

# Desegregating Dixie: The Catholic Church in the South and Desegregation, 1945-1992

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Podcast with **Mark Newman** (23 March 2022).

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Transcribed by **Allison Isidore**

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## KEYWORDS

Desegregation, Segregation, Catholic Church, African American Catholics, Bishops

### **Allison Isidore (AI) 00:01**

Hello everybody and welcome to [New Books in Catholic Studies](#), a podcast channel on the [New Books Network](#). This channel and episode were created in collaboration with the [American Catholic Historical Association](#), a conference of scholars, archivists and teachers of Catholic Studies. My name is Allison Isidore, and I'm a host of the channel. Today we'll be talking to [Mark Newman](#), a historian in at the University of Edinburgh. Mark is the author of [Desegregating Dixie: The Catholic Church in the South and Desegregation 1945-1992](#), published by University Press of Mississippi in 2018. *Desegregation Dixie* is the winner of the [2020 American Studies Network Book Prize from the European Association of American Studies](#). In this thoroughly researched book, Mark examines the Catholic Church in the American South during the 20th century, taking a careful look at its relationship and involvement in the civil rights movement. This volume adds to the history of Catholic involvement in the freedom struggle, demonstrating how the Church variously resisted, assisted and adapted to racial tensions. Researching diocesan archives from Virginia to Texas, Mark illustrates complicated relationships that both white and black Catholics had with the rest of the South. Mark, welcome to the show.

### **Mark Newman (MN) 01:37**

Thank you very much.

**AI 01:38**

I was you know, wondering, you can just start the interview by telling us a bit about yourself.

**MN 01:43**

Okay, as you mentioned, University of Edinburgh, which I've taught it for nearly 18 years now. I did my PhD in Mississippi. So, if somebody is wondering where I'm from, I'm from England. But I teach in Scotland, and I studied in America.

**AI 01:59**

So, before we dive into *Desegregating Dixie*, I was wondering if you can tell us you know, how you came to this particular project? What made you want to focus on the Catholic Church and desegregation in the American South?

**MN 02:15**

Well, the [first book](#) I wrote was actually on Southern Baptists and desegregation. And I thought I was kind of done with that. And I was researching what became a [next book](#) on the Delta Ministry, which is a national council approach — a National Council of Churches project in Mississippi; that was in the early 1960s, 1964. And I kept finding references to Catholicism when I was looking at that. I didn't know the Catholic Church in Mississippi, the diocese, and that's in Jackson act as a conduit for federal money for a truck job training program aimed at the poor, most of whom were African American. And that surprised me, I wasn't expecting that in Mississippi. And as I went through this, I found more and more about what was happening in that state. So, I thought, well, if things are happening, there is surely going to be happening other states as well. So, I did [an article](#) about Mississippi specifically. And then I discovered through that about the [National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice](#). And when I discover that, that opened up a whole new field to me, I really didn't know about. And the archives are very thorough. One of the things as I'm sure, you know about Catholicism is that Catholics keep very good records. And that kind of really open things out. There are a lot of letters going back and forth between the National Council. And also, a sudden field services started in 1961, to work with a different diocese, and with Catholic interracial councils. So, there are fair there was a whole network of Catholic interracial councils and Catholics involved in this area. And of course, that made me look at the bishops to look at the nature of having How does a Church that is universal, have separate churches for African Americans and whites and separate schools in much of the South, and also to some extent outside of the region as well, which is another kind of facet of it. So, I really found a whole wealth to look at, and I realized this is going to take some time to do but I thought be worthwhile to do it.

**AI 04:16**

Yeah. And I think, as I mentioned, in, describing your book, it really is a volume on Catholicism in the South, specifically the institution, right. And so, I was wondering if you talk about the breakdown of your book, you have it in two sections, right. The first five chapters are looking at, you know, the history, defense and sociology of segregation in the South and its relationship with Catholicism. The latter half is examining the efforts to desegregate the South and the subsequent results of it. Why didn't you want to structure your book in this way?

**MN 04:55**

Yeah, it's interesting. You You're quite right to say that it is institutional. That's really about half the book also is institutional and the other half was more thematic. The reason for that was, first of all, there hadn't been an institutional study across the south, the only word had been done was really in the mid 1960s. And that was a national attempt. That was [The Segregated Covenant](#) by William Osborne. So, I realized that I couldn't speak — expect people to have a prior knowledge of this, I needed to explain the kind of nuts and bolts of how desegregation happened. What did a bishop say? How did they actually follow up on the pronouncements that they made? And also meant looking at the Catholic Church as a national body as well, because it also issued statements from the bishops occasionally on race every year on issues more generally. So, I needed to look at the institution. By looking at that I don't think it really give any sense of the experience of for many Catholics without breaking it down to themes. And that's why I have themes on Catholics who supported segregation and how they sought to justify their views. A chapter about progressive status, those who challenge segregation and put forward integrationist vision. And also looking at African Americans, after all, they were the ones being segregated, in effect to find out insofar as they could about African American perspectives. So, to try and get a picture that was not solely about the institution, or solely about particular individuals, I think I needed those two approaches and try and bring them together in the book.

**AI 06:34**

Yeah, and I think you do really well, in breaking down that there's this institutional aspect, but there's also the personal level that's going on. And so, I want to start by talking a little bit about the doctrine that was frequently comes up in the book, because of its impact in relationship with racial equality in the US Catholic Church, and that's the [Mystical Body of Christ](#). Could you talk or explain to our listeners who don't know what this is? Why do these bishops, Archbishops priests and nuns keep referring to this doctrine when discussing desegregation?

**MN 07:17**

Yes, it's an interesting coming together, I think. Got a [zeitgeist](#) to really these ideas were in train before the service movement itself started to develop. The Mystical Body of Christ in essence, is the idea that the Catholic Church is effectively Christ's body on Earth. So, all those who are part of the Catholic Church are part of Christ's body. The Catholic Church, of course, wants all people to be Catholic, and therefore everybody else is potentially a member of that church. The way integration is approached this was to say that there could be no divide in Christ physical body, that everybody is part of the church, and the injustice is done to one member of the church is effectively done to Christ and that is Christ's body. Integration is adapted that quite readily to the idea that you cannot segregate people, there will not be segregation in heaven, there should not be segregation on Earth, and it could not be segregation in Christ body. The mystical doctrine of Christ goes back to [St. Paul](#). So, if it gets important Corinthians, he explains that idea, as this says effectively, although we have men, women, at this time here is writing slaves, bondsman as he puts it, everybody is part of the Mystical Body, and there can be no boundaries within that body.

**MN 08:35**

So, I think we can see quite readily why integrationist would apply that to the Catholic situation. And this was an idea that was endorsed by [Pope Pius XI](#). And by a successor [Pius XII](#), in 1943, in an [encyclical](#) specifically entitled The Mystical Body. So that meant there was — the Vatican itself was put its seal of approval on that idea. And it began to be disseminated more through seminaries, to bishops and priests being trained in those seminaries. And with the growth of Catholic interracial councils, they often focus their attention on the Mystical Body. What I found was quite often, whether we're talking about bishops, or we're talking about clergy, or about Catholic interracial councils, was that adherents of integration specifically cited the Mystical Body in justification, alongside saying the Catholic Church by its very nature is to be universal. And it should be a church that is for justice, and charity and understanding and all of those things should create a church that has no boundaries or barriers within it based on race.

**AI 09:49**

Yeah, and when talking about integrationists using the mystical Body of Christ doctrine, you also have some Catholics — specifically lay Catholics — using biblical justification in support of segregation. And I thought that was really interesting section because, you know, many books I've read on Catholicism or really the civil rights movement looks at segregationist — Protestant segregationist using that justification for segregation. So, it's interesting seeing a Catholic use this type of justification. So, could you talk a bit about that, and what kind of pushback these people are getting from both inside or outside of the church?

**MN 10:36**

When I looked at the biblical segregationists, most of them simply say that God created separate races, therefore, we should not infringe on that in any way. Not many of them specifically cite biblical passages. So, if you compared with some Baptists where they were quite readily with cite, biblical passages. And I think that's part of the reflection of practical Southern Baptist still it was they supposedly interpret the Bible for themselves. While as for Catholicism the doctrine itself, everything really arises from Rome as if the final kind of arbitrary of that. However, there were Catholics who did try and cite Biblical verses in support. And they vary quite a lot. There's not a great deal of consistency among them. They're very much a player in their own authority, I think with those. But to give one example, that comes up on several occasions was Acts 17:26 the idea that God created the earth and it's separated people by their habitations, and they tried to suggest that was some justification for segregation. Another aspect was to say that most examples I should serve from the Old Testament — that one was from the new, but mostly from the old. In the Old Testament, they try and argue the Israelites refused to be segregated from other people, and therefore God favored segregation.

**MN 11:55**

But one extreme example of this was lay one called Una Gallots in Louisiana. And she argued that the Israelites were white. And therefore, that shows that God wanted whites to be segregated for other races, he assumed other races were other tribes. She also claimed the 10 commandments, was a justification for segregation. And as many times as I read her work, I still puzzled to quite understand how she got to that formulation. She claimed that biblical scholars agreed with her, but she was never able to actually present any examples of anybody who actually did. There are other examples where the verses are cited, which again, when you look at them don't even remotely connect with the idea of race or nation. With Southern Baptist, they tend to interpret nation in the Bible has meaning race, but quite often, where Catholics they will cite verses that are vaguely connected with slavery, but actually had no connection with segregation. There is one other example that was quite a common trope among Protestants and among some of the Catholics, there is the idea of the [Curse of Ham](#). Supposedly, Noah had cursed his son Ham with blackness according to segregationists. Of course, this is to look at the biblical account that makes no sense whatsoever. I mean, the idea of blackness does not occur there at all. But this was quite a popular trope. What I found was those Catholics who tend to select Biblical verses quite often were themselves converts from Protestant denominations. And I suspect that to why they tended to lean to try and find versus more than many of the Catholics who were cradle Catholics. It's not an absolute is the word cradle Catholics who also made his arguments, but it does seem stronger among those who were converts.

**AI 13:48**

Yeah, and now it's such an interesting aspect to see that breakdown there. But this leads me into, my next question where, when talking about the institution of the Church. I was wondering if you talk about how the Catholic response to segregation, desegregation in the South differed from the Catholic response to desegregation and segregation in the North. What is the difference you saw when you compare them to other major denominations in the South and the rest of the nation?

**MN 14:22**

Well, it's a big question. And a lot depends on where you choose to look. So, one of the things I think we have to do with this is to consider different parts of the church, whether it's all about Protestants or Catholics. So, do we look at the statements that are made by denominational bodies if they meet as a region [Southern Baptist Convention](#)? If there are national such as the [Catholic Bishops meeting](#) every year? Do we look at a region that's to say if we're looking at Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, there will be conferences, state conferences state assemblies. If we look at Catholics, of course we look at the bishops. So, do we look at the official proclamations by different representatives of the church, whether at the national, regional or state or local level? Or do we look more at the laity and the priests. And I attempt to do all of those, which is rather ambitious, but I attempt to do this. And I think we can see some trends. First of all, denominations that are predominantly northern tend to speak out or raise earlier than those denominations which are predominantly southern. And now we're talking a course here about denominations that are predominately white or entirely white, when I'm talking about these, obviously, African American denominations will be different. So, we find predominately white denominations, which are mostly north intense speak out earlier, and more far reaching what they say. And this begins in late 1940s, into the 1950s. That doesn't mean that Southern based, denominations and bishops for Catholics don't speak out either. We do find that happening.

**MN 16:08**

To break this down a little bit more when we look at South, if we take the South to be the [old 11 Confederate states](#), and I entirely appreciate the definition of the South is open to discussion and others may look at this differently. But if we take the 11 as a starting point, then there tends to be a difference between the [Deep South](#) and the Upper South, or if you prefer the peripheral South. So, the seven states outside the deep south tend to be different, how are they different, tends to be the case that peripheral South addresses race earlier and more far reaching than the Deep South, which is often silence. And that's if we're looking at Protestants and Catholics, that tends to be that pattern. What bring things to the fore is really the [Brown](#) decision, the public-school desegregation decision by the US Supreme Court in 1954. And that really forces religious denominations to take a stand. Their members are looking to them to do that, and they feel they often feel a moral

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obligation to comment in some way. So, we find that the innovations that are predominately North in tend to be more outspoken, they agree with desegregation as a principle that segregation is morally religiously wrong. In the South, the peripheral South, we get some statements, which again agree that segregation is wrong, we have some action by some Catholic bishops to actually act against segregation, before *Brown*, and increasingly after *Brown*. The Deep South tends to be more resistance. Resistance often takes a form of silence initially not commenting on *Brown*. But as we get the rise of massive resistance to public school desegregation in the south, and the second half the 1950s, then increasingly, we find the splits occur even more. So, in the Deep South, the laity try to get their denominations or their bishops not to say anything. They sometimes try in places such as Alabama or Mississippi for some batches to get their state organizations on board for segregation and get statements to that effect. But by and large, we can see that most denominations and whatever level whether it's state or regional or national, will not back segregation at all. And more than anything, they will be against it. And the higher up the chain we go, the more likely they will say they are against it. And this is a course because they are concerned about many of their members, they know are supportive of segregation. So, they are they are cautious quite often the closer they are to the local and state level. Further away they are from that they are more outspoken.

**MN 18:57**

If we look at the laity things a little bit different again. So, I'd say a little bit about that, if I may, if we look, there's an opinion poll done 1956 to look at Protestants, Catholics and Jews across America about the issue of segregation. If we looked at that poll for 1956, then it would seem — this is poll of white people — that there is a real divide between North and South. That for example, Southern Catholics and Protestants say they're more they agree with the idea of desegregation much more than you would find an overwhelmingly against in the South. So that on the surface appears clear cuts. But when we actually look in practice and what happens on the ground, it becomes a different story, which is one reason that when the opinion polls sometimes people say what they think they should say, not necessarily what they would actually do when things come to their doorstep. And that's what we tend to find. So, if we look at example, to the North an illustration of this is there is a lot of resistance among white Catholics in a city such as Detroit, Chicago, to desegregation of churches and schools. And it was quite often the case that there are separate Catholic Churches and schools in the North as well as in the South, not to the same extent, but they were there and it's still a process of trying to break down segregation, as far as the bishops are concerned. So often, it was great white lay resistance in a North desegregation in practice, despite what oppose might tell us otherwise. And if I get an example of [Archbishop Toolen](#) from Mobile, in Alabama, when he was criticizing civil rights demonstrations, most famously to [Selma demonstrations of 1965](#). He was surprised how many letters he got from white

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Catholics outside of South agreeing with him. And some of them being quite vociferous in their support for segregation. He himself didn't expect that, and it does represent a more complicated picture. We can't simply talk about a North South divide when we look at this. And there's a great resistance among Catholic — white Catholics in the North, to segregation as there often is on the ground among white Southerners, too.

**AI 21:20**

And that kind of leads perfectly into my next question when talking about the Church's response to desegregation in the secular front. And so, like you just mentioned, Archbishop Toolen in Montgomery and his response to the Selma march, right. And so, could you talk about the Church's response to the secular desegregation of the South and how that worked within the Church discourse and hierarchy?

**MN 21:51**

If we consider before the *Brown* decision, first of all, then we find that segregation was state law across the south. So effectively to be against segregation, would be to get be against the law. One of the things that or values that informed many Catholic leaders bishops was adherence to law and order, to democracy, and to public education, before the *Brown* decision, all of those things pointed towards a segregated system that was lawful. What *Brown* does, of course, is to say, that public school segregation is unconstitutional. Therefore, the weight of federal law begins to bear down on segregation. Give an example of that it's a [Bishop Adrian](#), who was a bishop of Nashville, it's covered Tennessee, when *Brown* was issued, he said, "Well, that's the law of the land, we have to obey the law." He hadn't spoken out against segregation before. So that starts to put people on the spot. And that becomes more apparent when we get to massive resistance when there was your attempts to prevent school desegregation, public school desegregation.

**MN 22:58**

Most famously perhaps be the [Little Rock incidents in 1957](#). So maybe use as an example here. So, we Little Rock, effectively, the [Governor Orval Faubus](#) blocked disintegration of the schools and [President Eisenhower](#) federalized the National Guard and put in the army to ensure that public school desegregation of Central High School went ahead. The bishops when they were meeting that year had a resolution put forward to them by [John Cronin](#), who was an [Sulpice Father](#), who is part of the [National Catholic Welfare Conference](#). And Cronin's resolution was a condemnation of segregation as religiously wrong and morally wrong. He tried to get the bishops to adopt that resolution, and most of them did not want to address the issue. So that resolution was not put forward and nothing happened. In Little Rock itself religious leaders — white religious leaders came together to sponsor a day of prayer for a little rock out for reconciliation. Effectively, they

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wanted law and order which meant de facto supporting desegregation because that was the law. A year later, Cronin brought back his resolution, and this time the Catholic Bishops adopted the resolution with very little dissent. I think they realized at this point they, they had to speak out as a body. And it was always easier to speak out as a body can speak out as an individual Bishop.

**MN 24:32**

So, it wasn't until 1958 that the Catholic Church if we looked at the bishops as a collective body spoke out against segregation, even though individual bishops had done so. Probably the two examples that come to mind for the South would be [Archbishop Robert Lucey](#) in San Antonio, who spoke out against segregation very early on. He became Archbishop in 1941 and spoke out within months have been appointed and consistently condemned segregation. But he was still a bishop in an archdiocese with separate schools and churches for African Americans. And we might also add de facto for Mexican Americans, Hispanic Americans as well. Another example would be a [Bishop Waters](#) in Raleigh, North Carolina, who began to desegregate parish societies in late 1940s, he came to office in the mid 40s and very soon after started Catholic societies. And it wasn't until the early 50s, he started to consider the idea of churches, and said Churches should not be segregated, but there was not a great implementation. There was one example Newton Grove, where Waters in 1953 came to personally desegregate the Church which we might also talks about. If I part that just a moment is to say that it was until after *Brown* that Waters ordered disagree of Catholic high schools. So really *Brown* is something that forces — increasingly forces bishops to speak out or to consider what they're going to do with the schools themselves. If I summarize this briefly, now, we start to get Catholic school desegregation in the peripheral south in some parts of it, none at all in the Deep South until we get into the 1960s. And massive resistance has a great deal to do with that. We do find people such as Waters and Lucy condemn massive resistance very publicly, most bishops do not. So they're really kind of outliers in this and they are exceptional, but they're important exceptions. Massive resistance led many Catholic bishops to be quiet as it did many Protestant organizations and reputational bodies as well. It goes across the board, I think.

**AI 26:51**

Yeah. And sticking with parochial schools or Catholic schools, specifically, for a minute you hit on it there. *Brown* kind of forces the hand of a lot of the schools in the South to desegregate, but as you just mentioned, also in Catholic schools were in Catholic churches were desegregating prior to *Brown* as well. And so, what kind of tensions you know, you've hit on it a little bit. There was some resistance from within the church from the laity itself. But what kind of tensions to these churches and parochial schools face when they started to desegregate?

**MN 27:29**

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There're a few examples in late 1940s and early 1950s, where [Synod](#) or Bishops say there should be no segregation in churches. The examples of this are San Antonio, Raleigh meaning North Carolina. We also get this perhaps surprisingly, in a diocese of Lafayette and also in Galveston, Houston. To follow on from an earlier point, it's one thing to say there should be no segregation in churches, it's something quite different to see that implemented. And what tends to happen is these proclamations are made but there is no enforcement mechanism. And there is no monitoring. So not a lot happens example of this is that in New Orleans in 1949, the Synod says it should be no segregation in churches, it says it again, in 1950. [Archbishop Joseph Rummel](#) of New Orleans says it himself in the early 1950s says that again in the mid 1950s. The fact that they are saying it over and over again tells you that it's not happening. After all, they would need to keep saying something that was already in train. And there are some Catholic interracial groups who do try and test this. So, in New Orleans, again, there's a group called the Commission on Human Rights, which is an interracial Catholic group. They say, "Well, we're going to go along to the churches as an interracial group and see how well they've been desegregated." And what they find sometimes find is that segregation signs have been removed from the churches. But the ushers still a segregating the parishioners. In the Diocese of Lafayette, there was no change at all.

**MN 29:12**

And when — I should explain perhaps in case I didn't do this before, that the path intends to be in the South that when there aren't many Catholics, there may be one Catholic Church and whites and African Americans would attend that church, but African Americans, almost without exception, are then segregated within the church, either in back pews, or in the on one side of the church. When there are more African Americans and the church release orders are willing to fund them, then an African American church will be set up separately. Once African American churches set up then African Americans who tried to go to white Church, invariably are told, go to your own church meaning you go to the black Catholic Church. So quite often, we don't actually have segregation signs, but people are directed by ushers, either not to go to the church at all if it's a white church, or to sit in a backer or in side pews.

**MN 30:07**

When we look at schools, there are a few elements of incidents of scores being desegregated before *Brown*. Not very many, and you're often talking about one or two African Americans who admitted to white schools. They're examples of this in El Paso and Marfa which is also in that diocese. Interestingly enough in San Antonio, it's actually a central Catholics high school that is run by these seminary, Society of St. Mary, who of their own volition decided to desegregate in 1951 admit a first African American student in 1952. When I looked at the yearbooks for that church for that school, I realized straight away there are quite a lot of Hispanic children already at that

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school. So, it's the African Americans who have been segregated there is a class element to this within the Hispanic community as well and which and diversity between those who are a Texas born Hispanics and those who are migrants from Mexico, immigrants from Mexico, which leases and segregation of the migrants rather than those who are long established in in that locality.

**MN 31:19**

When we try and find response, the way in which and they are invariably the these are white pastors, they're white superintendents of Catholic schools, they tend to interpret desegregation as a success, if there's no incident. So, if there's no public demonstration, if there's no obvious violence or conflict, but what that doesn't tell us is about the experience of African Americans who went to desegregated schools. And that can be quite different example, I don't have examples from the early 1950s, unfortunately. I would say if anybody's listening to this, who has any memories they wish to share, who actually — African Americans who desegregate schools, I would certainly love to hear from them, because there's a lot more to be written and said about this. And I really would welcome any memories before half of that. There have been some interviews done years after the events with some African Americans, this desegregated schools tend to be from the 1950s — the mid 1950s onward, when there was a greater pattern of desegregation, as you might expect. And it's really a mixed bag. One consistent theme is that often African Americans are not invited, invited to social events. So, proms are canceled, dances are canceled. This is great southern white fear among segregation in southern whites of miscegenation, that if whites and African Americans get together, they will then marry and have children and so forth is why the segregation is one of their great concerns. And so that's often their answer social events.

**MN 32:54**

In some cases, there is outright hostility. Other times there is indifference. And sometimes there are interracial friendships as well. So, there is a range of experience. And even people within the same school may have a different experience. So, they're examples of African American in school in Memphis in 1964, who was shunned, he was had food thrown at him and things like this quite a dismal things happen. There are other cases in Nashville so same state, where reception was raised from indifference, but not to outright hostility, and some degrees of friendship. So, it really is a mixed picture. But there's a real difference between looking at what a superintendent of Catholic schools may say to what's happening on the ground. And quite often, a give one more example of this. At a PTA meeting, this is in Houston, African American mothers were invited because their children were parties to segregated schools. And the superintendent said it was very good at the African American parents didn't say anything. And it he said he thought they were comfortable. Whereas of course, I think we'd read that very differently. That doesn't tell us anything about their perspective. And of course, silence does not necessarily mean agreement or

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comfort, you naturally of course, mean discomfort. And so, this is why we really need to know more from African Americans who experiences for themselves. We can't just rely on what superintendents of schools or white teachers tell us.

**AI 34:35**

Yeah, and I think that's such a great segue to my next question. The history discourse about the Civil Rights Movement has been primarily — when looking at religions part in it — focused on Protestantism, you know, Martin Luther King, Jr. But I don't often see a lot of books or articles written about Catholicism involvement in the civil rights movement. And just like you said, we don't see a lot about African American Catholic voices in these stories, these histories. But you know, you're making the argument in the book that African American Catholics were much more involved in the movement than previously thought. So, as we start to wrap things up here, can you talk a bit about what you found when you started looking into that subject and how it counters this previous narrative?

**MN 35:35**

Yeah, I think if we say the Civil Rights Movement often comes to mind Martin Luther King, African American ministers who were a part of the civil rights movement. And of course, they were very important within it, but the civil rights movement was more than those who were in Protestant churches, because the ministers had — African American ministers who were Protestants — had such a an impact, and we have the institutional kind of memory, we had the footage of Selma and so forth. We tend to associate price insurance, African American church with civil rights picture is far more complicated than that, even within various African American denominations. And because we have very few black Catholic clergy, in the 40s 50s, and 60s, then we don't see them in the forefront of civil rights, demonstrations and protests. But what we do find is that African Americans, Catholics are often very much involved in them. And that's one example comes to mind. I was interviewing [Father Thomas Hadden](#), who's African American clergyman, Catholic clergyman, in North Carolina, he was in New Bern in North Carolina. And he started to talk about his work with the NAACP, and with African Americans in his church were involved in civil rights demonstrations and protests there. So, I asked him more about that, because I said, "There's an image that African American Catholics were not involved." And he made he said to me, "Who told you that?" And I had to say, "Well, mostly sociologists told me that, but I want to hear what you can tell because this has presented a whole another side to it."

**MN 37:08**

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And we find is over and over again that because there weren't many black Catholic pastors, we don't find them leading protest. Too often we get people I hadn't who involved the other black clergy, Catholic clergy who are involved to some in Louisiana. There are more examples in North Carolina, I suspect there may be others. If we look at the laity, then Catholic organizations, African American Catholic organizations such as the [Knights of Peter Claver](#), and also if we're looking at the Ladies of Peter Claver, as well as an auxiliary of them, we don't find them leading demonstrations, protesting as specially as Catholics, but we do find members often who were involved in civil rights. So, if we look, most obvious example, if we look at Louisiana — Southern Louisiana, famously is most Catholic part of the South. Then, African Americans are involved in civil rights. They are Catholic, but they're not involved as Catholics. So, they're not sort of protesting as a particular Catholic group or particular Catholic organization. But I did start to find even in New Orleans, St. Augustine High School, which was a black Catholic school. And that became an organizing point for various initiatives and civil rights in the in the early 1960s. Voter Registration, moves to get — outlaw discrimination in housing and employment and so forth. So, there's actually kind of activism that were involved there.

**MN 38:46**

If we look more broadly, there are many Catholics who were involved in South protests who didn't necessarily identify themselves as Catholics. So famously, there was the [Greensboro Sit-In of 1960](#), North Carolina, against segregated lunch counters, and it was for African American men who were students who participated that in those initial protests, one of them was Catholic, but we don't tend to hear about that. If we think about the [Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner murders of 1964](#), in Mississippi, two white civil rights workers, one African American civil rights worker were killed. The two whites were from outside of state [James Chaney](#) was from Mississippi and he was a Catholic, African American Catholic. But again, we don't tend to hear that too much. And examples of even before the [Bus Boycott in Montgomery 1955](#), there were previous instances of the buses before [Rosa Parks](#) was famously arrested and we have the mass protest, or one knows who was involved in earlier incidents with Catholic and that nearly led through a boycott at that point. So, when we start to look at this in more detail, because we don't have cash legs necessarily, as grouped in cattle organizations evolve in civil rights. It doesn't mean that Catholics themselves were not involved or were necessarily less involved. Often, they're very involved. And we find this again and again, closing one final example. [Diane Nash](#), who was part of the [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee](#) was Catholic, but we don't tend to hear about that when people write about Diane Nash's importance in civil rights.

**AI 40:25**

Well, looks like we have time for one last question before we run out of time. So, I just want to ask, what projects are you currently working on? Are there any lingering questions that remain from your work on *Desegregating Dixie* that you plan on pursuing more or that you're working on? Or are you going in a new direction?

**MN 40:47**

Well, I went to a new direction. After writing the *Desegregating Dixie* book, I wrote a [history of black nationalism in America](#). And having done that, I've now gone back to look at Catholics so I kind of took a break away and I've gone back to it again, because there are so much to be written about this. And there's plenty more to be said. What I've been doing more recently is looking at particular diocese, because each experience is different. One diocese is not necessarily saying the same as another, and to be able to look at these stories in more detail, also to try and bring in more of the experience that people had as well as simply your what bishops may tell us, or their most famous kind of examples.

**AI 41:32**

Well, thank you, Mark, for being on the show and talking with us today.

**MN 41:37**

Thank you very much.

**AI 41:38**

This has been *New Books in Catholic Studies*, *New Books Network* podcast.

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