

***Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism* by Michael Printy, published by Cambridge University Press, New York. ISBN 978-0-521-47839-7 (hardback), 2009, Pages 246, Price: US\$ 109.99.**

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Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's". This ought to have settled the matter of the separation of the Church and the State, long ago. However, ever since religion and state became institutionalised in society, in ancient times, the divine was invoked to ensure the security and prosperity of the state, and to seek legitimacy to rule. Thus, when divinity became the pre-eminent claim to a legitimate rule, the state religion emerged. This took a concrete form when Emperor Constantine took upon himself the responsibility of spreading and enforcing Christianity. Saint Justinian the Great (CE 482 - 565) distinguishes between the roles of emperor and the clergy as follows: "the priesthood and the empire are the two greatest gifts which God, in His infinite clemency, has bestowed upon mortals; the former has reference to divine matters, the latter presides over and directs human affairs, and both, proceeding from the same principle, adorn the life of mankind." However, this bonhomie should not be seen as some lasting peace between the emperor and the clergy. The Papal sovereignty was questioned, so is the absolute authority of the emperor contested by the clergy from time to time. This contention between the ruler and the clergy over authority was fully resolved with the emergence of the modern nation-states. The complete separation of the Church and the State came about with the Enlightenment, the American Declaration of Independence and the following French Revolution.

It is widely understood that, both in academic writing as well as common parlance, Enlightenment and Religion, herein Christianity, especially Catholicism, are poles apart. That Enlightenment came about fighting religion and its influence throughout; one of the significant aspects of 'enlightened modernity' was the secularisation of the polity and the public space. However, of late, several scholarly attempts were made to have a relook at the role of religion in Enlightenment – a sort of 'restoring religion to the Enlightenment'.

Michael O' Neill Printy's *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism* is an earnest attempt in this direction, though with many shortcomings, to try to restore religion, herein Catholicism, to Enlightenment in Germany. The book is divided into two parts. The first tries to rethink the relations between the German Catholic Church and the State, whereas the second part deals with the relation between the universal Church and the bourgeois class in Germany during the time of Enlightenment. The book is an outcome of his doctoral thesis done at the department of history at the University

of California, Berkeley. Printy claims this to be the first full account of the German Catholic Enlightenment.

Michael Printy's effort was to establish the existence of a progressive strand of Catholicism in Germany during the Holy Roman Empire of the eighteenth century. This strand, he further argues, had a large degree of autonomy from the Roman Church. The German Catholic intelligentsia, in carving out autonomy of this kind, has rethought the Church, and reconceived its relations with the State and Society. This reform process was undertaken without losing its link with the umbilical cord, the Roman Church. By reconfiguring what it meant to be a Catholic as well as a German, Printy argues, the Catholic intelligentsia contributed to the German Enlightenment project. He tries to ascertain the role played by Catholicism and the Catholic Enlightenment in the development of the modern German national identity. This is the novel contribution of Michael Printy.

The book explores the contours of German Catholicism, through ways of securing legal and institutional autonomy from the universal, Roman church, in conjunction with the state, and by asserting intellectual and moral authority over the broad Catholic population. Printy argues that the Hontheim's treatise, published under the pseudonym Febronius, is the first salvo in the German Catholic Enlightenment. This Febronianism, which is discussed in the second chapter, set the frame for the German Catholic rethinking of the church, through intellectual engagement. The chapter tries to establish, through the contributions of canon lawyers and Catholic historians, the liberty of the German church. The next three chapters elaborate the tumultuous relationship between the Church and the State. It discusses in detail the transformations of both the Church as well as the State under the impact of modernity, in general, and Enlightenment in particular.

The next part of the book closely analyses the reform programme and the people involved in it, especially the role of the Catholic bourgeoisie in shaping the German Catholicism. It also examines how the church was rethought in the public sphere; how the reform of the secular clergy was at the centre of the Enlightenment project; and most importantly how the German Catholics envisioned the church as a potential vehicle for national unity. In short, how the Catholic bourgeoisie, in re-imagining the role of the church in the society, also re-imagined a unified Germany. Thereby, the Catholic bourgeoisie contributed to the creation of the very German identity. This, according to Printy, is the major contribution of the German Catholics to Enlightenment in particular, and to the creation of German identity in general.

However, there are problems: First and foremost, though his intentions are well placed, it appears that he could not do full justice to the self-proclaimed 'first full account of German Catholic Enlightenment'. Secondly, the over use of German language, often

without translation. A large chunk of the footnotes and references are in German. It is almost impossible to read without taking the help of translation. Thirdly, the reading occasionally becomes cumbersome, probably due to translations from medieval German and Latin, besides alignment and other typological errors. The Cambridge University Press could have addressed better some of these issues.

Fourthly,, the concept of Enlightenment itself is complex and contested. Printy simply does not find it necessary to critically understand and conceptually define 'Enlightenment' for his purpose. Generally, enlightenment has been described as the liberating agency of humanity from the religion and its moral obligations. Moreover, there is a plurality of enlightenments, of various denominational kinds, like Anglican, Lutheran, Calvinist, Orthodox, Catholic, and of course, the radical and secular variety. In an attempt to establish the progressive role of an 'enlightened Catholic Church', he uncritically accepts the mainstream notion of the concept of Enlightenment. Fifthly, the book does not describe much the tension between the Catholics and Protestants. The index is such a small collection that it does not include, Max Weber, Machiavelli, who much before asserted that incompatibility of Christianity and politics, Edict of Milan etc.

All said and done, Printy and the book should be read because of the novelty of the topic, its attempt to restore an 'enlightened Catholicism' in the making of the German identity, the extensive bibliography it offers to students and researchers of Catholicism and, above all, to have a relook or a better understanding of 18th century Germany itself.