are quite similar to what Christopher Black found for the Forty Hours in Italy. The ornamentation was more lavish for this second celebration in Thonon with the increased status of the participants. The interior of the church was used more than the public streets so that parts of the devotion could be more exclusive for the visiting dignitaries. The stage was set for an even more powerful and dramatic devotion with hope of more impressive results.

On Thursday morning, the first day of October 1598 the duke escorted the cardinal from his lodgings to the church of St. Hippolyte. Various dignitaries of both church and state were present. They were seated according to their rank and included the bishops from the surrounding dioceses of Mantua, Geneva, St. Paul, Torcelle, Termoly, the nuncio of Gonzaga, the general of the Observance, and others. Both accounts have virtually the same list of dignitaries and while there is no way to know if these people were present, it is reasonable to suppose that the event would have attracted such a group. Cardinal de Medici, dressed in all his pontifical finery, was presented with people who wanted to receive absolution. The first person offered for absolution was the Protestant minister Pierre Petit. After his public profession, Pierre Petit spoke to the crowd for more than an hour on how he came to return to the Catholic fold. While the public abjuration of Pierre Petit was a staged performance, the impact cannot be discounted. The Protestant minister had agreed to participate in this public return to the Catholic Church

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47 Les Trophées Sacrés, 235-236; Charles-Auguste de Sales, I: 207-208.
49 Les Trophées Sacrés, 236; Charles-Auguste de Sales, I: 208.
50 Les Trophées Sacrés, 236-237; Charles-Auguste de Sales, I: 208-209.
providing himself as an important symbol that showed to Catholics that the mission was making progress and reminded the Calvinists that even someone trained in their beliefs could see "the truth."

The story of Pierre Petit however is much more complex. Pastor Petit was not the model Calvinist minister. He was suspended from the ministry in 1595 for marital and drinking problems. He lost his parish of Choulex and the Company of Pastors in Geneva had to order his wife to vacate the home so the new minister could occupy it. Petit applied two separate times for reinstatement into the ministry but was denied.\(^{51}\) It was probably not the most difficult task to convince Petit that Catholicism had a place for him. After all, his reputation among the Calvinists could not have been stellar. It was not uncommon for Protestant clergymen to receive a pension from their new Catholic brethren, a fact that left the converts open to criticism.\(^{52}\) While we cannot know Petit's true reasons for converting, it provided him a special place in the community. At the Forty Hours he stood alongside the leaders of society. Even with his questionable past, Petit's conversion had the desired effect on the Calvinist leaders. An account of Petit's conversion appeared in Paris in 1599.\(^{53}\)

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51 Registres, VII: 9-10 note 42, 37 note 41.
53 Registres, VII: 191, note 285 - The account was La Volontaire conversion de Pierre Petit, cy devant ministre de Genève, à nostre saincte foy et religion catholique, apostolique et romaine. It was reproduced by Émile Vuarnet, "Découverte d’un livre de 1598 relatif à la Célébration des Quarante-Heures de Thonon" in Mémoires & Documents Publiés par L'Académie Chablaisienne 26 (1912-1913): 1-62.
Keith Luria has found that the conversion of clergy always occasioned attacks and questions of sincerity from the other side. Writing against the diocese of Geneva-Annecy became Pastor de la Faye's specialty. In August 1604, Bishop de Sales complained to the Bishop of Dol that the Protestant minister had written a book specifically against him, and de Sales was trying to decide if he would respond. Pierre Petit appears to have remained in the Catholic fold and the duke rewarded this fidelity by naming him châtelain of Thonon four years after his conversion. According to the parish register of Thonon Petit died in October 1621 after receiving the sacraments.

After the public absolutions, there was music, a mass, and a general procession through the streets of Thonon. The procession ran along streets that were decorated with tapestries, images, and greenery. Bishop de Granier led the procession and carried the Eucharist. The prominent visitors including the duke walked in the procession with their heads bare and holding candles, and ended up at the church of St. Augustine. It is significant that the route of the procession was from the church of St. Hippolyte through the narrow streets of Thonon to the church of St. Augustine. The Catholics were staking out their territory and reclaiming the streets. It was as if they were re-sacralizing Thonon after it had been “polluted” by the Protestants. All of this was done in full view of the Calvinists who lived in the village. As Thonon is built up on the rise along the banks of Lake Geneva, no one would have been able to escape the sights and sounds of the Forty Hours.

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54 Registres, VII: 191.
56 Œuvres 12: 296-297; Letter to Antoine de Revol, Bishop of Dol, 18 August 1604.
57 Œuvres 11: 227 note 1.

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The organizers placed various images and props along the streets on the path between the two churches. Charles of Geneva described a large rock emitting flames placed before the door of the church of St. Augustine as a symbol of the invincible Catholic Church; a fountain to symbolize the “living, perpetual and clear doctrine of the church”; and a triumphal arch decorated with artificial doves that held gilded scrolls in their feet. One scroll was a Latin verse addressed to the cardinal and one in French was for the duke. The verses sang the praises of the two men as preservers of Catholicism. The Latin verse proclaimed that Alexander de Medici was greater than Alexander of Macedonia while the French verse said that the Duke was a ruler with a great heart who gave more in peace than in war.\(^{59}\)

The dignitaries entered the church of St. Augustine and were seated so that they all were visible to the others present in the church. Like the first two Forty Hours devotions, the rest of the first day and night were taken up with preaching and confraternity processions. Père Chérubin made the first sermon on the power of God; François de Sales followed with a message on the Gospel passages interpreted differently by Catholics and Protestants. Other preachers including Louis de Sales followed. Processions arrived from neighboring villages and like the first general procession, followed the route between the churches of St. Hippolyte and St. Augustine. The processions ended up at the church of St. Augustine where they could pay their respects to the duke.\(^{60}\)


\(^{60}\) *Les Trophées Sacrés*, 241-244; Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 211.
On Friday morning the duke became a more active participant in the ceremonies. In addition to more sermons and processions on the second day, there was a plenary indulgence for all who confessed and received communion. Both authors claimed that the Duke Charles-Emmanuel realized he had to be an example to his people so he received the sacraments along with the other dignitaries. The duke served the double purpose of being one of many humble penitents and leader by example. Both authors recount an episode about a confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament that began a procession at the church of St. Hippolyte. All the confreres were dressed in white, and they carried a large wooden cross that they planted at the crossroads of Rue de la Croix where there had been a cross in the place before the Protestants came. The duke and the bishops of Geneva and St. Paul assisted with the procession and the cross. The duke, dressed as the other confreres, knelt before the cross in prayer, then kissed and embraced the sacred object. The other confreres followed suit. People from all levels of society were dressed alike and all participated in planting the cross. For this moment the duke was symbolically one of many anonymous confreres, but all who viewed and participated in planting the cross certainly knew that he was not one of the masses. The celebration would last until the wee hours of Saturday morning.

The missionaries claimed even greater success from the two Forty Hours in Thonon. Provost de Sales notified the papal nuncio that several thousand inhabitants returned to Catholicism at the festivity. He believed that Calvinism was finally being turned back in the region. He wrote, "The interests of Jesus-Christ are now in such a state

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61 Les Trophées Sacrés, 244; Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 212.
62 Les Trophées Sacrés, 245; Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 212.
in these provinces that if we are able to give to the cult the proper splendor, the head of the serpent will be broken."^63 He also reported to Pope Clement VIII, in the name of Bishop de Granier, the results of the Forty Hours mentioning that Cardinal Medici attended with the Duke and viewed an "innumerable multitude of men" abjure Calvinism.\(^64\) Both Charles-Auguste de Sales and Charles of Geneva claimed that the Forty Hours devotions brought about the conversion of huge numbers of people. While we must question both their claims and those of François de Sales, the events were successful enough for Duke Charles-Emmanuel I to stand up to the Bernois leaders and renounce the liberty of conscience for the Protestants guaranteed by the treaty of Lausanne signed in 1564 by Duke Emmanuel-Philibert.\(^65\) After the second Forty Hours in Thonon, representatives arrived from Berne, Geneva, and Fribourg to plead the case of the Protestants of the region, but Charles Emmanuel claimed that he as the legitimate ruler of the region, who had reconquered the area, had the right to reestablish Catholicism. The duke reportedly gathered people together in a "public assembly" to exhort them to return to his faith.\(^66\) At this moment the Church and secular leaders saw their goals united.

By October 1598 the pastors in Geneva appeared to realize that they were in danger of losing villages of the Chablais back to Catholicism. Theodore de Bèze claimed that the Company had failed Thonon and was responsible for those who had "revolted."\(^67\) As negative reports arrived in Geneva from the Protestants in the Chablais, the pastors

[^63]: Cœuvres, 11: 356, 358-359.
[^64]: Cœuvres, 11: 364.
[^66]: Les Trophées Sacrés, 249-250, 259.
wrote "our brothers of Thonon are in affliction and bitterness where they have great need to be consoled and sustained." As this point in time, the pastors of Geneva feared that the duke of Savoy would be successful in his suppression Protestant worship. In a letter from Bèze to the church in Zurich, he wrote that the duke was having no trouble using flattery and threats to convert his subjects to Catholicism. The Company of pastors attempted to gain support from the French king and the Protestant cities of Zurich, Berne, and Basel for continued religious pluralism in the duchy of Chablais. Bèze wrote to the churches of Zurich and Basel at the end of October warning them that Duke Charles-Emmanuel was a threat to all the Protestants of the region including the pays de Gex and was not as tolerant as his father. He also mentioned that the duke planed to establish a college manned by Jesuits and Capuchins. For the Catholic missionaries, the duke's appearance at the second Forty Hours in Thonon and his subsequent change of policies concerning religious toleration had the desired effect on the Swiss Protestant cities. They now viewed him as a more active threat to their religious freedom.

Even with all this concern, the pastors of Geneva still refused to debate publicly with the missionary Père Chérubin. Claude Deprez, a syndic of Thonon, pleaded to the company to hold such a public debate, claiming that one was necessary to inspire people. He thought live voices would be more persuasive than writing. Deprez wrote, "If we do not show more zeal in the defense of our cause, we are lost." He referred to "a time of desolation" and warned the Company that if they did not aid Thonon they could not

68 Registres, VII:115.
69 Registres, VII, Letter of Bèze to the Church of Zurich, 5, Oct. 1598, 327; 118.
70 Registres, VII, Letters of Bèze to the Church of Zurich and Basel, 27 Oct., 1598, 341-342.
blame the people of Thonon if they turned to Catholicism. The Forty Hours made the
Protestants of the region behave as if they were under siege and in many ways they were.
Syndic Deprez appeared isolated by the actions of the missionaries led by Chérubin and
by the perceived inaction of his Protestant neighbors.

The Catholics were also gaining strength in other villages beyond Thonon and
Annemasse. The Company received a solicitation for advice from Jean Gervais, the
Calvinist minister of Bossey. Gervais reported that most of his parishioners had written
secretly “to the Capuchin” presumably Chérubin, informing him that they were ready to
embrace Catholicism. The minister of Bossey wanted to know if he should let these
people receive baptism and take communion. The pastors of Geneva advised him that
the people of Bossey must “renounce the papacy, idolatry, and all false religions” and
also have their children baptized in the Reformed Church. If they were not willing to do
these things then they should be excluded from Pastor Gervais’s church. In
December 1598, the pastors of Geneva received a report that the Bishop of Geneva had
said mass at a church in the town of Véry. The following January the Calvinist minister
of Véry asked the Company if he should continue to preach. By the first of February the
register mentioned that the inhabitants of Véry had renounced Protestantism, dressed the
altar, and were making the sign of the cross. François de Sales visited Véry in 1607
during his tour of the diocese. The people of the Chablais were embracing Catholicism
at a rapid rate.

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71 Registres, VII, Letter from Claude Deprez to the Company, 5 Oct., 1598, 328.
72 Registres, VII: 118.
73 Registres, VII: 125, 138.
74 Visites, 2 193.
The Forty Hours celebration served numerous functions in the community. In having the devotions as the culmination of a mission, the clergy brought the Catholic community together which surely reinforced their faith. The clerical leaders consciously used the strong visual images, especially the public displays of the Eucharist and crucifix, as a way of including some viewers of the ritual and excluding others. This process also defined the community as those who believed in the power of the host. The Catholics carved out their community not unlike the Protestants had done decades before. Those excluded might also see the ritual but their beliefs made it impossible for them to be part of this community unless they embraced the symbols of Catholicism. The Catholic clergy proclaimed to the Protestants their exclusion from the true church, from the civil realm, represented by the Duke of Savoy’s participation in the celebration, and from their neighbors. However, Protestants could become a part of this community if they publicly professed a belief in the real presence of the Eucharist. It would have been tremendously hard to resist this type of persuasion, and only those with the strongest of faith would be able to stand this ostracism, however, as we shall see in the next chapter, dramatic celebrations were just one part of the mission process.
CHAPTER 4

THE COUNTER REFORMATION IN THE DIOCESE: THE MISSIONS IN THE
DUCHY OF CHABLAIS AND THE PAYS DE GEX

From 1594 to 1622 François de Sales oversaw two projects to convert the
Protestants living in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy – one in the duchy of Châblais, part
of Savoy, and one in the pays of Gex, in France. De Sales’s biographers, including his
nephew, Charles-Auguste de Sales, recounted the mission in Chablais in hagiographic
terms, telling how de Sales, almost single-handedly, converted the Calvinist populations
back to Catholicism. Correspondence, visitation accounts, and other documents reveal a
much more complex and difficult road. The few incomplete studies of the pays de Gex
have focused mainly on the Protestants there and the disputes over the region’s
ownership. Both missions are worthy of further study in an effort to achieve a greater
understanding of how the Counter Reformation, specifically the conversion of
Protestants, went about its work.

Diocesan officials regularly faced the secular politics of their region but the
impact was greatest when dealing with Protestant populations. The diocese of Geneva-
Annecy had the misfortune of being the playground of the imperial aspirations of the
kings of France, the dukes of Savoy, and the Protestant cities of Geneva and Berne.

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1See Charles-Auguste de Sales.
Secular politics imposed themselves on the ecclesiastics, but the motivations of François de Sales and the other missionaries remained primarily religious in nature. Because of the often inseparable character of religion and politics during the early modern period, this chapter also explores how the clerical elite of the diocese of Geneva-Annecy dealt with their secular rulers, as Catholic missionaries, including François de Sales, attempted to convert the Protestants who lived within the diocese. The complex political situation of the region in which the diocese was located forced the clergy to address, often reluctantly, an ever changing political landscape.

Both the duchy of Chablais and the pays de Gex had at various times during the sixteenth century seen their secular leadership change between the warring powers of the area. The two regions were the sites of sporadic but intense fighting beginning in the late 1520s. Charles III of Savoy was forced to abandon the Chablais and Gex to Berne at the beginning of 1536. The Bernois quickly dismantled the foundations of ecclesiastical revenue belonging to the monasteries and thirty-five parishes in Gex and sold much of it to Geneva. Berne and Geneva successfully introduced Calvinism into the areas. When Emmanuel-Philibert succeeded his father Charles III in 1553, he found much of the former holdings of Savoy in the hands of his enemies. France controlled Bresse and Bugey; the Bernois held the pays de Gex, the pays de Vaud, and much of the duchy of the Chablais; and the Holy Roman Emperor and France were fighting over Piedmont. France returned the area it occupied in 1559, and Duke Emmanuel-Philibert regained control of Gex, Ternier, and Thonon from Berne in 1564 with the completion of the treaties of
Nyon and Lausanne.² The religion however, remained Protestant and thus the regions stayed closely tied to Geneva and Berne. Warfare resumed in 1589 between the Swiss Protestant cities, who had the aid of Henri III of France, and Savoy, which received support from Spain and the French Catholic League.³

A key turning point for the confessional composition of the region came with the treaty of Nyon of 1589 between Savoy and Berne. Duke Charles-Emmanuel demanded that the treaty include a provision that allowed for the reestablishment of Catholicism in the disputed areas. According to Genevan historian Alain Dufour, Berne abandoned its alliance with its Protestant brethren of Geneva by acquiescing to the demands of the duke. This alliance also left vulnerable the Protestants who found themselves under Savoy’s secular rule.⁴ The provisions of the agreement from Nyon opened the door for the return of Catholicism to the Chablais in the 1590s. Hostilities over Gex continued for the remainder of the decade. When the pays de Gex became a French possession in 1601 with the signing of the treaty of Lyon, the region was almost completely Protestant with twenty-five churches.⁵

The young provost of the Cathedral, François de Sales, accompanied by his cousin Louis de Sales, set out for the fortress at Allinges in the Chablais in September 1594. The first months of the mission were not very successful and the priests soon became discouraged. In a letter to Antoine Favre, senator of the Savoy and a close friend, de Sales wrote that people did not come hear him preach.⁶ The young missionary

⁴Martin, 61.
⁵Martin, 65; Alain Dufour’s La Guerre de Genève cited in Martin.
⁷Œuvres, 11: 91.
appeared frustrated by the lack of response from the local population and by the interference of civic leaders. He complained to the Bishop of Geneva-Annecy, Claude de Granier who had sent him to the duchy of Chablais, that the people were very stubborn and had even reinstated a public ordinance that no one had to attend Catholic services. François de Sales believed that some people would like to hear him preach, but he thought they were fearful of being mistreated by the Bernois and the Genevans if they did. This fear was not unfounded since troops regularly used the region as a battleground, and the inhabitants had faced various occupations in the past. In a later letter he told the bishop that he felt like St. Paul in the early days of Christianity. The François de Sales of the early stages of the Chablais mission was not the one portrayed by his biographers.

By March 1595, François de Sales was spending more time preaching in Thonon, but he did not seem to have converted many people. His letters reveal a man very isolated and at times doubtful about his mission. He confided to Antonio Possevino, the Jesuit missionary and diplomat, that even though he preached often, only three or four Huguenots attended his sermons. He wrote that he was preaching to the walls and wondered if someone else might be better for the job. One hopeful sign he revealed was that some people hid behind windows and doors to listen to him secretly. De Sales did not divulge how he knew this. Throughout his stay in the Chablais, de Sales’ friends and other preachers offered him letters containing support and advice, which were sources of comfort to the missionary. He mentioned to Antoine Favre that Pere Chèrubin, a

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7Œuvres, 11: 94. 8Martin, 53-91.
Capuchin missionary who would later join de Sales in the Chablais, advised him to continue offering sermons to the people and bring in new preachers if necessary to repeat the message. Overall, François de Sales appeared overwhelmed in the early stages of the mission - understandably so considering he was one of only a handful of preachers trying to convince thousands of Calvinists to leave a faith they had known for nearly sixty years.

The conflicts between France and Savoy and the involvement of the neighboring Swiss Protestants certainly affected the progress of de Sales’s mission, though his determined efforts did bear some fruit. He believed a peace agreement that was being negotiated between the states while he was preaching in the Chablais would give too much power to the Protestants, making his job even more difficult. De Sales informed his friend Possevino that there were some inhabitants of the region whom he had convinced to abjure Protestantism, but he claimed they were fearful of converting due to uncertainty about the truce. De Sales described to Antoine Favre the illustrative situation of one possible convert, Pierre Poncet, a local notable who was considering conversion to Catholicism, who feared losing property and friends and worried about the duration of the truce. De Sales revealed that Poncet had believed in the real presence of the Eucharist for some time. This fact alone surely made de Sales optimistic that he could convince Poncet to leave Calvinism. In a follow-up letter to Favre, François de Sales appeared more hopeful of Poncet’s embrace of Catholicism. He claimed that

9Œuvres, 11: 118.
10Œuvres, 11: 120-121.
11Œuvres, 11: 115
12Œuvres, 11: 120-121.
13Œuvres, 11: 124.
Poncet, "promised to make a public profession to the Catholic faith soon." The prominent Calvinist finally converted during late spring or early summer of 1595. De Sales wrote Peter Canisius informing the Jesuit theologian that he had been in Chablais for nine months and had converted eight people including Pierre Poncet. Provost de Sales needed Canisuis's aid in refuting Calvin's translation from the Hebrew of Genesis 4:6 for the benefit of Poncet. Even after his rejection of Calvinism, Poncet was debating theology with de Sales. According to de Sales, Poncet was more knowledgeable about Calvinism than a Protestant minister. He said that the authority of antiquity did not persuade Poncet about the infallibility of the Catholic Church; rather it deterred him. This fact must have disturbed de Sales since appealing to Rome's connection and continuity to the early church was often a useful tool in conversion. Susan Rosa explores the use of such polemics in her analysis of Turenne's return to Catholicism.

De Sales informed Canisius that he had utilized the theologian's catechism and examples from the church fathers to convince Poncet of his errors. The missionary wrote that he did not want to fail in refuting the Calvinist interpretation, but the only appropriate book he had with him was Bellarmino's Controversies which was silent on the particular scripture. De Sales went to great lengths to ensure that Poncet, a man well respected in the region, sincerely converted to Catholicism and remained there.

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14*Œuvres, 11: 128.
15François de Sales, Nouvelles Lettres Inédites de Saint François de Sales, 2 vol. (Paris: J.J. Blaise, 1835), I: 110-112; hereafter Lettres Paris ed. De Sales wrote to Peter Canisius in June or July of 1595 concerning the recent conversion of Poncet.
18Registres, VII A Pierre Poncet went before the Council of Geneva in April 1599 and renounced Catholicism, 182, note 241. It is unclear if this is the same one.
The conversion of community leaders was always a primary goal of a missionary. The belief in a patriarchal society transferred to a top-down view of conversion. If a leader who was viewed as the best educated and wisest member of a community abandoned Calvinism, then the rest of the members would more likely do the same. Prospects of individual conversions seemed to ebb and flow with the negotiations between France and Savoy, which included Berne and Geneva. At one point de Sales informed the Papal Nuncio in Turin that further progress of the mission was on hold until the completion of a truce.19 Political stability was crucial for the success of the mission.

When de Sales had been preaching in Thonon for eight months he informed Senator Favre that he would stay for four more months. If, after a year, people were not fulfilling their duty to the mission he would not continue there. The ‘people’ de Sales referred to were the secular authorities of the region. De Sales claimed that some inhabitants of the Chablais believed that he was proselytizing without the permission of Duke Charles-Emmanuel. He complained that the duke aided and abetted the accusation saying, “his silence is in effect a great argument.”20 François de Sales wanted the duke and members of the senate, as loyal Catholics, to become active participants in what he viewed as God’s work. He needed them to support his mission by publicly embracing the cause and supporting it financially. The Duke, however, was trying to negotiate a peace settlement with France and he did not want to antagonize the Calvinists.

In the beginning of 1596, with his threat of resignation seemingly forgotten, Provost de Sales became more assertive with his requests for increased support to both

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19[Œuvres, 11: 278.](#)

20[Œuvres, 11: 139.](#)
Archbishop Jules-Cesar Riccardi of Bari, the newly appointed Papal Nuncio to Turin, and Duke Charles-Emmanuel. He informed the Papal Nuncio of his immediate need for money to repair churches and to hire preachers to send out into the villages beyond Thonon. De Sales offered this suggestion to Riccardi:

> It would be a great help for us if his Highness ordered the governor of the province to favor the converts, to call upon the obstinate, and to deprive them [in case they refuse] from all charge and from all public honor, and above all if he ordained one of the members of the sovereign senate of the Savoy to come here to Thonon to exhort the inhabitants.21

François de Sales wanted the Duke of Savoy to take a much more participatory role in the conversion of the Protestant populations, especially in the area of finances. He asked Riccardi to intervene with the Duke about getting revenues controlled by the Catholic Chevaliers of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus for church repairs and curés’ salaries in the duchy of Chablais.22 The Duke of Savoy Emmanuel-Philibert had entrusted the Chevaliers in 1575 with Catholic benefices located in the Chablais, since much of the population there had converted to Protestantism. Not surprisingly, they were less than eager to give them up. The Papal Nuncio in Turin told the missionary, “do not lose hope of the good intentions of the duke and the eagerness with which I solicit them.”23 In addition, the Nuncio reminded de Sales that the negotiations for the benefices were complex and exhausting and that the Duke was very sincere in affairs of religion.24 This uncertainty over revenue would continue to nag François de Sales throughout his life.

The Protestants continued to challenge de Sales’ right to reside and preach in the Chablais. De Sales requested letters from the Nuncio in Turin so that he could prove to

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21 Œuvres, 11: 187-188.
22 Œuvres, 11: 190.
the Protestant opposition that he possessed the duke’s permission to practice Catholicism openly. For de Sales, the goals of the church always came first, and he did not approve of political compromise if it hindered these aims. Charles-Emmanuel, concerned with issues of state, had his own goals and timetable to achieve them, and at this point had clearly decided not to pursue aggressively suppression of Protestantism in the region.

Even with the challenges to his authority, François de Sales continued to work towards the conversions of prominent Calvinists. One of his key conquests was Antoine de Saint-Michel, Seigneur d’Avully. De Sales enclosed a commentary of Saint Jérôme in a letter written to the Protestant d’Avully that the missionary claimed was clear on Catholic doctrine including the issue of Purgatory. D’Avully was at least open to the idea of converting to Catholicism if he was corresponding with the missionary. De Sales mentioned in the letter that he had heard that Seigneur D’Avully’s daughter and her maid had abjured Calvinism. Like the first Christian missionaries in Europe, De Sales viewed the conversion of family members as another motivating factor to convince this prominent Protestant to follow suit. Through doctrinal education and familial pressure, the missionary hoped for a successful conversion. D’Avully did embrace Catholicism in a public ceremony in Turin on August 26, 1596 in the presence of the papal nuncio and the inquisitor. However people of both confessions questioned the sincerity of Monsieur d’Avully, which upset François de Sales greatly. D’Avully must have convinced at least some people of the sincerity of this conversion since in a later letter to the papal nuncio

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25 Œuvres, 11:239.
de Sales mentioned that d'Avully was a good example to other new Catholics. D'A

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D'Avully became one of the more vocal opponents of Geneva, even writing propaganda against them. Missionaries spent a great deal of time and effort trying to convert the leaders of society with only mixed success, but cases like d'Avully demonstrate why they went to such lengths.

The most important person both in the political and religious realms whom de Sales tried to convert was Theodore de Bèze. Pope Clement VIII gave de Sales this daunting task. In a letter to the pope in the spring of 1597, de Sales reported that he went to Geneva often but was unable to meet with Bèze until the third festival of Easter. De Sales claimed he talked with Bèze alone and came to the conclusion that the leader of the Calvinist had a "heart of stone." De Sales hoped that if he met with Bèze more frequently he could return the Protestant to the Catholic fold but time was of the essence due to Bèze's advanced age. Obviously de Sales was unsuccessful but it is still interesting that the pope would send someone to try and convert Bèze. Of course, if by chance de Sales had been successful it would have been a major coup of the Counter Reformation and a blow to the Calvinists. Perhaps in only sending one missionary the risk was considered small.

Both of de Sales's temporal rulers had policies that hindered the missionary work, at least in his eyes. Geneva and Berne would seek recourse first from the Duke of Savoy for their grievances against the missionaries, and if that channel failed to achieve results,

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29. *Œuvres*, 11: 278; See the discussion of Père Chérubin's debate below. D'Avully published an account of it.
30. See discussion below concerning debate.
they turned to the king of France, viewed as the protector of Protestants. De Sales complained to Pope Clement VIII in April 1597 that he was tired of the Republic of Geneva using the name of Henri IV, King of France, to justify its opposition to reestablishing Catholicism in the Chablais. He claimed that the king did not know of this and that if he did, he would not allow the Genevans to claim him since he had returned to the Catholic Church. Furthermore, de Sales believed that if the king pressed Geneva, its leaders would give Catholics in the Chablais what the Genevans themselves claimed—“liberty of conscience.” All of de Sales’s correspondence concerning the French king supported the validity of Henri’s renunciation of Protestantism, but there is no way to know if de Sales really believed in the sincerity of his most recent conversion. After he became bishop, de Sales confessed to Clement VIII that the greatest difficulty he faced was having “two different temporal jurisdictions.” He had to maintain good relationships with both rulers as well as their corresponding parlement and senate. De Sales was always juggling divergent interests. Both before and after he became bishop, de Sales worked with the king, but Henri IV’s friendly relationship with Protestant nations would continue to be a point of concern for de Sales in both the Chablais and Gex.

François de Sales eventually did receive help for the mission in the Chablais with the arrival of several Capuchins and Jesuits in 1597, who went to work immediately on a strategy for the region. De Sales wrote to the papal nuncio Riccardi in September 1597 that the small band of missionaries had met in Annemasse to discuss how best to achieve conversions in the area. The three key measures the group agreed on were that first, it

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32 Œuvres, 11: 270, 278.
33 Œuvres, 12:257.
was “absolutely necessary that the Chevaliers of St. Lazarus and others cede to the curés what they have.” Second, they should establish a College of Jesuits in Thonon using the revenue of a priory that had been there previously. Finally, the taille owed to the duke by the inhabitants should be suspended because relief from this financial burden would improve their standard of living and make them more willing to listen to the preachers. It is worth noting that two of the three measures were economic. Obtaining the revenues from the Chevaliers was an ongoing conflict. At its founding, the Holy House of Thonon included a contingent of Jesuits.

The Capuchin missionary Pere Chérubin was one of the more colorful and controversial figures in the Chablais during this period. Two of his defenders wrote biographies of the mendicant in an attempt to justify some of his more questionable activities. By most accounts he took a rather aggressive approach to conversion which included taking the rope from the church bell so the Protestants could not use it and accosting people on the street for spontaneous theological debates. Chérubin began lobbying Geneva for a public disputation in 1597. François De Sales mentioned the idea to the papal nuncio in Turin in his report on the success of the Forty Hours in Annemasse, and he tried to justify a disputation with the Calvinists, pointing out that similar debates had occurred in other places including Vivarais and Languedoc. In June 1597 the Capuchin informed the Company of Pastors that he had received permission from his superiors for a debate, and he was waiting for word from the ministers. The Company

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34*Œuvres*, 11: 309.
36*Œuvres*, 11: 323-324.
appeared surprised by the suggestion and debated whether Jean Corajod, a craftsman and a member of the Council of 200, had its permission to engage in a dispute with Chérubin. Finger pointing occurred among the leaders of Geneva over who had responded to the missionary in the first place.\textsuperscript{37} The majority of the Council and the Company appeared reluctant to become involved with Chérubin. However on March 14, 1598, a Protestant Professor of Theology Herman Lignaridus arrived in Thonon to debate Chérubin. After two days, Lignaridus left for Geneva. This disputation only whetted the Catholic missionary’s appetite and he spent the next year pressing the Protestants to send someone else. Geneva appeared unhappy with the outcome of the public dispute and instead offered to arrange a written debate. Chérubin was very persistent and insistent on his desire that a debate over theological differences be oral and in public. The pastors of Geneva turned to the church in Berne for advice and support. Berne refused to send anyone to face the Capuchin and affirmed that a written dispute was best.\textsuperscript{38} The Catholic missionaries preferred oral debates to written ones because they offered the opportunity for drama in front of an audience.

By August, as the Forty Hours celebrations in Thonon approached the Company of pastors received letters from a syndic of Thonon, Claude Deprez, asking if Geneva was planning to continue the debate with Chérubin. Herman Lignaridus attempted to free himself of the situation by pursuing a teaching position in Berne. D’Avully, the recent Catholic convert, had published a letter about the debate claiming victory for the Catholic

\textsuperscript{37} Registres, VII, 67-69.
\textsuperscript{38} Registres, VII, 96-96.
side. The Company wanted Lignaridus to write a response, and Bèze instructed him to
address the points of controversy. The minister agreed to write a rebuttal but wanted
instead to provide his account of the dispute rather than respond directly to d'Avully’s
letter. A Protestant professor of theology was reluctant to debate doctrinal points with the
Catholics. Ultimately Lignaridus’s piece was published before the end of 1598. In the
meantime, another letter arrived from Thonon pleading for assistance.

The treatment of the Calvinists was a point of concern to the government of Berne
as it was the official protector of the Protestants in the duchy of Chablais. In a letter to
Jérôme de Lambert, governor and lieutenant general for the duke in the Chablais, on
December 23, 1597, the Bernois asked Lambert to stop Chérubin from harassing people
who had been promised by the duke “to be left to their religion.” The Treaties of
Lausanne and Nyon, both signed in 1564 between Berne and the duke of Savoy, allowed
for the Protestants of the duchy of Chablais to continue their worship. The government
of Berne also informed the Duke of the problems with Chérubin. The Duke in turn wrote
Governor Lambert on December 31, 1597 that he too desired to return the Chablais to the
“true religion” and viewed the Calvinists as “usurpers of the country.” While the Duke
claimed that he appreciated the “zeal” of Chérubin and President Favre, he wanted
Lambert to remind them that violent threats were not the best way to convert the

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39 Registres, VII, 98; note 70 mentions the letter entitled Copie de la lettre du Seigneur d'Avully touchant la dispute des ministres avec le R.P. Cherubin, prescheur de l'ordre des capuccins.
40 Registres VII, 98-100; note 78 Response de Herman Lignaridus à certaine lettre imprimée en laguelle le S. d'Avully s'est essayé de représenter la dispute entre iceluy Herman et Cherubin, moine de la secte des capuchins.
42 Martin, 48-51.
Further correspondence reveals that Chérubin did not stop and the Capuchin’s health, possibly mental, appeared to be in question. In January 1599, de Sales informed Bishop de Granier that Chérubin had “fallen into a lamentable illness” and was unable to work. De Sales wrote that the Pope and the holy office regretted “this accident of such a valued person being rendered useless” and claimed that Chérubin’s “adversaries” were spreading rumors about his illness." Did the friar have some sort of mental breakdown? The Duke again notified Governor Lambert in February 1599 about Père Chérubin’s continued use of extreme methods. Charles-Emmanuel informed the Governor that he was sending someone to persuade Chérubin to leave the area immediately. If the friar refused, the duke wanted the governor, the bishop, and the Marquis de Lullin to help convince him. Ultimately, Chérubin was sent to Rome on business for the mission. The Duke had political relations with the Bernois to think about and Chérubin’s actions could jeopardize these and do more harm than good in the Duke’s politically attuned eyes.

Despite the setbacks and difficulties, the missionaries continued to preach and attempted to corral the populations of the Chablais back into the Catholic fold. The mission culminated with the three Forty Hours devotions staged between September of 1597 and October of 1598. Even the acclaimed success of the Eucharistic celebrations did not vanquish the Catholics’ fear that Protestantism would again dominate the duchy of Chablais. De Sales warned Duke Charles-Emmanuel in March 1598 after the Annemasse

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43 "Deux autographes de Charles-Emmanuel I," Reprint of a letter from the Duke of Savoy to Governor Lambert 21 December 1597 in Revue Savoisienne, (1872), 71-72; “les menaces.”
44 Oeuvres, 12: 4-5.
45 Vuy, reprint of a letter from the Duke of Savoy to Governor Lambert 2 February 1599 in Revue Savoisienne (1872), 13-14.
devotion that the Catholics of the region had informed him of the Protestants’ pleas to the Bernois for more ministers. He appealed to the papal nuncio in Turin, Jules-César Riccardi, that the parishes still needed more money to ensure that the new Catholics did not lapse and that conversions continued. The missionary reported of several new converts including Claude Deprez and his son. Deprez had been the syndic of Thonon who had pleaded with the Company of Pastors of Geneva in 1597-1598 not to abandon the Protestants of the Chablais to the Catholic missionaries. He left Thonon in exile after the Forty Hours Celebrations there but returned in 1599 and accepted Catholicism.

Returning people to the Catholic fold remained de Sales’s primary concern, and he was willing to employ political and economic pressures to attain this goal. He warned that the “Genevans and other enemies” were still a threat and continued to spread rumors of war and to distribute Calvinist books to the populations. Of the Genevan ministers de Sales wrote that he believed they continued to fight not from courage or ardor but out of rage and despair. De Sales described the Protestant ministers as, “already fatigued from the idle talk that they produce, [they] will easily open up their ears to the truth.” If this letter is to be believed, de Sales hoped that the Protestants were on the defensive and that the Catholics needed to apply continuous pressure to ensure “victory” in the battle for the souls of the faithful.

Due to the success of the Forty Hours celebration, diocesan leaders wanted to proceed with other public devotions. During Pere Chérubin’s semi-exile to Rome, he had received the pope’s permission to celebrate a Jubilee in Thonon. The leaders saw the

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46 Œuvres, 11: 327.
value of lavish ceremonies and the power they could have over the population. De Sales wrote,

Truly, if at the conclusion of the peace one makes an effort to make brilliant the exercise of the Catholic cult and doctrine in this country, I am sure that we will see the glory of God and that perhaps, according to the Law, the possessions will be returned to their former masters during this Jubilee.⁴⁸

He assured the papal nuncio that Bishop de Granier would be in Thonon to ensure that the Jubilee was planned properly. But the diocesan leaders viewed a lavish celebration as more “powerful, efficacious, and persevering.”⁴⁹ Catholicism remained a sensual faith and the church leaders knew this aspect was one of their most powerful weapons against Protestantism.

The Duke’s public support of the mission continued into the first decade of the seventeenth century. In November 1599 Duke Charles Emmanuel issued a series of ordinances prohibiting the public exercise of Protestantism in the towns of Chablais where the Catholic cult had been reestablished. He also took steps to deprive Protestants of public office.⁵² Like the clergy, the Duke desired religious hegemony, but only at this point did his diplomatic situation allow him to pursue such a goal. It is not clear how many people converted to Catholicism as a result of the added pressure from the government, but there is evidence that Protestants remained in the region. In June 1601 the Senate of the Savoy registered patent letters of the duke that ordered people of Chablais, Ternier, and Gaillard “to listen and assist in the sermons of the Capuchins and

⁴⁸Œuvres, 11: 162-163, note 1. For further discussion of Claude Deprez see Chapter 3, p. 77.
⁴⁹Œuvres, 12: 20.
⁵⁰Œuvres, 12: 20.
⁵¹Œuvres, 12: 20, 36.
⁵²Abbé Gonthier, Le Mission de Saint François de Sales en Chablais, (1891), 165, 172.
others and bring their women and children.”^53 A visitation account from 1617 for Saint-
Gingolph, a parish in the Chablais, revealed that the curé was told to “extort the Heretics
in the knowledge of the church in which God made his miracles.”^54 Even the dual
pressure from church and state had not suppressed the Protestants completely.

With Chérubin as the lead negotiator, plans began for establishing a mission
house in the duchy of Chablais. By the end of 1599 François de Sales informed the papal
nuncio in Turin that the duke had ordered the senate “on the instances of Pere Chérubin”
to establish a house of refuge.^55 The Abbey of Abondance promised financial support by
offering to the project two of its vacant prebends.^56 Duke Charles-Emmanuel informed
de Sales that he and the bishop should present the proposal for the holy house to the
president of the senate and advise the body on what was needed to make it happen.^57 The
missionaries halted their plans for the establishment of the mission house in August 1600
when Henri IV and his army entered the region, which allowed Protestants back into the
Chablais.^58

During the French occupation in 1600 de Sales reported that a few curés left their
parishes but those of the mission remained. He also claimed that most of the new
converts remained Catholic.^59 Still, rumors were rampant and the diocesan officials were
very nervous about the political situation and how it would impact their goals of
conversion. François de Sales wrote Bonaventure Secusio, the Patriarch of

^53 Archives Départementales de la Savoie, B1436 Repertoire des edits-bulles 1598-1606, folio 147.
^54 Visites. 1: 353.
^55 Œuvres. 12: 38; Letter to Papal Nuncio 9 December 1599.
^56 Œuvres. 12: 47-48; Letter to Papal Nuncio 17 January 1600.
^57 Œuvres. 12: 458; Letter from Charles-Emmanuel, 28 April 1602.
^58 Œuvres. 12: 50, note 1.
^59 Œuvres. 12: 50-51; Letter to Papal Nuncio Riccardi 26 August 1600.
Constantinople, on behalf of Claude de Granier to plead for aid. The patriarch was a special nuncio and had helped negotiate the treaty of Vervins of 1598 that had brought about a temporary suspension of the fighting in the region. De Sales wrote, "The rumor is widespread in the diocese of Geneva that his very Christian majesty has concluded with the Republics of Berne and Geneva an accord by which he authorized those to seize, guard, and possess the bailliages of Chablais and of Ternier. If this is true, it would be the total ruin of the Catholic cult in this region." He pleaded on behalf of the bishop for Secusio to intervene with Henri IV imploring "do not let them [Chablais and Ternier] be delivered into the hands of the heretical republics." Diocesan officials must have believed that the risk of falling under Protestant control was very real. De Sales asked Secusio to ensure that there would be no change in religion if the area did go to the Protestant republics. Catholic leaders continued to fear that Henri IV would use his alliance with the Swiss Protestant cities to conquer Savoy.

Claude de Granier had François de Sales write similar letters to Cardinal François de Joyeuse and to Nicolas de Sancy, who was one of Henri IV's leaders in the occupation of the region and someone who also went back and forth between confessions. De Sales informed the Cardinal that through three years of constant missionary work they had converted 14,000-15,000 people. He asked the Cardinal to plead with King Henri for the diocese to preserve the mission work done in the area. In the case of Nicolas de Sancy,

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60 Martin, 69.
61 [Œuvres, 12: 409-411; Letter written to Bonventure Secusio, Patriarch of Constantinople, nuncio extraordinary, September 1600; 409 note 1.](Œuvres, 12: 411.
62 [Œuvres, 12: 412-413; Letter to Cardinal François de Joyeuse, September-October 1600.]
de Sales described to him the destruction the war had caused in the area and the ruin of many churches. Sancy took possession of the fort in Allinges in the name of the king of France on December 18, 1600, the same fort de Sales had used as his base during the early days of the mission in the duchy of Chablais, but the Frenchman soon departed and left the fort under Protestant control. De Sales informed Sancy that in his absence the Huguenots had used violence to spread "their heresy" and injure people. He claimed that the preachers from Geneva had come to "desecrate and to profane our churches, to overturn the altars and to steal the bells and other sacred objects." De Sales wanted Sancy to enforce the resolution that would ensure that the Huguenots no longer harass Catholics or their churches.

With the signing of the Treaty of Lyon between France and Savoy at the beginning of 1601, hopes of ending the Protestant presence in the Chablais returned. De Sales informed Father Juvenal Ancina, a member of the Congregation of the Oratory, and Papal Nuncio Riccardi in Turin that both clerical and lay inhabitants of the region had suffered under the French occupation. In addition there had been instances of iconoclasm by the Protestants. De Sales said that Baron de Montglat, Robert de Harlay was a Huguenot official of the king and had been the leader of the aggression against the Catholics. Even with this setback, de Sales continued to be optimistic at least in his

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64 *Œuvres*, 12: 415-416; Letter to Nicolas de Sancy, 6 November 1600.
66 *Œuvres*, 12: 419-420; Letter to Nicolas de Sancy, January 1601.
writings. He assured the Papal Nuncio in Turin that in spite of the war with France there
were more converts since Christmas, few converts had left Catholicism, and none of any
social rank.68

The Holy House of Thonon, established with great fanfare in the summer of 1601
with the authorization of Pope Clement VIII and Duke Charles Emmanuel, was
envisioned as a place of refuge for those who abandoned Protestantism and a center for
the continued renewal of Catholicism. The mission house was to carry on and even
expand on the work began by the missionaries in the duchy of Chablais. The charter
called for there to be theologians, preachers, a school, and job training for the refugees.
The duke helped with its establishment and provided a substantial financial contribution
with promised continued support.69 The Catholic clergy certainly possessed high hopes
for the mission project in Thonon. De Sales wrote that the holy house, “will trample and
break the venomous head of the serpent which has taken refuge in Geneva and
Lausanne.” The house was to possess the special protection of the Pope and Catholic
princes.70

The Holy House had problems of money and manpower from the beginning. The
duke became distracted by affairs of state and expensive wars and failed to provide the
monetary and moral support he promised. Once François de Sales became bishop, he too
had other preoccupations and obligations that kept him from being involved constantly in
the running of the mission. Others failed to deliver on promised support. Previously the
Abbey of Abondance had promised two prebends, but a year later de Sales mentioned to

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the Papal Nuncio that he was still trying to collect the income from the Abbey.\textsuperscript{71} The
diocese thanked Pope Clement VIII for sending six Jesuits for the mission in Thonon and
reported that they preached, heard confession, and taught the children belles-lettres and
articles of faith. According to de Sales, their efforts resulted in more than 500 people
returning to Catholicism in only five weeks. They wanted more preachers and a College
of Jesuits in Thonon that could possibly serve as a seminary.\textsuperscript{72} Diocesan leaders
complained to the duke of Savoy about the syndics of Thonon’s refusal to hand over the
priory of Saint Hippolyte to the Jesuits. The occupation by the French troops had allowed
“a handful” of Protestants back into the administration of the town.\textsuperscript{73} The duke had
ordered the priory and its goods joined to the holy house at its foundation.\textsuperscript{74} The clerical
leaders of the diocese appeared almost desperate to have more Jesuits in the region.
François de Sales wrote to the duke on behalf of the bishop to remind him of the need for
a Jesuit college in Thonon. The bishop realized it was not possible at the present time but
hoped that soon a few could come from the College in Annecy. He sought the duke’s
permission to write to the general of the Jesuit order and ask him to send a few Jesuits to
the College in Annecy. The logic of this was that the Jesuits could then be easily

\textsuperscript{69} Archives Départementales de la Haute-Savoie, 22H1 \textit{La Charte de la Sainte Maison de Thonon},
in Turin 31 July 1601.
\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Œuvres}, 12: Lettre to Papal Nuncio of Turin Conrad Tartarini, 21 December 1601.
\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 59.
\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 421-423; Letter to Pope Clement VII (on behalf of Claude de Granier) mid July
1601.
\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 426; Letter to Charles-Emmanuel I (on behalf of Claude de Granier) 30 July 1601.
\textsuperscript{74} ADS, B1436 folio 196, register of patent letters of the Duke Charles-Emmanuel I by the Senate
of the Savoie concerning the establishment of the Holy House of Thonon, 31 July 1601.
transferred to Thonon when a college was established there. The diocese continued to place high value on the preaching orders when it came to the front lines of missionary work.

The Jesuits’ tenure in Thonon was not long-lived. The Barnabites replaced the Jesuits at the mission house in 1616. Lack of financial support was one of the main reasons the Society of Jesus departed. The duke promised the revenue from the priory of Contamine in an effort to support the Barnabites in a better standard than the Jesuits had experienced. The Barnabites had been installed in the College of Annecy in 1614. The bishop and the duke hoped that the introduction of the Barnabites would revitalize both the College in Annecy and the mission in Thonon. A portion of the register from the meetings of the council of the holy house between 1617-1619 reveals that funds remained scarce. Damage done by warfare to the buildings inhabited by the mission still had not been repaired, and the council continued its effort to obtain benefices from the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus and the priory of Contamine.

By 1620 the Holy House of Thonon was barely functioning. François de Sales provided a very dire picture to the Prince of Piedmont Victor-Amadeus in December 1620. The bishop described extreme poverty claiming that the children being educated at the mission had no shoes or warm clothes. The Barnabites were not suitably housed or clothed and barely had enough to eat. He claimed that the situation had led to “a

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75 Œuvres, 12: 436-437: Letter to Charles-Emmanuel I (on behalf of Claude d eGranier) 14 September 1601.
78 ADHS, H22.2, Fragment de un register de desliberation du Conseil de la Sainte Maison de Thonon 1617-1619.
79 Truchet, 236.
lamentable disunion” among all those who lived there because they fought among themselves over what little money and provisions there were. De Sales pleaded for more financial support. He reminded the prince that the state had promised the holy house 4000 écus annually at its establishment. Since then the amount had been greatly reduced. The bishop suggested replacing the preachers there with members of the Oratory and had broached the idea about the Oratory with the counsel of the mission house earlier in the year.\textsuperscript{80} He claimed that this move would reduce expenses by 300 ducats, since members of the Oratory could live in common. He also encouraged the duke’s plan to apply prebends from the priory of Contamine to the support of the Barnabites. The more immediate need appeared to be funds to cover “the pressing necessities of the Holy House.” De Sales asked the prince to provide the carrier of the letter with any money he could.\textsuperscript{81} Limited access to revenue producing assets continued to plague the diocese and the bishops’ plans.

In the summer of 1621 the bishop toured the Holy House of Thonon along with the president of the Chamber of Accounts of Savoy, Georges de Lescheraine, and the master auditor of the chamber, André Bertier. De Sales reported their findings to the duke and prince. He again emphasized the poor state of things at the mission house and the need to replace the eight preachers of the Congregation there with some from the Oratory. The bishop also mentioned that while the priests held a daily mass, they did not observe the canonical hours. He also mentioned a “notable defect” at the Holy House, which was the lack of a place of refuge for recent converts. He reminded the rulers of


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Savoy that it was one of the main reasons they erected the mission house. In another appeal for the Holy House, de Sales pleaded with the prince to save the place and pointed out how, if the mission was put in proper order, it would increase the reputation of the House of Savoy. One senses from his correspondence that François de Sales was making a last ditch effort to save the mission of Thonon that with high expectations he had helped establish twenty years before. Until the end of his life de Sales continued to plead for pensions for those who converted to Catholicism and for the entry of the Oratory into Thonon. The mission house continued to limp along well into the seventeenth century but never achieved the grand designs its founders envisioned.

The duke’s commitment to the Counter Reformation, while perhaps sincere in the abstract, possessed a fickleness that made him a less than ideal partner in the battle against the Protestants. Charles-Emmanuel had his moments when he encouraged the clergy of the diocese as when he informed de Sales how happy he was to hear about recent converts in the Chablais and how he hoped the rest would do the same. He even promised de Sales that to ensure his success he had ordered the president of the Senate of the Savoy to help establish more curés. Yet even the pope appeared to realize that the duke’s support of the Counter Reformation wavered at times. Fearing that he had been maligne to the pope, in October 1605 the duke wrote a letter to Bishop de Sales to complain of the situation. Duke Charles-Emmanuel I instructed the bishop to send the pope an account of the activities in the diocese, and explain to the pontiff how many

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81Œuvres, 19: 399-400.
82Œuvres, 20: 99-103, Letters to the Duke of Savoy Charles-Emmanuel I and the Prince of Piedmont, Victor-Amadeus, 12 June 1621; Included with the letters was a memorandum recounting the situation in Thonon and François de Sales’s proposed remedies; 100 notes 1 and 2.
Protestants there had been and how Catholicism had been reestablished. The duke wanted the pope to know that the "pretended religion [Calvinism] had been pushed back to the gates of Geneva." François de Sales was to have the cathedral canons and other prominent clergy sign the document to attest to its truthfulness.85

The bishop did as his secular ruler asked and wrote a glowing letter to Pope Clement VIII. De Sales recounted the history of the turbulent region, explaining how when Savoy fell under the control of Francis I of France the Bernois "infected" the region with the ideas of Luther and Zwingli and Geneva soon followed. A peace treaty between Henri III and Emmanuel-Philibert returned the territories of Thonon, Ternier, Gaillard, and Gex to the duke on the condition that Catholicism not be exercised. De Sales commented that this was an unusual situation. According to this account, the duke tried to find a way to annul the article of the treaty but the duty fell to his son Charles-Emmanuel. War continued between Savoy and France allied to Berne and Geneva. The duke was able to occupy Thonon and Ternier and a truce freed these areas from the clause prohibiting Catholicism. Soon after, the duke asked Bishop de Granier to send Catholic preachers to the areas. According to de Sales the area previously held sixty-four parishes but when he arrived there less than one hundred Catholics remained and the churches, images, and altars had been destroyed. The missionaries established six parishes and were not able to establish more because of the Protestant ministers, lack of money, and uncertainty about the truce. When the duke came to Thonon in 1598, de Sales claimed that many Calvinists had converted. While there, Duke Charles-Emmanuel focused all his

84Œuvres, 12: 458; Letter from Charles-Emmanuel, 28 April 1600.

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energy on Catholicism. De Sales wrote, "his heart...seemed to be in the hands of God."
He publicly exhorted the people and met with most of the Protestant leaders. De Sales
claimed, "He [the duke] appeared truly as the prince established by God over his people."
Still people remained Protestant. The duke issued a public edict ordering those who
refused to convert to leave the country. Many of the Duke's councilors opposed this
move because of "reasons of state." De Sales assured the pope that the duke did it for
"reason of religion." As a result of the mission, de Sales claimed that there were less than
one hundred Protestants left in the region.\(^8^6\) Whether de Sales believed all this praise or
not, he was pragmatic enough to know that he had a better chance of success if the pope
and his secular ruler remained on good terms.

Even before the diocese had completed the missionary process in the duchy of
Chablais, officials turned their attention to the pays de Gex. The Papal Nuncio informed
de Sales in May 1597 that he believed the Pope would soon give the order to reestablish
the mass in Gex and several other provinces.\(^8^7\) The Treaty of Lyon between Charles
Emmanuel I and Henri IV signed on January 27, 1601, permanently made Gex part of
France. The diocesan officials of Geneva-Annecy immediately took steps to reclaim Gex
for Catholicism. François de Sales faced different circumstances in the pays de Gex than
he had in the duchy of Chablais. Central to this was the different policy of the secular
ruler. The reality in Gex was that the Protestants had official toleration with the Edict of

\(^{8^6}\) Œuvres. 12: 229-238; Letter to Pope Clement VIII, 15 November 1603.
\(^{8^7}\) Lettres, Paris ed., 1: 201.
Nantes supported publicly by the ruler. De Sales could not expect to receive the added social and political pressure from Henri IV that he had ultimately received from the Charles-Emmanuel I.

The ever-present financial issues soon engaged the bishop in the pays de Gex. As they had in the duchy of Chablais, diocesan officials began challenging the Protestants' rights to property once controlled by the Catholic Church. De Sales told the papal nuncio in Turin that the region was currently all Huguenot and occupied by Geneva, but he wanted the king of France to force the Huguenots to return goods taken from the Catholic Church. In July de Sales told a friend that the Baron de Lux, Edme de Malain, lieutenant to the king in Burgundy, had called a conference to discuss the reestablishment of Catholicism for Gex. Diocesan officials knew from the beginning that Gex would be a much more troublesome mission than the one in the duchy of Chablais. De Sales wrote Pope Clement VIII for Bishop de Granier claiming that while they were in the process of "conquering" the bailliages of Thonon, Ternier and Gaillard, Gex would be more difficult task. This difficulty lay in Gex being "situated between the governments of Berne and Geneva as between two pestilent swamps, [and] it has drunk their poisonous water." By August, François de Sales reported to the Papal Nuncio in Turin that, "Baron de Lux had taken possession of it [Gex] in the name of the king, declared that the intention of the king himself was the exercise of the Catholic cult there...in the same manner as he practices [it] in France." He complained that Geneva, which had occupied the area on behalf of the king of France for the past 15 years, resisted returning ecclesiastical

89 Œuvres, 12: 69; Letter to a friend July 1601; 12: 80, note 1.
goods.  Diocesan officials used all channels to influence the king. De Sales stated that Bishop de Granier had written the Papal Nuncio of France and Henri IV pleading their case concerning the necessity for the church revenue in Gex. De Sales also wrote Cardinal Pierre Aldobrandino, in the name of Bishop de Granier, concerning the same matter. In addition they asked the papacy to use its influence with the King of France to encourage him in turn to force Geneva to hand over the properties. De Sales claimed the diocese would not be able to reestablish Catholicism without them.

Despite the financial and diplomatic limitations, the process of Catholic reconquest began. In a letter to the diocesan officials in October 1601, Henri requested that curés and pastors be sent to Gex and asked that this step cause no disruption in the area. The king wrote that he expected the priests to live an exemplary life and not enter into disputes with the local population. De Sales informed Baron de Lux, again on behalf of de Granier, that the diocese had good preachers, including canons, reserved for the mission to Gex. While in Lyon to meet with Baron de Lux, François de Sales informed Cardinal Pierre Aldobrandino, who had helped negotiate the treaty of Lyon, of Henri’s request. He claimed that the king would like to be able to return revenue held by Geneva to the diocese without "offending the heretical Swiss cantons and the Queen of

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90Œuvres, 12: 424; Letter to Pope Clement VIII (on behalf of Claude de Granier) mid-July 1601.
91Œuvres, 12:70-72; Letter to Papal Nuncio Riccardi, 20 August 1601;
92Œuvres, 12: 428-429; Letters to Henri IV and Gaspard Silingardo, Papal nuncio in France (on behalf of Claude de Granier) August 1601.
94Œuvres, 12:70-72.
96Œuvres, 12: Letter to the Baron de Lux (on behalf of Claude de Granier) 8 October 1601.
England." As with the papal nuncio, de Sales pleaded with the Cardinal to use his influence to press the recently absolved king. He even declared that the king wanted to be seen as having no choice in the matter. Whether this was true or not, de Sales must have hoped that if enough powerful church figures pressured the king he would relent on the issue of Geneva and force the Protestants to hand over the properties. De Sales also suggested to the Cardinal that he write letters to the bishop of Geneva and the Papal Nuncio of France encouraging them on this matter with Henri. Was François de Sales trying to establish written proof of support or was he not getting enough assistance from Bishop de Granier and the papal nuncio? After all he had been a missionary in the field and knew first hand what problems came from a shortage of funds.

The Edict of Nantes gave the Protestants of Gex the right to worship, but as de Sales and other Catholics saw it, the edict also gave Catholics the right to hold services in predominantly Protestant areas. The process of reestablishing Catholic parishes was very slow, and the bishop met organized resistance at every turn. The diocese of Geneva-Annecy was initially more concerned about making the sacraments available for the small number of Catholics in the region than winning back the Protestants. In December 1601 the diocese established three parishes in Gex, placing three of its cathedral canons in the churches: Louis de Sales, Claude Grandis and Antoine Bochut took up residence in Gex.

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97 *Œuvres*, 12: 81-83; Letter to Cardinal Pierre Aldobrandino, 10 November 1601.
98 *Œuvres*, 12: 83. Note 2 states that the Papal Nuncio of France at the time was Innocent del Bufalo, Bishop of Camerino.
This was just the first step as the revenue and church property still needed to be restored. François de Sales claimed that twenty-six parishes in Gex that had been Catholic were now held by Protestants.  

Thus François de Sales began another journey through a complicated political labyrinth that took him from the Parlement in Dijon to the royal court of Paris and lasted throughout his tenure as bishop (1602-1622). De Sales traveled first to Dijon and then Paris at the beginning of 1602 on the order of Bishop de Granier, who was nearing the end of his life, in an effort to regain properties from the Protestants. Before leaving on his journey, de Sales wrote Claude de Quoex, an official of the duke of Savoy, to inform him that he was going to Dijon to meet with Marshal de Biron and the Baron de Lux about Catholicism in Gex. Baron de Lux was to take him on to Paris to meet with the king and his council. De Sales praised the baron, claiming his piety showed through in all his negotiations. He mentioned that Cardinal D’Ossat was using his influence in the matter. The Cardinal had played a crucial role in annulling Henri IV’s marriage to Marguerite of Valois and his reconciliation to Rome. Even before he left for Paris the Protestants in Gex were able to offer resistance with the help of François de Bonne, duke of Lesdiguières, who served as a military leader under both Henri IV and Louis XIII.  

Shortly after his arrival in Paris, de Sales informed Bishop de Granier that he had given his “fundamental request” to the Royal Council, and he had to wait and see what

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99 Euvres, 12: 90, 100; Letter to Conrad Tartarini, Bishop of Forli and Papal Nuncio in Turin, 21 December 1601. Note 1 provides the full names of the canons sent to Gex. In a letter to Claude de Quoex on 3 January 1602, de Sales wrote, “Nous avons laissé a Gex messieurs les chanoynes de Sales, Grandis, Bochuti.”

100 Euvres, 12: 91.

101 Euvres, 12: 98-99; Letter to Claude de Quoex, 3 January 1602.

102 Euvres, 12: 99; note 1.
happened. Chronically worried about funds, de Sales hoped he would not have to stay in Paris too long as it was expensive.\textsuperscript{104} De Sales soon voiced frustration to Claude de Quoex about the Council who he believed hindered his efforts on Gex and dismissed his demands.\textsuperscript{105} Reclaiming ecclesiastical goods was not the only goal of de Sales’s visit. He mentioned that the Baron de Lux was helping him in an effort to establish a priory in Gex. He also addressed the issue of nationality since a person had to be a naturalized Frenchman to hold a benefice in the country.\textsuperscript{106} The problem for the diocese of Geneva-Annecy was that its pool of clergy was mostly Savoyard. De Sales also faced serious opposition from Geneva whom had sent its own representatives to Paris to protest the Catholic demands.\textsuperscript{107} By April François de Sales believed his negotiations would fail, but one hopeful sign he received from the king was an invitation to preach for him.\textsuperscript{108} He had also preached before the queen and her entourage numerous times during his stay in Paris.\textsuperscript{109} While the French king and his court had not given in to all his demands concerning Gex, de Sales had made an impression on the political leaders of France.

With the death of Claude de Granier on September 17, 1602, de Sales was recalled to Annecy from Paris before he had completed all his negotiations with Henri IV. Despite vigorous protest from the Calvinists, the king issued a proclamation allowing for the Catholic seizure of several churches and the division of cemeteries

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\item \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 100; Letter and note 4.
\item \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 101-102; Letter to Claude de Granier from Paris, 8 February 1602.
\item \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 104; Letter to Claude de Quoex from Paris, 9 March 1602.
\item \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 106.
\item \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 107, Letter to Claude de Granier from Paris, 26 March 1602.
\item \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 108-110; Letters to Claude de Granier, 10 April and 18 April, 1602.
\item \textit{Œuvres}, 12: 105.
\end{thebibliography}
The king confirmed the three parishes with patent letters on September 19, 1602 and parlement in Dijon registered the king’s edict in March 1603. De Sales voiced disappointment to Pope Clement VIII that his time in Paris only brought about the king's approval to provide annual revenue for three parish priests. While François de Sales’s mission began with this small success, not every request he made was approved. Catholicism was introduced into other villages with great caution and in certain instances the Protestants were successful in slowing the process.

The Protestant inhabitants of Gex viewed Henri IV as their protector, a position he wanted to maintain. Certainly Henri’s successors were more agreeable to the Catholics’ plans, but Protestantism continued in Gex until the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Protestants were not the only ones who tried to prevent the diocese from obtaining ecclesiastical goods. De Sales had a dispute with the archbishop of Bourges over property ceded to the diocese of Geneva-Annecy in Gex. The archbishop claimed that the property rightly was part of his benefice. De Sales informed Antoine des Hayes, a counselor of King Henri, that he planned to travel to Dijon during Lent to resolve the conflict. In addition, the bishop hoped he would also be able to extract some pensions held by inactive Protestants ministers while in Dijon. The Order of Saint-John of Jerusalem claimed a chapel in the village of Crozet had belonged to it before the

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109 Œuvres, 12: 128, note 1; Archives Départementales de la Côte-D'Or, B12088: Enregistrements des Édits et Ordonnances, Folio 7 gave François de Sales the right to reestablish Catholicism in the villages of Gex.
111 Claperède, 66-67.
112 Claperède, 63.
113 Œuvres, 12: 251-254; Letter to Antoine des Hayes, 16 January 1604.
Protestants came. Claude de la Verchère, chevalier and commander of the Order, asserted that the chapel had never been part of a parish and that the ecclesiastical goods of Gex should be restored to the state they were before the Bernois came. The chevalier pleaded with de Sales to see his point of view. Claude Girod, acting on behalf of the religious order, had appealed the case of the chapel to the royal commissioners who had ruled to leave the property in the hands of the bishop. Chevalier de la Verchère promised Bishop de Sales he would send someone to celebrate mass in Crozet on the day of foundation, but he said he was unable to entertain a priest full-time for the chapel. The evidence suggests that both the diocese and the Order of Saint-Jean of Jerusalem maintained rights to the chapel. The commander of the Chevaliers visited the chapel October 29, 1614 and reported that he did not say mass there since all people present were Huguenots. The bishop of Geneva-Annecy, Jean d’Arenthon d’Alex, visited Crozet in June 1663 along with the other parishes in the pays de Gex.

Because Bishop de Sales continued to deal personally with the most important issues in Gex, he had to travel periodically out of his diocese, which came with its own set of difficulties. François de Sales walked a tightrope at times between Savoy and France. The bishop notified the duke of Savoy that he had to go to Dijon to address the parlement about Gex. De Sales told the duke how he wished that Gex would be returned to Savoy, and he reminded the duke that his trip into France was necessary if his entire

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116 Oeuvres, 15: 394-396. Letter from Chevalier Claude de la Verchère to François de Sales, January 1613.
118 Oeuvres, 15: 396 note 1. Quote from the Procès-verbal de la visite de Crozet et Maconnex from the Archives du Rhône, H. 260, n.86.
119 Visites 1: 166.
diocese was to return to Catholicism. The duke did not like “his” bishop traveling to the lands of one of his adversaries. François de Sales recounted his difficulties to Pope Clement VIII. The situation made it necessary for him to have good communication with both rulers as well as with their legislative bodies. The French Parlement of Dijon in Burgundy viewed him as a Savoyard - a foreigner. The populations taken from Savoy and given to France in the peace settlement still saw themselves as Savoyard and thus wanted “a foreign vicar.” Officials in France required that clergy should be naturalized French. De Sales also faced difficulty when visiting the existing Catholic parishes in the French part of his diocese and complained that he was not allowed to collect money from the people for construction and repairs of churches. De Sales went to great lengths in order to justify his need to be absent from his diocese and was certainly seeking the pope’s permission and approval. After all, the Council of Trent called for a bishop to reside in his diocese, to leave only when absolutely necessary, and to obtain permission from superiors for any travel. Bishop de Sales was following this decree. He promised to keep the papal nuncios of France and Savoy informed of his progress while in Burgundy, and he hoped that his trip would only last two months. It appears that de Sales had some success with matters in Gex. In a letter to Antoine de Revol, Bishop of Dol, de Sales recounted how the Baron de Lux and several members of the Dijon parlement came to Gex on behalf of the king to settle a dispute between the Catholics and

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120 Œuvres, 12: 256; Letter to Duke Charles-Emmanuel I, February 1604.
121 Œuvres, 12: 257-258; Letter to Pope Clement VIII, end of February 1604.
122 Œuvres, 12: 106; De Sales had addressed this issue in a letter to Claude de Quoex during his visit to Paris in 1602.
123 Œuvres, 12: 259; Letter to Pope, end of February 1604.
124 Trent, Sixth Session, 47-48.
125 Œuvres, 12: 259.
Conflict had arisen over the partitioning of a cemetery and clerical housing. Ultimately the commissioners intervened and the Parlement in Dijon issued a decree on May 11, 1604 forcing the parties to accept the partitions.\(^1\)

Even with at least some public support from the French crown for reestablishing Catholic parishes in Gex, the clergy made few inroads into the region. Bishop de Sales wrote to the Bishop of Dol that a few Huguenots had converted, some had doubts, and several people had made a general confession. He claimed that several parishes wanted the "Catholic cult" but were afraid to ask for it, but de Sales does not reveal what they feared. According to de Sales, the king said that the process had to be slowed "for the consideration of the malice of the time." \(^2\) The king was not going to let a reform-minded Catholic bishop disrupt a tenuous peace. De Sales continued his efforts to bring Catholicism back into the pays de Gex. In 1609 de Sales complained to his friend Antoine Favre that the ministers challenged him and Monsieur de Lux on nearly every issue. One hopeful sign for de Sales was he had just celebrated mass in the parish of Cessy for the first time in seventy-three years. He told Favre that the following day he would do the same in two other parishes. \(^3\) While de Sales began reintroducing Catholicism in Cessy, Péron, Challex, and Versonnex in 1604, it was not until February 1609 that he received a decree from the king’s royal council giving the churches and

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\(^1\) Œuvres, 12: 296; Letter to Antoine de Revol, 18 August 1604.
\(^2\) Œuvres, 12: 296, note 1.
\(^3\) Œuvres, 12: 296.
cemeteries of Cessy, Péron, and Versonnex to the Catholics. The protestant ministers successfully resisted in Challex until 1611 when the Duke of Bellegarde returned the church to the Catholics.\textsuperscript{130}

Beyond coping with two political policies, François de Sales faced the difficult task of serving two masters. Both his secular rulers recognized the talents of de Sales. The bishop mentioned to Antoine des Hayes, an agent of Henri IV, that the king had offered him a church position in France. De Sales claimed that he was very grateful for the offer and would accept it if the pope and king agreed.\textsuperscript{131} It is unclear what position France offered de Sales. One of his biographers André Ravier claims it was archbishopric of Paris and contends that de Sales was unwilling to leave Savoy.\textsuperscript{132} De Sales comments to Hayes appear that he would have considered a move to France. Whatever the case, de Sales did not leave Savoy for France.

Yet, this fact did not keep him in favor with the duke of Savoy. At the end of 1609 de Sales informed des Hayes about a problem he was having with the duke. The bishop recounted that on his return from Gex in September he had gone through Geneva. At the gates he claimed the right to enter the city of Calvin based on his predecessors' position as Bishop-Prince of Geneva. Geneva informed the duke who took offense and accused the bishop of trying to retake temporal authority as Prince of Geneva.\textsuperscript{133} The

\textsuperscript{130}Œuvres, 14: 196 note 1.

\textsuperscript{131}Œuvres, 14: 9-10. letter to Antoine des Hayes 6 May 1608. Antoine des Hayes title was master of the hotel of the king and governor and bailiff of Montargis.

\textsuperscript{132}Ravier, 112-113.

\textsuperscript{133}Œuvres, 14: 216. letter to Antoine des Hayes, 4 Dec. 1609.
The duke of Savoy did not like François de Sales going to France, and at times questioned his loyalty. Perhaps the real source of the duke’s anger was the time de Sales spent in the French territory.

After seven years of work in the pays de Gex, little progress had been made on the Catholic front. De Sales told his former mentor Antonio Possevino that no more “heretics” existed in the duchy of Chablais where when sixteen years before almost all the population had been. In Gex however, most of the inhabitants remained Huguenots, a religion that had been brought there seventy years before by the Bernois. De Sales remained hopeful as he had reestablished five Catholic parishes and had recently converted “a gentleman of mark.” He placed the blame for his lack of progress on Geneva, asserting that “the reason of state” kept Geneva from seeing that Catholicism was the better religion and fear of death kept inhabitants in Geneva from embracing Catholicism. The influence Geneva maintained with the king of France frustrated de Sales just as it had in the duchy of Chablais.

The death of Henri IV in 1610 does not appear, at least initially, to have changed the policy in Gex. Gex seems to have become almost a cross de Sales had to bear. In 1611, he admitted to his old friend Antoine Favre that he was apprehensive about going to Gex but would go as it was his duty. He was worried about war and “wondered if at this time he should go out of state and among Monsieur le Grand [Duke of Bellegarde] and Monsieur de Lux.” Tensions were again growing between France and Savoy and de Sales did not want to get caught in France in the company of two powerful French

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124 Œuvres, 14: 221-222. Letter to Antonio Possevino, 10 Dec. 1609.
125 Œuvres, 15: 48. Letter to Antoine Favre 30 April 1611
officials if hostilities broke out. De Sales told Favre that he had to put his service to God first and hope that he could accomplish his business quickly. De Sales was obviously worried about how the duke would react to his leaving Savoy for France at this time. He wrote the Marquis de Lans, who was a nephew of the duke and who had been recently named governor and lieutenant general in Savoy, to explain how he must go to Gex.

Once in Gex Bishop de Sales always seemed to find the situation more complicated than he expected. He reported to Jeanne Françoise Chantai that the religious situation in the region forced him to stay longer than he anticipated and how he hoped that some day the place would be rid of heresy. De Sales recounted how he had reestablished the mass in Divonne the day before and in the next few days he planned to do the same in two other places. He remained hopeful that his preaching would reach a few people. Each parish that the diocese reestablished came with its own set of difficulties and holding Catholic services did not mean that a large portion of the village had left Protestantism. In the case of Divonne, a priory was restored in 1601 after it had been severely damaged during the religious violence of the region. De Sales requested funds from the monastery to help pay a priest and to furnish the church. The prior of Saint Claude informed de Sales that he was happy that the mass had been reestablished in Divonne and would furnish money to decorate the altar and make other repairs. As to the salary of a curé, the prior was not willing to furnish a forty-franc increase that de Sales wanted. The prior said they could not afford as large a pension as

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138 *Œuvres*, 15: 57; Letter to Mère Chantai, 10 May 1611.  

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as the one paid to the priest in Cessy. The priory had other financial obligations including one to the papacy and one to Paris and had only recently received property back from the Protestants. The prior hinted that Bishop de Sales may have exercised rights over the parish that had in the past belonged to the priory, but he promised to acknowledge de Sales's authority since it had been granted by the pope. All parties with claims to property, both Catholic and Protestant, fought to obtain what they believed rightfully belonged to them. No transfer of money or property was ever easy and most came with a long history of claims.

On his return to Annecy de Sale's fear that the duke would be unhappy with him was realized. Bishop de Sales had to defend himself against accusations that he was keeping company with the enemy. He argued that his duty required him to go to Gex for "preaching, disputing, reconciling the churches, consecrating altars, [and] administering the sacraments." The bishop tried to appease the duke by providing him information that discounted a rumor that France was interested in conquering Geneva. He also gave his opinion of the Swiss Catholics cities, claiming that he thought they would turn away from Berne. De Sales said he provided the duke what information he had, but claimed "I have a great aversion to worrying about matters of state." Being caught between two hostile countries and forced to cope with complicated and volatile political situations were not parts of the job that François de Sales enjoyed.

140Œuvres, 15: 59-60; Letter to Grand Prior and Religious of St. Claude, 17 May 1611. The priory of Divonne was under the Priory of St. Claude.
141Œuvres, 15: 386-387, Letter from the Prior and Religious of Saint-Claude to François de Sales, 20 May 1611.
142Œuvres, 15: 66-68; Letter to Duke Charles-Emmanuel, 12 June 1611.
Despite the problems he faced at home over his association with Gex, de Sales continued to work diligently to amass revenue for the parishes. Claude de Montluel, abbot of Bonmont, a Cistercian monastery near to Divonne, had offered the cathedral canons of Geneva a small benefice he controlled in Gex valued at twenty to twenty-five ecus. De Sales asked the bishop of Montpellier, Pierre Fenouillet to help him expedite the matter with the French crown as Fenouillet was in Paris at the time.\(^{143}\) The fact that the cathedral canons resided in Savoy and the benefice was in France may have complicated the matter, but the canons had played a vital role in the mission in Gex, being the first preachers back into the area. Perhaps this small benefice was a reward for their work in Gex. Louis XIII authorized the union of the benefice to the cathedral canons on 6 July 1611.\(^{144}\)

François de Sales continued to pursue the mission in the pays de Gex but it remained a slow and complicated process. For every move the diocese tried to make in Gex, the Protestants responded. In 1611 Marie de’ Medicis appointed two commissioners, one Protestant and one Catholics, to hear complaints of the regions concerning the execution of the Edict of Nantes.\(^{145}\) By 1611-1612 both confessions had representatives in place who presented their interests to the governing bodies, yet this did not prevent the bishop from traveling there personally to check on the progress. De Sales again returned to Gex at the request of the ecclesiastics and once there the bishop reported to Jeanne de Chantal that he had seen a “poor errant flock.”\(^{146}\) The trip to Gex

\(^{143}\) *Œuvres*, 15: 69-70; Letter to Pierre Fenouillet, bishop of Montpellier, 15 June 1611.

\(^{144}\) *Œuvres*, 15: 70 note 6.


was necessary because of the Huguenots' claim that the Edict of Nantes was not being properly carried out in the region. De Sales told the Marquis de Lans that a Capuchin was representing the diocese's interest before the commission concerning property in Gex, and was disappointed that the regent's commissioners decided to leave some property in the hands of the Protestants. The bishop still professed hope that he would get more parishes back. The fragile peace was difficult to maintain and the queen's representatives were trying to preserve some balance in the region. Both confessions were surely frustrated as the Protestants tried to hold on to property they had possessed for over sixty years and power as the Catholics tried to regain it.

Diocesan officials must have viewed the Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis, as more sympathetic than her late husband to their plight in Gex. The bishop sent a letter to the regent along with “un cahier animé” from the Catholic people of Gex that presented strategies for how best to reduce the Protestant population and increase the Catholic one. De Sales informed Madame Saint-Cergues, a recent Catholics convert, that the Queen of France had written him to say she “will give back all our churches and all our benefices of Gex occupied by the ministers.” The bishop wrote to the Marquis de Lans in August 1612 informing him that he had received all the churches that had been held by the Protestant ministers except for the ones in the custody of Geneva. He had forwarded this information concerning Geneva's refusal on to the royal council of France.

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147 Œuvres, 15: 127-130, Letter to the Marquis de Lans, 13 December 1611.
148 Œuvres, 15: 166-167, Letter to the Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis, 12 February 1612.
149 Œuvres, 15: 171-172; Letter to Madame de Saint-Cergues, 26 February 1612.

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According to de Sales's account, Geneva was shocked that it was expected to turn over goods that they had held for France. Marie de Médicis received a letter of thanks from de Sales for her help with the matter in Gex. De Sales also thanked the Duke of Bellegarde for his support of Catholicism in Gex and proclaimed that the king had given his authorization "for the execution of the Edict of Nantes in Gex." The bishop continued to assert his right to reestablish parishes in the region under the edict. De Sales acknowledge to Bellegarde that "heresy" remained a problem in Gex, but the Catholics of the region were hopeful that progress would be made. The letter to Bellegarde contained a profession of loyalty to France claiming that the Catholic of Gex "are so happy to be under your government." This of course was not what the bishop told the duke but as a diplomat de Sales tried to tell both sides what they wanted to hear.

François de Sales had some success in obtaining church buildings from the Protestants, but the revenue was a different story. Because the Huguenots lost their churches in Gex, the government ruled that they could keep three-fourths of the ecclesiastical revenue for a year to help them build new places of worship. Of course this type of compromise did not sit well with de Sales. He voiced frustration to the Bishop of Dol over his inability to obtain the goods from the "ministers." He claimed that regular and secular clergy in Gex were currently in "holy uselessness" but would

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150 Œuvres, 15: 254, Letter to the Marquis de Lans, 2 August 1612.
151 Œuvres, 15: 255, Letter to the Queen Mother Marie de Médicis, beginning of August 1612.
152 Œuvres, 15: 293, Letter to the Duke de Bellegarde, 10 November 1612.
153 Œuvres, 15: 293-295.
154 Œuvres, 16: 49, note 1.
receive their reward in the afterlife for their work. De Sales wrote of the Protestants, who continued to ignore the Catholic message, "But it is a marvel as these serpents stop their ears so they will not hear the voice of the charmer."\textsuperscript{155}

Even though the monarchy recognized de Sales's rights to pursue missionary activity in Gex, the bishop still faced problems due to his status as a foreigner in part of his diocese. François de Sales soon found himself in trouble with the \textit{Parlement} of Dijon because of his administration of a benefice in the French part of his diocese. The bishop proclaimed to Bénigne Milletot, a counselor of the king in the \textit{Parlement} of Burgundy, of his right to confer the benefices in his diocese on whomever he saw fit. De Sales asserted,

\begin{quote}
I believe that one will consider that there is no law in the world which would prevent me from using my ecclesiastical authority in the administration of the benefices of my diocese; and so as the archbishop of Lyon expects in Burgundy, the bishop of Grenoble in Savoy and in Chambery also, not withstanding their residence in the kingdom [France], I also must enjoy the authority in the kingdom, although I live in Savoy.
\end{quote}

The bishop pleaded to Milletot for his protection in this matter.\textsuperscript{156} The problems with the benefices and clergy in Gex continued to bother de Sales. He referred to "our poor Gex" when he informed Gilles Le Mazuyer, a Catholic in the king's council, about the problems of the curés' nationality. People challenged the priests' rights to hold benefices by challenging their status in France. De Sale claimed that people "attack these poor

\textsuperscript{155}\textit{Œuvres}, 16: 69-70, Letter to Monseigneur Antoine de Revol, Bishop of Dol, 12 September 1613.

curés in order to have their benefices, choice meats in these times, with the most incapable wanting them the most." The bishop asserted that nothing ever changed in Gex but he hoped for miracle for the future.\textsuperscript{157}

If parish priests could not make headway, then perhaps regular clergy could. Similar to the tactics used in the duchy of Chablais, diocesan officials took steps to reestablish religious houses in Gex as an important step towards placing Catholicism back in the center of the communities. De Sales commenced trying to reestablish a Carmelite monastery that had been pushed out of Gex by the Bernois in 1536 and subsequently part of the property was turned into a cabaret.\textsuperscript{158} The bishop first approached the idea with Henri IV and received positive news from the Baron de Lux in March 1607 that the king was willing to allow the reformed Carmelites into Gex.\textsuperscript{159} De Sales soon asked Cardinal de Givry to send "a mission of the reformed Carmelites" to Gex since the king had agreed to the move and it would benefit the region.\textsuperscript{160} As of 1612, de Sales had made little headway concerning the Carmelites, but he wrote Marie de Médicis informing her that the people of Gex would like to reestablish the monastery. He said the move would have a positive impact on the region and help increase the Catholic faith there.\textsuperscript{161} Yet when the return of the Carmelites was close to fruition the bishop appeared to lose some of his enthusiasm. François de Sales told Louis XIII that he hoped over time that the monastery would be able to reclaim its property but it should be done

\begin{footnotes}
\item[157] Œuvres. 15: 295-297: Letter to Gilles Le Mazuyer, 14 November, 1612. "attaqueront ces pauvres curés pour avoir leurs benefices, viande si friande en ce tems, que les plus incapables en veulent plus avoir."
\item[158] Brossard, 279.
\item[159] Œuvres. 15: 385-386, Letter from the Baron de Lux, 18 March 1607.
\item[160] Œuvres. 15: 382-383, Letter to the Cardinal Anne de Péusse D’Escars de Givry, 6 August 1607.
\item[161] Œuvres. 15: 316-317, Letter to the Queen Mother Marie de Médicis, c. 1612.
\end{footnotes}
“little by little” so no one would be inconvenienced. This was a very different approach from the one de Sales tried with the parish properties. He informed the king that the diocese would not be able to provide the 300 livres that the Carmelites had requested from it because all the available money was needed for the parish churches. De Sales even went so far as to say another religious order such as the Oratory might be better suited for the monastery and the region. What could have caused de Sales to change his mind? Most likely the request for money from the diocese, revenues that were scarce and had taken years to obtain, offended him. The Carmelites were successful in their bid to reenter Gex, and they returned on July 30, 1618.

In 1614 the King Louis XIII made a public gesture of support for the Catholic Church in Gex by providing alms of 300 ecus. François de Sales thanked the king and told him that the money would be used for the “extremely miserable” church “at the end of the kingdom.” According to Joseph Brossard, Louis XIII was more aggressive than his father in granting the wishes of François de Sales. Yet support for Catholicism remained uneven and the Protestant population continued to assert its rights. Bishop de Sales voiced his anger to Baron du Villars, a royal official for Gex, over the Protestant clergy representing the first estate at the assembly of the three estates in the region. De Sales asserted that “the Huguenots” were not part of the clergy and it was offensive that Protestant preachers would represent “the sacred thing that it signifies.” Protestants were not going to give up their position in society without a fight.

164 Œuvres, 16: 176-177, Letter to the King of France, Louis XIII, 1614.  
165 Brossard, 381.  
166 Œuvres, 16: 195-196, Letter to Baron François du Villars, 1 August 1614.
The long struggle in Gex took its toll on the parish priests and not surprisingly, problems arose among the clergy. A parish priest in Gex certainly faced a difficult and uncertain task with the money problems and a largely Protestant population. It was surely difficult to attract quality clergy to the region. Bishop de Sales wrote to the curé of Gex Etienne Dunant asking him to tell the clergy "to remove promptly the women that they have in their houses." De Sales claimed he had already spoken to Claude Jacquin, treasurer of Gex, who had assured the bishop that he had remedied the situation. From the correspondence, it does not appear that Père Jacquin had solved the problem and was himself one of the offenders. The bishop goes on to say that, as the Gallican church is part of the Universal church, the priest cannot claim this privilege through the French church. De Sales vowed that he would establish ecclesiastical discipline in Gex and would enforce the order dating back to the Council of Nice that only female family members such as a mother, aunt, and sister may live with a priest. The priests of Gex were also not in compliance with the synodal statutes concerning the distribution of holy oil. De Sales informed Père Dunant that he had recounted the problems of Gex to a Capuchin from Chambery who was on his way there. The Capuchin had assured de Sales that he would help implement the bishop's orders. The curés whom the bishop had left to oversee the clergy in Gex were not enforcing the diocese's code of conduct. De Sales again turned to the religious orders he had counted on many times in the past when he needed clergy holding similar views of reform and pastoral duties. Failings within the Catholic clergy of Gex just added to the complications. In June 1617, the bishop

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informed his close friend Antoine Favre that he was leaving for La Roche, Thonon, and Gex to oversee the affairs there. François de Sales continued to take a hands-on approach to the more complicated issues of the diocese.

In October 1618 the curé of Gex, Etienne Dunant reported to the bishop on the difficult situation in the region. The chronic problem of money was foremost on the agenda of the priest. Dunant claimed that if the bishop’s wish to institute a priest in the town of Sacconex were to be realized, then more revenue would have to be found. In order to conserve the scarce funds, the curé suggested that rather than attempting to reestablish all the parishes in Gex, the diocese should focus on the towns that had requested a priest. Dunant also wanted to pool all the revenues assigned to the pays de Gex and distribute them to the parishes according to need. Perhaps the inequality of salaries had led to conflict among the priests. It should focus on paying the curés, servicing the debt, and making repairs. He then recounted problems with individual priests. According to Dunant, the Catholics of Versoix “complained greatly” that a priest named Gobet held no services. Gobet claimed he had no income, place to live, or place to hold services. Dunant told Gobet to hold services in the nearby church of Souvemier so that “he could console all the good Catholics from parts beyond.” Dunant also revealed a conflict between him and another priest, a Monsieur Paris. The curé of Gex charged that Paris, after having lived for free with him and used his garden, refused to return his keys and the robes worn by the children during mass. Dunant does not say why Paris had taken the robes. These petty squabbles reveal that the priests battled each other as well as the

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Protestants. Dunant also provided a very revealing account of the curé from Divonne. He informed the bishop that the priest had never been able to hold services in Divonne because the people there would not permit it. They had even attacked him on the road in an attempt to kill him. The injured priest had not pursued the incident with the authorities because he believed that the legal system in Gex was too difficult and slow.

Bishop de Sales voiced his displeasure over the problems of the clergy in Gex to Gérard de Tournon, a Capuchin. De Sales claimed the priests of the pays de Gex suffered from a "great breach of gentleness", and he did not understand why they could not "moderate their passions." The bishop had told Etienne Dunant not to take any action against the priests Jaquin and Paris until de Sales's planned visit to Gex after Easter. He still had not given up hope of finding a suitable parish for Jaquin and hoped to place the priest soon in Grilly, a goal that came to fruition February 16, 1619. François de Sales appeared resolved to push on in Gex. He asked Pere Gérard for his input on parish and personnel matters for Gex and claimed he hoped to still resolve the conflict among the three priests. The bishop was enormously frustrated and referred to "all our imbecility and misery" and claimed he had to continue to practice "patience." Yet patience was not enough for de Sales even to begin to reach his goals in Gex.

At the end of François de Sales's life the two mission projects that had consumed so much of his time and energy were at very different places. In the duchy of Chablais, with the crucial assistance of legislation by the duke, the Protestant population had been reduced to a small minority and the reestablished Catholic parishes had seen regular

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pastoral visitations by the bishop or his representative. Claude de Granier, François de Sales, and Jean-François de Sales all conducted or oversaw visits of the parishes in Chablais. On the other hand, after a presence of twenty years in the pays de Gex, few inroads had been made. With the support of the Edict of Nantes, Gex remained primarily Protestant and openly resistant to the Catholic efforts.

As of 1630 the parlement of Burgundy was still issuing arrêts condemning the inhabitants of Berne who refused to hand over ecclesiastical goods that they held in Gex. The parish of Gex, toured by Charles-Auguste de Sales in 1647, was the only one visited by a Catholic official between the last general visit of the diocese before the Reformation from 1516 to 1518 and 1663. Bishop Jean d’Arenthon d’Alex visited the Catholic parishes of the pays de Gex in 1663 only after Louis XIV declared in a royal edict on August 22, 1662 that the Edict of Nantes had no bearing on Gex since it had become part of France after Nantes’ execution. The King allowed the Protestants to worship in the villages of Sergy and Femex and ordered the rest of their churches to be pulled down. The parishes in the duchy of Chablais saw the establishment of new confraternities dedicated to the rosary and the Eucharist in the decades after the reestablishment of Catholicism. Even the revocation of the Edict of Nantes does not appear to have prevented the Protestants of Gex from continuing their worship. An anonymous memoir written by a cleric for the Parlement in Dijon sometime after the

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172 ADCO, B12235 Registre des Arrêts Définitifs, 1630-1631, Folios 28, 42-43, 46, 163.
173 Visites 1: 127-253, Table of Pastoral Visits made in each of the parishes of the diocese of Geneva.
174 Brossard, 397-398.
revocation complained of secret Protestants in Gex sending their children to school in Geneva and not observing lent.\textsuperscript{175} When Bishop Jean-Pierre Biord visited the thirty-three parishes of Gex in the 1760s, twenty-two parishes still had no confraternity.\textsuperscript{176} Before the Reformation and the resulting wars, the duchy of Chablais and the pays de Gex had both been part of the same country, confession, and diocese. Because of the very different political, financial, and religious situations that emerged, the process of religious conquest was dramatically different in the two places.

The Counter Reformation in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy was a complicated process. Even though the missionaries in the duchy of Chablais and the country of Gex had to a certain extent the public support of their temporal rulers in their efforts to spread Catholicism, this support did not come without conditions and limitations. The political and financial realities of the day were an ever-present force. The bishops faced constant shortages of money to repair and restore parishes and religious houses and to attract quality clergy. The secular rulers were often unwilling or unable to provide the moral, policy, and monetary support the religious leaders wanted. Church and state may have both desired religious hegemony as an ultimate goal, but their intermediate goals could be quite different. These two missions reveal not a joint venture between two powers but rather two separate forces vying for allegiance – one for the allegiance of souls to its version of the path to salvation, the other carving out national territories in the hotly contested region.

\textsuperscript{175} ADCO, B1280: n° 44 Mémoire touchant le miserable État de la Religion Chrétienne au Pais de Gex à cause des abus, et scandales cause par les Heritiques.

CHAPTER 5

REFORM OF THE CLERGY

The Parish Priest

No one held a more central role in the early modern village than the parish priest. He was present for most of the important events of the community including baptism, marriage, death, and feast days. Malcolm Greenshields says of the early modern priest, "In traditional Catholic theology, the priest stood astride the chasm between God and man, a mediator and by an unspoken corollary, neither completely of this world on earth nor of God’s heaven."¹ The villagers' direct link to salvation was not the pope or the bishop but the local priest. In addition to being mediator between God and His faithful, the parish priest also acted as the bridge between diocese and village. He was the diocese's primary conveyor of official doctrine and was expected to be the bishop's eyes and ears in the parish. At no time was the priest's role more important than in the period after the Reformation. According to Greenshields, between the years 1560 and 1720, the parish priest found himself at the center of a transformation of village life.² He was

²Greenshields, 52.
expected to reform the existing parish practices to fit in with the new post-Tridentine Catholicism. Because of the increased pastoral burden placed upon them, priests had their performance more closely scrutinized.

A curé’s job performance had long been the object of reproach and even ridicule. Rome had been aware of problems within the priesthood. During the Middle Ages, critics of the Church in Rome singled out for special criticism the parish priest who did not know Latin, broke the vow of celibacy, or neglected to perform the sacraments due to absence or incompetence. The fourth Lateran Council held in 1215 had placed the burden of salvation of the laity squarely on the shoulders of the priests. Thus the church leaders recognized that the lower clergy needed a minimum level of education. From the thirteenth century onwards there were attempts, at least in some dioceses, to build a competent clergy through training at annual synods and the statutes issued there. There were also manuals printed that used mnemonics to aid the priests in memorizing ritual that accompanied the sacraments. While it is difficult to measure what the priest came to know as a result of this educational effort, the few surviving wills reveal that most priests possessed few books and only inexpensive ones. Certainly on the eve of the Reformation, many local curés relied on limited knowledge of ritual to perform their duties.

The Council of Trent called for better-educated and more qualified priests, as they would be the main agents of reform and renewal within the Catholic parish. The framers

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Lemaitre, 118-120.
of Trent acknowledged that some priests failed to perform their duties for a variety of reasons. There were curés who were illiterate or ill trained for their positions due to lack of access to education. The reformers at Trent to a certain extent viewed this group at blameless. A priest who was ignorant was to receive instruction and even assigned a curate during the educational process. A priest who led a “disgraceful and scandalous life” however, was to be dealt with more harshly. If this priest did not change his ways he could be denied his benefice.\(^5\) The clerical leaders at Trent recognized that while some curés could be turned into adequate shepherds of their flock, others who had taken priestly vows were just not suited for their profession.

Through proper education and oversight, Catholic leaders hoped to create a body of clergy who would not only perform the sacraments but whose conduct would be an example to all Christians. Like bishops and other members of the clergy assigned to a specific domain, a priest was not to leave his parish without just cause and written permission from a superior. Even with a good reason such as continuing education, a curé was not to be absent from his parish longer than two months.\(^6\) In being a daily example to his parishioners, a priest was expected to conduct himself very modestly. He was to dress appropriately, avoid gambling and taverns, abstain from luxury, and observe all sacraments and ceremonies. The Council of Trent demanded that his outward actions “inspire reverence” in his flock.\(^7\) A parish priest was to be a constant and ever present

\(^5\)Trent, Twenty-first session, chapter 6, 139-140.  
\(^6\)Trent, Twenty-third session, chapter 1, 164-166.  
\(^7\)Trent, Twenty-second session, chapter 1, 152-153.
reminder of how a faithful Catholic behaved. The reformers from Trent believed like
those who had broken away from the Catholic Church that people were more likely to
listen to someone they viewed as moral and worthy of respect.

While scholars may still debate the exact changes that occurred within the
Catholic villages, whatever did take place, the priest was at the center. A. G. Dickens
asserts in his work on the Counter Reformation that, "However weighty the evidence for
anticlericalism, the fact remains that parish priests and preachers, normally though not
universally religious conservatives, remained the regular channels through which ideas
reached rural society." The early modern priest had the dual tasks of serving both the
Catholic hierarchy's desire for reform and his parishioners' spiritual wants and needs,
which were at times very different. Does this mean that reforms, whether popular with
the laity or not, were imposed on the parishes by the bishops and their agents, the parish
priests?

Historians need to gain a fuller understanding of the priest's function in the parish
during the critical period of Catholic renewal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Greenshields views a better appreciation of local priests as "central to discussions of
popular and elite culture and religion." According to Philip Hoffman, because the local
curé was the primary agent of reform at the parish level, the Counter Reformation
transformed the relationship between parish and priest from members of the same
community, to a leader apart from his flock. Shifting to Germany, Marc Forster sees the

\[8^\text{Dickens, 190.}\]
\[9^\text{Greenshields, 52.}\]
\[10^\text{Hoffman, 72, 87, 96, 129.}\]
focus of reform fall more on the clergy. Beginning in the 1560s, church officials began
reforming the clergy in the Bishopric Speyer into a more celibate, educated, and
competent group. He sees the visitations primarily as a tool to monitor the property of the
parish and the performance of the clergy. Forster concludes that by the 1620s most
priests were without a mistress and were holding services on Sundays and holidays.
Ultimately, Forster asserts that the reform of the parishioners was left to the local priest
who normally was not willing to repress popular practices and alienate those with whom
he had to live.¹¹

If the priest was the primary enforcer of new religious practices and the suppressor
of old ones, then historians need to further explore exactly how he accomplished this
daunting task. To understand more fully where the parish priest fits into this changing
milieu of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we must obtain a greater understanding
of his interaction with his superiors and his parishioners and how they perceived him.
Social psychologist Jean-Pierre Deconchy points out that parishioners recognize a
Catholic priest, because of his status in the hierarchy of the church, as an embodiment of
orthodoxy. This recognition of a priest's power and status allows him a wide range of
actions within the orthodox system, even if some people might view these actions as
"marginal or audacious."¹² A closer examination of communal religious practices
encouraged or allowed by early modern priests may reveal a greater diversity than
previously found in other diocesan studies.

¹² Deconchy, 430.
Because of its poverty, the diocese of Geneva-Annecy was not able until 1663 to fulfill Trent's goal of there being a seminary in the diocese. But as the priest was on the frontline of Catholicism, his competence was a primary concern for the reform-minded bishops of the diocese. Thus, the primary ways priests received instruction during the years under investigation for this study, were through individual tutoring and the annual diocesan synods held to discuss the state of the parishes and the priests' duties there. Annual synods commenced in the diocese during the episcopate of Claude de Granier and his successors continued the practice. At these synods diocesan officials issued statutes and constitutions concerning such matters as which festivals were to be celebrated in the parishes, new devotions to be introduced, and of course proper conduct of the priests. The date of the synod was announced several months in advance and all clergy of the diocese, both secular and regular, were expected to attend. The meeting opened with great fanfare that included a mass performed by the bishop, musicians, and a general procession of the clergy. With formalities completed, a roll call occurred, and those absent were issued an act of default. Next, clergy were appointed as examiners and regional visitors to observe curés in their home parishes. These priests were supposed to visit parishes under their jurisdiction twice a year and make any necessary corrections in the local curé's conduct. There is no evidence on how vigorously these visits were carried out.

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12 Trent twenty-third session, Chapter 28 175-179, addressed the establishment and maintenance of seminaries.
13 Oeuvres, 23: 315; In the Visit ad Limina that François de Sales envoyed to Pope Paul V in November 1606 he mentioned that Claude de Granier began the practice of annual synods. Diocese registers list annual synods during the tenure of François de Sales.
14 Charles-Auguste de Sales Sales, 1: 364-68.
A priest might be sent away from his parish for further training or education. In a letter written by François de Sales in 1614 to the Baron of Cusy, the bishop justified the absence of the curé by claiming that the parishioners were better off without him until he received more training. De Sales sent a curate to the parish until the curé could return.\textsuperscript{16} For the most part, it was not feasible to send all parish priests off for training. Most likely only those in dire need of further education were actually taken out of their parish.

Through this makeshift process of an often informal education, synods, and peer review, the diocese built a body of clergy. According to one of his biographers, François de Sales administered rigorous examinations for those who wished to enter the priesthood, and during his tenure as bishop, he ordained close to 900 priests.\textsuperscript{17} Diocesan leaders still needed to see a curé at work in his own parish church to obtain an accurate picture of the state of the clergy.

Ecclesiastical visitations can provide the historian with a unique view of the parish priest and his role in the local religious environment. During the visitation process the priests interacted with the diocesan officials, local elites, regular clergy and the rest of the parishioners. He entered into a dialogue with people possessing diverse goals and backgrounds. Visitation records have the potential to help the historian understand where the parish priest stood in this dialogue about religious devotion.

The visitor arrived in a parish with certain goals in mind concerning the parish priest and possessed a series of specific questions and instructions handed down by the bishop himself. The curé was a vital part of the parish and the visitation process. As

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Œuvres}, 16: 202-203.
Marc Forster points out in his work on the bishopric of Speyer, the curé was closely scrutinized during visits.\textsuperscript{18} Keith Luria states that the visitor was looking for abuse.\textsuperscript{19} The visitors wanted to know of any moral or spiritual failings of the priest. After all, it was his parish, and he held the salvation of his flock in his hands. He was also the one person in the parish over whom the bishop possessed power. The diocese could punish an errant priest in a number of ways including fines, deprivation of benefices, and even excommunication.

The visitor surely had preconceived ideas of what qualities a "good" curé possessed. A parish priest was to be competent in his abilities to perform all divine services. These duties included Sunday mass, baptism, confession, feast days, catechism classes and any other necessary ceremonies. He was also expected to introduce new devotional practices to his flock. He made sure that the church was kept repaired, clean and had all the necessary accessories to perform the services. He lived a celibate and reserved life absent of excessive drinking, cursing, or gambling. As a pious and holy man, he was an example and disciplinarian to his flock. He was to keep them on the right path towards salvation and away from the dangers of superstition or Protestantism. In turn, the parishioners turned to him during their times of need. The evidence obtained from the visits shows that most curés fell short of this model, and their activities within the village often went well beyond their spiritual duties. Certain curés did a better job fulfilling their duties and were praised in the visitation reports for it. In addition, the

\textsuperscript{17}Ravier, 129-131, 239.
\textsuperscript{18}Forster, 78.
\textsuperscript{19}Luria, 56.
diocesan representative hoped the curé would inform on his flock and the parishioners on their priest. From this process, the visitor could find and correct problems, solve conflicts, and punish where necessary. Ultimately he wanted to make the parish a fitting place for the worship of God.

When the visitor found the curé not fulfilling all his duties, he was given an official order, an injunction, by the bishop to improve or alter his performance. The most frequent injunctions addressed improper decoration of the church and the failure to teach of the catechism. Failure to fulfill these types of injunctions rarely led to more serious punishments. The majority of the curés didn’t implement the catechism after repeated injunctions and diocesan officials took no other actions during the period under study.

One of the most serious offenses was failure to live in the parish, and it always brought a threat of punishment from the visitor. In 1607, François de Sales enjoined Jean d’Arenthon, the rector of the chapel dedicated to St. Magdalene in the parish of Alex, to renovate, inventory, and conduct services in the chapel on pain of ten livres and excommunication. In La Balme de Thuy the rector was enjoined “to make residence hereafter in his curé on pain of five livres and excommunication.” The rector of the chapel of the Holy Spirit in the parish of St. Jean de Sixt, Memet Favre, was also ordered to perform his duties or risked a fine of five livres and excommunication. Bishop Jean-François de Sales ordered the curés of Thollon and Chevenoz after his visit of 1624 to

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20 Visites 2: 24-25.
21 Visites, 2:72. The patron of the chapel was listed as a seigneur of Alex.
22 Visites, 2: 24-25, 560.
live in their parishes or be denied their benefices. The curé of Chevenoz seemed to have been in serious trouble because he was also ordered to appear at the next synod or face an "arbitrary penalty."^23

Misapplication of revenue could get a priest into trouble with diocesan officials as well. The rectors in the village of Thones were ordered "to not appropriate for themselves the oblations" given to the chapels under their supervision on penalty of excommunication. Another priest in Thones was accused of taking revenue that was not part of his prebend and was told to declare this revenue or risk excommunication.24 There is little evidence that the threats were carried out; after all, the diocese had a chronic shortage of priests. Denying someone his benefice would have been used only after every other means to reform the priest had been exhausted.

The fundamental duty of any curé was to perform the sacraments. Without regular services the entire village was lost to Catholicism. Claude de Granier's visitation accounts from the 1580s were the first of the diocese that included a list of services required of the curés or rectors.25 Successive visitors explored with increasing scrutiny the duties of the parish priest. In many of the visitations a description of these duties was listed under "charges of the curé". For example, in the account of the visit made by Jean-François de Sales to the parish of Cons-Saints-Colombe in August 1626, the priest was to say high mass on Sundays and feast days, hold matins and vespers on solemn days, have a

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23ADHS, 2M180, Thollon, Folio 88, Chevenoz Folio 98.
25Rebord, ed., Visites, 98.
low mass on Mondays for the dead and on days when there was a vigil, hold a high mass at vespers on the day of the patron or for the dedication of a new altar, and finally hold catechism instruction every Sunday. The duties almost seem too much for one man, and the visitations reveal disagreements among laity and parish priests over services to be performed. In Abondance, during the 1617 visit made by Jean-François de Blonay, the parishioners expected their curé, Jean Mocand with the help of his vicar, to say High Mass on Sundays and festival days as well as for burials. However, the curé denied that he was bound to perform all these services.

In the town of Evian in 1617, the visitor Blonay, asked the curé if he preached on Lent and Advent. He replied “no” and told the visitor to ask the syndics of the town why. The visitor obviously listened to the priest because he requested that the syndics provide a summery of the revenues, charges, and offices of the parish and chapels. In addition, the visitor asked the syndics “to offer their advice on how to proceed in reestablishing [the parish] to its premium state.” While the injunctions for this visit of Evian are lost, it is evident from this exchange that there were problems between lay leaders and parish priest over his duties and salary. On a follow-up visit in 1620, the visitor Jean Mocand noted that the curé was doing a good job in administering the services and sacraments "to the great contentment of all the bourgeois nobles of the town.”

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26 ADHS, 2M182, Folio 110.
27 Jean Mocand was the bishop's visitor during the follow-up visits of 1620.
28 Visites, 1:257.
29 Visites, 1:295.
reached some agreement pleasing to all. There is a sense that negotiations often occurred between bishop, priest, and parish as to what sacred rites the priest would conduct and this arbitration varied from village to village.

The parishioners expected their priest to observe all holy days celebrated by the community and were not afraid to seek recourse from the bishop or his representative when he failed. Keith Luria noted that even though it had been two hundred years since an extensive visit in the diocese of Grenoble when Bishop le Camus made his tour, the parishioners did not appear afraid to talk. No visitation produced complaints that the priest held too many masses. The parishioners wanted salvation, and they had a sense of what they needed from their priest to achieve it.

Most reformers realized that beyond the ritual of the sacraments, the laity needed to be better educated about Catholic orthodoxy. This knowledge primarily came through the sermons given by the clergy. Due to the proximity of Calvinist Geneva this was of central concern to the bishops of this diocese. The instructions to the priests handed down by the synods stressed the importance of preaching and reminded the priests that they were condemned for the sins committed out of ignorance by people under their care. François de Sales was an advocate of adroit preaching and by all accounts was quite good in the pulpit himself. As bishop he continued to give sermons regularly and offered advice to other clergy on the art of preaching. In a letter written in 1604 to the Archbishop of Bourges, de Sales revealed his views on preaching and the elements he

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30 Luria, 50, 54.
31 Jean d’Aranthod d’Alex, Constitutions et Instructions syndales de St. Francois de Sales Eveque and Prince de Geneve. (Annecy: Humbert Fontaine, 1695), Hereafter Synods, 173.

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believed were necessary for a good sermon. He wrote that a sermon should always be first and foremost true to scripture, then to the Church Fathers and Councils. While content was central to de Sales, one is struck by how conscious he was of style and keeping the attention of the laity. For example, he found the short and forceful phrases of St. Augustine very useful and easier for the listener to understand than those of St. Bernard, who he thought ought to be paraphrased into simpler French, if used at all.32

He never forgot the importance of the listener. He wrote that stories should be lively and clear. Examples should neither be too short—so as to fail to explain fully—or too long as to bore. He found excerpts from Saints' lives useful especially those of the province where one was preaching. When telling any story, de Sales reminded the archbishop not to lose the major point. Sincerity was central to effective preaching. He wrote, "In a word speak affectionately and devoutly, simply, and candidly and with confidence." According to de Sales, sermons that stressed love and compassion were the most effective, even when preaching to the Huguenots.33

Bishop de Sales even offered advice on when to prepare a sermon. He found evenings best for composing and mornings best for reflecting on what one wanted to say.34 He advocated continuing education for all priests whatever their place in the church hierarchy. The synodal statutes stated that curés should continue to study the bible and moral theology and specifically recommended the works of Saints Gregory, Bernard, and Thomas as well as Luis Molina and Luis de Granada for the instruction of

32Œuvres, 12: 311-312.
33Œuvres, 12: 313, 321-323.
34Œuvres, 12: 323.
preaching. He suggested to the archbishop, the writings of famous preachers of the Middle Ages like Thomas Aquinas and Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, and more contemporary clergymen like Osorius Jerome, a Portuguese Dominican, Salmeron Alphonse, a Spanish Jesuit, and Barradas Sebastien, a Portuguese Jesuit. François de Sales continued to study and read to improve his preaching and he expected others to do the same.

In addition to the quantity of services and the content of sermons, the quality of the curé’s performance while administering the sacraments came under scrutiny during parish visits. Louis Châtellier asserts that reformers realized that in order for the mass to be appealing it had to be well-performed and dramatic, almost like theater. In four of the parishes visited in the duchy of Chablais between 1617 and 1621, the visitor noted that several of the curés’ hands trembled when they performed the sacraments. The visitor noted that the curé from Thollon was very old, but this fact did not seem to make any difference to Bishop de Sales when he issued his injunctions. The visitor observed four priests in Fetemes perform a sacred ceremony to see if their hand trembling was so noticeable as to make the service appear irreverent. Catholicism was a highly visual faith full of rituals, images and evocative ceremonies. The diocesan officials believed

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35 Synods, 156.
36 Œuvres, 12: 323.
37 Châtellier, 39.
38 Visites, 1:300, 343, 366, 386. Trembling hands noted in Fetemes, Novel, Thollon, where the cure was very old, and Vinzier.
39 Visites, 1:300.
that for a religious ceremony to have meaning for the laity it had to be performed with the proper drama and reverence. This sense of theater was an aspect of Catholicism that clearly distinguished it from the Reformed confessions.

The visitors noted other inadequacies that hindered a priest’s performance of his duties. In Montigny the curé was away and it was recorded that the curate was not suited to perform mass or administer the sacraments. In Chevenoz, catechism classes were not held because of the priest’s “incompetence.” The account of the visit to the parish of Ugine in 1626 stated that because of the cure’s “indisposition,” most likely illness, he was no longer able to perform his duties to the parish. The visitor ordered a Capuchin to take his place and function as priest. The bishops strove to have a body of clergy capable of performing all their duties within the parish.

The personal morality of the priests had long been a concern for church leaders. Clerical celibacy received close attention following the Council of Trent. Keith Luria notes that Bishop Etienne Le Camus reported eighty-five cases of sexual misconduct in a diocese of approximately 300 parishes during his visit of Grenoble in the 1670s. Results were very different in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy. There were rare problems as when François de Sales visited the parish of Pringy in 1610 and heard the complaints of parishioners who said that an inappropriate maid lived with the priest. The bishop ordered the maid to leave the residence within eight days. According to the synods, an

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40 Visites, 1: 332.
41 Visites, 1: 285, "impuissance".
42 ADHS, 2M182, Folio 129.
43 Luria, 48.
44 Visites 2: 507.
"appropriate" housekeeper included a mother, aunt, sister, or grandmother. Out of the twenty-seven parishes visited in the Chablais region between 1617-1621, only two curés were reported to have improper females in their households. In Marin the visitor ordered a "suspect woman" out of the curé's house immediately in the presence of the priest from nearby Publier and the local notables. In the parish of Novel the visitor discovered that the priest had two maids: one for the house and one for the barn even though he did not seem to have any animals. The visitor issued an injunction for the expulsion of the two maids but as the expanded discussion below will reveal, this was only one of the shortcomings reported to the visitor about the curé from Novel. For the most part the diocesan officials appear to have put an end to priests openly living with women. The problem did arise occasionally as in the newly reestablished parishes in Gex. Marc Forster also found in Speyer that by the first decade of the seventeenth century, open concubinage had disappeared. By this period, both church officials and parishioners at least in this area recognized that clerical celibacy was part of a priest's vows.

Out of 1048 parish visits made during the tenure of the three bishops, examples of serious problems with parish priests were relatively rare. A few cases where problems did emerge are worth examining more closely. In Novel, during the visit of 1617, the parishioners had a long list of complaints concerning their curé, Jean Million, who the visitor identified as a "religious of Saint Bernard" in addition to his maids discussed

45 Synods, 131.
46 Visites 1:323.
47 Visites 1:342-3.
48 See the discussion of the problem in Gex in Chapter 4.
49 Forster, 82.
above. The visitor described the church building as “very poorly built” and in danger of falling down from the rain. The great altar was ill decorated and lacked the “missal and ritual of the Council [of Trent].” The parishioners claimed that the priest baptized one child in the previous two years. He had possession of the collection box, which was empty. He left the parish and for a month, no services were held. He had a habit of replacing the wheat offerings left in bags at the altar with straw. The people also claimed that he frequented taverns and drank too much in St. Gingolph, a neighboring parish. Beyond his moral failings the visitation account also stated that the priest was deaf, his hands trembled, and he was not very good at administering the sacraments, especially absolution. For all his faults, there is no evidence in the visit accounts that he was removed from his parish; rather, injunctions were issued against him concerning the chambermaids and his lack of residence, and there was a call to investigate further the embezzlement of the wheat. One wonders what was going on in Novel. The priest described by the parish appears to be almost a stereotype of a bad cleric.

A closer reading of the visit reveals a much more complex conflict that included a local noble, Monsieur de Montjoux, and a nearby monastery, the Abbey of Mellérée. Nicholas Fernex was the only person mentioned by name as being present at the visit, and he was there as Montjoux’s representative. Fernex inquired about the revenues produced by the parish’s properties because Monsiuer de Montjoux claimed that he had primary control over the administration of the parish. This control included the collection of all parish revenues and appointing and removing the curé. Furthermore, the religious at the

[^Visites 1:341]
Abbey of Mellérée performed the sacraments of marriage, penitence, and baptism, minus a baptismal font, at a chapel endowed by Monsieur de Montjoux at their abbey without permission from the diocese. Mounjoux had a proprietary view of the abbey and the parish. If the people of Novel received their sacraments from the abbey rather than the parish priest, then the fees for these services would follow. The visitor threatened the religious from the Abbey with excommunication if they performed the sacraments for anyone except Montjoux.

Novel presented numerous problems for the visitor and the diocesan officials. Here was a layman asserting control over the spiritual matters of a parish. While some of the complaints against the curé were most likely true, it is probable that Monsieur de Montjoux and his supporters embellished the man’s faults. The visitor appears to have realized this since he did not issue injunctions against the priest for all the complaints lodged, and was willing to challenge the religious of Mellérée’s right to carry out the sacraments. There is no mention in any visitations or other diocesan sources of an Abbey of Mellérée, and Novel was on the eastern boundary of the diocese. So while the diocese threatened the religious with excommunication, there is little evidence that the abbey was in the bishop’s sphere of influence. Visitors returned to Novel in 1619 and 1620 to note the progress of fulfilling the injunctions issued as a result of the visit of 1617. The parishioners made progress on the needed repairs to the church structure, but there is no reference to the curé Jean Million by name, of Montjoux, or of Mellérée.

^Visites, 1:342-3.
Jean-François de Sales arrived in Novel in August of 1624. The account contained little mention of the previous visit or of the many problems seen a few years before. Jean Million was still the curé, and Monsieur de Montjoux was mentioned in the context of jointly controlling a piece of land with the parish. But Jean Million still faced problems with diocesan officials. He was enjoined to bring the register of baptisms, marriages, and burials to the bishop in six weeks. Conceivably the accusation made in the previous visit that the priest was not performing baptisms was being investigated further. Jean Million was also ordered to replace the straw in the bags left in the church with wheat. The lost wheat was the only specific reference to the many complaints made by the parish in the previous visit. Perhaps the parish had managed to solve some of the conflict on their own, or perhaps the diocesan officials decided to address only the most serious charges.

Parish priests could find themselves in trouble with their church superiors if they offended the local elite. An episode appeared in a visit conducted by Jean-François de Sales in November 1623 where the actions of the priest caused the prominent parishioners to unite against him. In the French parish of Seyssel, “the majority of the bourgeois” complained to the bishop about the “scandalous behavior” of Curé Francois Bojat. Unfortunately, the visit does not reveal the exact offense, but it must have been rather serious as Curé Bojat was ordered to pay a forty livres fine.\(^{52}\) This amount was rather high considering that most fines ranged from between five and ten livres. Even though Jean Bojat had been curé for at least a decade, he violated accepted norms of

\(^{52}\)ADHS, 2M182, Folios 6-7.
behavior within the parish structure and the laity saw to it that the bishop knew of the offense. Jean Bojat found himself at odds with the Parlement of Dijon in 1627 when it issued an arrêt condemning him for passing information to the cathedral canons of Saint Peter of Geneva-[Annecy] informing them of their rights to a chapel in Seyssel. The parlement had confirmed the rights of the canons to the benefice attached to the chapel of St. Nicholas in Seyssel, but it obviously was not pleased at having Savoyard canons in control of a French benefice. Perhaps Curé Bojat had passed on this intelligence to the cathedral canons in hopes of regaining some favor of the bishop, but the act led him into conflict with secular authority. Parish priests faced difficulties when serving two masters.

Sometimes conflicts arose between the curé and parishioners over issues not exclusively religious. In many cases these had to do with the administration of parish revenue. In the parish of St. Jean d’Aulph the visitor in 1617 reported that "the people [are] very harsh [towards] and have little affection for their priest." The real issue in St. Jean d’Aulph seems to have been control of parish funds. The laity possessed the “box” of revenue that was to be used for reparations of the church, for candles and habits needed for processions, and for payment to a priest to lead the processions. The laity used the money as they saw fit “without any license from the curé.” Typically the visitors placed the responsibility for repairs to a priest’s house on the parishioners. In St. Jean d’Aulph the parishioners were supposed to provide 200 florins for the reconstruction. In

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51 Visites, 1:391. In the visit made in May of 1614 François Bojat was listed as curé.
52 A D Côte D’Or, B12232, Folios 286, 291.
53 Visites, 1: 355-58.
an effort to free itself of the responsibility for the repairs the laity claimed that their priest, Jean Louie, had caused great damage to his residence. The parishioners tried financial blackmail when it told the visitor that if the priest accepted three florins and six sols for adult burials and thirty sols for a youth who had received first communion then they would turn over the 200 florins. The curé stated that he did not want to agree to this arrangement without the consent of the bishop since in the past the burial fee was seven or eight florins. Continuing to malign the character of their priest and perhaps to show his fiscal irresponsibility, the parishioners informed the visitor that Jean Louie had made a financial agreement with the curé of the nearby parish of Morzine, Laurent Decollonge, without their consent. They opposed the agreement because they believed it was a financial hardship for the parish. The visitor sided with the curé and ordered the parish to hand over the money for repairs and appointed two priests from neighboring parishes to help oversee the reparations. He does not mention any resolution for the burial fees or the agreement with the priest of Morzine. He also concluded that the parishioners who controlled the revenue had not been careful with it, and he ordered the priest to issue a monitory letter and to use all his authority to get the parish's property and revenue in order. The visitor even mentioned the possibility of monitory letters from a clerical superior and excommunication against the parishioners if the situation was not remedied. The visitor must have sympathized with the priest's difficult situation because he stated
in his account that the revenue of the church was too small to support the priest who had to conduct services for 1500 people.\textsuperscript{56} One wonders whether the financial matters or a personality clash led to the conflict between priest and parish.

There were three follow-up visits to St. Jean d'Aulph between 1619 and 1622. The accounts of the visits that took place in 1619 and 1620 are very brief and both reported that the parishioners were making good progress towards the injunctions issued in 1617. The account of 1620 said that almost all the proceeding injunctions had been accomplished and the rest would be completed in the near future. The visitor, Jean Mocand, claimed that the church was well ordered and adorned, that the chapels were well maintained, and that the services were being conducted “to the great contentment of the people.” The parishioners complained to Mocand that the priest was not teaching the catechism, but this is the only problem mentioned. The curé promised he would begin holding catechism lessons and complete the walls of his house or risk losing revenue from his benefice. This statement leads one to believe that the parishioners had handed over at least a portion of the 200 florins. These two follow-up visits focused on the parishioners' injunctions but during the visit in May 1622 the problems over of the property reemerged.

From the visit made by Claude Cullaz curé of Abondance and Pierre Vallet, curé of Vacheresse it is evident much work remained on the part of diocesan officials to get the property in order. While the parish priest had failed to make all the required improvements to his residence, a new curé, Claude Falconnet, had arrived in St. Jean

\textsuperscript{56}Visites. 1: 357-58.
d’Aulph. The account offers no clues as to what happened to Jean Louie. The account reported that though he had tried, Curé Louie had been unsuccessful in collecting the papers that the previous visitor had ordered him to do so. The two visiting priests ordered the new curé, Falconnet, “to obtain a monitory letter against whoever knows where the goods, rights, or documents of the parish are retained and to pursue them up to the last fulmination.” The inability of both the diocesan officials and the local priest to force the parishioners to relinquish control of and the records for the parish property demonstrates the limits of reform and the laity’s ability to resist unwanted change to parish structure.

If the laity continued to withhold funds, a priest might be forced to call on civil justice to enforce injunctions against them. Such an example is found in the parish of Feternes where the curé was told in a visit of 1621 to use the “secular arm” after the parish had repeatedly failed to fulfill an injunction from a previous visit. According to the visitation account the parish refused to hand over money for church renovations including repairs to the priest’s house and the purchase of a new bell even though the funds were available. The most serious disagreements occurred over control of money and not over behavior displayed or services done by the priest.

Most conflicts over money did not escalate to the level they did in St. Jean d’Aulph and Feternes. Typically the disagreements were minor concerning exact amounts owed to the priest for particular services including baptism and funerals. By far the most

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57 *Visites*, 1: 359-361. There were visits on 1 July, 1619, 3 August, 1620 and 22 May, 1622.
58 *Visites*, 1: 302, this step was taken after a series of visits to the parish between 1617-1621.
common one was the burial fee given to the curé for his services. As in St. Jean d’Aulph, the curés usually claimed that there was a customary amount while the parishioners said any payment was much less or even voluntary. For example, in the parishes of Feternes, Larringes and Publier the curés required five florins for burials while the parishioners claimed there was no such custom. The parishioners believed that they were the best judges of what the curé’s services were worth and what they could afford to pay.

Squabbles over payments for the curé’s services and support appear in many of the visit accounts. The laity possessed a sense of ownership of their parish. As money was often a sign of control, parishioners rarely were willing to turn all rights over to the curé.

The relationship between a curé and laity could be one of concord. Many of the priests displayed concern for the happiness and well being of their flock and vice-versa. Priests pleaded the villager’s poverty to the bishop when the parishes couldn’t fulfill financial obligations placed on them as a result of the visits. The account of the visit to Allinges in September 1624 mentioned that the curé had the “good will and devotion of the parishioners.” In Morzine, the bishop ordered the parishioners to hand over the offering box to the priest because he was poor. The priest “having regard for the goodwill of his parishioners had been content with what they gave [him].” The parishioners preferred to keep the offering box, but were willing to give a set amount to the curé.

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60 Visites. Poverty mentioned in Bernex 263, and Bonnveaux, 273.
61 ADHS 2M180, Folio 163.
agreeable to all parties. In a follow-up visit, the parishioners still had the box and were allowed to keep it. The priest and parishioners of Morzine preferred compromise to conflict over revenue. 62

Curés encouraged and protected local veneration of saints. In Vacheresse, the curé established a shrine to St. Bernard of Menthon "at the instigation of the inhabitants of the Ubenaz mountain," in an attempt to heal the sick cows of the area. 63 The well being of the cattle were vital, as dairy products were a crucial part of the regional economy. This correlates with William Christian's work on local religion in Spain, where he found that holy places were frequently placed in natural surroundings near water, trees, or mountains. Christian sees this type of devotion as a community's way of trying to assert control over their environment. 64 The chapel was probably no more than a shack and according to the visit account, was poorly furnished. The priest had to carry the altar and other sacred objects from the main church to the shrine in order to hold services there. This prevented the curé from performing scheduled observances at the parish church. The curé of Vacheresse went to a great deal of effort to fulfill the spiritual needs of his flock. Bishop de Sales ruled that the parishioners could indeed hold services at the shrine if they properly decorated the chapel and found an appropriate time for services.

63 Visites, I:381-82, "...a instigation des communiers de la montagne appelee Ubenaz"; Saint Bernard of Menthon was a noble Savoyard who lived in the tenth-century and established a hospital and monastery in the region. See Butler, II: 646.
64 Christian, 91, 176.
which did not conflict with mass at the main church. François de Sales did not forbid this devotional practice or deem it superstitious, which, if Peter Burke's definition of popular religion is used, surely bordered on the bounds of orthodoxy.

Priests also protected long-standing customs. In Abondance, the visitor's account reported a conflict between parishioners and a nearby monastery concerning which day the parishioners would hold a procession that passed by the monastery. The traditional procession day was no longer convenient for the monastery, and the curé was expected to act as mediator and find a solution that was agreeable to both sides. The follow-up visit reveals that the curé worked out the problem to the "contentment" of the people and that the procession would be performed. Church officials on all sides allowed a certain level of flexibility in how a community observed a local religious celebration.

The records of the visits to the diocese of Geneva-Annecy between 1580-1640 reveal curés functioning in small, often isolated parishes. Many of the priests faced small salaries, inadequate housing, and too much work, but these were the same conditions facing many of their parishioners. Standing at the crossroads between his superiors and his flock, the early modern priest faced a difficult situation. The diocesan officials had increased expectations of a curé’s duties in the parish. This included closer scrutiny of a priest’s behavior, training, and performance of the sacraments. In turn, the curé was expected to implement reforms and assert more control over parish administration, which often were not popular with the laity. The parish priest faced repercussions from both sides when his actions displeased them. Yet the priests managed for the most part to

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65 Visites, 1:382, 385.
negotiate their way through the complexities of the early modern community. Michael Hayden concludes from his pastoral visitation project, "old beliefs, sometimes ascribed to peasants and described as 'popular religion' were, in fact, shared by all parts of society including priests." Despite the changes thrust upon them, the curé was just one member of a parish.

**Religious Houses**

The bishops of Geneva-Annecy wanted to reform all the clergy under their supervision including those in monasteries. When François de Sales toured his diocese 1604-1610 he visited many of the religious houses. The majority of the houses were very small and many had seen any outside scrutiny in a very long time. The exceptions were the Order of Cluny and the Observants of the Order of St. Bonaventure, which appointed its own visitors roughly every ten years to visit its houses within the diocese. While these visitation accounts mentioned little of the specific criticism that François de Sales's correspondence revealed, they still provide a sense of the rather sad and uneven state of religious houses within the diocese. Many were priories with only two or three religious and the largest were the Abbey of Hautecombe with twenty-four religious, the Priory of

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66Visites, 1: 256-259.
68ADS B1432: Repertoire des matières contenues au present registre scavoir des edits, patentes bulles, transactions depuis le 25 Nov. 1577 jusqu’au 4 Novembre 1579, Folio 174-200, provisions from the Abbot general of Cluny authorizing visitation of all Cluniac monasteries under the duke; B1435: Repertoire des matières contenues au present registre tant edit, bulles, patentes Qu’autres actes depuis 1587 Jusqu’en 1597, Folio 75, Letters of commission for Pierre Pondielly to visit convent of the Observance in Savoy, 21 August, 1589. B1437: Registre des Edits, Patentes, Bulles, Transactions, 1605-1611, Folio 3, allow the visitor from Cluny to visit its monasteries in the Savoy 3 March 1607.
Talloires with twenty monks, and the College of La Roche, with fifteen secular canons.  

Like the rest of the church property of the diocese, most of the priories and abbeys were in need of major refurbishing. The clergy, whether secular or regular, often were expected to perform parish duties. These men’s lives were most likely not much different from that of the curés. When François de Sales became bishop female houses were virtually nonexistent. In his report to Pope Paul V in 1606, he made mention of only four houses for women.  

This fact would change with the introduction of his own order the Visitation and the Ursulines into the diocese. Diocesan leaders introduced new male orders into the region as well, the majority of them associated with the Catholic reform movement including the Capuchins, Jesuits, and Barnabites. The new orders had only mixed success within the diocese. The Jesuits left the Holy House of Thonon after barely ten years there and were replaced with the Barnabites. The parishioners of Bellecombe, Crestvoland, and Combloux complained repeatedly to successive visitors about the Jesuits of Chambery, who had taken over the priory of the nearby village of Megeve, claiming the Society had taken revenue from the parishes.  

(See table 5.1 for a list of the religious houses)

The Council of Trent gave the bishop more control over monasteries including visitation rights and the power to reform. A bishop could visit a religious house annually if it was not properly observing its rule even if a house held privileges and exemptions the bishop was expected to do whatever was necessary to reform the place.  

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69 Visites 2:
71 Visits 2: 79, 234; ADHS, 2M181, Folios 68, 73, 95-98.
72 Trent, Twenty-first session, chapter 8, 141.
attention was to be given to monasteries that had pastoral duties.\textsuperscript{72} A bishop could punish a monk who committed a crime outside of his house if his superior would not.\textsuperscript{74} Before the Reformation monasteries had often kept to themselves, apart from the rest of the diocese. Many houses had special exemptions from the rules and regulations issued by the bishop. The decrees of Trent instructed religious houses to conform to the diocese where they were located and required the regular clergy to observe all censures and feast days of the diocese.\textsuperscript{75} Monks fought to prevent changes in their behavior considered inappropriate in light of the new guidelines proposed by the Council of Trent creating conflict between diocesan reformers and monasteries that wanted to be left alone. The evidence reveals that the regular clergy resisted reform much more vigorously than their parish counterparts and involved secular authority more frequently. Secular authority found itself involved either as mediator between the two parties or as an advocate of one side. No where was this type of dispute more complex and prolonged than the one between the bishops of Geneva-Annecy and the house of Talloires.

Located in the province of Genevois along the banks of Lake Annecy, the Priory of Talloires was established as a Benedictine monastery in the first part of the eleventh century. The church of the monastery was dedicated in 1031. The archbishop of Vienne authorized the house and made it a dependent of the Abbey of Savigny located in Lyon. The king and queen of Burgundy, Rudolph and Ermengarde, were Talloires’s primary patrons. The later Middle Ages saw the king and queen of Burgundy disappear, but the

\textsuperscript{72}Trent, Twenty-fifth session, chapter 11, 224.
\textsuperscript{74}Trent, Twenty-fifth session, chapter 14, 226.
\textsuperscript{75}Trent, Twenty-fifth session, chapter 12, 225.
counts of Genevois and later the dukes of Savoy replaced them as benefactors of Talloires.\textsuperscript{76} The monastery remained a favored object of pious donations by all the rulers of the region.

The priory never had more than twenty or thirty religious, but it became wealthy and powerful as it increased its holdings throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The seeds of corruption were planted as the influence of the small priory continued to expand. Specific properties and the revenue they produced became attached to specific offices within the monastery including the sacristan, the overseers of the laborers and the infirmary, and of course the prior. Beginning in 1426 the Charansonary family held the office of prior for more than a century.\textsuperscript{77} In addition, lay offices that came with prebends also became hereditary.\textsuperscript{78} These positions were highly prized as they were a steady source of revenue for local villagers.

Talloires's influence went well beyond its walls and its property. In 1448 the duke of Savoy granted the monastery the right of final punishment which allowed a judge from Talloires to preside in Chambéry over the Supreme Court of the Duchy. By the fifteenth century the priory had become a very powerful vassal of Savoy.\textsuperscript{79} In the sixteenth century the priory's ties to the house of Savoy became even closer. In 1537 Jacques of Savoy was made prior, but he was absent from the monastery most of the time. He was not away on

\textsuperscript{76}Gabriel Pérouse, \textit{L'Abbaye de Talloires}, (Chambéry: Librairie Dardel, 1923), 13,18,25.  
\textsuperscript{77}Pérouse, 35.  
\textsuperscript{78}Pérouse, 27, 30, 32.  
\textsuperscript{79}Pérouse, 34, 35.
priory business and by all accounts he lived less than a monastic life.®° Like so many monastic houses established in the Middle Ages, by the sixteenth century Talloires was no longer a place of devout and ascetic piety.

The problems between diocese and monastery commenced with the first attempt to reform the Priory of Talloires. An enthusiastic young monk, who in 1572 had just returned from his studies in Rome, first attempted the implementation of Tridentine reforms. This monk, Claude de Granier, had been made prior of Talloires the year he departed for Rome. According to his biography, fifteen of the twenty monks living in the monastery were hostile to his intended reforms including stricter diets, more ascetic living, and better observance of the canonical hours. Another major problem concerned the lay officers of the priory who received prebends for certain duties such as cooking, caring for the horses, and performing the duties of the office of justice; some of these local villagers did not do the services required of them. Prior de Granier attempted to remedy this matter but met with resistance by those of the town who held these stipends. The young reformer certainly faced an uphill battle with both the monks and the villagers opposed to his proposed changes. The monastery served the needs of those within the walls as well as those on the outside who depended on it financially in its unreformed state.®¹

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®°Pérouse, 43.
®¹Constantin, 25, 32, 37, 75-76.
Claude de Granier’s efforts to reform his monastery took a new path in 1579 when he became bishop of Geneva-Annecy and Ange Justinian, who was bishop, became prior of Talloires. Pope Gregory XIII authorized this unusual arrangement. When Bishop de Granier visited his former monastery in 1581 during his general tour of the diocese, he was not particularly welcome. The visitation account revealed that the priory of Talloires protested the presence of de Granier, and that the bishop informed the monks that the Council of Trent gave him the right to scrutinize and correct the religious of the priory. This was the last visit de Granier made to the monastery as he shifted his attention to other projects including the reform of the parishes under his care and the missionary project in the duchy of Chablais. He left the problems at the priory to his successors.

François de Sales addressed the issue of monastic reform even before he became bishop. The papal nuncio wrote Provost de Sales in September 1598 asking for specific information relating to replacing lax monks with more diligent ones in existing religious houses. The papal nuncio wanted to know what prebends would be used. Would they bestow vacant ones on the new religious or would they deprive the errant monks of theirs? A year later the papal nuncio reminded de Sales that he still awaited his response about converting conventual prebends to theological ones. This correspondence reveals that the diocese and certainly François de Sales were pursuing the possible expulsion of lax monks from their monasteries of the region well before the process commenced.

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82 Constantin, 93.
83 ADHS, 2 M173, Folio 204.
Soon after he assumed the See of Geneva-Annecy in 1602, François de Sales described to his superiors the state of the religious houses under his jurisdiction. In a letter addressed to the papal nuncio in Turin, de Sales reported that the majority of the monasteries in the diocese had lax discipline, the exception being the Carthusians. In a letter to Pope Clement VIII, de Sales claimed, “There is nothing better than good religious, nothing worse than bad [ones].” The bishop informed the pope of his distress over so many monasteries of various orders having inhabitants who were not observing their discipline when the close proximity of Geneva made it of the utmost importance that the diocese possessed strong clergy. He viewed the problems in his diocese as so serious that no simple solution would solve them.

Bishop de Sales provided several alternatives for reform to the papal officials depending on the circumstances in each house. Some houses needed the existing Orders replaced with different ones, like the Carthusians, or the Feuillants, a stricter branch of the Cistercians established in 1589. According to de Sales these orders were “embraced and enflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit.” Other houses needed their monks replaced with secular clergy or perhaps canons. Another option de Sales proposed was to place a remiss house under the supervision of an already reformed Congregation in its order. The final suggestion he offered was require a house to follow the Ordinary rule of its order,

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88 *Œuvres*, 12: 240.
90 *Œuvres*, 12: 372.
i.e. before the introduction of exemptions and customary practices. Obviously de Sales
had thought a great deal about how best to correct a problem he perceived as longstanding
and pervasive.

François de Sales knew that this would be no easy task for whomever undertook
the reform mission. The individual would have to possess great power exercisable
without possibility of appeal in order to remove any ability that the monasteries would
have to elude reform. In addition, the reformer would have to hold the full support of
the Duke and the Senate. Secular power could help enforce the monastic reform
ordered.91 De Sales favored these broad powers because many of the monasteries were
dependent on houses that were themselves unreformed. His examples to the papal nuncio
included the Priory of Contamine, the Abbey of Entremont, and of course the Priory of
Talloires.92 Since the superiors would not reform the dependent houses certainly would
not. François de Sales was certainly an enthusiastic proponent of monastic reform, but
the resistance he feared came to pass.

When François de Sales turned his focus on Talloires nothing had really changed
there since the days of Claude de Granier. Surprisingly, the account of de Sales’s visit to
the monastery in October 1607 did not address the problems that his later correspondence
revealed. The visitation account is rather mundane. It listed the names of the twenty
religious, the services required of them, and the income of each prebend. The injunctions

included repairs to buildings and an order to the religious to “conduct the divine offices
[required religious services] in the chapels under their charge.”93 This last injunction was
the only one that hinted at the monks’ less than sincere observance of their duties.

The time and effort spent on this reform project by the bishops, the papacy and the
house of Savoy shows that Talloires was an important part of the diocese. Charles-
August de Sales in his biography of his uncle said that de Sales wanted to reform the
monastery because of its age and prestige in the region.94 Certainly the long history of
royal patronage, and the association of St. Bernard of Menthon, a favored local saint,
made the monastery important to all parties. Before he was bishop de Sales had more
than a passing interest in Talloires. Antoine Favre, President of the Senate of the Savoy
and a close friend of de Sales, wrote him in March 1595 that the prior of Talloires had
died, and that although he [Favre] had hoped that de Sales would become prior, the son of
Baron de la Batie, intendant of the hospital, had been appointed instead.95 As bishop, de
Sales had his chance to oversee the priory.

Claude-Louis-Nicolas de Quoex was appointed prior of Talloires in June of 1609.
He was born in the village of Talloires and had taken the Benedictine habit at Saint-
Martin de Savigny in the early 1590s. François de Sales saw in this young monk a
promising tool for the reformation of Talloires.96 The Quoex family had long been
associated with the priory holding the secular position of barber at the monastery for
generations. The house of Savoy eventually ennobled the family, and at the end of the

93 Visites 2: 667-668.
94 Charles-Auguste de Sales, II: 41.
sixteenth century Jean de Quoex, father of Nicolas, was surgeon to the duke.97 The Quoex family’s longstanding connection to both the dukes of Savoy and the house of Talloires made the young Nicolas the logical choice to be prior, and both bishop and duke hoped he would implement Tridentine reforms at the monastery. A month after the new prior’s appointment, the bishop offered some advice on commencing reform. He told the prior to begin reforming the monks by setting a good example. Bishop de Sales reminded the prior that change took time, and he offered the symbolic examples of Jesus having only a small number of disciples after thirty-three years and the palm taking a hundred years to produce fruit. More pragmatically, the bishop instructed de Quoex to have the monks examine their consciences every evening and to teach them to obey their director. He also wanted to ensure that all those in the monastery received communion at least once a month and modified their habits “in the fashion of the reformed Benedictines.”98 This letter reveals that the monastery had made few lasting steps toward implementing Tridentine reform since Claude de Granier had been prior and that de Sales was putting his hope in the new prior.

In 1610, in an effort to expedite the reform of Talloires, both the Sovereign Senate of the Savoy and Pierre-François Costa, the Papal Nuncio in Turin, became more directly involved. Costa issued a letter of commission for the Bishop of Geneva, François de Sales, giving him the authority to visit the priories of Talloires and St. Jorioz in order “to reform the disorder into which they have fallen; to reestablish the divine service that is

96Œuvres, 14: 172-173, note 1.  
97Pérouse, 70-71.  
98Œuvres, 14: 172-174.
almost extinct; also to reform the morals of the religious." Father Jacques de Pendes, vicar to the Abbot of St. Martin de Savigny, was to accompany the bishop as the abbot's representative and aid in the "correction of the morals of the religious of Talloires." The Senate registered both of these letters, and sent one of its senators, Monsieur de Buttet, to join the two religious on this visit. The three men went to Talloires on 25 October 1610. According to Charles-Auguste de Sales, Bishop de Sales assembled the religious at the monastery and told them that they had to reform. He informed them that it was evil for a monk to desert his vows, and in doing so, they risked their souls. Charles-Auguste claimed that some listened but others were "obstinate in their wickedness." One would think that the visit of these three high-ranking men might have had some effect on the recalcitrant monks, but rather than facilitating reform the result of this visit appears to have been more conflict.

Future correspondence reveals how complicated the matter of reform of Talloires was. In another letter written to Prior de Quoex sometime between 1611 and 1613, François de Sales referred to two monks in particular who were involved in some scandal. He wrote that news of the two offenders' conduct had reached the Senate of the Savoy. The Senate wanted the two young men removed if they did not change their ways. François de Sales did not want the secular government making these types of decisions. This comment is interesting considering de Sales assertion in his letter to the papal nuncio in 1603 that the support of secular authority was crucial to successful monastic

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99 ADS, B1437, Folio 190, registration of the letters by the Senate of the Savoy. Copy of the letter in the Œuvres, 16: 385-386.
100 ADS, B1437, Folio 200.
reform. The Sovereign Senate of the Savoy had been involved off and on in the conflict of Talloires since Claude de Granier was prior. He informed de Quoex that it would be a “great shame” if the laity took this action and that the prior and ultimately de Sales himself would be blamed for the disorder. There is no indication of the monks’ offenses but de Sales referred several times to their youth. The bishop reiterated to Prior de Quoex of the need to reform the two monks and asked to be kept informed of further developments in the brewing scandal.

The bishop became more aggressive, although he had been discussing the reform for years, when he tried to introduce the Feuillants into the monastery. While both papal and secular powers in Turin appear to have supported this proposition, both the prior of Talloires and the abbey of Savigny opposed this move. They wanted to reform the priory on their own terms. Philippe de Quoex, the brother of the prior and rector of a chapel in Thonon, joined the efforts to block the Feuillants’ introduction. Bishop de Sales was aware of the disagreement when he wrote to Philippe in December of 1613 explaining in a friendly but firm tone that introducing the Feuillants was the best way to reform Talloires and mentioned that the process had worked in other houses. De Sales wished there could be some way to compromise, but he reminded Philippe de Quoex of the decree from Trent granting the bishop authority to judge the situation. François de Sales knew that de Quoex was going to Rome to pursue the issue further so he wished

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101 Œuvres, 16: 113-114, note 3.
102 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 2: 42, “obstinez en leur meschante liberté.”
103 See page 6 for further discussion of the role of the duke. Œuvres, 12: 240-243.
104 Œuvres: 16: 127.
105 Œuvres, 16: 128.
106 Œuvres, 16: 113-114, note 3.
him a safe trip and told him he respected him. The bishop mentioned that there was someone else “less discreet and charitable” who had said many things against de Sales.\textsuperscript{107} This reference reveals how heated the debate had become. It is unclear who de Sales is referring to, but by 1613 all parties involved in the reform of Talloires had taken sides.\textsuperscript{108}

Philippe de Quoex was in Rome in January 1614 to plead Talloires’s case. De Quoex and another advocate of the priory, a Monseur d’Albon, met with the ambassador from France, François Sàvary de Brèves, where they presented a letter from the Abbot of Savigny explaining their predicament. The ambassador said he did not want to get involved unless “honor and victory” could be achieved.\textsuperscript{109} France became involved in the reform of a monastery in Savoy most likely because the Abbey of Savigny was in French territory. Perhaps the ambassador enjoyed taking the opposite side of the duke or maybe he was told to do so by the French crown. The ambassador suggested that the two visit the procurer general of the Feuillants and inform him of the contents of the letter from the Abbot of Savigny and of the rulers of France’s interest in the matter. Philippe de Quoex told his brother that he excused himself from this mission because he thought it was “so furtive,” and that he and his companion planned to visit Cardinal Bellarmine to explain the entire situation. De Quoex wrote that he would inform Bellarmine that those who were willing to reform should never be forced to leave the monastery; only those who would not change their ways. Furthermore, he would tell the Cardinal that his brother, the prior, would no longer want to live at Talloires if the proposed changes occurred.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{107}Oeuvres, 16: 114-116.  
\textsuperscript{108}Oeuvres, 16: 116; Note 2 states that this comment may refer to the monks of Talloires who had criticized de Sales to the Senate of the Savoy.}
Political intrigue does not seem to have appealed to de Quoex who preferred going through traditional channels of the church for his appeals rather than rival secular powers like France. Nevertheless, both members of the Quoex family wanted to continue the reform under their more traditional interpretation of the Rule of St. Benedict.\textsuperscript{110}

Bishop de Sales continued his correspondence with Philippe de Quoex while the rector was in Rome. In a letter written in January 1614, de Sales informed him that the papal nuncio in Turin had requested a report on the “true state” of Talloires and the bishop had forwarded the requested information. The entire matter was then turned over to Cardinal Scipion Caffarelli-Borghese, secretary of state, for his decision. François de Sales told Philippe de Quoex that they both must wait patiently for God’s Will in the matter.\textsuperscript{111} It is evident that the bishop still respected and trusted the rector because he had de Quoex handle other business for the diocese while in Rome and entrusted him with letters to deliver. Both men were sincere in their desire to reform Talloires; they just did not agree on how to go about it.

Ultimately, the Feuillants were not introduced into Talloires. Cardinal Borghese ruled in favor of the Priory in August 1614 and allowed it to continue to reform under the less strict discipline.\textsuperscript{112} It is unclear how much change took place. Charles-Auguste de Sales claimed in his account of the matter that those who refused to reform had to leave the monastery.\textsuperscript{113} In his history of Talloires, Gabriel Pérouse asserted that it was Senator Buttet who informed the monks to either embrace the reform or leave the house in three

\textsuperscript{110}Œuvres, 16: 406-407.
\textsuperscript{111}Œuvres, 16: 406-407.
\textsuperscript{112}Œuvres, 16: 147.
\textsuperscript{113}Œuvres, 16: 147.
months. This interpretation certainly is supported by the sentiments expressed by both François de Sales and Philippe de Quoex in their letters. There is no evidence that reveals how many men left the monastery. Perouse claimed, “Almost all declared that they would remain, and the bishop embraced them tenderly.”

François de Sales did not turn his back on the priory that resisted his proposed methods of reformation. In 1616 the bishop wrote to Victor-Amadeus, the Prince of Piedmont, son and heir of Charles-Emmanuel I, pleading on behalf of the religious of Talloires against a requisition of 300 coupes of wheat for the prince’s army. De Sales informed the prince that they first had to feed themselves so they might continue divine services and that their land barely supplied the priory’s needs.

For all its effort, the diocese did in fact make some progress on the reform at Talloires. In 1621 Duke Charles-Emmanuel I issued a patent letter that praised Talloires for its progress in reform and its “strict observance of the Rules of St. Benedict.” The duke called for the spread of reform into other Benedictine monasteries in the diocese. He declared François de Sales head of all reformed Benedictines and authorized him to visit and reform the other houses of the order especially Bellevaux, Contamine, Chindrieu, and Saint Paul. Bishop de Sales was to establish better observance of the rules, and of the duties to God and to the people which including preaching, confession and administering the sacraments. Each house was to have enough religious to fulfill its duties. The duke

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112 Œuvres, 16: 397-398.
113 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 2: 44.
114 Pérouse, 76.
115 Pérouse, 76.
warned the monks that failure to implement the reforms would lead to loss of revenues. François de Sales was unable to lead this new charge to revive the monasteries since he died in 1622. After all the time and effort spent on monastic reform, only Talloires, the monastery that had received the prolonged scrutiny of church and state showed positive results.

Ultimately, Talloires survived as a Benedictine monastery into the eighteenth century. The priory was made an independent abbey in 1637 after yet another protracted negotiation that began in 1624 under Pope Urban VIII. Not surprisingly the abbey of Savigny opposed this move and was the primary reason for the delay. Bishop Jean-François de Sales visited the parish of Talloires in May 1627 but did not visit the monastery. Had the monastery regained some independence from the bishop? The visit mentioned that there was a dispute between the curé of the parish and the Prior Nicolas de Quoex over what role the monks of Talloires would play in a village procession. Perhaps the stricter observance by the monks had led to a distance between the priory and the village.

While Talloires certainly faced the most scrutiny, the diocese attempted to reform other monasteries. The abbey of Notre-Dame of Abondance was a point of special concern for diocese and papacy. The abbey of Abondance like the priory of Talloires resisted the visit of Bishop de Granier in 1580, claiming an exemption, but de Granier

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118ADS, B1441 Repertoire des Edits-Bulles, 1622-1627, Folio 349, register of the apostolic brief with the decree from the Senate of Savoy.
119Pérouse, 77-78.
120ADHS, 2M182, Folio 308.
asserted his authority according to the Council of Trent. In January 1597, the papal nuncio in Turin informed de Sales that the Pope planned to remove the monks at Abondance and replace them with reformed Benedictines. In a letter to Pope Clement VIII in the spring of 1597, de Sales mentioned that many abbeys, especially those of Aulps and Abondance, needed reform. Abondance annoyed de Sales when it refused to provide a prebend to support a preacher for a recently reestablish parish in the duchy of Chablais. In 1604, Bishop François de Sales informed Pope Clement VIII that the abbot of Abondance, Vespasien Aiazza, had suggested bringing in the Feuillants to Abondance. Pope Paul V authorized this change in September 1606 and the Feuillants would arrive at the Abbey the following spring in 1607. Six canons left the abbey for other houses in Savoy. Not surprisingly, when bishop de Sales visited the abbey in September of 1606, he was not particularly welcome. The abbey again protested the visit of the bishop and de Sales like his predecessor asserted his right to visit according to Tridentine decrees. There were seven religious present in addition to the abbot. One of these was the parish curé of Abondance who would stay on after the Feuillants took possession of the monastery. The others left the house for greener pastures or at least less strict discipline. Future visits in 1617 and 1624 reveal that the introduction of the

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121 ADHS, 2M175, Folio 21.
125 Œuvres, 12: 373, note 1.
126 Visites, 2: 5-6.
127 Jean Moccand was still the curé in the visits of 1617 and 1624.
Feuillants disrupted the abbey’s relationship with the parish of Abondance. In the visit by Jean-François de Sales in 1624, the exact role of the new religious within the community was still under negotiation.128

The Monastery of Sixt also tried to avoid reform by the bishops of Geneva-Annecy. The Abbot of Sixt protested to the archbishop of Vienne claiming exemption from correction by the bishop. Obviously this resistance upset Bishop François de Sales. In a letter written in April 1606 to the prior and other monks who resided at the Abbey of Sixt, the bishop referred to the “iniquity of his [the abbot’s] design” and asked the other religious to submit to his authority. De Sales asserted that it was just for the monks to do so and it was best for the monastery.129 When Jean-François de Sales visited the parish of St. Jean d’Aulph he attempted to visit the Cistercian abbey there as well but appears to have been met at the abbey gate by the prior. The prior provided an account of the duties and activities of the ten monks but claimed immunity from the visitation requirement of the Council of Trent. The prior claimed that there were no scandals within the walls and the abbey provided only edification and devotion to the people.130 The account makes no mention of any further challenge on the part of the bishop to enter the monastery’s gate, and he went on to his next visit.

No monastery appears to have embraced reform. In a letter to his brother Jean-François de Sales, François de Sales referred to an apparent ongoing issue concerning the possible excommunication of those in a monastery that allowed women inside their walls.

128Visites 1: 256-260; ADHS, 2M180, Folio 116-119.
130ADHS, 2M180, Folio 134.
De Sales acknowledged to his brother that the religious in question would do all in their power to resist the process of excommunication. He mentioned that the archbishop of Tarantaise had proceeded against a single convent in a similar situation. The letter hints that François de Sales was hesitant to carry the matter as far as his brother wanted to. The bishop seemed very aware of the realities of proceeding against a group of people who often had the power and influence to resist.

In most cases diocesan officials faced organized opposition when trying to implement Tridentine reforms into existing monasteries. The houses rarely complied with the bishop's desires. Reform was a lengthy process, with the monks using all their abilities to resist reform. Because of their ties to prominent people in the secular world, recalcitrant monks were very effective in opposing change that did not want. By the time off divergent parties which included bishops, monks, popes, and kings, became involved in the process, easy and efficient reform were nearly impossible to achieve.

All three bishops included in this study aspired to create a body of clergy that would lead the inhabitants of the parishes in a revitalized Catholicism. Thus both the regular and secular clergy of the diocese of Geneva-Annecy faced rising expectations and increased scrutiny of their conduct and their training. Diocesan officials had better results from their efforts to improve the behavior of the parish priests or at least their performance of required services than from the measures tried against those who lived in

\[131^{131}\textit{Œuvres}, 13: 350-351.\]
religious houses. This is not surprising since monks could unite against unwanted reform and were typically better connected to those in power on the outside. Parish priests faced the correction of the bishop one on one.
**Cathedral Canons - Annecy (30)**

**Cluny**
- Priory of Bonneguête (6)
- Priory of Chêne
- Priory of Contamine (12)
- Priory of Bellvaux
- Priory of Reignier (5)
- Priory of Rumilly (3)
- Priory of Sillingy (3)
- Priory of Talissieu (4)
- Priory of Vaulx

**Cistercians**
- Abbey of Chézery (12)
- Abbey of Hautecombe (24)
- Abbey Saint-Jean d’Aulph (12)
- Priory of Saint Innocent (dependent on the Abbey of Hautecombe)

**Benedictines**
- Priory of Anglefort (2) — (dependent on the Abbey of Amburnes)
- Priory of Bellevaux
- Priory of Belmont (1)
- Deaconate of Ceysérieu — Benedictine (Canons) — doyen not in residence
- Priory of Chindrieux (2)
- Priory of Gresy sur Aix (2)
- Priory Lovagny
- Priory of Saint Claire
- Priory of Saint Paul (2)
- Priory of Saint-Robert (0)
- Priory of Talloires (20)
- Priory of Ville en Michaille

**Uncertain**
- Priory of Ardon (1)
- Priory of Léaz
- Priory of Thiez
- Priory of Vaulx
- Priory of Chiésaz (inactive)

Table 5.1: Religious Houses Located in the Diocese of Geneva-Annecy
Table 5.1

**Regular Canons**
- Abbey of Abondance (7)
- Abbey of Filly
- Abbey of Entremont (5)
- Priory of Molard de Vion
- Priory of Notre Dame l’Aumône
- Priory of Peillonnex
- Priory of Poisy (4)
- Abbey of Sixt

**Secular Canons**
- College of Annecy (12)
- College of La Roche (15)
- College of Sallanches (13)
- College of Samoëns (10)
- Priory of Seyssel (united to the Cathedral Canons of St. Peter of Geneva)
- Priory of Chamonix
- Priory of Héry sur Ugine

**Carthusians**
- Aillon
- Pomier (Présilly)
- Reposoir (Scionzier)
- Vallon (united to Ripaille priory of Augustinians in 1623)

**Cordeliers**
- Annecy
- Cluses
- Evian

**Dominicans - Annecy**

**Barnabites** established in Annecy (1614), Bonneville, and Thonon. The priories of Bellevaux and Contamine were united in the seventeenth century to the Barnabites of Thonon.

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continued
Table 5.1

Capuchins established in Annecy (1592), La Roche (17th Century.), and Rumilly (17th Century.)

Jesuits took over priory of Megève, La Roche.

Female Houses

Chartreuse of Mélan (founded in 1283)

Cistercians of Sainte-Catherine-du-Semnoz and Abbey in Bonlieu.

Poor Claires of Annecy and Evian (left Geneva in 1535)

Priory of Saint Ennemond – (united to the Abbey of St. Peter in Lyon)

Annonciades in Annecy, Bonneville, and Thonon.

Bernardines in Annecy, La Roche, and Rumilly.

Ursulines of Sallanches and Thonon (also in Gex (Ain).

Visitation of Annecy, Rumilly, Thonon, and Seyssel.
CHAPTER 6

THE LAITY: THE IMPACT OF TRIDENTINE REFORM

While much of the reform movement that grew out of Trent focused on the clergy, officials targeted the priest partly so he in turn could reinvigorate and direct his parish. Through the catechism Catholic reformers wanted parish priests to educate their flocks on doctrine and proper practice that centered on the sacraments. The bishops also wanted parishes literally to rebuild themselves, which included restoring, constructing, and refurbishing the church structures and properties. Diocesan officials expected the laity to provide financial support for this physical reform of the parish and properly endow and maintain chapels and altars. Reformers also scrutinized lay practices because the decrees of Trent hoped to eliminate behavior judged excessive or irreverent and religious activities conducted independent of the clergy. Lay devotion continued to manifest itself as it had in the High Middle Ages through participation in confraternities, processions, and pilgrimages. Ideally reformers wanted parishes that clearly delineated between sacred and profane time, space, and activity.

Scholars have made much of the issues of discipline and control of the people in post-Reformation Christianity. Many argue that both confessions sought to create populations that were loyal and disciplined which was beneficial to both church and
The major tools that the Catholic Church possessed to regulate the laity were the catechism, confession, and punishments in the form of fines and excommunication. According to some scholars the clergy, often with the support and even aid of the secular elites, used these three methods to bring the non-elites into line with the "orthodox confession." Of these three only the catechism was reserved almost exclusively for the laity since the clergy was also expected to confess and could be punished by the church. How did the diocesan officials of Geneva-Annecy use these tools and what impact did they have on the laity?

One of the primary ways both Catholics and Protestants educated their faithful was through catechization. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are considered to be the age of the catechism even though late medieval Catholic educators had also utilized them. The Council of Trent acknowledged the need and purpose of the catechism and stated that the bishops were to ensure that the laity under their care understood the significance and efficacy of the sacraments through proper instruction. Furthermore, the bishop was to supervise the parish priests who in turn were to offer catechism lessons in a language and manner that the parishioners could understand. Robert Bast asserts that the catechism of Trent and one authored by the Jesuit Peter Canisius were the first ones to challenge Luther's in the years after the Reformation. Canisius' catechism spread along with the Jesuits and had more than two hundred editions in twenty-five languages.

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1 See the works of Bossy and Delumeau, and Heinz Schilling, Civic Calvinism in Northwestern Germany and the Netherlands: Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1991).
2 Hsia, 75.
3 *Trent*, Twenty-fourth Session, ch. 7, 197.
between its initial publication in 1556 and the author’s death in 1597. The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* was published in 1566 and established the pattern for future Catholic catechisms. No catechisms were more influential than those of the Italian Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. According to one of his biographers, James Brodrick, Cardinal Francesco Maria Tarugi asked Bellarmine to write out his method during the papacy of Clement VIII. He completed a compendium of Christian doctrine in 1597, his small catechism, and the next year Bellarmine completed a larger one that was to serve as a teaching manual for clergy. Both were published initially on July 15, 1598 and were translated into French in 1600. Brodrick claims that Bellarmine’s catechisms were the only ones François de Sales used in his diocese. Certainly his nephew asserted this in the biography of his uncle, and it is evident from de Sales's correspondence that he favored Bellarmine’s method.

One of the significant changes formal catechization brought to both confessions was the shift from the Seven Deadly Sins to the Ten Commandments as a morality system. According to John Bossy the Decalogue was more precise in its declarations of right and wrong, and it allowed church leaders to place more emphasis on offenses.

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6 Tarugi was a member of the Oratory and was an active reformer. For more on Tarugi see Wright, 86-88; and John Patrick Donnelly, S. J., “The Congregation of the Oratory,” in *Religious Orders of the Catholic Reformation*, ed. Richard L. DeMolen (New York: Fordham University Press, 1994), 195-204.

7 Brodrick, 390.

8 Brodrick, 391-392, 395-396.

9 References for letters about Bellarmine; Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 370.
against God. Stuart Clark writes, “Catholics were taught by an authority like Bellarmine to regard it [the Ten Commandments] as the best possible statement of Christian laws, on the grounds of its authorship, antiquity, universality, immutability, necessity, and solemnity.” Furthermore, the catechists of the age singled out the first commandment for particular consideration because it focused Christians on their relationship with God. In addition, it denounced anything that interfered with the bond between God and man. Cardinal Bellarmine pointed to infidels and witches as individuals who violated the first commandment.

Though Martin Luther and Robert Bellarmine envisioned heads of households catechizing their children and servants, both confessions soon realized that the clergy were better equipped for teaching doctrine. Bossy writes, “...it was enough to get parents to send their children along to catechism, never mind doing it themselves.” What did the process of catechization entail? In Bellarmine’s short catechism the teacher asked the questions while in the larger one, the pupil does. Both catechisms taught Catholic doctrine through the “three theological virtues”: faith demonstrated with the Apostle’s Creed, hope in the litanies Our Father and Hail Mary, and finally charity in the Ten Commandments and the sacraments. The little catechism also addressed practical issues such as those associated with receiving the sacraments, even telling what actions one must take if the Host became stuck to the roof of one’s mouth. The accessibility made Bellarmine’s catechisms popular throughout Catholic Europe.

11 Clark, 503.
12 Clark, 501, 507.
Proper teaching of the catechism was of great interest to the clerical leaders of the diocese of Geneva-Annecy. According to the instructions handed down at the annual synods, teaching the catechism to the young was a curé’s most important ministry. François de Sales taught the catechism personally in Annecy. He mentioned in a letter to Baronne Jeanne de Chantai in 1607 that he had just completed teaching the catechism to the children.¹⁴ The catechism was expected to include the commandments of God and the Catholic church, rules concerning the reception of the sacraments and the proper method and use of prayer. If some of their neighbors were “heretics” then a parish needed the catechism of Cardinal Robert Bellermine and those from the Council of Trent. Heads of households were to be made aware that it was a mortal sin not to have their children and servants instructed in Christian doctrine.¹⁵

Charles-Auguste de Sales described the method his uncle used in catechism lessons and its emphasis on catechizing the young. The people were called together by the ringing of the church bell sometime before vespers at a time convenient for the parishioners. A priest should allow two hours for the catechism and the classes should be held in a church or school. The priest should wait at the door for people who are bringing children because it gave the priest the opportunity to teach the proper greeting. The salutation included saying, “God give us peace” and forming the sign of the cross with

¹⁴Bossy, Christianity in the West, 119.
¹⁶Synods, 181-187.
holy water. The children were to recite the dominical oration and angelic salutation, and those who did not know them were to make the sign of the cross in front of the main altar before going to sit down.\footnote{Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 370.}

The ever practical François de Sales ordained that a catechism instructor should have no more than four to six students. Thus the lead priest should have several clergy to help him with the catechism, but he should carefully observe them to ensure those he assigned to help were capable of instructing. Initially, the children were to listen and observe in silence but after several weeks of classes they should attempt disputation. Before a formal disputation the priest should recite the oration traditionally made before a dispute. Once the students had participated in disputations in class, they were to go somewhere public. Before the children began their public disputation, the priest offered a brief explanation of the process and the doctrine disputed. The children would then recite their assigned parts; some interrogated while others responded. After this public display someone was to read from "the small constitution of good morals" for all those present, and there was next an oration and someone noted who was absent and ill. The students then returned to the church where the priest reminded them to remember what they had learned and ordered them to return to the church the next holiday at a specified hour so they might display what they had learned. Children who had been especially hardworking received a "reward" but were also told they could always do better. The catechism class then heard a sermon from the priest. In an attempt to have oversight of the catechism classes throughout the parish, the bishop wanted each teacher to send a representative
monthly to report on the progress of inculcation.\textsuperscript{18} It is hard to believe that this level of diocesan supervision would have been feasible for many of the parishes since many had only one priest with no curate.

From the evidence offered by the visitations, the bishops made a major effort to implement this reform at the parish level. The accounts from François de Sales's first tour of his diocese made only two references to the catechism. The visit to Compiègne enjoined the curé to teach the catechism to the children on Sundays, and the visit to Thones ordered the parish priest to employ three curates who could teach the catechism “according to the synods.”\textsuperscript{19} In the tour of the sixty-six French parishes in 1614 only one visit makes mention of the catechism. The priest of Echallon was ordered “to teach the catechism.”\textsuperscript{20} Commencing with the visitation of the parishes located in the duchy of Chablais 1617-1622, the catechism was addressed in virtually all of the villages. Most parishes did not appear to be teaching the catechism to the satisfaction of the diocesan officials. Out of the twenty-seven parishes visited during this period, only five mentioned the curés holding the catechism and fourteen claimed no such classes occurred. The reasons given for this failing varied among the parishes. In Bernex the priest was enjoined to hold catechism lessons “such being the desire of the people.”\textsuperscript{21} In Fétines, the curé offered “to do the catechism,” but the parishioners responded that they could not attend because they lived too far away. Nevertheless the bishop ordered the priest to hold the

\textsuperscript{17}Charles-Auguste de Sales, 1: 370-371.  
\textsuperscript{18}Charles-August de Sales, 1: 372.  
\textsuperscript{19}Visites, 2: 375, 671.  
\textsuperscript{20}Visites, 1: 418, “d'enseigner le catechisme”.  
\textsuperscript{21}Visites, 1: 263, “tel estant le desir du peuple.”  

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classes and for the people to attend. The visitor did not find distance a good excuse for not being properly catechized since most parishes appear to have held the classes after Sunday mass, which all faithful Catholics was expected to attend. Sometimes the priest bore the responsibility for the lack of classes as in Chevenoz where the cause given in the visitation account for there being no catechism was the "ineffectiveness of the curé." In this case the visitor gave no order to hold the catechism, since it was believed that improper instruction in Catholic doctrine could be as harmful as ignorance. The parishioners and curés played a blame game over who was responsible for the failure to have catechism instruction. In most of the villages the parishioners who talked with the visitor appeared willing to attend the catechism lessons. Was this simply something the villagers told the diocesan visitor to please him or did they really desire instruction in Catholic doctrine? For two of the parishes where there were catechism lessons, the visitor complemented the curés within the account and wrote that the classes were "to the contentment of the parishioners."^24

When Jean-François de Sales became bishop the nagging problem of the catechism remained. Out of the twenty-two parish visits conducted by the younger de Sales between August 1626 and May 1627, sixteen contained injunctions ordering the curé to teach the catechism, four made reference to the catechism in the duties of the priest, and two made no mention of it at all. It is questionable whether the curé held catechism lessons in the four parishes where the visitor listed it under the duties of the

^22 Visites, I: 298-299.
^23 Visites, I: 285, "a cause de l'impuissance du curé."
^24 Visites, I: 259, 266. Concerning the catechism in Abondance and Biot.
^25 ADHS, 2MI82. There are 24 parish visits in this visitation ledger, but the first two Seyssel and
priest. Two of the four parishes made no reference to any injunctions for the curé, which means that the scribe may have included them with the duties.\textsuperscript{26} By this point the onus appears to have been placed primarily upon the curé. Jean-François de Sales included the order for the catechism with the injunctions for the curé rather than the ones for the parishioners whereas in the earlier visits both parties were held accountable. Was this truly a shift in the responsibility for the instruction or just a change in recording? In contrast to the visits conducted during the tenure of François de Sales where the accounts often include the reasons for there being no instruction, Jean-François de Sales was silent on why there was no catechism. In parish after parish the bishop enjoined the priest to hold the catechism every Sunday. It is open to debate on whether the failure of this reform was due more to an unwilling clergy or laity or a combination of both. I suspect the latter. Nevertheless, the unsuccessful implementation of the catechism reflects a lack of support for such reforms at the local level.

Church leaders hoped that education through the catechism would bring about a better informed and more devout flock. They hoped that better-informed laity would understand the importance of observing the sacraments in attaining salvation. Annual confession had been the standard goal of church leaders since the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and Trent reaffirmed this tenet. This yearly confession normally took place during Lent and was necessary to participate in Easter communion.\textsuperscript{27} While the framers of Trent hoped that the faithful would regularly examine their consciences and confess their

\textsuperscript{26} ADHS, 2M182, Folio 110, the parish of Cons-Saints-Colombe, and Folio 230, the parish of Dérée.

\textsuperscript{27} For a complete discussion of sin and penance see Bossy, \textit{Christianity in the West}, 45-45.
sins, especially their mortal ones, more often if necessary, church leaders realized that the majority of Catholics would only confess once a year.\textsuperscript{28}

The confessional is associated with post-Tridentine Catholicism. While the first confessional appeared shortly before the Council of Trent, Carlo Borromeo was the first to offer specific dimensions for the structure and his writings were crucial to its spread.\textsuperscript{29} The synodal statutes of 1584 for Carpentras were the earliest north of the Alps to make mention of the confessional. The statutes from the synods of Geneva-Annecy followed the instructions of Borromeo concerning construction and called for each parish to have one or two confessionals.\textsuperscript{30} By the middle of the seventeenth century many of the dioceses of France required confessionals.\textsuperscript{31} François de Sales did not appear overly concerned with confessionals in his initial tour of his diocese. He issued only two injunctions calling for the parishes of Menthon and Saint Felix to build seats for confession. Saint Felix was given the option of providing seats or confessionals.\textsuperscript{32} Conceivably most parishes already had a serviceable place to hold confession. Building confessionals may have been too much of a financial burden. These were very poor parishes and as the majority of the visits ordered numerous repairs to church buildings and priests' dwellings as well as the purchase of basic supplies, confessionals were not at the top of the list yet.

\textsuperscript{28}Trent, Fourteenth Session, ch. 5, 92-94.
\textsuperscript{30}Synods, 17.
\textsuperscript{31}Venard, 219-220.
\textsuperscript{32}Visites, 2: 418, 537. François de Sales visited Menthon in October 1607 and Saint Felix June 1606.
Over the tenure of François de Sales, the concern for such structures increased. In the visit to the parishes of the duchy of Chablais (1617-1622) nine of the parish visits made mention of confession. Six of the accounts have injunctions ordering the parish to build one or two confessionals. The visitor ordered the parish of La Thouviere to make two confessionals in the initial visit of 1617 and in the follow-up visits of 1620 and 1621.\textsuperscript{33} Only two inventories make reference to confessionals. The inventory of Saint-Gingolph listed a confessional near the high altar, and the one of Marin stated that no confessional existed.\textsuperscript{34} Most likely most priests were offering the sacrament even without a confessional. The priest of Larringes was told to make himself available "to hear the penitents in confession." The visit account of Publier mentioned that some people from neighboring villages received the sacraments from the curé of Publier when they were ill but went to Marin to confess at Easter.\textsuperscript{35} This was a concern, as reformers wanted the laity to receive all its sacraments from the same parish priest if possible.

Jean-François de Sales's visits continued to address confession and confessionals. The visit to Bonnvaux in the summer of 1624 mentioned that the parish held communal confession during Easter, and the injunctions issued to Le Biot and Vallier included orders to build confessionals in the parishes. The visitation account for Saint Nicolas Véroce from August 1626 contained orders to both the priest and parish to construct

\textsuperscript{33}Visites, 1: Fetermes. 299; Marin 321, 324, 325; Morzine 333; Thollon 368; La Thouviere 372; Vacheresse 383.
\textsuperscript{34}Visites, 1: 321, 351.
\textsuperscript{35}Visites, 1: 308, 348.
Since confessionals were not necessary to receive the sacraments they did not receive the same emphasis as other improvements to the church structure but the bishops did try slowly to introduce them into parishes.

Beyond providing proper instruction to the laity, priests were supposed to convey to their flock the other parish responsibilities, most of them financial. If their religious devotion failed to convince parishioners of their duties then visitors often used the threat of punishment. According to the institutions of the diocesan synods, excommunication was be used only in the most serious offenses and fines were the preferred punishment. The visitation accounts demonstrate this practice. Out of the 303 parishes and fifty-three annexes visited by François de Sales during his tour of his diocese from 1605-1610, only nine parishes received threats of excommunication, but almost every visit contained an order or a threat of a fine. The transgressions listed in the visits of de Sales concerned the clergy and laity in almost equal number and the laity were enjoined as individuals and groups.

Excommunication had long been the most powerful disciplinary tool of the Catholic Church because it took away the victim’s access to the sacraments and thus all hope of salvation. With the advent of the Reformation, however, exclusion from the church no longer held the same power. With confessionalization came multiple paths to salvation. The Council of Trent recognized the negative ramifications of excommunication, and called for it to be used sparingly. The framers of Trent acknowledged that in the past when the punishment was used too quickly or for petty

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36 ADHS, 2M180, Folios 106, 122, 137; 2M181, Folio 150.
reasons, its power was greatly diminished. Excommunication was viewed as the
punishment of last resort for only the most serious of offenses. In addition to the
sacraments, an excommunicated person was to be excluded from all interactions with
other Catholics. Once the sentence had been handed down, however, the individual was
expected to repent or risked being accused of heresy.\textsuperscript{38}

Neither church nor legislative records provide much evidence that the penalty was
carried out with any frequency. One case appeared before the Senate of the Savoy in
1679. In 1619, Duke Charles-Emmanuel I had given the Barnabites of Annecy the
proceeds from a tax on meat sold within the city to support their newly established
college. By the 1670s at least one butcher was not turning over this money and the
Barnabites filed a grievance with the senate. The senate upheld the privilege and ruled
against the butcher, claiming that the tax was for the maintenance of the college. The
condemned were excommunicated.\textsuperscript{39} This case appears to have been a rarity and the
guilty party was expelled from the Catholic Church only after the violation of a royal
proclamation of the duke and a conviction by the senate. Excommunication was a public
and painful process to be avoided if at all possible. Visitors did not hesitate to use the
threat of excommunication but were rarely willing to carry it out.

If there was an ongoing conflict between the bishop and the laity it was over the
furnishing and reparations of the church. All three bishops faced parishes that did not see
the link between devotion and clean linens, new missals, and undamaged images.
François de Sales enjoined the parish of Chavornay to furnish chasubles, linens, and other

\textsuperscript{37}Synods, 123

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articles necessary for the priest to perform the sacraments and to repair the church nave and doors in six months or risk a fine of twenty-five livres and excommunication. The parishioners of Vongnes were ordered to provide a container to place on the high altar for the Blessed Sacrament, to repaint the image of their patron saint Eugend, and to purchase a missal, chasuble, stole, and maniple. The parish had six months to complete these tasks or risk a fine of ten livres and excommunication because these same injunctions had been given by François de Sales in the preceding visit. Parishes frequently failed to fulfill injunctions from previous visits concerning repairs to church property and the next visitor normally repeated the injunction without carrying out any penalty. Pollieu faced a hundred livres fine and excommunication while Lavours risked twenty livres and excommunication over repairs to the church building. The parishioners of Lavours were also told to use the revenue from a Holy Spirit confraternity for church repairs. The visitor gave both parishes three months to fulfill the injunctions. Parishioners also spoke up when if they thought something was not their responsibility. The injunctions of 1607 to the parish of Chene-en-Semine ordered the parishioners to furnish a confaron, but they protested that the prior of St. Nicolas was responsible for it. All these cases demonstrate a debate between diocesan officials and parishioners over how sacred space should be

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38 Trent, Twenty-fifth Session, 235-236.
39 Archives Départementales de la Savoie, Chambery, B2059 Barnabites d'Annecy.
40 Visites, 2: 175.
41 Visites, 1: 466; 2: 765.
42 Visites, 1: 460, 463.
43 Visites, 2: 177-178. “un confaron” was on the main altar and used in the sacrament of the Eucharist.
treated. The visitor believed existing funds should be used to refurbish the physical properties while the laity did not need pristine church properties to commune with the sacred.

Yet the laity wanted divine services and were quite willing to request them from the bishop. When de Sales visited the French parish of Grand Albergement in 1605 two local elites complained that vespers were not being held on holy days and both were willing to donate funds to ensure that the services were made. Jean Charpy agreed to give two-hundred florins and Pierre Bertet offered fifty florins. The bishop allowed this foundation, and a royal notary present at the visit authorized it. In Petit Albergement the parishioners requested that they be allowed to celebrate the parish’s dedication day on the Sunday after Quasimodo and the bishop agreed. Parishioners viewed church services as much more important for their salvation and central to their lives than a well-decorated sanctuary, so while they often resisted providing monetary support for reparations, they were more willing to support a mass.

A visitor sometimes had to address issues over properties that were not exclusively religious. The prior of St. Paul complained that the parishioners had three bell towers that they rang indiscriminately. The prior wanted a designated parishioner hired to ring the bell only for divine services. In a follow-up visit, the parishioners claimed that they wanted to continue to ring the bell as was customary in the village. In Bernex a local lord reportedly redirected some water, an operation which shut off access to land that belonged to the priest’s benefice. The visitor told the curé to order the lord to return

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the water to its original course and to seek the help of the local syndics if the lord refused. In trying to gain control over all aspects of parish life, no matter concerning property was beyond the bounds of reformers.

Chapels and altars remained an important outlet for lay devotion during the early modern period. The visitations provide excellent information on the state of chapels. The records typically include accounts of the physical state of the structures, inventories, lists of revenues, names of the patrons and rectors, and registers of the services performed. All the bishops who are part of this study concerned themselves with the chapels and altars of each parish, attempting to make them fitting places of worship. The visitors issued injunctions for repairs and items needed and even threatened patrons and rectors with deprivation of the chapel if they failed to fulfill the orders.

The parishes held chapels of varying states. When François de Sales entered the village of Bonne in September of 1606 he found thirteen chapels in terrible shape. Few were holding services and most were without rectors or revenue. A Marian chapel had both a patron and a rector but the patron asked the visitor to name a new rector as the current one no longer lived in the area. Bishop de Sales described one chapel in the village as “entirely lacking habits and ornaments.” From the rest of the visitation account it is evident that Bonne had suffered from the armed conflicts of the region and included a house ruined by war in the list of revenue. The account of Claude de Granier’s visit to Bonne from September 1580 reveals some of the chapels needing

45 Visites, 2: 20.
46 Visites, 1: 363-4.
47 Visites, 1: 264.
48 Visites 2: 105-108.
repairs and lacking a patron or rector, but the situation further deteriorated between this visit and the one of François de Sales twenty-six years later. Jean-François de Sales’s visit in 1631 found the chapels of Bonne still in need of improvement. This bishop issued a general injunction to all the chapel patrons and the syndics of the town enjoining them to get the chapels in order. On the other hand, the visit to Combloux in July 1606 revealed five chapels all with patron, revenue, and rector and most had decent furnishings and held the required services. The majority of the parishes possessed chapels that fell somewhere in between Bonne and Combloux, neither all ruined nor all in good shape. Unique issues emerged because each rector and patron was an individual. The visitor seemed to know the true state of things and judged each parish accordingly.

Creating a clearly defined and well-furnished sacred place was the overarching theme that guided the bishops’ approach to parish chapels. Diocesan leaders strove to revitalize chapels that had revenue, but they also wanted to rid the parish churches of those not properly endowed, decorated or in an unsuitable place. The bishops frequently warned parishes that if chapels were not adequately funded and services conducted they would be pulled down and the revenue added to the main altar. The parish of Allonzier was told to move services from an unconsecrated altar to the main one. Depending on the specific circumstances, patrons or rectors were normally given one to three months to fulfill injunctions. The standard method for a chapel with unknown patron, rector, or revenue was to have the curé make mention of the chapel from the pulpit on three
consecutive Sundays and see if anyone knew its history. If no one came forward, the chapel was pulled down and any ornaments were given to the parish.\footnote{This was the common method in both the visits of Bishops François de Sales and Jean-François de Sales including the visits to Chilly and Frangy in 1607 and to Thonon and Concise in 1624. \textit{Visites} 2: 188, 306; ADHS, 2M180, Folios 4, 9.}

In the process of restoring chapels, visitors sometimes uncovered thefts of church property. As stealing violated a commandment of the Decalogue, Christianity had long viewed it as an especially grave sin. The Council of Trent ordained that anyone who stole church property or misused church revenue could be anathematized until restoration of the item.\footnote{Trent, Twenty-second Session, 158.} A parishioner from Veyrier du Lac, Claude Ducrest, was ordered to restore a chalice to a chapel in two weeks or risk excommunication.\footnote{\textit{Visites}, 2: 732.} Jean Rosetain found a chapel in the French parish of Hauteville in a state of disrepair because members of the community had taken the goods and revenue of the chapel. He ordered the inhabitants of Hauteville to provide donations for repairs to the chapel and issued a warning to those who harbored the goods and revenue belonging to the chapel that he would “fulminate excommunication against them.”\footnote{\textit{Visites}, 1: 427.} Most charges against parishioners concerning the chapels were not so serious and concerned neglect rather than actual malfeasance.

Sometimes patrons simply needed a little scrutiny to be motivated to fulfill their duties. In the parish of Amancy there was a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary and Saint Peter that was properly furnished, had a patron named Pierre Dumonal but lacked a rector. The visitor gave Dumonal a month to find a rector but he immediately named the
curate from the parish of La Roche as the chapel's new rector. A similar instance occurred in Chanay where the curé was nominated immediately as rector of a chapel. In the parish of Andilly possessed a chapel described as almost falling down. De Sales told the parish to remedy this situation in a month or the chapel would be razed. A local parishioner François Fusier stepped forward and offered to act as patron of the chapel; the offer was accepted "in the presence and with the consent of the syndics and parishioners." Diocesan officials appear to have preferred restoring chapels than tearing them town.

At other times the bishop had to use stronger measures with reluctant patrons. In the visitation account from 1605 for Vovray-en-Michaille, the patrons of the chapels were enjoined to justify their rights and titles and name rectors in six weeks because four of five chapels had no revenue or rector. If the patrons did not fulfill the bishop's orders, the chapels were to be declared vacant and united along with their revenue to the main altar. The chapels would then be torn down and the materials made property of the parish church. Two families of Feternes were ordered to repair their pews in the parish church and when on a follow-up visit the families still had not performed the repairs, the visitor told the curé to involve civil authorities and a local seigneur to assist in enforcing the injunctions. In Larringes the bishop ordered a man who was a chatelain and notary deprived of his burial chapel because he refused repeated orders to make repairs of

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58 Visites 2: 152.
59 Visites 2: 31-32.
60 Visites 2: 59.
61 Visites 1: 303.
another chapel. When Jean Rosetain visited the French parish of Champfromier in 1614 he gave the patron of the chapel of St. Sebastien three months to make repairs or be denied burial there. With leadership positions came certain duties and responsibilities. If a family founded a chapel or altar, the members were expected to decorate and maintain it for the veneration of God. By not maintaining their chapels, local elites failed to uphold their proper position in the community or the integrity of sacred space.

Sometimes conflict arose among parishioners concerning the chapels of their churches. In Bonneville a problem existed between the town syndics and the du Monet brother over burial in a chapel dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. Charles du Monet claimed his family had the right to be buried in the chapel, but the syndics asserted that the chapel was only for them. Monet claimed he had proof that the chapel was exclusively for his family. The visitor did not believe his claim and “exhorted” Monet to be satisfied with burial outside the chapel. In Bonneville two families claimed the rights to a chapel of St. Antoine. The village of Annemasse, a town that had returned to Catholicism in the 1590s, had two people who wanted to be patron of the chapel of the holy trinity. In the parish of Ruffieu several chapels had patronage problems. The services of a Marian chapel had been moved to the chapel of St. John the Baptist but the patron of that chapel, Claude Chablod, was not fulfilling his duties. He was ordered to assume responsibility for the chapel because his "predecessors" had founded it. He opposed this obligation but was ordered to offer proof of his rights to the chapel in six

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62 Visites, 1: 52.
63 Visites, 2: 415.
64 Visites 2: 112-113
65 Visites 2: 46.
months anyway. Another chapel in Ruffieu dedicated to St. John the Baptist had no
rector, revenue, or furnishings, but Claude Rolet, the chatelain of the Chateau de Neuf,
offered to assume the chapel for his family. The parish Ruffieu reveals families
attempting to free themselves from the responsibility chapels and others willing to
embrace new obligations. The visitors were rarely able to order blanket reforms
concerning chapels; rather they had to examine each one to find the best solution.

Chapels continued to be established and new devotions emerged. The visit to
Hottones revealed a new chapel of St. Bernard with the Billod family as patron,
consecrated at the visit on November 4, 1605. The laity as a group took initiative with
existing chapels as well. In the village of Champfromier the parishioners asked if the
altar of a Marian chapel with no known rector, patron, or revenue could remain for their
usage if they provided offerings. The bishop agreed only if the laity would furnish the
chapels appropriately since at the time of the visit it was indecent. If they failed to do this,
the altar was to be pulled down. The village of Pers also had a chapel without rector or
revenue where devotions for deceased children occurred. The parish of Echallon had
four chapels with no rector or revenue, but the one dedicated to St. Claude was listed as
"entertained by the parishioners, out of devotion." Parishioners were proactive in
defining their sacred places and devotions.

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66 Visites 2: 521.
67 Visites 2: 342.
68 Visites 2: 148.
69 Visites 2: 493; "Sus les tribunes de Léglise il y a une chappelle de Nostre Dame, sans rectuer ny
revenu, en laquelle se font plusieurs devotions pour les enfants morts, et services pour les Trespasses."
70 Visites 2: 256. "entretenue par les parrochians, par dévotion."
The laity also did not hesitate to let the visitor know if the clergy failed to fulfill their duties to chapels. In Epagny, a parish near Annecy, the procurer of the parish complained to François de Sales in 1608 on behalf of the syndics and parishioners that the rector of the chapel of St. Antoine has not made the services and let the chapel fall into ruin. The patrons of the chapel were the curé and parishioners of the village and the rector was Jehan Baudillion, curé of Cilingie. The procurer asked that the rector be enjoined to repair and furnish the chapel and conduct the services. The rector responded to the charges, claiming that it was impossible to make the repairs with so little revenue, but de Sales ordered the rector to make the repairs in two months as he had been ordered in previous visits. Furthermore, if the rector failed to fulfill the injunction, the revenue of the chapel would be seized for reparations. The rector Baudillion opposed these orders but the bishop ordained them anyway.\(^7\) Like the rest of the parish, chapels were a communal responsibility, and the bishops realized that both clergy and laity had to do their part for the chapels to thrive.

**Confraternities**

The lay confraternity of the Catholic faith has long sparked the interest of scholars exploring the communal nature of religion, but its exact role in Early Modern Catholicism has yet to be explored fully. Historians generally assert that the Catholic clergy, armed with the Council of Trent, encouraged confraternities dedicated to the Eucharist and the rosary and discouraged or even suppressed groups which had flourished in the Middle

\(^7\)Visites 2: 270.
Ages such as those devoted to the Holy Spirit. Other scholars have focused on the political nature of confraternities at the expense of their spiritual purposes; such is the case with confraternities connected with the French Catholic League. The authors of Trent mentioned confraternities by name only twice. One canon stated that the bishops had the authority to visit “...all manners of hospitals, colleges, and confraternities of laymen.” The other decree called for an annual accounting of the finances of all church institutions, including confraternities. Certainly other canons and decrees from Trent were applied to lay confraternities, most notably those concerning the proper veneration of saints, relics and images. One session of the Council ordained that the laity should be instructed in the proper “intercession and invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, and the legitimate uses of images.” Additionally, all profit, superstition, reveling, and drunkenness associated with processions and pilgrimages was to be abolished. Many of the specific disciplinary actions in conjunction with brotherhoods seemed to have emerged from individual diocesan synods. One of the most influential reformers of confraternities was the archbishop of Milan Carlo Borromeo, who John Bossy asserts provided an example for future bishops with his "rigorous régime of episcopal authorization and supervision."
During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, church officials certainly aspired both to revitalize fraternal organizations within parishes and to monitor more closely their activities. These two tasks, however, were not always compatible as the devotional activities of the confraternities popular among the laity were frequently the ones most resistant to clerical interference. The diocese of Geneva-Annecy provides a good place to explore the state of confraternities during the transition from medieval Catholicism to the form of worship encouraged during the Catholic Reformation. The bishops of the diocese were avid proponents of Tridentine reform and the three men who held the See between 1580 and 1635, Claude de Granier, François de Sales, and Jean-François de Sales, were quite active in the establishment of confraternities. Religious brotherhoods were institutions important to every level of Catholic society and an examination of their state during this crucial period of reform can offer us insight into post-Tridentine spirituality as well as the often complex relationships between the various ranks of the clergy and the laity.

When studying any institution of the past it is useful to have a definition in mind. Christopher Black in his work on confraternities in Italy broadly defines a confraternity or sodality as "a voluntary association of people who come together under the guidance of certain rules to promote their religious life in common." This general definition certainly encompasses the brotherhoods of the area under investigation. The visitation records of the diocese of Geneva-Annecy reveal a wide variety of confraternities present in the Alpine region. The accounts from François de Sales’s grand tour of his diocese
1605-1610 make mention of brotherhoods dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament and the holy rosary in almost equal number. However the visits still make references to the older Holy Spirit confraternities. Several of them were registered as inactive, but none of the Holy Spirit sodalities appear to have been singled out for suppression during the bishop’s visit. There were also various confraternities dedicated to individual saints that were present in the parishes decades before the Council of Trent. Constant de Bortoli traced the devotional activities of the confraternity of Saint Julien in Menthon, a parish on the banks of Lake Annecy, back to the first half of the sixteenth century. No particular brotherhood appears to have dominated the diocese at the beginning of the seventeenth century. For the parish of Thones, a representative example of the region, the account of the 1607 visit listed four confraternities: a holy rosary, a Blessed Sacrament, one dedicated to Saint Alex, and one dedicated to Saint Crespin. The diocese contained old and new confraternities functioning side by side often within the same parish.

The diocesan officials possessed expectations of the sodalities. The constitutions and instructions handed down by the synods of the diocese for the supervision of confraternities were certainly guided by the decrees of the Council of Trent, decrees that refocused the devotional activities of sodalities toward church sacraments and away from festive communal celebrations. The diocese wanted to bring the confraternities under tighter clerical control. The activities of the brotherhoods were to be scrutinized by the clergy with “great vigor.” Diocesan permission was required for the creation and

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administration of all confraternities including those of the regular clergy. There was to be an annual accounting of each group’s revenue in the presence of the curé and any excess funds were to be used to “help the honest poor” and to “assist prisoners.” Scandalous living could get a confrère expelled from the ranks of a confraternity because the clergy believed that a bad reputation of one member would infect the others. But despite the official vigor of this oversight, evidence offered by the visitation accounts and other supporting documents show that only a handful of the confraternities were consistently subject to this intense scrutiny.

Synodal decrees provide evidence of clerical expectations but offer only a glimpse of the structure and function of the sodalities. A better source for understanding the hierarchy and the sanctioned activities of the confraternities is their statutes. Tridentine reform required that all confraternities have written statutes which had been approved by the bishop, but few of these records are extant for the diocese. The two most complete are for confraternities established in the 1590s, and from these we can get some idea of what was envisioned by the clerical elite of the diocese for the post-Tridentine sodalities.

When François de Sales was provost of the cathedral canons of the diocese, he established a confraternity of the Holy Cross in Annecy in 1593. The following year a confraternity in honor of the five wounds of Christ was founded in the parish of Talloires, a nearby parish also on the banks of Lake Annecy. Both brotherhoods appear to have

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79 Visites 2:671.
80 Synods, 44.
81 Synods, 45.
modeled their statutes closely after other Tridentine groups and François de Sales wrote the statutes for the one he started in Annecy. The founding of these new confraternities were authorized by the bishop, Claude de Granier, and the pope. Membership was open to all men and women who were of “good reputation” and the statutes make no mention of a set membership fee that would have precluded the poorer parishioners from joining. Concerning female members, Christopher Black in his work on Italian confraternities asserts, “Mixed confraternities were common, but the degree of female participation and the extent of their welcome was very variable.” Black found that women were allowed to join confraternities in the fifteenth century, excluded in the next century and then allowed to join again in the seventeenth century. It is hard to tell from the statutes and visitation accounts, how active a role women played in the confraternities in Geneva-Annecy, but they were members and participated in the processions, confession and communion.

The cathedral canons of Saint Peter supervised the confraternity of the Holy Cross in Annecy with one canon acting as first officer while a rector oversaw the confreres of Talloires. The clerical leader performed all divine services associated with the confraternity. He also was to solve all quarrels between confreres and was to choose those members who were to visit the ill and prisoners. Both sodalities followed the directive from Trent, at least on paper, that the primary control of the group should be in the hands

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82 Archives Departementales de la Savoie, B5419 Confréries- diocese de Geneve; The statutes for the confraternity of the Holy Cross in Annecy are summarized by Charles-Auguste de Sales, 68-73.
83 Œuvres 1: 65-67, 67 note 1 provides the date of foundation for the confraternity.
84 Black, 34-35.
85 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 71-72; B5419.
of the clergy. The confraternity members elected lay officers who participated in the administration of the organization, but the ultimate arbiter of decisions was supposed to be the clerical leader.86

These confraternities participated in a full range of religious activities including processions and festivals on designated holy days. The confreres of the Holy Cross's celebrations included feast days dedicated to the holy cross, to Saints Peter and Paul and to the conception of the Virgin, while the confreres dedicated to the five wounds of Christ celebrated Holy Thursday, the day of Saint Sebastian and the day of the assumption of the Virgin. Members of the two groups were also expected to attend confession and mass at their altars on other days designated throughout the year.87 Both brotherhoods escorted the bodies of dead confreres to the churches and held requiem masses for the souls of the departed.88 One of the primary reasons people joined confraternities was the comfort of knowing that at death someone would accompany their bodies to the church and pray for their souls.89 When the confreres performed their various devotions, both the male and female members of the confraternity dressed in habits and marched in a solemn procession while chanting the litanies.90 The two sets of statutes stressed the Tridentine tenets of regular confession, Marian devotion, and Eucharistic piety.

Like so many of the devotional activities encouraged during the Catholic Reformation, these two confraternities made the Eucharist one of the main focal points of

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86 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 73; B5419.
87 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 68; B5419.
88 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 70-71; B5419
90 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 68; B5419.
their pious activities. The confreres of the Holy Cross from Annecy were expected to display the Eucharist on their altar “publicly and honorably” and guard it all day on their days of celebration.\(^{91}\) A. N. Galpern in his work on Champagne points out that the Corpus Christi was a natural point of public devotion for Catholics as their interpretation of the sacrament was most offensive to Protestants.\(^{92}\) Furthermore, with the Council of Trent’s reaffirmation of the real presence of the Eucharist, no sacrament was more central to Christianity.\(^{93}\) Miri Rubin writes, “The Eucharist was fought over regionally and nationally, personally as well as communally, and became a touchstone of attitudes towards community, family, virtue—and politics.”\(^{94}\) Thus the communal celebrations of this sacrament were a natural manifestation in Catholic parishes so close to Calvinist Geneva.

Mortification of the flesh played an important role in penitential brotherhoods especially those established in areas influenced by Protestantism.\(^{95}\) While both of these groups under discussion called themselves penitents no evidence from the statutes reveals that either confraternity participated in any flagellation. This is not surprising considering the groups’ association with François de Sales whose devotional writings and correspondence revealed his dislike of physical discipline. His advice to a nun who wanted to walk barefoot in the winter was that she should cover her feet and expose her

\(^{91}\) Charles-Auguste de Sales, 68.
\(^{93}\) For a discussion of these issues see Miri Rubin, Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 351-2.
\(^{94}\) Rubin, 347.
\(^{95}\) For a discussion of French penitents see the following articles Andrew E. Barnes, “Religious Anxiety and Devotional Change in Sixteenth Century French Penitential Confraternities,” Sixteenth Century

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Bortoli asserts that Savoy contained only “a few rare associations which truly merited the name of penitent.” Rather discipline appears to have been tied to the confreres’ participation in the sacraments and commitment to pious living as stated in the rules of the organizations.

Nicholas Terpstra rightly asserts in his study of confraternities in Bologna that the statutes of such groups were composed of the goals of and desires for the organizations, the ideal, and “there was obviously a gap between norm and practice.” In the case of the two sodalities discussed above, being in and around Annecy under the watchful eye of the bishop would certainly alleviate some of the common problems found in other confraternities. The rest of the brotherhoods did not receive the constant involvement of the church leaders from Annecy. For the diocese as a whole, the sources reveal that most groups fell far short of the reformers’ aspirations.

For a confraternity to be successful it had to provide devotional activities that appealed to the villagers. Diocesan officials could face difficult obstacles when attempting to establish a new confraternity in the presence of a popular older group. The parish of Morzine offers an example of how the introduction of a new confraternity did not always attract the interest of the parishioners. The visitation account of 1617 listed a Blessed Sacrament brotherhood with no activity and a Holy Spirit brotherhood with annual activities of distributing proceeds from the sale of cheese to the poor, to the church.

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96 Bortoli, 31.
97 Euvres 14: 232.
for candles, and to the convent of Cluses as alms for masses on the day of Saint Gregory. A follow-up visit of 1622 revealed a confraternity now dedicated to the holy rosary which was established on July 4, 1619. The holy rosary confraternity was introduced as a new alternative, one certainly encouraged by diocesan officials, but the established holy spirit brotherhood continued to perform its traditional devotional activities and remained popular with the parishioners. When Jean-François de Sales visited the parish in 1624, the Holy Spirit group was still offering its various alms and the Blessed Sacrament group was still dormant. The devotional activities of the new confraternity of the holy rosary were to celebrate the days of the Virgin Mary, to hold masses for the dead, and to furnish candles for the altar. The confreres were also ordered to make repairs to their altar. It is unclear whether the Blessed Sacrament brotherhood declined in popularity or the parishioners never embraced it, but this episode demonstrates how the laity were not simply passive sheep who allowed the clergy to dictate what was sacred and impose devotional practices at will.

Even when a new sodality, established by a clerical leader, attracted the attention of the parishioners, it still had to compete with older traditions. The account of the visit to Evian in 1624 made mention of confraternities of Saint Nicholas, Saint André, and Saint Joseph as well as one for the Blessed Sacrament which was established by François de Sales during the 1590s. The visitation report of 1617 mentioned that the brotherhood of the Blessed Sacrament had forty to fifty female members and twenty men, and the visitor

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99 Visites, 1: 331, 334; ADHS, 2M180, Folio 127.
100 ADHS, 2M180, Folio 27
101 Visites, 1: 293; ADHS 2M180, Folio 21-30. In the account of François de Sales' visit in 1606 the chapel of Saint Andre is listed as holding the altar of the confraternity of the ferry men. Visites, 2:282
claimed that the “confraternity is a great edification to the place.” However, the organization dedicated to Saint André, which the visitor described as "extremely poor", had around five hundred members and possessed indulgences granted by Rome. The visit provides no gender breakdown for the five hundred. These confreres of St. André were to maintain six large candles for their days of indulgence and also to hold funeral offices for their dead members. They also were the patrons of a bell in the village.\textsuperscript{102} Galperrn writes, “Rural confraternities may have participated rather extensively in the ordinary responsibilities of the parish, and have been more an adjunct of the vestry than a wholly separate entity.”\textsuperscript{103} Perhaps because of its duties in the village and its tie to the ferry trade, the older confraternity of Saint André remained popular with at least the male parishioners and very active in the community of Evian even if it was not the favored brotherhood of the diocesan officials. As women were not active in the ferry trade, they may have joined the Blessed Sacrament more readily because it offered them access to devotional activities that the older confraternities of Evian did not.

In addition to promoting Tridentine orthodoxy through new confraternities, the Catholic Church established sodalities whose expressed purpose was to celebrate Catholic festivals literally in the face of Protestants. Included with the establishment of the Holy House of Thonon in 1601 was a Marian confraternity dedicated to Our Lady of Compassion. This brotherhood was attached “in perpetuity” to the Holy House by the Pope. The confreres were to celebrate the major festivals of the Virgin Mary which included the assumption, nativity, purification, and annunciation. They were to assist in

\textsuperscript{102}Visites, 1: 293-4.
the processions held by the parish on Holy Thursday and the Octave of the Eucharist and were to say the rosary at the burials of fellow confreres and at masses for the dead. For all its devotion, the confraternity received a forty-day indulgence in 1612 from Pope Paul V. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia argues that the Marian cults which emerged after Trent were often the most militant of the new confraternities. The earliest of these new Marian brotherhoods can be traced to the Society of Jesus, a religious order instrumental in the establishment of the Holy House of Thonon.

In some cases it appears that the parishioners took the initiative in establishing a new sodality in their village rather than waiting for a cleric to do it. During the 1606 visit to Larringe, the parishioners asked for and received the bishop’s permission to use a chapel dedicated to Saint Antoine and its existing revenue for a confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. In August 1624 Jean-François de Sales found a confraternity holding activities in the chapel of Saint Antoine and ordered the parishioners to furnish the chapel and the light for the altar. The laity of Larringe wanted the confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the diocese officials consented.

According to John Bossy, beginning with Carlo Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, reformers attempted to organize confraternities into federations with centralized diocesan control and discipline. There is little evidence that there were formal groupings of confraternities within the diocese of Geneva-Annecy. In his biography of his uncle,

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102 Galpem, 59.
103 ADHS, 2M180, Folio 8.
104 ADHS, 22H1.
105 Hsia, 202-203.
107 AD HS, 2M180, Folio 66.
Charles Auguste de Sales does mention a union between the confraternity of the Holy Cross of Annecy and a brotherhood of the same devotion in Chambéry. Both groups recognized François de Sales as their "common father". According to the account, the two groups made pilgrimage to Aix en Savoy (Aix les Bains) to "see and adore the Holy Cross" on the last day of June and there made a public acclamation of their unification. While it was the capital of the Savoy, Chambéry was part of the diocese of Grenoble. This joint journey to Aix may have been an attempt to establish ties between the religious and political capitals of Savoy since the Calvinist takeover of Geneva.

One of the most compelling examples of Tridentine reform in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy is the proliferation of confraternities and other devotions dedicated to the holy rosary. As mentioned above, the brotherhoods of the Blessed Sacrament were mentioned in almost equal number to those of the holy rosary in the visits of François de Sales during the first decade of the seventeenth century, and he established personally several eucharistic sodalities. The visits of 1614 to the French parishes mention Rosary devotions in almost one-third of the churches. In the visits of Jean-François de Sales during the 1620s, there appeared to be a confraternity of the holy rosary in most of the larger parishes. Keith Luria found in his study of the diocese of Grenoble, which borders the diocese of Geneva-Annecy, that confraternities devoted to the rosary were more popular than those dedicated to the Eucharist in the region during the later seventeenth century.

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110 Charles-Auguste de Sales, 86, 89. For further discussion about this pilgrimage see page 228-229 below.
111 See Table 6.1.
century. Geneva-Annecy seems to have promoted the rosary brotherhood almost exclusively in subsequent decades. According to Marie-Helene Froeschle-Chopard, by the later seventeenth century, confraternities of the holy rosary accounted for half of all sodalities in Savoy. Why did the diocese shift its support so dramatically to the confraternities of the holy rosary?

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112 Luria, Territories of Grace, 40.
1. Arlod — devotion to the rosary
2. Champfromier — devotion to the rosary
3. Brenod — Chapel of the Holy Spirit - devotion to the holy rosary
4. Champdor — holy rosary
5. Corcelles — holy rosary
6. Cormaranche — holy rosary
7. Sutrieu - holy rosary
8. Grand Albergement — holy rosary
9. Hottones — Confraternity of the holy rosary
10. Songieu — Chapel St. Catherine — holy rosary; Chapel of Notre Dame of Compassion — holy rosary
11. Passin — Chapel of St. Anne - rosary
12. Chemilieu — Chapel of St. Sebastian - Procession of the rosary newly establish in the chapel
13. Belmont — Chapel of St. François dedicated to the devotion of the rosary of Our Lady.
14. Fitignieu — Confraternity of the holy rosary
15. Vieu — Chapel of St. Sebastian and Our Lady - “exercise of the holy rosary”
16. Pollieu — Altar of holy rosary
17. Cressin — Chapel of the Holy Trinity — exercise of the holy rosary
18. Ceyerieu — Chapel of the Holy Spirit — remitted to the holy rosary

Table 6.1: Rosary Devotions in the French Parishes 1614

\[\text{Visites 1: 389-484.}\]
While most of the confraternities erected by the diocesan officials during the period of this study were those promoted by champions of Tridentine reform, each brotherhood, whether old or new, appears to have been judged on an individual basis. Rather than suppressing a confraternity just because it was dedicated to the Holy Spirit, the clergy seemed to have preferred more indirect methods of ending an old brotherhood that failed to meet the standards of reform-minded bishops. Some of the older organizations were phased out and replaced by new ones. Sometimes the diocese established new brotherhoods in an attempt to pull away membership from the older groups. The parish of Arith possessed two confraternities; one dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament and the other to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brotherhood’s only annual activity occurred on Pentecost, yet they had two hundred florins of income. The bishop ordered that the money be handed over to the Blessed Sacrament sodality which had monthly activities plus a celebration during the Octave of the Eucharist. According to the visitation account, this change was made with the consent of the confreres. Perhaps the majority of the parishioners who comprised the membership of the Holy Spirit had subsequently joined the Blessed Sacrament, so the shift had already been accepted by the confreres. This method of promoting new confraternities met with only mixed success because parishioners were often very resistant to giving up valued local customs.

Those older confraternities that remained active and performed important functions within a parish continued their traditional devotional activities. In the seventeenth century, the majority of the Holy Spirit confraternities within the diocese of

\[115\textit{Visitie}s, 2: 62.\]
Geneva-Annecy appear to have continued the medieval practice of communal alms distribution, usually foodstuffs, on a particular holy day often Pentecost or Corpus Christi.\(^{116}\) Medieval theologians believed that charity was expressed best through the act of distributing alms.\(^{117}\) No devotional practice belonged exclusively to a particular confraternity. In the Chapel of Abondance, the parish performed a yearly distribution of bread and cheese on Corpus Christi day.\(^{118}\) But charity seems to have declined as a focus for confraternities after the Middle Ages in at least parts of France. Philip Hoffman asserts that diocesan officials in Lyons attempted to suppress communal almsgiving, and shift charity exclusively to the poor.\(^{119}\) A.N. Galpern describes an annual act of charity by a Blessed Sacrament confraternity in the parish of Chaource in Champagne as "most unusual."\(^{120}\) Perhaps because of the widespread poverty and rural nature of this rugged Alpine region, reformers of the diocese tolerated the traditions of general alms.

Problems existed with the annual distribution of alms in several parishes. Some of the parishioners of Vacheresse complained during the visit of 1617 that the Holy Spirit brotherhood's general distribution of bread and cheese on Corpus Christi day interfered with the mass of that day. The confreres attended to the preparation of their alms dispersal instead of attending mass. Reformers wanted mass to be the most important sacred activity in which parishioners participated, and the time and place set aside for the sacrament was to always take precedence over other devotional activities. The diocesan

\(^{116}\) Visites, 1: 331.
\(^{117}\) Flynn, 45.
\(^{118}\) Visites, 1: 277.
\(^{119}\) Hoffman, 108; Gutton, 205; Galpern, 63.
\(^{120}\) Galpern, 63.
officials attempted to reach a compromise rather than suppress the devotionals act in question. The bishop enjoined the group to distribute food on another holy day.\footnote{Visites, 1: 382-83, Parish of Vacheresse.}

The problem was not unique to the Holy Spirit confreres of Vacheresse. A similar complaint was made concerning the parishioners from Abondance and its annex, the Chapel of Abondance, during the visits there in 1617. Abondance had a tradition of distributing general alms on the day of Pentecost, and as in Vacheresse, some people failed to attend mass on that day. The curé made the people postpone the alms distribution until the following Tuesday. The monks from the Abbey of Abondance also complained about the almsgiving affirming that the dispersal must be done on a different day and that the procession done in conjunction with the alms should no longer go around the walls of the monastery. The visitor ordered the curé to ensure that the procession would be undertaken with "the most propriety and convenience as will be possible." On a follow-up visit conducted by Claude Cullaz in 1622, he reported that the procession would continue with the agreement of all parties.\footnote{Visites, 1: 382-83, Parish of Vacheresse.} The Chapel of Abondance had a custom of general alms of bread and cheese on Corpus Christi day and here too some parishioners chose to skip mass. There was no mention of the problem with the alms on repeat visit to the annex in 1619, but the issue did surface again in 1622. The visitor reported that he found "good will" to change the day of the alms to the Octave or another day.\footnote{Visites, 1: 382-83, Parish of Vacheresse.} The account goes on to reveal that because of the "great poverty" of the present year, alms of wheat would be distributed only to the poor. The parishioners agreed to the change for the current year because they wished to show obedience to their prelate, but in
the future the laity wanted to return to "the former devotion" i.e. a general alms. The laity, wanting to return to "the former devotion," held a lofty place in their religious world.

Bishop François de Sales had been aware of the problems around Abondance for at least a decade. In a letter to the curé of Abondance written sometime during 1603 or 1604, the bishop told the curé to address the problems and to change the day of general alms from Pentecost to a holy day "less celebratory." The bishop appears to have understood the origins of the problem writing, "those in the place are very distracted by their duties and devotion, to the prejudice of the honor which is owed to a day of so great solemnity." While de Sales might have appreciated the laity's attachment to the alms giving, he expected the parishes of his diocese to observe the sanctity of Sunday mass.

The visits to the parishes by Claude de Granier from 1580 and those by François de Sales from 1606 make no mention of the problem with the alms dispersal. Yet from his correspondence, de Sales already viewed the processions and almsgiving as a problem. All three parishes were close to the abbey of Abondance that was deemed by Bishop de Sales to be in such a lax state that the Feuillants were introduced there in 1607. The editors of the letter for the Annecy edition also note this.

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124 Visites, 1: 256, 258.
125 Visites, 1: 277, 283, La Chapelle D'Abondance.
126 Visites, 1: 283.
127 Œuvres, 11: 250. The letter mentioned both Abondance and the Chapel but only referred to Pentecost even though it is clear from the visits that the Chapel's almsgiving was on Corpus Christi. The editors of the letter for the Annecy edition also note this.
128 ADHS 2M175, Folios 20-21; Visites, 2: 5-8.
129 For a discussion of the introduction of the Feuillants see Chapter 5, 41-42.
abbey, and the visit to Abondance in 1617 made specific reference to the complaints by the reverends Feuillants. Perhaps the introduction of the stricter order into the area had made the problem with the alms more of an issue.

Bishop de Sales's letter had little impact on the practice as the problem was addressed again in the visitations of 1617 and injunctions issued in all three parishes. When his successor Jean-François de Sales visited the three places in 1624, only Abondance appears to have fulfilled the order as there was no mention of the alms in the visit account. In Vacheresse, the confraternity of the Holy Spirit still had failed to transfer their general alms from Corpus Christi to the Octave of the Eucharist. The visit said that the confreres continued to leave mass early to assist in the preparation of the procession for the food distribution. The same situation remained in the Chapel of Abondance. The local priests must have been unable or unwilling to force the laity to give up its traditions. Parishioners had their own ideas about devotion and viewed their procession and almsgiving as sacred as Sunday mass. Individuals within the parishes were willing to defy the diocesan officials to protect a local tradition. Jean-François de Sales does not appear to have been as understanding as his brother was. He threatened the Holy Spirit confraternity of Vacheresse and the laity from the Chapel of Abondance with excommunication if they did not comply with his injunctions to change the day of its alms dispersal. These cases demonstrate that disagreements between confreres and

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128 *Visites*, 1: 256.
129 *ADHS 2M180*, Folio 118.
130 *ADHS 2M180*, Folio 104.
131 *ADHS 2M180*, Folio 104, 114-115.
diocesan officials resulted in extended dialogues among the interested parties. Only after years of debate and prolonged resistance did the bishop threaten the parishioners with serious punishment.

Far from being discouraged, the Holy Spirit brotherhood in the parish of Saint-Gingolph received special praise from diocesan officials. According to the visit of 1617, the Holy Spirit confraternity was “very old in the place and of great devotion for being at the gates of the heretics.” Furthermore, the visitor ordained that the confreres because of their piety, should have as alms for the rest of their lives the cheese from the mountain of Lavenet. Did the diocese acknowledge that parishioners could be attracted to Protestantism? Was the cheese a reward for resisting Calvinism or an incentive to do so? In a village where Protestants lived there was not a more sacred activity than to defy the reformed faith.

Another goal of Tridentine reform was to reign in the lay confraternities that were too independent of diocesan control. In the parish of Thollon, a Holy Spirit brotherhood appears to have been a point of concern for diocesan officials. Thollon had an old company of the Holy Spirit reportedly with good revenue though controlled by its members without the license of the curé. In this case, François de Sales ordered a priest from the nearby parish of Bernex to investigate how the brothers used their money, but the bishop did not order their disbanding. Scholars have asserted that one of the ways reformers tried to exercise social control over confraternities was by gaining access to the

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132 Visites, 1:351-52.
group's money.¹³⁴ Trent gave diocesan leaders the right to an annual accounting. The case of the Thollon confraternity appears to have been rather isolated because the visitations from other parishes do not mention similar fiscal problems. The Holy Spirit brotherhoods were far from dead, and neither priest, parish, nor visitor appeared to want their demise.

Issues of proper supervision however, were not limited to Holy Spirit brotherhoods. When Jean-François de Sales toured the parish of Feternes, he found problems with employment of donations received by the confraternity of the holy rosary. The group had received several donations that were to be used for masses for the dead. The baron of Feternes, Charles de Compoix, had established a monthly mass as stated in the statutes of the confraternity, and another man had given twenty livres for a mass for the dead. The prior of the confraternity was ordered to use the donations according to the statutes.¹³⁵ The confraternity must have received the money, but the masses were not being performed. Reformers expected the clergy to increase its supervision over lay confraternities but it also had greater responsibility. The prior was the one who received the order about the donations.

There is also little mention in the visitation accounts of excessive or inappropriate celebrations in conjunction with the devotional activities of confraternities. Peter Burke asserts that many devotional activities popular with the laity were condemned as superstitious and immoral.¹³⁶ It is unclear whether most were free of serious moral failing or if parishes were able to hide the indiscretions of their confraternities from the visitor. However, during a visit to the parish of Seythenex in 1626, a “public scandal” came to

¹³⁴Hoffman, 108; Gutton, 205.
the attention of the bishop. A Holy Spirit confrere committed a "scandalous act" during a celebration on the Monday of Pentecost. The bishop ordered the guilty party to stop the act. The members of the confraternity were told to prohibit any public act the people considered scandalous on pain of excommunication. 137 Most likely the confrere had offended other parishioners with his behavior, and they informed on him to the bishop. Perhaps it was an ongoing problem that the parish was not able to solve on its own. The holy rosary confraternity of Domancy had its services conducted in its chapel at a portable altar that was unconsecrated. Bishop de Sales noted this irregularity but did not order any remedy. 138 With a few exceptions, the visitations are silent on the vices of individual confraternity members. Even when diocesan officials were aware of behavior connected with religious activity that they considered inappropriate, as the discussion of processions below reveals, it was not always easy to end.

Overall, great diversity remained among the confraternities present in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy between 1580 and 1640. Confreres embraced new practices that enriched their spiritual lives, protected valued local customs, and resisted changes not to their liking. The bishops may have envisioned parishes where confraternities centered on the Eucharist and rosary devotions would replace those of the Holy Spirit and patron saints of trades, but the time and scrutiny to see to such changes was not available. As the bishops were unable to visit the parishes of their diocese as frequently as the framers of Trent envisioned, the injunctions imposed against confraternity activities were rarely

135 ADHS, 2M180, Folio 93.
136 Burke, 209-212.
137 ADHS, 2M182, Folio 92.
followed up in a timely manner. If the devotional activities of an ancient Holy Spirit confraternity fell short of the bishop’s expectations, the members were still dedicated Catholics, which in his eyes was preferable to losing them to Protestantism.

The Laity and Sacred Space

Lay piety went beyond activities centered on the parish. Processions and pilgrimages whether connected with a confraternity or a parish-wide tradition remained an important part of Catholicism and fell under the eye of reformers. John Bossy writes, "Sad as it may be, it is no doubt true that the emergence of modern Catholicism depended on eliminating most of the elements of popular participation." The synodal statutes, visitations, and correspondence help reveal how the inhabitants of the diocese of Geneva-Annecy, both cleric and lay, viewed these religious activities. For the most part, the evidence discloses that the diocesan officials held a rather realistic view of processions. The statutes from the synods stated that diocesan officials had to participate in the devotion if the procession required that the parishioners return at night or had to sleep out of doors. Processions should be planned the Sunday before and the participants were to undertake the journey in a serious and reverent manner. The other major guideline concerning behavior was the prohibition of people dressing like an apostle or in a "superstitious manner".

The clerical leaders of the diocese were aware that many processions had a long history in a particular parish and that the laity were often very attached to the practice. The synodal statutes mention that if there existed a "custom" of carrying an image or

\[\text{139}^{\text{Bossy, "The Counter-Reformation," 62.}}\]

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statue in a procession, it could continue with the recommendations that the ritual be done rarely and that the people be made aware of the orthodoxy of the procession. The statutes left the final judgment to the priest.\textsuperscript{141} Diocesan officials acknowledged limits on reforms of valued traditions that the laity would tolerate. Certainly the clergy wanted behavioral excesses long connected with processions and other devotions to cease but compromise was the normal path. In Vacheresse during a follow-up visit of 1622, the curé was told to exclude people who participated in "debauchery, dances and revelry" while in procession to a popular shrine.\textsuperscript{142} In the parish of Menthon, François de Sales enjoined the laity in to assist in the traditional processions but not to dance in the fields of the curé.\textsuperscript{143} The bishop hoped that the parish priest would curtail the actions of his flock considered inappropriate.

Yet the visitations contain other examples of processions that were a normal and even central part of a community. The account of the visit to the French parish of Saint-Germain de Joux in 1614 made note that the syndics were not present for the visit because they were leading a procession of St. Claude.\textsuperscript{144} During a visit to the parish of Larringe in 1617, the visitor toured a chapel dedicated to St. Thomas that was dependent on the Priory of St. Paul. The record of the visit states that the chapel has a great reputation of devotion in the region "even [in] the town of Evian." The parishes came in

\textsuperscript{140}Synods, 46-47.  
\textsuperscript{141}Synods, 15.  
\textsuperscript{142}Visites 1:385.  
\textsuperscript{143}Visites 2:418.  
\textsuperscript{144}Visites, 1:419.
procession to the chapel every year. The prior of St. Paul, Jean-François Deblonnay, was ordered to ensure that the chapel was properly maintained so that he could hold mass there once a week.145

The best evidence of how the diocese generally viewed processions comes from a letter of François de Sales written to his good friend and senator Antoine Favre. François de Sales dispatched this letter in May 1594 shortly before they both embarked on a procession with the confraternity of the Holy Cross to view a piece of the true cross in Aix-les-Bains. As mentioned above de Sales had helped establish the brotherhood in Annecy in 1593 and a chapter was erected in Chambéry the following year. He wrote that the confreres would leave from Annecy on the Monday of Pentecost and the procession would follow a pattern of previous pilgrimages to Aix-les-Bains. He described how the group would chant litanies together as they walked and would hold no profane conversations during the journey. The group was to dine together along the way under the same roof “modestly and frugally.” Always practical, François de Sales said the confreres would walk barefoot but only for the final few miles as they approached the shrine. He hoped that the group would arrive to their destination by ten or eleven in the morning and meet up with the group led by Antoine Favre coming from Chambéry.146

François de Sales revealed in this piece of correspondence that some aspects of the procession were hard to control. He complained to Senator Favre that he could not provide an exact time for the arrival of the confreres from Annecy because “against our will, a numerous crowd has joined us for this pilgrimage, principally several women for

145 Visites 1:310-311.
whom all our arguments have never been able to change from resolution, being members of our confraternity from the beginning, [and] admitted to the Communion and other pious exercises. 

Obviously the actions of the women were not condoned by François de Sales but his comments show that the women were members of the confraternity and that he was either unable or unwilling to exclude them from participating in the procession and pilgrimage of the brotherhood. His own involvement in the trip to Aix-les-Bains shows that he supported and even encouraged lay participation in communal devotions.

Much has been made of how the Reformations reigned in customs practiced among the laity. While most historians no longer concur with Delumeau’s assertion that much of Europe was pagan until the Reformations, the idea that the elites wanted to suppress “popular religion” is still common. The dichotomy between elite and popular however is too black and white for understanding the differences over practices that emerged between the visitor and the laity in the diocese of Geneva-Annecy. The reformers and the parishioners often held incompatible views of sacred space. The bishops wanted devotion to center around the main parish church and Sunday mass while the laity often preferred the veneration of local saints or using the day of rest for other activities. Most of the disagreements that made it into the visitation accounts were over control of and the proper uses of parish space. Trying to create a separate time and place for sacred services was on occasion a difficult task as most of the villagers’ lives revolved around the agriculture cycle, which coincided with the calendar of the Catholic Church.


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In the eyes of the bishops the most pervasive problem was the failure to observe the third commandment, keeping the Sabbath holy. In the parish of Copponex, the bishop ordered the men to enter the church and “assist in the divine service” on pain of ten livres and excommunication, and in Jarsy, the parishioners were told not to walk out during divine offices. The bishop enjoined the parishioners of Petit Bornand to help with the divine offices and processions or be subject to a ten livres fine and excommunication unless one was ill or had another legitimate excuse. The parishioners of Thones received the same threat for their lack of participation on holy days. Diocesan officials believed that attending services in the parish church was necessary for salvation, and they wanted all their flock to be present and accounted for.

Beyond attending church services, the laity were to abstain from certain activities on Sunday and feast days. Secular business was not to be carried out on holy days or on church property. In the parish of Jarsy, the bishop ordered the sergeants not to “execute any letters” on holy days on pain of excommunication. François de Sales also warned the parish of Arbusigny that if they sold anything in the church that they risked a ten livres fine. Jean-François de Sales enjoined the parishioners of Morzine during his visit in August 1624 “not to hold council in the church nor make any assemblies there.” The syndics and other town officials in the parish of Thones were ordered not to hold meetings or conduct town business during times of worship, and the bishop enjoined the laity to stop holding their markets in the cemetery, selling their goods, and frequenting

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148 Protestants considered this the fourth commandment.
149 Visites, 2: 215, 346, 495, 692.
150 Visites, 2: 51.
taverns on Sundays and feast days. The parish of Thones, at least in the view of the diocesan officials, did not keep holy days or show the proper reverence to sacred sites.

While it occurred in only a small number of the total visits, frequenting taverns on holy days was an offense the bishops tried to stop. In the visit to Craz in August 1581 Bishop Claude de Granier forbid the parishioners from going to taverns during church offices. During the tour of the parishes of the duchy of Chablais in 1617 two of the four threats of excommunication concerned taverns. The visitor Jean-François de Blonay reprimanded the parishes of Feternes and Larringe about eating and drinking during divine services. In Larringe husband and wife tavern owners were dubbed "public sinners" because she had a "bad reputation" and he "gets drunk very often." The official ordered the couple to not make their refreshments available during church services on pain of excommunication. Obviously the visitor realized that it was easier to control the laity on this matter if the temptation was not there in the first place.

The bishops wanted the parishioners to show proper reverence toward all church properties, not just the sanctuary and chapels. We see a conflict between religious exigencies and the prosaic demands of agriculture because parishioners appear to have taken a more pragmatic view of some parish property. The visitation reports made by Claude de Granier, though often brief, did contain orders forbidding villagers from grazing their animals in the cemetery. The parishioners of Craz were enjoined not to

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151 ADHS, 2M180, Folio 126.
152 Visites, 2: 346, 692.
153 AD HS, 2M175, Folios 178-79.
154 Visites, 1: 303, 310.
155 ADHS, 2M175, La Gieta Folio 46, Bellecombe Folio 46, Ugone Folio 48, Priory of Vieu Folio 52, Craz Folios 178-179.
walk through the cemetery during divine services by both Claude de Granier and François de Sales. In the visit to the parish of Les Clefs in October 1607, the injunctions included an account of a cemetery with forty bodies where people kept removing a cross and sowing seeds of some sort. François de Sales stated that this was “not suitable” and ordered the parish to replace the cross. In addition the bishop threatened the parish with a fifty livres fine if the area was planted again, and reminded them that they must keep the cemetery as a place of rest for the bodies of the deceased. Even the religious at the priory of Sillingy received a reprimand from the bishop for grazing their animals on the grounds of the priory and in the cemetery. The injunctions for the visit to the parish of La Côte d’Hyot in October 1606 include a prohibition from sleeping or storing the crops in the church during the grape harvest. The promised penalty if the practice continued was a ten livres fine and confiscation of the harvest. It is unclear whether the people used the church out of convenience or in hope that God would favor their harvest. Either way, the parishioners again confounded agriculture with clerical enterprises of the sacred.

It was difficult to clear even a tiny plot of land in this rugged mountainous area and the need for cultivation imposed practices that religious authorities could not accept. The temptation to use the space set aside for sacred purposes for agriculture must have been high.

Survival in this Alpine region depended on producing healthy crops and animals. It is not surprising that parishioners would turn to the church for aid in this matter. In the

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156 ADHS, 2MI75, Folios 178-179; Visites 2: 228.
157 Visites 2: 196.
158 Visites, 2: 643.
159 Visites 2: 116.
parishes of Corbonod and Craz, François de Sales reprimanded the parishioners for offering the tether of their livestock on saints' days. In Corbonod, the people venerated Saint Blaise for the preservation of their animals. According to the visit account, "They have the custom of drinking sacred wine in this place and of offering the cord of the livestock." In Craz the parishioners offered the tether on the day of Saint Hilaire. The bishop called the devotional act in both places "indecent" and prohibited the practice.\(^{160}\) Most likely this was an old practice that came to the attention of the bishop, but there was no mention of the practice in the visits to the two parishes in 1581.\(^{161}\) Paul Sébillot asserted that rural people of France often viewed their animals almost as part of the family, and it was common for people to call on saints for the prosperity and health of their livestock.\(^{162}\)

- In the process of parish reform the bishops tried to carve out space to be used exclusively for sacred purposes. Yet even they sent mixed signals. Ultimately, reform had limits because images, saints, and processions remained central to Catholic devotion even though the practices were the source of conflicting views of the sacred. The bishops acknowledged that the agricultural cycle was central to the lives of the laity and gave people permission to work on holy days during planting and harvesting seasons. The accounts of François de Sale's visits to the parishes of Domancy and Saint-Nicolas de Veroce mentioned that the curé had the authority to tend their crops on holy days during

\(^{160}\) *Visites*, 2: 216, 228, "le lien du bétail."
\(^{161}\) ADHS, 2MI75, Folios 146-147, 178-179.
planting and harvesting. For the parishes of Sallanches and Saint Gervais the power for deciding who could work during the crucial periods of cultivation was in the hands of the canons from the College of Sallanches. De Sales reminded the canons that the decision should be based on urgency. The parish of Sallanches could not be released from religious services on the day of St. Sebastian and the town of Sallanches was required to observe the day of St. Nicholas. At the urging of some of his parishioners the curé of Vacheresse established a shrine to St. Bernard of Menthon in an attempt to heal the sick cows of the area. Bishop François de Sales told the parish they could indeed hold services at the shrine, located on a hillside far from the parish church, if they properly decorated the chapel and found an appropriate time for services that did not take the curé away from mass at the main church. The diocese tried to balance obligation to the church with the realities of eking out a living in the harsh environment.

A few incidences emerge within the accounts from the duchy of Chablais from the second decade of the seventeenth century that could be taken as attempts to control "popular customs." In the account of the visit to St. Gingolph the visitor de Blonay inquired about superstitions in daily devotions and claims of miraculous events. He was most likely following up on a previous report or rumor. The priest was told to exhort the offenders in the teachings of the church and remind them that miracles only came from God. In the account of the 1617 visitation of Biot, an entry stated that the people of the village had a tendency to turn to faith healers despite the warnings of their curé. A

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woman of Monthey and one from Megevette were mentioned as the ones who had performed the superstitious acts. The woman of Monthey was mentioned again in the visit of Novel in connection with an offering to St. Pancrace and again in the bishop's comments concerning the Morzine visitation. The bishop noted that the curé reported the woman and wanted her to be "discouraged" from her actions. No further mention was made of her or of any further reprimands even though she appeared in parishes throughout the region, and no reference to heresy or witchcraft was present in any of the accounts concerning this woman. While diocesan officials certainly did not approve of "superstitious" activities, they did not take aggressive actions against the offenders and left the matters to be resolved by the parish priests.

Visitors in rare instances addressed complaints about the laity's behavior long considered immoral by the Catholic Church. In Bonnevaux the charges made against the laity in the visitation report include a woman accused of adultery, a "bastard" possessed by a devil who forced himself on innocent women, an unwed mother who refused to name her baby's father, and parishioners who gambled, played cards, and blasphemed. The bishop ordered the woman accused of adultery to return to her husband since he was willing to take her back. These people committed acts which violated behavior norms long recognized by the Catholic Church, the local parish, and the community in general.

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166 See Alban Butler, The Lives of The Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints, ed. Bernard Kelly (Virtue & Co. Ltd., 1936), 502; Butler listed a Saint Pancras who was a teenage boy who was martyred under Diocletian in the fourth century.
167 Visites, 1:266, 332, 342.
These types of problems rarely made it into visitation accounts because most communities probably resolved them without outside interference. Someone in Bonnevaux felt the need to involve the visitor in the village’s problems.

Nowhere are the efforts to revitalize Catholicism more evident than in the reformers’ interaction with parishioners. The bishops surely envisioned gaining oversight over all aspects of parish life including the properties, participation in the sacraments, and lay devotional activities. They introduced the catechism, built confessionals, and ordered reparations all in an attempt to create communities that revolved around a clearly defined parish. The bishops encouraged lay devotion through chapels, confraternities, and processions but they wanted it led by the clergy. The reformers hoped the laity’s ideas of sacred and profane would come to mirror their own, but parishioners had definite ideas about the role of the divine in their lives. The laity viewed their parish church as their own and wanted it to meet their spiritual needs as they perceived them, not as the needs ordained by the bishop.
Parish
1. Abondance  Blessed Sacrament
2. Chapel Abondance  Blessed Sacrament
3. Allion  Holy Rosary
4. Annemasse  Saint Sebastien
5. Annecy  Saint Barbe
               Saint Sebastian
               Holy Cross
               Holy Rosary
6. Annecy le Vieux  Holy Spirit
7. Anthy  Holy Rosary
8. Araches  Notre Dame
9. Arith  Holy Spirit converted to Blessed Sacrament
10. Armoy  Holy Rosary
11. Ayse  Holy Rosary
12. La Balme de Thuy  Holy Rosary
13. Bellecombe  Holy Spirit (inactive)
               Holy Rosary
14. Beon (F)  Holy Spirit
15. Boegeve  Blessed Sacrament
16. Biot  Blessed Sacrament (newly erected)
17. Boege  Holy Spirit (Penitents)
18. Bonne  Blessed Sacrament
               Holy Rosary
19. Cernex  Holy Rosary
20. Ceyserieu (F)  Notre Dame
               Blessed Sacrament—united to Holy Spirit chapel
21. Chamonix  Holy Rosary
22. Chatelard  Holy Spirit
23. Chatillon-sur-Cluse  Holy Rosary
24. Chemilieu (F)  Holy Rosary
F — French parish

Table 6.2: Confraternities Mentioned in the Visitations

continued

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1Taken from the visitation accounts of the three bishops except where noted; Visites: ADHS, 2M175, 2M180, 2M181, 2M182, 2M183.
| 25. Chevrier   | Holy Spirit (inactive)       |
| 26. La Clusaz  | Holy Rosary                  |
| 27. Cluses     | Notre Dame                   |
| 28. Le Clez    | Saint Eloi                   |
| 29. Combloux   | Saint Crespin                |
| 30. Contamine  | Holy Rosary                  |
| 31. Cordon     | Notre Dame                   |
| 32. Cressin    | Holy Rosary                  |
| 33. Cruseilles | Holy Rosary                  |
| 34. Culoz (F)  | Holy Spirit                  |
| 35. Domancy    | Holy Rosary                  |
| 36. Doussard   | Holy Rosary                  |
| 37. Ecole      | Holy Spirit                  |
|               | Saint Peter                  |
|               | Holy Rosary                  |
|               | Blessed Sacrament            |
| 38. Evian     | Blessed Sacrament            |
|               | Saint Nicholas               |
|               | Saint André(Batteliers)      |
|               | Saint Joseph                 |
| 39. Faverges  | Holy Rosary                  |
|               | Blessed Sacrament            |
|               | Saint Anne                   |
|               | White Penitents              |
| 40. Feternes (Feternaz) | Holy Rosary                  |
|               | Blessed Sacrament            |
| 41. Fillinge  | Holy Rosary                  |
| 42. Fitignieu (F) | Holy Rosary                  |
| 43. Fleyrier   | Blessed Sacrament            |
| 44. La Giettaz | Holy Spirit                  |
| 45. Gresy sur Aix (parish) | Blessed Sacrament         |
| 46. Gresy sur Aix (priory) | Black Penitents joined with St. Mary of Rome |
| 47. Hautville (F) | Notre Dame                  |
| 48. Hottones (F) | Holy Rosary                  |

continued
Table 6.2

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<td>49. Jarsy</td>
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<td>50. Larringe</td>
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<td>51. Lavours (F)</td>
<td>Holy Spirit</td>
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<tr>
<td>52. Lugrin</td>
<td>Holy Spirit</td>
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<tr>
<td>53. Lullin</td>
<td>Holy Spirit — no services in 30 years</td>
<td>Holy Rosary</td>
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<td>54. Mareche</td>
<td>Holy Spirit — water ruined most income</td>
<td>Holy Rosary</td>
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<td>55. Margincel</td>
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<td>57. Megevette</td>
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<td>Holy Spirit (est. 1498)</td>
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<td>Holy Rosary (est. 1619)</td>
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<td>60. Passy</td>
<td>Holy Spirit</td>
<td>St. Sebastian</td>
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<td>61. Petit-Bornand</td>
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<td>62. Pringy</td>
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<td>63. Rumilly</td>
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<td>64. Saint Felix</td>
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<td>68. Saint Laurent</td>
<td>Holy Rosary</td>
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<td>69. Saint Maurice of Thone</td>
<td>Holy Spirit</td>
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<td>73. Serraval</td>
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<td>74. Seyssel (F)</td>
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<td>La Thouviere of Evian</td>
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<td>Notre Dame</td>
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<td>Vieu pres Faverges</td>
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CONCLUSION

Religious reform was a complicated and multi-faceted process. At the level of the parish, neither laity nor clergy blindly accepted new rules or practices imposed from above. Rather any attempts to implement change in local religion were met with inquiry, resistance and negotiation. Whether the bishops of Geneva-Annecy tried to convert Protestants, to restore parish chapels, to reform a monastery, or to introduce the catechism, they faced populations who questioned and challenged their actions. Claude de Granier, François de Sales, and Jean-François de Sales all attempted to introduce measures they viewed as improvements to the religious life of their diocese. By the 1580s diocesan officials were pursuing policies of reform within the parishes including closer scrutiny of priests and their duties, repairs to church structures, and the purchase of new ceremonial linens. By the 1590s the preaching orders of the Jesuits and Capuchins had joined forces with diocesan and government officials in a missionary effort to win back those in the duchy of Chablais who had embraced Protestantism. In the first decades of the seventeenth century the church officials expanded the diocese’s Counter Reformation measures into the pays de Gex. The Catholic populations saw efforts to modify dramatically the behavior of the parish priests, monks and canons and to introduce new practices to the laity including confraternities and the confessional, yet few of the reform goals were achieved completely.

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The conversion of Protestants who lived within the diocese was the most difficult feat the clerical leaders faced, but the project was also of paramount importance to the Catholic clergy. After all, in the bishops’ eyes, the Protestants faced certain damnation if they did not return to the Catholic Church. The Counter Reformation was so intertwined with the secular matters of the region that the clergy could make no moves towards the Protestant populations without first seeking the approval and support of secular authority. The property in the Protestant regions that had belonged to the Catholic Church had fallen into the hands of others who were not willing to give it back without a fight. Despite the obstacles, the clergy of Geneva-Annecy with the support of Capuchin and Jesuit missionaries vigorously pursued the reestablishment of Catholic parishes in the Protestants areas. The missionaries adeptly used the rituals, visual images, and evocative services of Catholicism to appeal to the inhabitants of the duchy of Chablais and contrast their faith with the Protestants. This process also led the Catholics to define themselves apart from the Protestants within a community. Yet the cooperation of the rulers of Savoy and France with the bishops of Geneva-Annecy varied greatly and the secular rulers were willing to undermine the projects of the Catholic Church to further their goals of state. Duke Charles-Emmanuel I spent much of his reign trying to regain his patrimony from Swiss Protestant cities and France and at times the goal of the Catholic leaders to end Protestantism within the boundaries of the diocese did not coincide with the duke’s plans. Only when the duke stepped forward to publicly participate at the Forty Hours Celebration of Thonon and subsequently enacted legislation to prohibit the Protestants’ participation in public life did Catholics gain the upper hand in bringing the Protestants of Chablais into their fold. The combined pressure of preaching by the missionaries, lavish
public devotions, and oppressive legislation by the duke had produced the desired results for the Catholics. François de Sales’ visits to the parishes in the duchy of Chablais in 1606 reveal that the Protestant presence had all but disappeared.

The French Protestants were not so malleable since the Edict of Nantes gave them the right to worship and maintain their property in the pays de Gex. The monarchy of France was unwilling to allow Catholic clergy to do anything that might undermine the fragile peace that had been achieved after the wars of religion. The French Huguenots had their own representatives with access to the king and were able to challenge any moves made against them by the Catholic leaders of the diocese. Diocesan leaders faced resistance from Protestants and fellow Catholics in their efforts to regain ecclesiastical properties in the Gex region. Without the active and public support of the secular rulers and the force of legislation the Counter Reformation made little progress. François de Sales spent his entire tenure as bishop trying to make some headway among the Protestants of Gex, but his efforts bore little fruit of either converts or revenue. In the last few years of his episcopate de Sales expended his energy coping with a disgruntled and demoralized clergy in Gex. Protestantism remained entrenched in the region and no actions of church or state moved many of the inhabitants to return to Catholicism.

The bishops never possessed the sense of urgency about reforming Catholic parishes as they did about converting Protestants. Diocesan leaders made progress in the reform of the existing Catholics yet not to the extent that the framers of Trent envisioned. It was not feasible to visit parishes and monasteries frequently enough to offer the oversight necessary to achieve the goals issued at Trent. Without cooperation at the local level, the diocese lacked the manpower to provide the supervision essential to suppress
practices deemed inappropriate. The rugged geography and harsh environment made regular visitation difficult and even dangerous during portions of the year. Allyson Poska found similar problems in the Spanish diocese of Ourense.\(^1\) External factors over which the bishops had little control, such as war, disease, and political policies, also hindered the churchmen's ability to inspect their parishes on a regular basis. The Council did not take into account the geographic and situational restrictions of individual dioceses when it called for a tour of a diocese to be completed at least every two years.\(^2\) Only the parishes near Geneva received more than one visit in a decade. A single tour of the diocese was all the bishops of Geneva-Annecy could manage.

While the injunctions issued against parishioners and clergy reveal a desire by the bishops to introduce a full range of new practices and regulations, the willingness to take punitive action was not as strong. The visitors issued injunctions regularly but there is little evidence that the threats of fines and excommunication were ever carried out. Following up on problems reported in previous parish visits was made more difficult when twenty-five years elapsed between appearances by the bishop. The poverty of both the clerical and lay inhabitants of Geneva-Annecy made the collection of revenues and fines difficult if not impossible. The bishops spent much of their time preoccupied with the economic problems of the region so they were certainly aware of the scarcity of funds at all levels of society available for parish improvements.

Parish priests were the first among those who remained loyal to Rome to find themselves under the intense scrutiny of the reforming bishops. Catholic readers

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\(^1\)Poska, 160.

\(^2\)Trent, Twenty-fourth session, 193.
envisioned the local priest as the main purveyor of doctrine and practice to the laity. Claude de Granier inquired into the religious services required of the curé when he made his cursory tour of the parishes, and he began the painstaking process of restoring the chapels to their former splendor which included enforcing the clergy's obligations. He instituted diocesan synods at which he issued proclamations on doctrine and practice that parish priests were to carry back to their villages. François de Sales continued these practices but placed even more duties on the parish priests requiring them to teach the catechism in their churches. De Sales also instituted the examination of clerical candidates. Jean-François de Sales expected the curé to obtain and maintain all the physical objects needed for the performance of the sacraments with the proper reverence. The diocese did not have the resources to establish a seminary, but through the above measures the bishops were able at least to require priests to live in their parish and abandon their concubines. Under the leadership of three reforming bishops, the parish priests of Geneva-Annecy became better educated, more competent in their duties, and subject to more oversight, yet they remained part of the communities where they lived and worked.

The regular clergy were the most successful at resisting unwanted change to their lifestyle. Many of the monasteries of Geneva-Annecy had been free of outside intervention for centuries and were comfortable with their interpretation of their Rules, rife with customaries and exemptions. When the bishops tried to impose new regulations, monks and canons fought long and hard to prevent the disruption of their lives, and they frequently had the education and connections in the secular world to put forth a strong defense. The bishops introduced stricter orders into a handful of houses that they had
deemed lax only after overcoming great resistance that came to involve papal and secular leaders. Yet these efforts caused disruptions within the larger community that perhaps the bishops did not foresee. Sometimes the laity did not like the introduction of a new religious order because it disturbed existing relationships within a parish. Ultimately, the diocese preferred the establishment of the religious orders like the Jesuits and the Capuchins that had emerged from the reform movement leading up to Trent rather than coping with the problems of the old orders.

Flexibility remained in the enforcement and implementation of new religious observances, and few oppressive measures were used to halt existing rituals. The visitors may have entered each parish with preconceived ideas of what needed to be done, but when they faced the communities of clergy and laity, the church officials had to judge each situation individually. The laity negotiated the allocation of revenues, the proper day for processions, and even the time of day for mass. If a parish placed a high value on a local custom such as a procession associated with a Holy Spirit confraternity, diocesan officials faced an uphill battle in trying to end or modify the practice. Poska asserts that reformers found it very difficult to overcome “culturally distinct local religions” that were deeply rooted in society.3 Even after repeated injunctions and threats of excommunication, the laity continue to cling to valued local concepts of sacredness.

If the goal of the reformers after the Council of Trent was to suppress local religious practices and make Catholicism uniform, then the parishes of Geneva-Annecy were atypical. The decrees of Trent, however, were the ideals for reform. Trent in practice, as revealed in the implementation of reform in Geneva-Annecy, faced obstacles
that made the ideals impossible to achieve. Bishops readily adapted reform measures to fit the unique situations of their dioceses in hopes of meeting some of the goals established by Trent. For the most part diocesan leaders of Geneva-Annecy were more concerned with maintaining Catholicism in the face of a Protestant threat than with rigorously regulating it. The local priest appears still to have played a vital role in the community, frequently appealing to the bishop on behalf of his parishioners to protect valued local practices. Very often parishioners embraced new practices such as rosary devotions that enriched their spiritual lives, and successfully resisted changes that did not. As of the 1630s local support for the catechism by the priests and parishioners was far from unanimous, few confessionals had been built, and Holy Spirit confraternities continued. A rich and varied spiritual life existed that included all levels of a community.

Perhaps the three bishops in this study were more tolerant of local practices deviating from church ideals than bishops in the later seventeenth century when secular authority was encroaching on all aspects of society, including religious practices. François de Sales had the reputation for being gentle and he encouraged religious expression by the laity, especially women. Philip Hoffman asserts that de Sales was more accepting of certain popular practices than other reformers.¹ Yet de Sales went to great lengths to introduce new measures to the laity and to reorder lax religious houses. He strongly supported secular authority’s use of political and economic pressure on the Protestant populations when preaching had failed to convert them. Leaders within the Catholic Church contemporary to de Sales acknowledged him as one of the most

³Poska, 160.
⁴Hoffman, 90.
important figures of the Counter Reformation in France. The failure of certain reform measures was not from a lack of effort on the part of the bishops.

Specific circumstances including location, confessional composition, and shifting boundaries that shaped reform in the diocese may not have been present in other jurisdictions, but the situation in Geneva-Annecy still provides important insight into the religiosity of the early modern world. Catholic reformers remained more concerned with practice than with doctrine among the laity, a fact that distinguished them from their Protestant counterparts. While the clergy remained committed to the decrees of Trent the complex political environment forced the reformers to compromise and alter their programs and goals of reform. Further research will better illuminate how successful diocesan officials were in remaking parish life and how typical the process of reform was in Geneva-Annecy. All dioceses faced particular local obstacles. Perhaps a comparison of regional studies throughout the Catholic world could offer comprehensive interpretations about the impact of Tridentine reforms on early modern Catholicism. Regional studies like this one of the diocese of Geneva-Annecy continue to reveal that local religion and politics exerted more influence on reform than did national policy or the pope.
APPENDIX A

MAPS OF THE SAVOY
Figure 1: Religious Orders of the Counter Reformation. From *l’Atlas historique français. Savoie.*
Figure 2: Protestant areas before 1783. From *l'Atlas historique français. Savoie.*
Figure 3: Savoyard Road and the Pays de Gex. From l'Atlas historique français. Savoie.
Figure 4: The divisions of the state of Savoy. From *l'Atlas historique français. Savoie*.
Figure 5: Region represented in the Senate of the Savoy. From *l'Atlas historique français. Savoie*. 

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