

*Religion, Politics and Reconciliation in France: The Death of Archbishop Denis-Auguste Affre and the Revolution of 1848**

Rising above the Left Bank of Paris, on the summit of the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève, the Panthéon is both a *lieu de mémoire*, a ‘site of memory’, and a representation of conflicting and contested identities in post-revolutionary France. Begun in the 1750s, the building was originally intended as a grand church, an *ex-voto* from King Louis XV to Saint Geneviève, protectress of Paris, after his recovery from illness. By the time it was completed in 1790, the deconsecrated church had been transformed into a mausoleum for the great men of the Revolution and their heroes, including Voltaire and Rousseau. In the decades of political turmoil that followed, the building alternated from revolutionary temple to church and back again. During the reconsecration of the church of Saint Geneviève in January 1822, under the Bourbon Restoration, a purification ritual sought to cleanse the edifice of its revolutionary past. The remains of Voltaire and Rousseau were not removed, but quietly hidden from public view. In the aftermath of the 1830 Revolution the government of King Louis-Philippe designated the building as a ‘Temple of Glory’, and—to the horror of the legitimist archbishop of Paris, Hyacinthe-Louis de Quélen—restored to the peristyle the revolutionary inscription: ‘Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante’ (‘To the great men from a grateful nation’).¹ The Panthéon was also a site of physical conflict: during the June insurrection of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871, the building and the area around it were the scene of heavy fighting.

Given the Panthéon’s status as a space of contestation between church and state in nineteenth-century France, it may seem surprising that, in the revolutionary year of 1848, the government of the newly founded Second French Republic should seek to erect a memorial to a priest—and not just any priest, but the archbishop of Paris himself—within

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1. E. Fureix, *La France des larmes: Deuils politiques à l’âge romantique (1814–1840)* (Seyssel, 2009), pp. 119–25.

the walls of this republican temple. Archbishop Denis-Auguste Affre died on 27 June 1848, two days after sustaining a gunshot wound at the barricades while attempting to parley with insurgents. The archbishop saw his mission as putting an end to civil conflict, and encouraging reconciliation. Public accounts of his dying words—including those disseminated just before his death—reiterated this position. In a letter to the priests of the diocese urging prayers for their dying prelate, Affre's vicars-general reported that, in the archbishop's final hours, he 'calmly meditated on the words of our divine Saviour, "The good shepherd gives his life for his flock"' and conveyed his 'ardent wish that his blood ... be the last spilled'.² These reported last words, 'que mon sang soit le dernier versé' ('let mine be the last blood spilled')—were repeated in General Eugène Cavaignac's message of condolence to the vicars-general on 28 June, in his capacity as head of government.³

Affre was the first of three incumbents of the Parisian see to die violently over the next two decades. In 1857 his successor, Marie-Dominique Sibour, was stabbed to death by a defrocked priest while saying Mass in the church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, adjacent to the Panthéon. In 1871 Georges Darboy was taken hostage and executed during the Paris Commune. Of these three, Affre's death generated the largest outpouring of public grief in Paris, across a broad spectrum of the population. His actions and self-sacrifice were memorialised through ceremony and ritual, including his huge funeral at Notre-Dame, and the production of an enormous range of commemorative and devotional images and objects that sought to present the archbishop as a modern 'martyr of Paris'.⁴ While efforts to commemorate Affre inevitably centred on the capital, his death was remembered across metropolitan France, especially in his native Aveyron region, and in the French empire. In October 1848, a decree proclaimed the creation of a new settlement for forty families near Miliana, in Algeria. It was to be called Affreville.⁵

Exploring efforts to commemorate Affre—including official plans and projects by both church and state, as well as more popular memorial and devotional objects and practices—and interpretations of his death offers a distinctive perspective on a crucial moment in the often troubled relationship between the Catholic church and post-revolutionary regimes in modern France. The revolution of 1848 was notable for the relative absence of anticlerical sentiment, and the first months of the new regime saw the emergence of a kind of alliance between those

2. Letter reproduced in *L'Universel*, 28 June 1848. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

3. Reproduced in *Le Constitutionnel*, 29 June 1848.

4. L.C. [Léon Guillemin], *Le martyr de Paris: Almanach du Bon Pasteur, année 1849. Rédigé par L.C.* (Paris, 1848).

5. *Bulletin officiel des actes du gouvernement*, VIII (Algiers, 1849), p. 386. Hundreds of June insurgents would later be deported to Algeria.

once-hardened enemies, the French Catholic church and the French republic.⁶ In contrast to the 1790s or the experience of the Third Republic in the last decades of the nineteenth century, 1848 presented an opportunity for an accommodation between a revolutionary, albeit moderate, republican regime and the French church. Building on older, important works by Weill and Duroselle on 'liberal' and 'social' Catholicism, as well as Edward Berenson's study of the relationship between religious culture and the political left, the historiography of the Catholic church in nineteenth-century France has in recent years challenged outmoded perceptions of a diametric opposition between Catholics and the progressive ideas of the time.⁷ While the experience of 1848 looms large in recent contributions to this literature, it is rarely directly confronted.⁸ Other work on the French Catholic church in 1848 and on Affre has tended to be biographical and political in focus, and has not addressed the construction and uses of Affre's memory in much detail.⁹

The distinctive context of the religious politics of the early Second Republic meant that Affre's apparent self-sacrifice on the barricades in June could be framed as both religiously *and* patriotically motivated. He was at once a man *mort pour la patrie* in the French republican manner, one who died for the fatherland or nation, and a martyr of Christian charity. Efforts to commemorate Denis-Auguste Affre and to interpret his death, therefore, reflect a moment in which reconciliation between the secular and the clerical seemed possible in France.

6. Some French bishops and clergy remained extremely uneasy about the Second Republic, and there were incidents in some parts of France in the late spring of 1848 where unpopular priests were harassed and driven from their parishes by locals. See R. Price, *The Church and the State in France, 1789–1870* (London, 2017), p. 68.

7. G. Weill, *Histoire du catholicisme libéral en France, 1828–1908* (Paris, 1909); J.-B. Duroselle, *Les débuts du catholicisme social en France (1822–1870)* (Paris, 1951); E. Berenson, *Populist Religion and Left-Wing Politics in France, 1830–1852* (Princeton, NJ, 1984). In more recent historiography, see, for example, C.E. Harrison, *Romantic Catholics: France's Postrevolutionary Generation in Search of a Modern Faith* (Ithaca, NY, 2014); J.F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park, PA, 2005); T. Kselman, *Conscience and Conversion: Religious Liberty in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven, CT, 2018). Kselman's short review essay offers a useful discussion of the 'religious turn' in the historiography of modern France more broadly: T. Kselman, 'Challenging Dechristianization: The Historiography of Religion in Modern France', *Church History*, lxxv (2006), pp. 130–39.

8. Price's *The Church and State in France, 1789–1870* is an exception among the more broadly focused histories of French Catholicism in this period, devoting two chapters to the Second Republic. Other works have examined the French church in 1848 in close detail: J. Leflon, *L'Église de France et la Révolution de 1848* (Paris, 1948); P. Pierrard, *1848: Les pauvres, l'Évangile et la Révolution* (Paris, 1977); P. Christophe, *L'Église de France dans la Révolution de 1848* (Paris, 1998).

9. Emmanuel Fureix's essay on the iconography of the barricade in the June Days is a notable exception, as it contains a section on images of Affre. See Fureix, 'De l'"autel de l'anarchie" au Golgotha: La barricade de juin 1848 en représentation', in A. Corbin and J.M. Mayeur, eds, *La Barricade: Actes du colloque organisé les 17, 18 et 19 mai 1995 par le Centre de recherches en histoire du XIX^e siècle et la Société d'histoire de la révolution de 1848 et des révolutions du XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 1995), pp. 221–33. On Affre, the standard biography remains R. Limouzin-Lamothe and J. Leflon, *Mgr Denys-Auguste Affre, archevêque de Paris (1793–1848)* (Paris, 1971). More recently, a collection edited by J.-P. Fabre includes talks given to mark the 150th anniversary of Affre's death: *Mgr Affre: Un archevêque de Paris au pied des barricades!* (Saint-Maur, 2009).

In a wider European context, this coming together of church and state is even more striking. Affre died at a juncture between the optimism of the European 'springtime of the peoples' in 1848, the collapse of those hopes in the bloodshed of June and growing repression across the continent, and the increasingly conservative and reactionary swing in European Catholicism occasioned by the flight of Pope Pius IX from Rome after the establishment of the Roman Republic in November 1848.¹⁰ As this article demonstrates, the window of conciliation that opened after the death of the archbishop was rapidly closed due to mutual mistrust and competing interests, particularly seen in the failure of attempts to commemorate Affre within the republican, secular space of the Panthéon. That this window was opened at all, however, is enormously significant, and points to the possibility of a different path for church–state relations in France and in Europe in the aftermath of 1848.

The case of Denis Affre is not just significant as a turning point in church–state relations, or as a brief glimpse of what might have been in terms of the Catholic church's relationship with liberal and post-revolutionary regimes. This article argues that the narratives of Affre's death created in the immediate aftermath of the insurrection, and the ways in which he was memorialised, offer a fascinating example of how the troubled French republic sought to move forward in the aftermath of June's brutal civil war. The June Days are often seen as a definitive rupture in the Second Republic and in the broader European experience of the revolutions of 1848, marking a point of no return for the moderate republic, and the triumph of conservatism and reaction. Such readings of June are justified. The insurrection undoubtedly marked the end of the dream of February, and became the Second Republic's 'founding massacre', in Alain Corbin's term for the use of violence by a regime to prove its viability.¹¹ Those who rebelled were demonised, presented in visual and written accounts of the insurrection as brutal savages and described by the National Assembly as the 'new barbarians'.¹² In this context, Emmanuel Fureix has argued for the iconography of Affre on the barricades as symbolically marking the beginning of a new republic, driven by conservatism.¹³ I argue, however, that efforts to memorialise Denis Affre in the immediate aftermath of the June Days were less about rupture and more concerned with shaping Affre as a symbol of reconciliation, a unifying figure around whose memory the republic could move forwards through the trauma of a divisive civil war.

10. See, among others, D. Kertzer, *The Pope Who Would Be King: The Exile of Pius IX and the Emergence of Modern Europe* (Oxford, 2018); E. Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (New Haven, CT, 1997), pp. 219–24; and E.E.Y. Hales, *Pio Nono: A Study in European Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1954).

11. Cited in R. Tombs, *France, 1814–1914* (London, 1996), p. 25.

12. 'Proclamation de l'Assemblée nationale', *Le Charivari*, 29 June 1848.

13. Fureix, 'De l'"autel de l'anarchie"', p. 229.

This article examines these issues through three key themes: narratives and representations of Affre's death; the debate surrounding the republic's plans for official commemoration; and how the archdiocese of Paris attempted to establish Affre as an explicitly religious martyr—albeit one who did not fit comfortably into traditional categories of martyrdom, and whose status as a 'martyr of charity' or of 'fraternity' straddled the divide between Catholic martyrdom and the revolutionary culture of patriotic self-sacrifice. It argues that, in contrast to the typical view of the June Days as a definitive moment of rupture in the Second French Republic, constructions of Affre's memory by both church and state actors indicate his use as a figure of reconciliation following the insurrection. With the benefit of hindsight, historians of the Second Republic can confidently argue that responses to the June insurrection escalated the shift to a more reactionary republican regime. However, my exploration of the death of Denis Affre challenges the idea that, for contemporaries, civil war inevitably led to irreconcilable division. Rather, the nuance with which Affre and his death were handled and represented shows a genuine concern to find a figure who could unite the fractured republic. Affre's status as a kind of dual martyr reflects, I argue, the potential in 1848 for a more lasting partnership between the French Catholic church—particularly the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but also encompassing its community of believers—and the moderate republic. I also show how continuing church–state tensions around commemorating Affre, and the church's efforts to shape a more traditional devotional culture around their dead archbishop, demonstrate the mutual suspicion with which republicans and many in the French church continued to view each other.

I

The Parisian insurrection of June 1848 was triggered by the National Assembly's decision to close the National Workshops, a work scheme designed to alleviate high levels of unemployment. On 22 June barricades went up in working-class districts of the city, as workers protested the government's apparent about-face on its commitment to the 'right to work'. Several days of street battles ensued. Under the command of General Eugène Cavaignac, who had made his reputation in Algeria, the combined forces of the Parisian National Guard, the regular army and the recently-formed Mobile Guard moved in to quash the insurrection.¹⁴ With its members aged between sixteen and thirty and largely recruited from the Parisian working classes, the Mobile

14. M. Traugott, *Armies of the Poor: Determinants of Working-Class Participation in the Parisian Insurrection of June 1848* (London, 2002), p. 30. On the role of the regular army in June, see J.M. House, *Controlling Paris: Armed Forces and Counter-Revolution, 1789–1848* (New York, 2014), ch. 9.

Guard was a force designed to respond quickly to urban unrest.¹⁵ The repression of the insurrection culminated in summary executions, arrests and deportations. Though it is impossible to establish an exact figure for those killed during the June Days, recent estimates suggest a combined death toll of 4,000 insurgents and forces of order, with almost 500 insurgents deported to Algeria and Cayenne. Thousands more remained in prison in France.¹⁶ It was just four months since late February, when a popular uprising had put an end to the constitutional monarchy of Louis-Philippe and brought the Second French Republic into being, but the contrast in responses to the barricades of February and those of June could not have been greater. For Karl Marx, June was a class war.¹⁷ For Alexis de Tocqueville, it was a ‘class combat, a sort of slave rebellion’ fomented by socialist ideologues.¹⁸ Tocqueville’s horror at the events of June reflected majority opinion, as moderate republicans, liberals and conservatives alike rushed to denounce the insurrection and those who fought in it. In its official proclamation following the end of the insurrection, the National Assembly described the insurgents as ‘these new barbarians’, who had threatened not just ‘family, institutions, freedom, the *patrie*’ but even ‘nineteenth-century civilisation’ itself.¹⁹

By the evening of Sunday, 25 June, fighting was concentrated in the working-class districts east of the city, with two enormous barricades blocking access across the rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine from the place de la Bastille. The scene at the place de la Bastille was captured in a panoramic painting by Jean-Jacques Champin, depicting the ranks of the National Guard and the Mobile Guard clustered around the Bastille column.²⁰ To the left of the image, four tiny figures can be seen making their way towards the looming barricades: two in clerical black, one in the blue shirt of a Parisian worker, and one in the violet cassock and white soutane of a bishop. Champin’s painting shows Archbishop

15. The Mobile Guard was created by the Provisional Government immediately following the creation of the Second Republic in February 1848. On the formation of the Guard, see L. O’Brien, ‘*Cette nouvelle transformation du gamin de Paris: The Figures of the Mobile Guard and vivandières in Popular Culture in 1848*’, *French History*, xxv (2011), pp. 337–61, at 341–2.

16. Q. Deluermoz, *Le crépuscule des révolutions, 1848–1871* (Paris, 2012), pp. 54–6.

17. See Karl Marx, ‘The Class Struggles in France, 1848–1850’ (1850), repr. in *Political Writings: Surveys from Exile* (London, 2010), pp. 35–142.

18. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848 and its Aftermath*, ed. O. Zunz, tr. A. Goldhammer (Charlottesville, VA, 2016), p. 97.

19. ‘Proclamation de l’Assemblée nationale’, *Le Charivari*, 29 June 1848. As Philip Spencer showed, the idea of the ‘barbarian assault’ carried powerful cultural connotations in mid-nineteenth-century France. The term was overwhelmingly negative, but in February 1848—just two weeks prior to the revolution—the Catholic democrat Frédéric Ozanam turned it on its head, arguing that it was vital to “go over to the barbarians”: in other words, the working class. It is clear, however, that the National Assembly was using the term in its more prevalent, condemnatory sense in their proclamation. See P. Spencer, “Barbarian Assault”: The Fortunes of a Phrase’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xvi (1955), pp. 232–9.

20. Jean-Jacques Champin, *La Place de la Bastille et la Barricade de l’entrée du faubourg Saint-Antoine, le 25 juin 1848* (Paris, 1848).

Denis Affre, accompanied by his vicars-general Antoine Jaquemet and Emmanuel-Jules Ravinet and a National Guardsman in the guise of a worker, in the moments before he was fatally wounded. Concerned at the potential for further bloodshed, Affre went to the barricades in the hope of bringing the insurrection to an end. His was a mission 'of peace and charity', as Jaquemet put it in his testimony of events.²¹ Affre's decision to go to the barricades was entirely his own, though some close to him in Catholic circles—including Frédéric Ozanam and Léon Cornudet, founding members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and serving National Guardsmen during the insurrection—also believed the prelate to be the ideal mediator for peace.²²

Having received the necessary approval for his mission from Eugène Cavaignac, commander of the forces of order and head of government, Affre set out from the archbishop's residence on the Île Saint-Louis towards the place de la Bastille.²³ Théodore Albert, the National Guard officer tasked with accompanying the party, walked ahead carrying a branch as a symbol of peace. Fighting ceased as the archbishop arrived at the barricades, where the insurgents welcomed him 'without animosity, with respect, even'.²⁴ When a shot rang out unexpectedly, confusion reigned. Insurgents cried out that they had been betrayed. In the midst of this chaos, Affre was shot in the lower back. Insurgent fighters carried the wounded prelate on an improvised stretcher to the nearby presbytery of Saint-Antoine, before he was transferred to his residence on 26 June.²⁵ Affre died there the next day.

At the time of his death, Denis-Auguste Affre had been the incumbent of the Parisian see for eight years. He was appointed in 1840 following the death of Archbishop de Quélen. He was almost 55 years old, born in Saint-Rome in the Aveyron region in September 1793 'in the middle of the bloody agitation of the Terror', as one of Affre's biographers described it.²⁶ The quasi-hagiographical biographies of the prelate that appeared in the months and years after his death emphasise the young Affre's precociousness and piety, from a 'truly divine'

21. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Hôtel de Ville [hereafter BHV], MS 1835, A.-M.-A. Jaquemet, 'Relation des circonstances de la mort de Mgr Affre par son vicaire-général Jaquemet', 26 June 1848.

22. Ozanam and Cornudet asked Bugnet, one of the vicars-general, to encourage Affre to parley with the insurgents, but it is not clear if the message reached him before he left the Archbishop's Palace. See Archives historiques de l'Archevêché de Paris [hereafter AHAP], 1D52, Mort d'Affre et ses suites, note from Bugnet, vicar-general, to Affre, 25 June 1848.

23. Details of Affre's mission are taken from Limouzin-Lamothe and Leflon, *Mgr Denys-Auguste Affre*, pp. 345–50.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

25. Leflon, *L'Église de France et la Révolution de 1848*, pp. 98–9. In his account of the events at the barricade, the sculptor Célestin Delpech, then a member of the National Guard, stated that due to sustained fire from the troops the injured Affre had to be brought around the front of the barricade. This 'cost a very large number of men who were killed or wounded'. BHV, MS 1835, Delpech, 'Détails sur la mort de l'archevêque de Paris', 29 June 1848.

26. Henry de Riancey, *Mgr Affre, archevêque de Paris: Esquisse biographique* (Paris, 1848), p. 10.

vocation at the age of fourteen to his stellar career as a seminarian.²⁷ His appointment marked a shift in the episcopal politics of the archdiocese of Paris. While de Quélen espoused legitimist politics, supporting the restored Bourbon monarchy, the nomination of Affre—described by his modern biographers as ‘a progressive traditionalist’—marked a step in what appeared to be a more liberal direction.²⁸ He was a well-known Gallican²⁹ and a prominent supporter of early initiatives in social Catholicism, including the founding of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and the Society of Saint François Xavier.³⁰ While highly critical of much contemporary socialist thought, which he denounced in his Lenten letter of 1843 as ‘this baleful science’, he was in contact with the Christian socialist and historian of the French Revolution Philippe Buchez.³¹ Affre’s relationship with the July Monarchy and King Louis-Philippe, however, was more difficult. Despite the king’s initial enthusiasm for the episcopal appointment, Affre’s vocal interventions over the contentious issue of educational freedom frustrated the king: ‘What a mistake I made’, he complained, ‘allowing the mitre to be placed on such an opinionated head!’³²

Given the fraught and often hostile relationship between the French church and republican and left-wing movements after 1789, it may seem surprising that the insurgents of June 1848 would have listened to a Catholic archbishop hoping to bring the rebellion to an end. In 1831, Parisians had sacked the old archbishop’s palace on the Île de la Cité, flinging vestments, books and devotional objects into the Seine. Forty years later, the anticlericalism of the Paris Commune of 1871 culminated in the execution of Archbishop Georges Darboy and other clergy. In 1848, though, there was a unique moment of conciliation between church and revolutionary state, and it is essential to recognise this context to understand Affre’s confidence in preaching peace at the Parisian barricades. The revolution of 1848 in France was notable not just for the absence of anticlericalism, but also the conspicuous presence of Christian iconography and language in popular republican culture. ‘Jesus Christ’, in the words of Pierre Pierrard, ‘was present everywhere in the first weeks of the Republic’.³³

27. P.M. Cruice, *Vie de Denis-Auguste Affre, archevêque de Paris* (Paris, 1849), p. 11.

28. Limouzin-Lamothe and Leflon, *Mgr Denys-Auguste Affre*, p. 9.

29. Codified in the Gallican Articles of 1682, Gallicanism affirmed ‘the independent existence of a national Church’, with its own customs. While Gallicans recognised the unity of the Catholic church and the authority of the pope as head of that church, they argued that his infallibility should be limited ‘to the occasions when he had obtained the universal assent of the Church’. P. Spencer, *Politics of Belief in Nineteenth-Century France: Lacordaire, Michon, Veillot* (New York, 1973), pp. 83–4. Spencer notes that the negotiation of the Concordat of 1801 with Rome, coupled with the growth of ultramontanism in the first half of the nineteenth century, posed an existential threat to Gallicanism and effectively made its survival impossible.

30. See Duroselle, *Les Débuts du catholicisme social*, pp. 242–56.

31. Limouzin-Lamothe and Leflon, *Mgr Denys-Auguste Affre*, pp. 131–3.

32. R. Limouzin-Lamothe, *Un archevêque aux barricades: Monseigneur Affre* (Paris, 1948), pp. 10–11.

33. Pierrard, 1848, p. 31.

The relative warmth shown by both the Provisional Government and the revolutionary populace to Christian ideas and the Catholic church served to distinguish the Second French Republic from 1830, but especially from the spectre of dechristianisation in the 1790s. Catholics of all hues urged support for the Second Republic in its early days. Frédéric Ozanam wrote enthusiastically that 'The people are convinced they have found better, more devoted friends among the priests and brothers of Christian doctrine than among the journalists and lawyers'.³⁴ With the liberal clerics Henri-Dominique Lacordaire and Henry Maret, Ozanam founded a new Catholic newspaper dedicated to advancing the cause of democracy and the social question: *L'Ère nouvelle*, 'The New Era'. For more progressive and socially minded Catholics like Ozanam, the events of 1848 marked a turning point in the relationship between the French Catholic church and the post-revolutionary state. Catholics had no reason to mourn the deposed monarchy, Ozanam wrote, as the 'new order ... begins to uphold their freedoms and their rights'.³⁵ Even Louis Veuillot, arguably the most influential ultramontane voice in nineteenth-century France, shared this initial sense of optimism. In the days after the establishment of the Second Republic on 24 February, Veuillot filled the columns of his newspaper *L'Univers* with articles tracing the roots of liberty, equality and fraternity back to the Gospels, and argued that the revolution was a providential event.³⁶ Veuillot emphasised, however, that support from French Catholics was contingent on the establishment of greater religious freedoms. He wrote on 27 February that 'if the French Republic finally gives the Church the liberty that crowned heads have refused it ... there will be no better or more sincere republicans than the Catholics of France'.³⁷

Veuillot's attitude to the new republic had much in common with that espoused by French Catholic bishops, even though his ultramontanism was often at odds with the largely Gallican views of the church hierarchy. However, both Gallicans and many ultramontanes shared a belief that the coming of the republic offered an opportunity to reshape the church–state relationship through a revision of the Concordat, the 1801 agreement between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII. The church's tense relationship with the July Monarchy allowed it to align itself with the new regime relatively smoothly. In practical terms, it was hoped that a renegotiated agreement could result in greater freedom for religious education, as well as more control for the church over the nomination of bishops. Adhesion to the new regime was therefore not simply a matter of political expediency, but a chance to rework the relationship between the church and the 'principles of 1789' in a way

34. *Lettres de Frédéric Ozanam*, III: *L'Engagement (1845–1849)*, ed. D. Ozanam (Paris, 1978), pp. 383–4 (Ozanam to Alexandre Dufieux, 6 Mar. 1848).

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 394–5 (Ozanam to Pierre Jaillard, 21 Mar. 1848).

36. See especially articles by Veuillot published between 25 and 27 February 1848.

37. Louis Veuillot, 'Paris, 26 février 1848', *L'Univers*, 27 Feb. 1848.

that ensured religious liberty while also encouraging a more moral, orderly vision of liberalism.³⁸ The moderate republicans leading the new regime were undoubtedly committed to religious freedom. Whereas the magistrates of the July Monarchy had been swift to prosecute unrecognised sects and schismatic churches, in early March the Second Republic announced the release of anyone convicted because of their religious practice.³⁹ The new republic was keen to forge a new kind of church–state relationship. Following elections to the National Assembly in April 1848, a Comité des Cultes set to work examining how best to revise the Concordat, as well as the question of state funding for all religious sects.⁴⁰

Denis Affre led the way in urging clerical support for the new regime, having refused to wait for permission from Rome to issue a pastoral letter encouraging his clergy and the faithful to rally to the republic. Like many of the episcopal letters from across France that followed the revolution, Affre's text explicitly connected Christian teachings with the revolutionary principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.⁴¹ He contrasted the First Republic of 1792 with the Second, stating that 'our first Republic ... was tyrannical because it was not Christian' and arguing for the importance of Christian influence in 'respecting individual freedom, paternal authority, conjugal harmony, property, honour, and the lives of citizens'.⁴² On 7 March he met with the Provisional Government, whose president, Dupont de l'Eure, told him that "liberty and religion are two sisters, with the same interest in a harmonious co-existence".⁴³ Cheered as he visited the injured of February in the Hôtel-Dieu hospital, adjacent to Notre-Dame, the archbishop symbolically sealed the new bonds of (cautious) friendship between church and state when he blessed a tree of liberty erected in front of the metropolitan cathedral.⁴⁴ Affre's actions in June reflected these friendlier relations and the emerging alliance between the French Catholic church and the moderate French republic. As this article shows, this context of greater cooperation between church and state also facilitated efforts posthumously to construct Affre as a figure of conciliation between church and republic, and as a rallying point for a divided France after civil war.

38. See Hales, *Pio Nono*, ch. 1, pt 2, on the intersection between political liberalism and nationalism with 'liberal-Catholicism' in Europe in the years prior to 1848.

39. J. Lalouette, 'La politique religieuse de la Seconde République', *Revue d'histoire du XIX^e siècle*, xxviii (2004), pp. 79–94, at 81.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

41. On this theme in the episcopal letters issued across France after February 1848, see Christophe, *L'Église de France*, pp. 27–31.

42. Denis-Auguste Affre, 'Mandement de Mgr l'Archevêque de Paris qui ordonne des prières pour la France', printed in *L'Univers*, 5 Mar. 1848, p. 1.

43. Cited in Christophe, *L'Église de France*, pp. 25–6.

44. Pierrard, *1848*, pp. 32–3.

II

The narrative of Affre's sacrifice at the barricade began to be shaped before the archbishop had drawn his last breath. His actions became an integral element in the wider memory of the June Days, but also stood alone as a distinct moment of heroic martyrdom. Affre was not the only 'martyr of June' associated with the ranks of the forces of order—indeed, he appears alongside the various generals and officers killed in the insurrection in several commemorative prints—but his status as a mediator, an advocate of peace and fraternity, made him a uniquely attractive figure for commemoration.⁴⁵ Furthermore, responses to Affre's death challenge the idea that contemporaries saw June as a rupture. Rather, they underline the extent to which moderate republicans saw the triumph of order in June as continuity with the values of the February Revolution. The June Days undoubtedly marked the end of the vision of fraternal harmony that had circulated since the spring of 1848. For Emmanuel Fureix, the iconography of Affre after June—symbol of mediation notwithstanding—explicitly signalled the founding of a 'new Republic' that had vanquished the 'menace of a terrorist Republic'.⁴⁶ While this reading of representations of the archbishop's death certainly reflects the insurrection's longer-term consequences, it does not capture the complexity of contemporary responses to Affre's death and the insurrection more broadly. For many moderate republicans, June did not mark a break with February. Instead, the defeat of the insurrection was framed as a triumph of the republic founded four months earlier. In its editorial of 27 June, the moderate republican paper *Le Charivari* deviated from its usual satirical content to strike a serious note, stating that the 'people of February' were not among the insurgents, but on the side of the forces of order.⁴⁷

In this respect, Affre's death did not—at least for some contemporaries—mark the beginning of something new, but affirmed and consolidated the accommodation reached between the church and a moderate republic in February. As Cavaignac stated in his message of sympathy to the vicars-general, 'For the past three months, the clergy have been associated with all the joys of the Republic. They now share its sorrow'.⁴⁸ Responses to Affre's death made the bishop a symbol of reconciliation in the midst of civil conflict. Narratives and representations of his last moments sought to obscure the lines of division in the republic, creating a sense of unity around the figure of the archbishop-martyr.

45. On Affre as mediator, see Fureix, 'De l'"autel de l'anarchie"', p. 229. An example of how Affre was represented alongside some of the military dead can be seen in the print *Martyrs morts pour l'Ordre et la République (Juin 1848)* (Paris, 1848), held at Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France [hereafter BnF], Collection de Vinck, and available at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530156763/fi.item.r=martyrs%20de%20juin> (accessed 29 July 2022).

46. Fureix, 'De l'"autel de l'anarchie"', pp. 230–31.

47. *Le Charivari*, 27 June 1848.

48. Reproduced in *Le Constitutionnel*, 29 June 1848.

This was in stark contrast to a wider post-June discourse that othered and demonised those who led the uprising. The representation of the insurgents in accounts and images of Affre's death, and especially the question of Affre's assassin, is a case in point. In the furious wave of repression and retribution that followed the crushing of the insurrection, the 'barbarian' rebels were depicted as shadowy figures who sought to lay waste to Paris, the capital of civilisation. Rumours circulated about the brutality of the insurgents, who were compared to native American tribes in their savagery and violence.⁴⁹ In the series of prints published by Aubert and titled 'Souvenirs des journées de juin' ('Recollections of the June Days'), many of which were published in *Le Charivari* in the months following the insurrection, insurgents were shown proudly waving the decapitated heads of soldiers and brandishing knives.⁵⁰

It might seem inevitable, then, that the insurgents would be blamed for the death of the archbishop. Some close to Affre did blame the rebels: Dr Cayol, the surgeon who performed his autopsy, insisted that Affre had been murdered by an insurgent bullet, and this view has been repeated by some biographers.⁵¹ But Cayol was an outlier in the summer of 1848. Most representatives of both the church hierarchy and the state either studiously avoided the question of culpability or explicitly disavowed the idea that Affre had been assassinated by the insurgents. As Affre was carried to the presbytery of Saint-Antoine following his fatal wounding, insurgents insisted to the clerics accompanying him that they were not responsible, and asked that written testimony be prepared to this effect. The signed testimony of Antoine Jaquemet, Affre's vicar-general, affirmed Affre's message of peace and fraternity and attested that 'in so far as it was possible to judge the midst of such great confusion, he [Affre] was not shot by the defenders of the barricade'.⁵² In the National Assembly on 26 June, as Affre lay dying, deputies were updated on the events that had occurred at the place de la Bastille. Pierre-Louis Parisis, bishop of Langres and a deputy for Morbihan, repeated the account given to him by the parish priest of Saint-Louis-en-l'Île: 'there was a drumroll, which triggered two shots, one from the insurgents' side and one from the other'. Parisis repeated the insurgents' statement that they had not killed the bishop. In the

49. See, for example, the conservative periodical *La Mode's* comparison of the insurgents to 'the Hurons and the Iroquois': *La Mode*, 29 June 1848, cited in M. Agulhon, *Les Quarante-huitards* (Paris, 1975), p. 168.

50. On the 'Souvenirs des Journées de Juin' series, see L. O'Brien, *The Republican Line: Caricature and French Republican Identity, 1830–52* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 142–8.

51. Jean-Bruno Cayol, *Relation de la blessure et de la mort de Mgr l'archevêque de Paris* (Paris, 1848). Limouzin-Lamothe and Leflon insisted in their individual works on Affre and in their jointly authored biography that the bullet came from an insurgent's gun. See Limouzin-Lamothe and Leflon, *Mgr Denys-Auguste Affre*, p. 350, and R. Limouzin-Lamothe, 'Du nouveau sur la mort de Mgr Affre, archevêque de Paris', *Actes du Congrès historique du centenaire de la révolution de 1848* (Paris, 1948), pp. 371–80.

52. BHV, MS 1835, Jaquemet, 'Relation des circonstances de la mort de Mgr Affre par son vicaire général Jaquemet'.

same session, the moderate republican deputy Charles Beslay, who had also gone to the barricades on 25 June, gave his version of events: 'there were about ten men killed: Monsignor [Affre] had gone on a little further into the faubourg; I believe that it was a bullet from our side [that is, the forces of order] that hit him'.⁵³ Beslay's testimony was corroborated by Célestin Delpech, a sculptor who served as an officer of the National Guard in the faubourg Saint-Antoine. His eyewitness account of Affre's death, written on 29 June 1848, affirmed that 'the bullet that hit him [Affre] came from the terrace of the Café de la Bastille ... which was occupied by the Mobiles and the troops'. Listing the various clergy and deputies who were witnesses to the incident, Delpech continued: 'a great number of people who came to hear the archbishop can confirm that he was injured by the troops'.⁵⁴

This conciliatory, rather than condemnatory, approach to Affre's death also informed visual representations of his wounding and death. Between June 1848 and February 1849 alone, over two hundred Affre-related images—including portraits, devotional images and depictions of events on the barricades—were deposited with the Dépôt Légal.⁵⁵ The insurgents who appear in these images are very different to the malevolent, criminal figures that haunt other depictions of the June Days. In prints showing Affre's arrival at the barricade, the insurgents are models of respect and even devotion: doffing their caps and genuflecting as the archbishop raises his hand in a gesture of benediction.⁵⁶ When the fatal shot is fired, the insurgents appear appalled by what has happened, and rush to the archbishop's aid. In a work by Joseph Felon, the rebels carry the wounded Affre—his hand raised in blessing over a working-class woman and her baby—off the barricades (Fig. 1). In 'Le Bon Pasteur', produced by the well-known publisher of religious images and devotional items, Turgis, Affre becomes a rallying point for both sides in the insurrection (Fig. 2). Working-class men of the faubourg Saint-Antoine pause as they carry Affre's stretcher, allowing him to give a cross to a young member of the Mobile Guard.

In both contemporary accounts and visual culture, therefore, depictions of Affre's death contrasted with the division and discord that characterised more prominent interpretations of the June Days. From the outset, narratives of his death sought to elide division, however futile an endeavour that might have been in the febrile atmosphere of civil war. The care with which most contemporary reports and eyewitness accounts of Affre's death avoided ascribing blame to the insurgents—with some even arguing that the forces of order were

53. 'Assemblée nationale. Séance permanente du 26 juin 1848. Présidence du citoyen Senard', *Le Moniteur universel, journal officiel de la République française*, 27 June 1848.

54. BHV, MS 1835, Delpech, 'Détails sur la mort de l'archevêque de Paris'.

55. BnF, Réserve Ye 79 Fol, Dépôt Légal registres 1846–9.

56. See, for example, BnF, Collection de Vinck, *L'archevêque de Paris sur la barricade* (Paris, 1848); AHAP, *Denis Affre (mort le 25 juin 1848)* [sic] (1848).

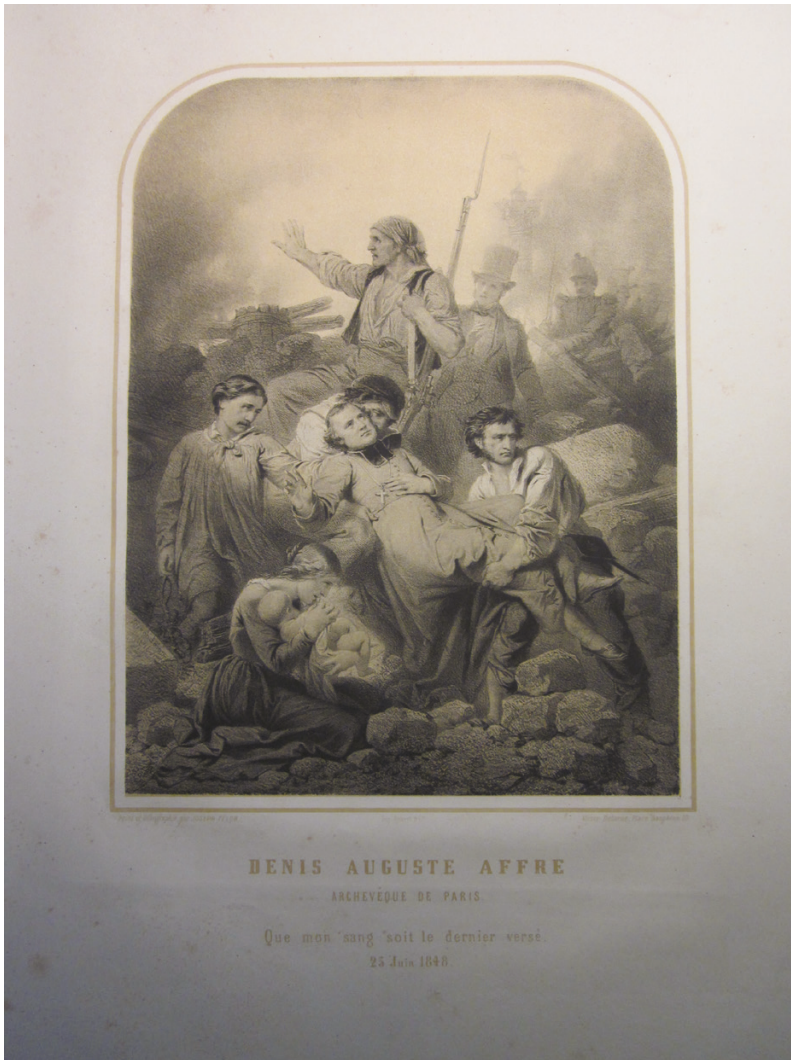


Figure 1. Joseph Felon, ‘Denis-Auguste Affre. Archevêque de Paris’ (Paris, 1848). Archives historiques de l’archevêché de Paris; author’s photograph.

responsible—shaped Affre as a figure to whom both sides could rally. The relative success of this strategy can be seen in the later use of Affre iconography in material that was sympathetic towards the insurgents and their cause. A poem titled ‘Petition of the Women of Paris in Favour of the Deportees’, published in either 1848 or 1849, was accompanied by an image of Affre and explicitly invoked his conciliatory message in pleading for leniency towards the men sentenced to deportation for their role in the insurrection:



Figure 2. Turgis (publisher), ‘Le Bon Pasteur. L’archevêque de Paris donne sa croix à un Garde mobile’ (Paris, 1848). Archives historiques de l’archevêché de Paris; author’s photograph.

To end our bloody conflict
 Monsignor of Paris was injured
 Remember his final words
 ‘Oh! Let mine be the last blood spilled’.

The poem also imagined Affre as a divine advocate for the deportees:

From heaven, France’s good prelate
 Looks down on you
 His voice urges you: Have mercy
 Remember that God forgives all.⁵⁷

Affre became a representative not just of a closer relationship between the moderate republican state and the church, but also a rallying point for unity. By reinforcing the bonds between church and state, the Second Republic was able to move forward from traumatic division. Contemporaries clearly understood Affre’s actions and legacy in these terms. A small memorial card, with a reproduction of a drawing of Affre lying in state by the cleric Gaston de Ségur on one side, presented the archbishop explicitly as a figure of conciliation (Fig. 3). The card’s

57. L.C., *Pétition des femmes de Paris en faveur des déportés* (Paris, 1848/9).

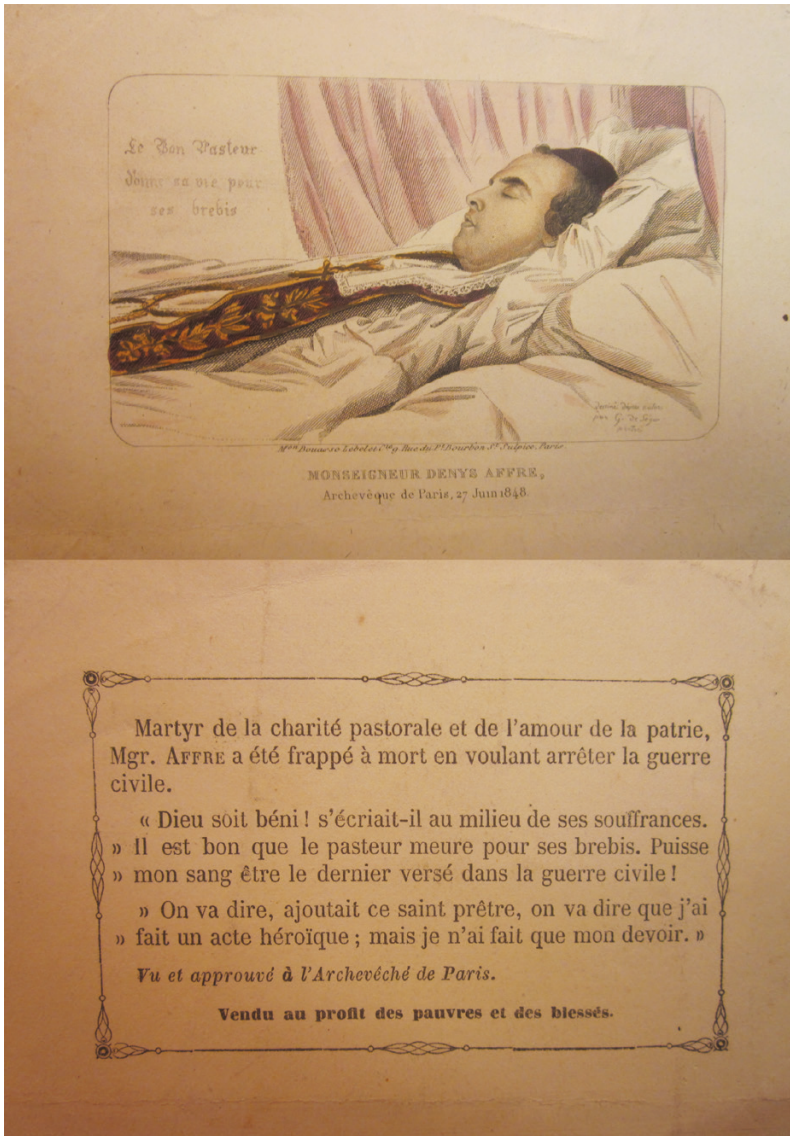


Figure 3. Gaston de Ségur, Bouasse-Lebel (publisher), card with drawing of Affre on his deathbed (front) and accompanying text (back) (Paris, 1848). Archives historiques de l'archevêché de Paris; author's photograph.

accompanying text states that Affre died 'while wishing to end civil war', while to his famous statement 'let mine be the last blood spilled' were appended the words 'in civil war'.⁵⁸

58. My emphasis.

In his expression of sympathy to the vicars-general following Affre's death, Eugène Cavaignac underlined Affre as a figure of conciliation, whose final sacrifice spanned secular and religious divides. Cavaignac described the archbishop's 'double glory', uniting civic and religious duty in an act that symbolised the reconciliation between the church and moderate republic. Affre, he wrote, had 'died as a good citizen and as a religious martyr'.⁵⁹ The archbishop's funeral on 7 July reinforced this status as a dual martyr, a man simultaneously *mort pour la patrie* and for Christian charity in the name of reconciliation. The traditional religious symbols of a martyr, as well as those representing his civic sacrifice, accompanied Affre's body on its final journey from the archbishop's residence on the Île Saint-Louis to Notre-Dame. The huge funeral procession included delegations from the city's seminaries and religious orders as well as politicians and a group of the 'blessés de Février', the men officially recognised by the state for their role in the February Revolution. Affre's body was carried by members of the National Guard, accompanied by a branch carried on one side as a symbol of 'civic recognition', and on the other, a palm, traditional symbol of Christian martyrdom.⁶⁰ Four banners embroidered with some of the archbishop's final words—including 'Let mine be the last blood spilled' and 'The good shepherd lays down his life for his flock', a verse from the Gospel of John—were carried by clerics, to remind the crowd of 'the sacrificial idea embodied by the Holy Archbishop'.⁶¹

Affre's funeral triggered an outpouring of emotion from the people of Paris. On 6 July, the state funeral of the insurrection's military victims took place at the church of the Madeleine: it was a 'stiff, sterile' affair.⁶² This contrasted starkly with the reported surge of emotion in the city on the day of Affre's funeral. While some Parisians may have felt uncomfortable mourning the military dead, depending on where their sympathies lay in the insurrection, Affre's lying-in-state and funeral offered a chance for a more diverse cross-section of Parisians to express their grief. People waited outside the archbishop's residence on the rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Île to file past Affre's body as it lay in state, many bringing medals and other tokens which they touched to his right hand.⁶³ For Patrice Cruice, the Irish-born cleric appointed by Affre to run a doctoral school for clerics, the École des Carmes, the visceral reaction from working-class Parisians as they followed Affre's body to Notre-Dame was testament to his efforts to improve their lot in life.

59. Reproduced in *Le Constitutionnel*, 29 June 1848.

60. 'Funérailles de l'archevêque', *L'Ère nouvelle*, 8 July 1848.

61. Archives du Chapitre de Notre-Dame de Paris (hereafter ACNDP), VI (31 Dec. 1845–8 Feb. 1852), entry for 7 July 1848.

62. C. Guyver, *The Second French Republic, 1848–1852: A Political Reinterpretation* (New York, 2016), p. 129.

63. *L'Ami de la religion*, 2 July 1848.

They wept openly, Cruice noted, crying that they had 'lost our father'.⁶⁴ Even more striking, perhaps, was the account of the funeral published in the newspaper *La Démocratie pacifique*, run by the utopian socialist and left-wing deputy Victor Considerant. Considerant believed firmly in the right to work—indeed, the slogan 'droit au travail' featured in the paper's masthead—and *La Démocratie pacifique* was sympathetic to the cause of the insurgents. The paper emphasised the 'universal emotion' and extraordinary diversity and unity of the crowd who witnessed Affre's funeral procession. Gone were the divisions of recent days: instead, 'rich and poor, National Guards and workers flocked together ... The Archbishop of Paris died for his flock; and for the good shepherd, no one is excluded from that flock'.⁶⁵ In mourning Affre, Parisians could come together in a way that was impossible during the military funerals. Their grief for him, as recorded by contemporaries across the political spectrum, suggests that he provided an outlet for a more generalised sense of loss and trauma as the city and the republic tried to come to terms with the aftermath of civil war.

III

In death, Denis Affre became a figure of ostensible conciliation, embodying civic duty and pious devotion. Blurring the boundary between republican self-sacrifice and religious martyrdom, he not only encapsulated the efforts at reconciliation between the moderate republic and the Catholic church but could also be used to elide the fractures within the state. In the oration he delivered at the Mass held to commemorate Affre at Notre-Dame on 7 August, Abbé Pierre-Louis Coeur emphasised this new bond, describing Affre as 'a gallant victim to reconcile forever the church and the *patrie*'.⁶⁶ This vision of Affre's death shaped the republican state's initial efforts to commemorate the archbishop and his actions. In mid-July 1848, the National Assembly began to discuss the creation of a lasting memorial to the so-called 'martyr of Paris'. Following a proposal from the conservative deputy Félix de Saint-Priest that a monument should be erected, a report was duly prepared and presented to the deputies on 14 July. The report's author, François Babaud-Larivière, was a republican of long-standing conviction. Such were his credentials that, in March 1848, he had been sent to the provinces by the Provisional Government as a *commissaire de la république*, whose role was to establish the republic more firmly in rural France ahead of the April elections.⁶⁷

64. Cruice, *Vie de Denis-Auguste Affre*, p. 176.

65. 'Funérailles de l'Archevêque de Paris', *La Démocratie pacifique*, 8 July 1848.

66. Pierre-Louis Coeur, *Oraison funèbre de monseigneur Denis-August Affre, archevêque de Paris, prononcée en l'église métropolitaine de Paris, le 7 août 1848* (Paris, 1848), p. 42.

67. 'François Saturnin Léonide Babaud-Larivière', *Assemblée Nationale: Base de données des députés français depuis 1789* (Assemblée nationale, 2019–), available at [http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche/\(num_dept\)/9674](http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche/(num_dept)/9674) (accessed 29 July 2022).

Babaud-Larivière's report on the memorial for Affre claimed the archbishop as a martyr for the republic, one whose heroic sacrifice should be commemorated for patriotic and republican—rather than purely religious—edification. The National Assembly, he stated, should be the 'conduit for the public emotion' that Affre's death had aroused. The archbishop's martyrdom, he added, was inspired by 'a holy love of humanity'. Affre's death was a providential act to secure France's republican future: a necessary blood sacrifice to ensure that 'henceforth the Republic—great, happy, strong and free—will be founded on the happiness of the people!' While this framing of Affre's actions reiterated the emphasis on unity and fraternity already seen in much of the immediate reaction to his death, Babaud-Larivière also pointedly stated that the gesture of national remembrance for the archbishop 'belonged to the French republic', and not, it was implied, to the French Catholic church alone.⁶⁸ In erecting its memorial to Affre, the state would ensure that he and his martyrdom were inscribed alongside all those who had died for the French republic. Though Babaud-Larivière's report echoed the watchwords of the alliance between church and state that had followed the February Revolution, recognising the relationship between Christian values and 'liberté, égalité, fraternité', it insisted nonetheless that Affre's memorial would be built not as a sop to the church, but to disseminate a specifically republican ideal. The statue, Babaud-Larivière stated, would remind future generations that 'even in our infant Republic's worst days, a country torn apart by factions could still ... take comfort and pride in reflecting on the courage, the self-sacrifice, and the dedication of its most devoted children!'

This, therefore, would be a monument with a powerful message for a troubled republic, providing a focal point to bring a divided France together. Its final location would be key in ensuring that its message of republican self-sacrifice, unity and devotion was disseminated effectively. For Babaud-Larivière, there was only one location where this could be achieved: 'The National Assembly, considering that the glorious death of the archbishop of Paris was a model of civic courage, of patriotism and of sublime dedication, decrees that ... the marble statue of the archbishop of Paris will be erected in the Panthéon, in the name of and paid for by the Republic'.⁶⁹ In the context of post-revolutionary France, and given the Panthéon's past (and future) connotations, this suggestion seems remarkable. Since the 1790s, the Panthéon had been a symbolic battleground in the conflict between revolutionary ideas and the church. Indeed, this conflict would intensify in the last decades of the nineteenth century, reflecting the wider escalation in tensions between French secularists and Catholics. In 1885, the government of the

68. 'Assemblée nationale. Séance du 14 juillet. Présidence du citoyen Marie', *Le Moniteur universel*, 15 July 1848.

69. Ibid.

Third Republic reclaimed the building for *les grands hommes*, beginning with the funeral of Victor Hugo.⁷⁰ As a deputy of long-standing republican convictions, therefore, Babaud-Larivière clearly saw the statue as an opportunity to make a powerful statement. Locating the official state memorial to Affre within the walls of this republican temple, close to the remains of Voltaire and Rousseau, was undoubtedly intended to integrate this ecclesiastical figure within the republican story—and, in so doing, to establish a permanent symbol of 1848's seeming reconciliation between church and republican state. The place du Panthéon and the streets surrounding the monument had seen intense fighting during the June Days, and the bodies of some of the generals killed in the insurrection had lain in state there prior to their funerals. The Panthéon loomed over commemorative images of the insurrection as a symbol of the civilised, republican values that men like Affre had died to save.⁷¹ Erecting his memorial there would further underline Affre's place within the official narrative of June as a triumph of moderate republican values.

The report on Affre's statue also suggested that the memorial, with its message of a 'happy, strong, and free' republic built on a 'holy love of humanity', might form part of a larger project to instil republican values through public art. Charles Blanc, the Second Republic's Director of Fine Arts, promised a 'republican [artistic] renaissance', where public spaces and buildings would become galleries for accessible and 'morally inspiring works of art'.⁷² The grandest of the envisaged projects in Blanc's ultimately abortive dream of a moral, popular republican art was the transformation of the interior decoration of the Panthéon by the left-wing artist Paul Chenavard. Chenavard's concept for the enormous, ambitious commission, comprising '63 murals, six floor mosaics, a portrait frieze and four decorated piers' was a celebration of 'universal history', depicting the progress of humanity from the biblical flood to Napoleon and beyond.⁷³ The design culminated in a vast mosaic depicting 'The Philosophy of History', or what Chenavard called the 'Social Palingenesis'—a vision of the stages of human history, with a Christ-like figure at its heart.⁷⁴ Chenavard's depiction of universal

70. On the Hugo funeral and reclaiming of the Panthéon as secular commemorative space, see A. Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789–1996* (Oxford, 2000).

71. See, for example, 'Barricade de la rue Clovis' and 'Cannonade du Panthéon' in the 'Souvenirs des journées de juin' series published by the Maison Aubert. 'Barricade de la rue Clovis' was published in *Le Charivari* on 7 Aug. 1848.

72. N. McWilliam, *Dreams of Happiness: Social Art and the French Left, 1830–1850* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), pp. 330–31.

73. D.R. Guernsey, 'Universal History and the French Left: Paul Chenavard's *Social Palingenesis*', in D.R. Guernsey, ed., *The Artist and the State, 1777–1855: The Politics of Universal History in British and French Painting* (London, 2017), p. 149; M.-C. Chaudonneret, 'Le décor inachevé pour le Panthéon', in M.-C. Chaudonneret, ed., *Paul Chenavard: Le peintre et le prophète* (Lyon, 2000), pp. 67–106.

74. Chenavard's designs proved extremely controversial later in the Second Republic's short life, and were condemned in particular by the French Catholic church; Affre's successor, Sibour,

history certainly echoed Masonic ideas of religious syncretism familiar to some of the leading *quarante-huitards*, including Ledru-Rollin (who commissioned the project) and Babaud-Larivière, himself a Freemason. Yet Chenavard's respectful integration of all religious beliefs, from East and West, into 'the story of Humanity' also fitted neatly with a particularly *quarante-huitard* understanding of the potential for religious pluralism within a republican framework.

Chenavard's project also sought to establish new heroes for the edification of young republican citizens. He envisaged the Parisian Panthéon at the heart of a national network of 'towns for youth', each with their own Panthéon containing the remains of local 'great men' and statues of them.⁷⁵ Chenavard's belief in the importance of 'exemplary models' in the civic education of young people correlates closely to Babaud-Larivière's framing of Affre as a patriotic ideal for future generations. Clarifying and defending his recommendations before the Assembly a few days after delivering his initial report, Babaud-Larivière explained that he conceived of Affre's statue as simply the first in a series of memorials to those who had 'bien mérité de la patrie' or done the state some service, forming a modern republican pantheon to illustrate and inculcate the values of the new, moderate French republic.⁷⁶

The proposed plans for the memorial were well received in some moderate republican quarters. Responses to the project from both other republicans and Catholics, however, exposed some of the fractures that Affre's image as a figure of conciliation was designed to obscure. It became clear that lingering tensions still surrounded the Panthéon, its role in the new republic, and its meaning, and questions remained about the extent to which the Catholic church could—and indeed wanted to—be fully integrated into a French republic. On 15 July the moderate republican newspaper *Le Siècle* reported favourably on Babaud-Larivière's recommendations, noting that the statue would be received warmly by 'all of France' as it 'glorifies a great act of patriotism and sublime dedication'.⁷⁷ But the article also sounded a note of caution, hinting at a persistent suspicion of the church which might yet have designs on reclaiming the Panthéon for itself. 'This tribute to a holy and heroic act will receive universal support', the article concluded, 'provided it does not mask a devious takeover of a monument that has been the subject of a stubborn dispute between the Church and the grateful nation, for the memory of its great men'. In turn, the conservative Catholic journal *L'Ami de la religion* reacted incredulously that

complained that the project was far too 'humanist' in its approach. A report on the commission was conducted in 1851, with results published by the *Ami de la Religion*. See M.-A. Grunewald, 'Chenavard 1807–1895', in M.-A. Grunewald, *Paul Chenavard et la décoration du Panthéon de Paris en 1848* (Lyon, 1977), p. 10, and Chaudonneret, 'Le décor inachevé', pp. 70–74.

75. Grunewald, 'Chenavard 1807–1895', p. 5.

76. 'Assemblée nationale. Séance du 17 juillet 1848. (Présidence de Corbon)', *Le Moniteur universel*, 18 July 1848.

77. *Le Siècle*, 15 July 1848.

Le Siècle should even suggest that the Panthéon was the subject of any kind of conflict between church and republican state. Its issue of 16 July 1848 reproduced *Le Siècle's* article in its entirety, protesting that, when it came to the Panthéon, the aim of the French church was simply conciliation and co-operation, not a covert takeover. The clergy had certainly been 'knocking on the door of the Panthéon to return there with their prayers, their noble sacrifice, and their religious ceremonies', but 'they have never sought to exclude *the grateful nation*'.⁷⁸ This ostensibly conciliatory message, however, was undermined both by references to those buried in the Panthéon being 'forgotten in the cold and lonely regions of a kind of atheism', and by the *Ami de la religion's* horrified reaction to Babaud-Larabière's plans to erect Affre's statue there.

If this temple profaned by a pagan name must remain closed to Catholic prayer [the paper argued] a statue of the holy Archbishop, in such a place ... would be a scandal against which the very memory of this holy death would protest, and which could only be explained to posterity by the absence of any religious feeling or moral sentiment in those who ordered it.

The response from the *Ami de la religion* to Babaud-Larabière's plan was broadly in line with the attitudes of many in the upper echelons of the French Catholic church. On 17 July, the project was once again debated in the National Assembly as an 'urgent' matter, following the receipt of a letter from the vicars-general now administering the Parisian diocese. Their letter, read out to the deputies, highlighted the church hierarchy's concern that Affre should be remembered first and foremost as a *religious* martyr, with tributes and commemorations firmly centred on the cathedral of Notre-Dame. More concerning for the future relationship between the French Catholic church and the republic was the unease of the vicars-general about the ways in which Affre was being shaped as a figure of conciliation, and the spaces in which the republic sought to commemorate him. Their letter respectfully acknowledged the significance of the republican state's gesture, echoing the emphasis in Babaud-Larabière's original report on the generalised outpouring of grief that accompanied Affre's death. However, they argued, the popular interest in mourning and commemorating Affre was more religious than it was inspired by his self-sacrifice for the republic. 'France', according to the vicars-general, repeating once again the words from Saint John's Gospel that had become the refrain of Affre's martyrdom, '... honours above all the good shepherd who lays down his life for his flock, the bishop-martyr of Christian charity'.⁷⁹ With this in mind, would it not be better to honour the fallen prelate 'near his pastoral seat, near the altar where he prayed, where he offered up the holy victim before immolating himself?'. The vicars-general concluded by

78. *L'Ami de la religion*, 16 July 1848. Emphasis in original.

79. ACNDP, VI, Copy of letter from *vicaires capitulaires* to Alexandre Marie, president of the National Assembly, 17 July 1848.

urging the Assembly to decree that the monument would be erected in Notre-Dame. It seems, however, that the clerics could not resist a further barbed criticism of Babaud-Laribière's plans, pointedly using the very words inscribed on the front of the Panthéon to make the case for Notre-Dame and to draw a dividing line between two Frances: 'It is there that the *grateful nation*, that *Christian France* would like to venerate him'.⁸⁰

This letter provoked a debate in the National Assembly that was at times fractious and intense.⁸¹ In his response to the clerical complaint, Babaud-Laribière reiterated yet again a vision of Affre as a symbol of national unity who transcended secular and religious divides. He rejected both the insistence of the vicars-general on Notre-Dame and an alternative suggestion advanced by the Christian socialist Philippe Buchez (who had known Affre during his life) in the name of the faubourg Saint-Antoine—namely, that the statue should be erected on the site where Affre fell. To erect the monument in the faubourg would, Babaud-Laribière argued, not allow the nation to move forward as one in the aftermath of the insurrection. Such a location, 'in the theatre of our civil discord', would 'remind us of those sad and terrible days which we have come through'—hardly the message of conciliatory unity the republic sought to convey. Erecting the memorial in the explicitly Catholic environment of Notre-Dame, Babaud-Laribière continued, would mean that Affre could not become a truly *national*, all-encompassing model of patriotic duty. After all, 'a monument erected in the name of the Republic, by the Republic ... must be installed in a place with no religious affiliation'. His committee's belief was that 'France should unanimously support the erection of this monument ... to the memory of the man who did not hesitate to go and offer up his own blood as a kind of expiation in the fires of civil war'.⁸² This could only be achieved by placing the statue in the Panthéon.

Babaud-Laribière soon found himself in the minority, as his fellow deputies rose to speak against the proposal. Athanase Coquerel, a Protestant minister, said that he and his co-religionists would have no problem going to Notre-Dame to pay homage to the archbishop's memory. Affre's older brother, Jacques Affre Saint-Romme, a staunchly conservative deputy who had abstained from the Assembly's discussions following the insurrection, spoke to emphasise the 'distinctive devotion' that marked Affre's death out from the other 'martyrs of June'. He challenged the framing of his brother's death as a civic *and* religious martyrdom, stating that 'The others fell as citizens, the archbishop died as an apostle and a martyr'. Yet he, too, echoed the overarching view that Affre should be a figure of unity in the aftermath of civil

80. My emphasis.

81. All quotations from the debate on 17 July in this section are taken from *Le Moniteur universel*, 18 July 1848.

82. *Le Moniteur universel*, 18 July 1848.

war; erecting a monument to him would be ‘the first step towards forgiveness and reconciliation’. However, this reconciliation should not obscure the quintessentially religious nature of what Affre had done: instead of ‘dissimulating the prelate behind the citizen’, as Babaud-Larivière’s report proposed, Affre’s brother insisted that the monument must recognise that ‘the archbishop is something other than a great man’, and should be commemorated accordingly.

The final substantial intervention in an increasingly fraught debate came from the left-wing republican Charles Lagrange, veteran of the revolutions of July 1830 and February 1848 and an insurgent leader in Lyon in April 1834.⁸³ Lagrange was among the most left-leaning of all the Assembly’s deputies. Though he had taken no part in the insurrection of June 1848, he voted against the deportation of insurgents. His comments on Affre’s memorial are therefore particularly striking, coming from a staunch representative of the left who sympathised considerably with the rebels of June. Although he supported Buchez’s proposal to place the statue in the faubourg Saint-Antoine, Lagrange’s contribution constituted more of a reflection on the meaning of Affre’s actions than a practical suggestion for the location of the monument. The divisions and discord occasioned by ‘vain discussions’ about the location of the statue, he suggested, seemed contrary to Affre’s fraternal message of peace and unity. For this left-wing deputy, Affre’s death served to heal religious and secular divisions within French society that stretched back beyond the revolution of 1789 and into the Wars of Religion: ‘this pious soldier of the cause of Fraternity ... almost effaced in a single day the Dragonnades and the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre’. Lagrange’s words echoed once again the vision of Affre as a great peacemaker, inspired not just by Christian values but by the ‘noble, virtuous, pure and spotless February Revolution’: ‘he came to say that all Frenchmen were brothers and friends’. ‘After civil war’, Lagrange added, ‘one thing, and one thing only ... must reunite good citizens: reconciliation’. Regardless of where his official monument ended up, in Denis-Auguste Affre, France had found its perfect symbol of conciliation and unity.

The increasingly frustrated deputies soon sought to bring matters to a close. Babaud-Larivière’s original proposal was amended to confirm that Affre’s state-funded memorial would be sited in Notre-Dame, and that it should feature not only Affre’s words ‘May mine be the last blood shed’ but also the Gospel verse from John 10:11, ‘The good

83. Having cut his teeth in the republican secret societies of the July Monarchy, Lagrange was a prominent figure on the left throughout the Second Republic, fighting for an amnesty for deported insurgents and arguing in favour of the complete abolition of the death penalty. Re-elected as a democratic-socialist representative for the Seine in May 1849, Lagrange remained a deputy until his pre-emptive arrest during the 1851 *coup d’état* and subsequent exile. ‘Charles Lagrange’, *Assemblée Nationale: Base de données des députés français depuis 1789*, available at [http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche/\(num_dept\)/10892](http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche/(num_dept)/10892) (accessed 29 July 2022).

shepherd gives up his life for his flock'. With a budget of 50,000 francs, a competition was launched to decide on the memorial's final design.⁸⁴ The debate over Affre's monument, occurring in the weeks immediately following the June insurrection, points to a brief moment where an extraordinarily symbolic accommodation between republican state and Catholic church seemed possible—as well as revealing the lingering problems and divisions that made this ultimately impossible. Practical concerns about the location of a statue both exposed the Panthéon's continuing status as a contested space and, more worryingly, highlighted the major faultlines within the apparent union between church and state. However, though the deputies and vicars-general disagreed on the eventual fate of Affre's statue, and on his motives in June, they remained united in their emphasis on Affre as a figure of reconciliation.

IV

While the debate raged over the location of Affre's memorial, the Parisian diocese had already begun to make other plans for their deceased archbishop. The church hierarchy's rejection of the Panthéon as the site of Affre's state-funded memorial was undoubtedly born out of lingering mutual suspicion, as well as the Panthéon's status as a contentious space and continuing debates about its future purpose. However, the suggestion of the vicars-general that 'Christian France' would like to 'venerate' Affre at Notre-Dame hints at a hope that the prelate might become a figure for religious devotion. Insisting that the republic erect Affre's statue in the metropolitan cathedral had benefits for the church beyond offering what the diocese saw as a more appropriate space in which to remember the archbishop and his actions. Both church and state agreed that Affre's message was one of conciliation and fraternal goodwill. As we have already seen, he was immediately presented (as evidenced by Cavaignac's statement in response to Affre's death) as a figure who straddled both secular and religious forms of martyrdom—though the debate over the location of his memorial suggests an increasing desire in some Catholic quarters to distinguish his sacrifice from that of the other, civic, 'martyrs of June'. For the republic, he represented the model of a 'good citizen', as Cavaignac had put it, and for the church, he was a martyr of Christian charity. They differed, though, on how the legacy of this message could be best disseminated and perpetuated. Increasingly, the Parisian diocese's attention centred on confirming Affre's status as a religious martyr, one with clear potential to become a future focus for Catholic devotion.

84. The final design for the monument was chosen in 1849, by a committee that included the new archbishop, Sibour, as well as Charles Blanc and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. Paris, Archives Nationales [hereafter AN], F/21/24, Beaux-Arts—Commissions des oeuvres d'art, 'A. De Bay (*sic*), Monument de l'archevêque de Paris'.

While older martyr cults were explicitly evoked in the rhetorical and material commemorations of his death, Affre himself was presented as a more modern martyr: one who died for charity, or fraternity, rather than simply faith.

The Parisian archdiocese moved quickly to secure Affre's relics in a manner that reflected more traditional models of martyr cults. On 29 June, the chapter of Notre-Dame recorded the donation to the cathedral of Affre's bloodied soutane and the bullet that killed him, noting that they would be preserved as 'souvenir[s] of the heroic devotion to which he was a martyr'.⁸⁵ The diocesan letter issued after Affre's death reiterated his status as a religious martyr, comparing his actions to those of Christ and reflecting that the archbishop's drawn-out suffering was essential to 'make the sacrifice more complete'.⁸⁶ However, the letter was also careful to frame Affre as a different kind of martyr from traditional martyrs of faith. While it briefly noted the symbolism of Affre's attachment to the Carmes, the site of a massacre of priests in 1792 and described as the resting place of 'so many martyrs', it also emphasised that Affre was a very particular kind of martyr: a 'martyr who suffered for charity'.⁸⁷ This distinction between a martyr of faith and of charity had already been made by *L'Univers*, which noted on 28 June that Affre's passing had finally given the Parisian diocese, which had so many martyrs of faith, its own 'martyr of charity'.⁸⁸ Strikingly, in responding officially to the death of their archbishop the vicars-general aimed to reinforce the more conciliatory church–state relationship, but also to issue a warning. 'Your Pontiff died for the fraternal charity that you have inscribed at the head of your laws', they wrote, 'but this will never be real and tangible until they are supported by a practical faith'.⁸⁹ This emphasis on Affre as a martyr of charity served several purposes. First, it affirmed—albeit in a more religious manner—interpretations of his death on the barricades as being motivated by fraternal sentiment, and therefore sat comfortably with Affre's presentation by both church and state as a figure of reconciliation in the aftermath of the insurrection. Secondly, it allowed the Parisian diocese to claim Affre as a legitimate religious martyr, while overcoming the obvious problem that he had not been killed for his faith. Positioning Affre as a martyr of charity (or of fraternity, as some sources put it) meant that the careful avoidance of questions of culpability and responsibility for the archbishop's death could be sustained. His role as a symbol of reconciliation could continue while the diocese sought to develop a more explicitly religious martyr cult around him.

85. ACNDR, VI, entry for 29 June 1848.

86. AHAB, 1D52, *Mandement de messieurs les Vicaires-Généraux Capitulaires administrant le diocèse de Paris, le siège vacant, qui ordonne de faire des Prières et Services pour le repos de l'Âme de Monseigneur DENIS-AUGUSTE AFFRE, Archevêque de Paris*, 30 June 1848, p. 5.

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

88. 'Mort de Mgr l'Archevêque de Paris', *L'Univers*, 28 June 1848.

89. AHAB, 1D52, *Mandement de messieurs les Vicaires-Généraux Capitulaires*, p. 9.

Affre's funeral publicly affirmed his martyr status. The traditional symbols of the religious martyr were combined with evocations of the saints of the past in order to legitimise his sacrifice in a specifically religious context, and to invest this modern martyr of charity with authority and authenticity. Contemporary accounts of the funeral explicitly compared both Affre and the ceremony to the early Christian martyrs. The liberal Catholic newspaper *L'Ère nouvelle's* account of the funeral said that it was 'not a ceremony of our time', describing it as an extraordinary journey through the centuries back to a moment of Christian triumph. Watching Affre's body as it journeyed to Notre-Dame was akin to witnessing the moment when 'the Church emerged, victorious, from the catacombs'.⁹⁰ Comparisons were drawn with Saint Denis, patron saint and first bishop of Paris, whose martyrdom offered a convenient point of connection with his eponymous successor.⁹¹ Others drew parallels between Affre and another martyr-bishop, Thomas Becket. In the oration delivered at the commemorative Mass in August, Pierre-Louis Coeur reflected on the fact that Affre's burial had taken place on the feast of the translation of Becket's relics, and conjured up an image of Becket's ghost awaiting Affre at Notre-Dame.⁹² Invocations of Becket and the early Christian Church reflected the mid-nineteenth-century vogue, in both religious and secular contexts, for the Middle Ages, as well as the surge of interest among Catholics worldwide in the early Christian martyrs. Comparisons between Affre and early martyrs were certainly influenced by the mid-century popularity of what Philippe Boutry has described as the 'saints of the catacombs', as human remains found in Roman tombs were excavated, labelled and sent all over the world for veneration.⁹³ Evoking medieval figures such as Becket, meanwhile, chimed neatly with the contemporary fascination with the Gothic, then being brought to bear on Notre-Dame as part of Viollet-le-Duc's enormous restoration project.

However, these comparisons with historic martyrs also served a useful political purpose. While the Second Republic had worked hard to separate itself from the contentious memory of the First Republic of 1792, in the fraught atmosphere after the June Days it was, perhaps, more politically expedient to refer to more distant religious martyrs

90. 'Funérailles de l'archevêque de Paris', *L'Ère nouvelle*, 8 July 1848.

91. See, for example, de Riancey's reference to Affre's personal devotion to Saint Denis, 'his patron and the patron of the Parisian Church, who was the first to shed his blood for his Church'. Riancey, *Mgr Affre*, p. 95.

92. Coeur, *Oraison funèbre*, p. 65.

93. Between 1837 and 1850 almost three hundred complete and incomplete sets of remains of early Christian saints—many of dubious provenance or authenticity—were brought from Italy to France, where they were presented for veneration in churches, schools, convents and private residences. See Philippe Boutry's seminal article on the cult of early Christian martyrs in nineteenth-century France: 'Les saints des catacombes: Itinéraires français d'une piété ultramontaine (1800–1881)', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen âge, temps modernes*, xci (1979), pp. 875–930.

and thereby avoid direct comparisons with the deaths of priests and other religious during the French Revolution. In some instances, it was impossible to avoid the spectres of these dead clerics—particularly when Affre's heart was, in accordance with his wishes, buried separately in the chapel of the École des Carmes. Patrice Cruice acknowledged the bloodshed of 1792 in his 1849 biography of Affre, describing the Carmes as 'already consecrated with the holy blood of the victims of 2 September [1792]'.⁹⁴ However, Cruice did not explicitly *compare* Affre to the murdered priests of the 1790s—perhaps to maintain the sense of conciliation that dominated the initial narratives of Affre's death, and to avoid arousing further division and bitterness. This was in marked contrast to the handling of the deaths of Darboy and other clerics during the Paris Commune of 1871, when the legacy of the First Republic and the Terror was invoked as a bloody precedent for the deaths of the archbishop and others.⁹⁵ The references to Becket, viewed as a defender of the rights of the church, also seemed to echo Affre's efforts during the July Monarchy to secure greater freedoms for the French Catholic church, particularly in education.⁹⁶

Collecting relics was a crucial element in establishing Affre as a figure for veneration and securing material traces of his martyrdom. The process of obtaining, identifying and presenting these relics began immediately after Affre's death. In mid-nineteenth-century France, relics were commonplace in both religious and secular contexts, as devotees acquired and preserved the blood, body parts and possessions of political heroes as well as saintly figures.⁹⁷ Alexandra Walsham has argued for the recognition of relics as part of 'the wider contemporary enterprises of religious record-keeping and writing sacred history', adding that the process of locating, preserving and establishing meaning around relics through narratives as well as reliquaries has 'sensory and emotional as well as cognitive dimensions'.⁹⁸ These aspects are clearly visible in the creation of a set of relics linked to Affre, and in some cases taken from his physical remains. In procuring and presenting these tangible traces of his sacrifice to the faithful, the Parisian diocese simultaneously established a sacred narrative of Affre's death and offered people a way in which to venerate and remember their archbishop in a manner that, as with all religious relics, foregrounded 'sensory and emotional' responses. Obtaining relics connected to Affre also responded to popular fervour, as demand for material traces of the archbishop's sacrifice in Paris was

94. Cruice, *Vie de Denis-Auguste Affre*, p. 512.

95. See J.-O. Boudon, *Monseigneur Darboy (1813–1871)* (Paris, 2011).

96. Affre was evidently familiar with contemporary work on Becket, having requested that Georges Darboy prepare an annotated French translation of the English scholar J.-A. Giles's book on the saint. See Darboy's preface in Georges Darboy, *Saint Thomas Becket, archevêque de Cantorbéry et martyr* (Paris, 1858), p. v.

97. Fureix, *La France des larmes*, pp. 55–7.

98. A. Walsham, 'Relics, Writing, and Memory in the English Counter Reformation: Thomas Maxfield and his Afterlives', *British Catholic History*, xxxiv (2018), pp. 77–105, at 78–9.

instantaneous and intense. Patrice Cruice described 'a pilgrimage' made by large numbers of Parisians in the days immediately following Affre's death: in addition to paying homage to the archbishop as his body lay in the *chapelle ardente* on the Île Saint-Louis, they followed the path he took to the faubourg Saint-Antoine, and sought out tangible relics to keep as devotional objects and souvenirs.⁹⁹ The parish priest of the Quinze-Vingts was forced to cut up the bloodied mattress Affre had lain on in the presbytery, in order to distribute small pieces to the crowds outside.¹⁰⁰ In October 1848, shortly after his formal investiture as archbishop, Affre's successor Marie-Dominique Sibour walked to the faubourg Saint-Antoine to undertake what he described as 'a pilgrimage ... walking in the footsteps of he who ... gave up his life for his flock'.¹⁰¹ Sibour's journey became a kind of Way of the Cross, with the new archbishop stopping to pray at key sites linked to Affre's final hours. At 26, rue du Faubourg-Saint-Antoine, he paused to view the 'sheets stained with martyr's blood' preserved by the family who lived there.¹⁰² Over time, Notre-Dame would become home to a range of Affre relics, including a framed lock of his hair, a blood-stained handkerchief, and a wallet in ecclesiastical purple (complete with mechanical pencil) that he was said to have had with him when he went to the barricades.¹⁰³

Religious relics traditionally include the body parts of saints and martyrs. In keeping with his wishes, Affre's heart was removed for burial at the chapel of the École des Carmes, the doctoral training school for priests he had founded on the rue de Vaugirard. His heart would eventually be placed in the chapel of Saint-Joseph-des-Carmes in August 1848, but prior to this it became a focal point for popular devotion, and a means of creating further secondary relics. Aware that the archbishop's heart was preserved in a crystal vessel at his residence throughout July and into early August, Parisians began to arrive with 'a very large quantity of medals, rosaries, images and other objects', which were diligently pressed against the relic by clerics.¹⁰⁴ This gesture invested these small, cheap *objets de piété* with the power of a sacred relic in their own right. Indeed, the immediate availability of small religious medals featuring Affre—some of which survive in the collections of the Musée Carnavalet in Paris—is testament to both the ability of makers of devotional objects to rapidly respond to demand, and to the existence of some form of popular devotion to the memory of the

99. Cruice, *Vie de Denis-Auguste Affre*, pp. 502–3.

100. *Ibid.*

101. J.-P. Daniélo, *Visites pastorales de Monseigneur Sibour, archevêque de Paris: Recueillies et publiées par M. J. Daniélo, ancien secrétaire de Chateaubriand* (Paris, 1852), p. 12.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

103. Most of the relics and items connected to Affre remain in the cathedral's collections but are not on public display, with some exceptions. See the unpublished catalogue, 'Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris. Inventaire des objets d'art et reliques' (Paris, 2011), volume 2, for item details and provenance for the Affre collection.

104. ACNDR, VI, entry for 5 Aug. 1848.

archbishop.¹⁰⁵ While Affre's heart was soon walled up behind a white marble plaque that describes him as 'Doctor, Pastor, Martyr' in the chapel of the Carmes, other corporeal relics were quickly prepared for public display and possible veneration. On 6 July, the chapter of Notre-Dame despatched the fatal bullet and some vertebrae removed from the archbishop's spine during his autopsy to the premises of one Monsieur Choiselat, a manufacturer of bronzes and ecclesiastical items, to be encased in what the chapter described as a 'type of shrine'.¹⁰⁶ Eventually, it was hoped, this shrine would be displayed to the public in the Treasury of Notre-Dame, which was then nearing completion.¹⁰⁷ The bullet and vertebrae returned encased in a gilded-bronze glass-walled reliquary, in neo-Gothic style to reflect the cathedral it was designed for. This relic was intended as both a sacred object for veneration and as a physical element in telling the story of Affre's sacrifice. The cathedral chapter requested that the relic be displayed 'in such a way as to show the trajectory of the bullet', and the rough metal ball was mounted on the end of a golden arrow that traversed the archbishop's spinal column (Fig. 4).

It is not clear to what extent this relic was ever used in religious ritual, or directly venerated. It was eventually displayed in the Treasury alongside Affre's death mask and other objects linked to him, including his pectoral cross.¹⁰⁸ In 1898, *La Semaine religieuse de Paris* reported that large numbers of visitors had come to the cathedral 'to visit the relics of the archbishop, martyr of charity', but offered no indication as to whether these 'visits' involved veneration.¹⁰⁹ Affre's memory, however, was built into the very fabric of Notre-Dame, in a process that embedded him within the lineage of Parisian diocesan history and of heroic martyrdom. As part of the great programme of renovation works carried out on the cathedral between the 1840s and 1860s by the Gothic revivalist architect, Viollet-le-Duc, a new wing of sacristies, robing rooms and a Treasury were built along the south elevation of the building. Viollet-le-Duc and his collaborators integrated Affre's image—and the narrative of self-sacrifice that became the core message of his death—into the stained glass and statuary commissioned for the

105. The medals and tokens that survive vary considerably in style and quality, from more sophisticated images of Affre to rough medals crafted on bullets from the insurrection. A particularly striking example is a tiny (4.5 cm tall) metal effigy of Affre standing on the *pavés* of the barricade, his arm raised in blessing, holding a branch to symbolise peace. Paris, Musée Carnavalet, ND13435, 'Effigie de Mgr Affre' (c.1848), available at <http://parismuseescollections.paris.fr/fr/musee-carnavalet/oeuvres/effigie-de-mgr-affre-benissant-1848#infos-principales> (accessed 29 July 2022).

106. ACNDP, VI, entry for 6 July 1848.

107. Viollet-le-Duc's extensive renovations of the cathedral included a sacristy wing that would house the treasury. The sacristy was eventually completed in 1850.

108. The relic is no longer on public view in the Treasury of Notre-Dame. The fire in the cathedral on 15 April 2019 does not appear to have reached the sacristy buildings, so the relic is likely to have survived. Guidebooks and other texts suggest it remained on public display until at least the 1950s. English-language guidebooks from the 1860s list the relic as an item of note for visitors to see in the Treasury; see, for example, *Galignani's New Paris Guide for 1867* (Paris, 1867), p. 315.

109. 'Chronique de la semaine. Paris', *La Semaine religieuse de Paris*, 28 June 1898, p. 23.



Figure 4. Relic and reliquary of Denis-Auguste Affre (vertebrae with mounted bullet). Treasury of Notre-Dame de Paris; author's photograph.

new wing. Affre is the central figure in the great window that dominates the Treasury, which pays homage to the bishops and archbishops of the Parisian diocese (Fig. 5).¹¹⁰ He is depicted lying on his deathbed, clad in white, surrounded by previous bishops of Paris (including Saint Denis), with the Gospel verse below: 'The good shepherd lays down his life for

110. The window was designed and manufactured by the leading firm Maréchal of Metz, in accordance with Viollet-le-Duc's guidance. See C. Bouchon, 'Faits contemporains dans le vitrail du XIX^e siècle', *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, xciii (1986), pp. 411–17.



Figure 5. Maréchal of Metz (manufacturer), window for the Treasury of Notre-Dame de Paris. Affre's body (in white) is depicted at the bottom of the window. Author's photograph.

his flock'. Affre is also present in the statues that overlook Viollet-le-Duc's sacristy cloister, alongside Parisian prelates from Denis to Maurice de Sully, who began the building of the cathedral. Of this group, Affre is the only bishop not from the medieval period. An anonymous letter dated 29 May 1853 to the leading sculptor Geoffroy-Dechaume, who created much of the statuary for the restored cathedral, outlined why Affre deserved to be memorialised in this way: as 'a good citizen, whose life was honourable and whose death was beautiful'.¹¹¹

As the years passed, commemoration of Affre's death increasingly became the preserve of the church, consolidating the initial efforts of

111. Cited in C. Lenfant, 'Un chef-d'oeuvre, la sacristie de Notre-Dame: La statuaire de Geoffroy-Dechaume', in L. de Finance and J.-M. Leniaud, eds, *Viollet-le-Duc: Les visions d'un architecte* (Paris, 2014), pp. 72–4.

the Parisian archdiocese after June 1848 to present him as a modern religious martyr. An annual Mass was offered at Notre-Dame around the anniversary of his death, with larger ceremonies and events organised in 1898 and 1948. For the fiftieth anniversary Mass, held on 28 June 1898, Stanislas Touchet, the bishop of Orléans, delivered a sermon that felt particularly pointed in the fraught contemporary political context. As the Dreyfus Affair raged, Touchet praised Affre as a model of peaceful conciliation and clerical neutrality. 'God wanted to present us with a prelate detached from all political formulas', he stated, '... passionate about the rights of the church and capable of defending them ... devoted, to the death, to his flock: and so it came to pass'.¹¹²

Curiously, it is the mystery of Affre's assassin that particularly illustrates the bifurcation in the trajectory of his memory, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are at least four accounts purporting to identify Affre's killer. In contrast to the refusal to apportion blame in 1848, the (usually) self-proclaimed assassins in these tales were all former insurgents. More striking, however, are the religious themes of repentance and redemption that underpin all but one of these stories, and the fact that they were almost uniformly a Catholic concern.¹¹³ In July 1898, the *Semaine religieuse de Paris* published a story in which a former chaplain of the Orléans asylum claimed a patient there was the assassin, driven to insanity by his crime and known for his violent outbursts towards priests and nuns. Even so, the dying man received the sacrament of penance and extreme unction—perhaps a sign, the chaplain mused, of Affre's intercession.¹¹⁴ In the next issue, the *Semaine religieuse* offered another account, one that claimed Affre's killer was, in fact, a Belgian called Laforce, who had left for California during the Gold Rush. Following the man's murder in the United States, Laforce's son reportedly stated, 'God punished my father and avenged his archbishop'.¹¹⁵

Other stories were even more explicit in their message of repentance, conversion and redemption. In 1912, the Catholic (and notoriously anti-Dreyfusard) newspaper *La Croix* reprinted part of a letter from one of Affre's great-nephews, originally published in *L'Éclair*. In it, he claimed that his great-uncle's remorseful assassin had become a Capuchin friar, and that 'his austere acts of penance had, for many years, served to greatly edify [his] community'.¹¹⁶ Though Affre himself did not become

112. Touchet's sermon is reproduced in the *Semaine religieuse de Paris*, 2 July 1898, p. 22.

113. The exception is the case of Coquelet, a man arrested in March 1851 following reports that he had been boasting about having killed Affre. He subsequently claimed that the assassin was, in fact, his brother, while the Coquelets' employer testified that neither man had left their workplace during the insurrection in June 1848. AN, BB/30/392A P74, 'Enquête sur le sieur Coquelet inculpé d'avoir assassiné Mgr. Affre, archevêque de Paris, en juin 1848', 1851.

114. 'Le meurtrier de Mgr Affre, archevêque de Paris', *La Semaine religieuse de Paris*, 2 July 1898, pp. 31–3.

115. 'Nouveaux détails sur l'assassin de Mgr Affre', *La Semaine religieuse de Paris*, 9 July 1898, pp. 69–70.

116. 'L'assassin de Mgr Affre', *La Croix*, 27 June 1912.

a major figure for religious devotion, as the archdiocese might have hoped, his memory—and the identity of his killer—could be invoked in the promotion of objects of piety. In the early 1920s the Lazarist priest Marie-Édouard Mott included the 1859 confession and conversion of Affre's assassin—in this version of events, a working-class Parisian living with his Protestant common-law wife—as an example of the 'wonders' achieved by the green scapular, a devotional item inspired by the reported visions of a young novice in Paris in the 1840s and granted papal approval in 1870.¹¹⁷ Mott's pamphlet even included a photograph of Affre's memorial in Notre-Dame, as if to affirm a connection between 'the holy archbishop' and the green scapular.¹¹⁸ While the resurgence of interest in identifying Affre's assassin can be explained as ordinary curiosity fifty years after his death, the extent to which the various narratives were rooted in an explicitly religious message underlines the divergence between Catholic and republican commemorations of the archbishop. In the case of the green scapular, it is striking how his memory could be exploited to promote the kind of Catholicism—supernatural, feminine, rooted in *objets de piété*, and seemingly incompatible with political liberalism or republicanism—that became particularly prevalent in the second half of the nineteenth century.

V

In 1862, fourteen years after the fractious debate over its final location, Affre's monument was finally installed in the chapel of Saint Denis in the cathedral of Notre-Dame. Designed by Auguste Debay following an open competition launched in late 1848, the memorial had been the subject of several delays and wrangling between the government of the Second Republic, and subsequently the Second Empire, the sculptor and the cathedral chapter.¹¹⁹ In contrast to the depiction of Affre in the Treasury window, Debay's design drew on more secular, rather than sacred, styles of memorial. Other submissions to the competition were similar to conventional ecclesiastical memorials and religious statuary; the maquette submitted by Victor Baltard, later the architect of Les Halles, featured a recumbent effigy of Affre in his vestments, with a bas-relief of the moment he was shot.¹²⁰ Henry de

117. The reported visions occurred at the mother house of the Daughters of Charity on the rue du Bac, better known as the site of the visions that led to the creation of the Miraculous Medal in the 1830s. See M.-E. Mott, *Le Scapulaire vert et ses prodiges* (Paris, 1923), pp. 69–76.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

119. AN, F/21/24, Beaux-Arts, Commission des œuvres d'art, 'A. De Bay (*sic*). Monument de l'archevêque de Paris'.

120. The inscription for Baltard's monument notably described Affre as a 'martyr for Christian and pastoral charity'. Musée Carnavalet, S1987, Victor Baltard, 'Projet de tombeau de Monseigneur Denys Auguste Affre (1793–1848), archevêque [*sic*] de Paris', 1848, available at <https://www.parismuseescollections.paris.fr/fr/musee-carnavalet/oeuvres/projet-de-tombeau-de-monseigneur-denys-auguste-affre-1793-1848-archeveque-de#infos-principales> (accessed 29 July 2022).

Triqueti's design recalled a pieta, with the injured Affre being taken from the barricade into the arms of Christ.¹²¹ Debay's finished monument (Fig. 6) captures Affre at the moment of his wounding, but does not sacralise it in the manner of Triqueti's design. Lying on the paving stones at the foot of the barricade, the archbishop holds the palm of a



Figure 6. Eugène Atget, 'Notre-Dame de Paris. Tombeau de Mgr Affre' (1905–6). Bibliothèque nationale de France; <https://gallica.bnf.fr>.

121. Orléans, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Henry de Triqueti, 'Projet de tombeau pour Monseigneur Affre, archevêque de Paris', 1848, reproduced in D. Rykner, 'Sculpteurs romantiques pour Orléans (3): Trois albums de dessins de Triqueti', *La Tribune de l'Art*, 10 Jan. 2021, available at <https://www.latribunedelart.com/sculpteurs-romantiques-pour-orleans-3-trois-albums-de-dessins-de-triqueti> (accessed 29 July 2022).

martyr, which draws the viewer's eye to the inscription above: PUISSE MON SANG ÊTRE LE DERNIER VERSÉ (May mine be the last blood shed). Underneath, above a bas-relief of Affre being greeted by insurgents as he attempted his mission of reconciliation, are the words from the Gospel of John insisted upon in the National Assembly: LE BON PASTEUR DONNE SA VIE POUR SON TROUPEAU (The Good Shepherd gives his life for his flock). Across the Seine and up the Montagne Sainte-Genève, meanwhile, there was no trace of the 'Temple of Humanity' or edifying republican statues and paintings envisaged by Babaud-Larivière in the summer of 1848. In 1852, with the Second Republic effectively dead in the water, the Panthéon had once again become the church of Sainte-Genève, by official decree.

The summer of 1848 was a turning point both in political and religious terms, as well as in the story of church—state relationships in France and Europe. Despite the insistence of some contemporaries that the defeat of the rebellion reiterated the triumph of the February Revolution, the June insurrection signalled a rupture in the fragile Second Republic. As reactionary forces sought to restore 'order' across Europe in 1849, 1850 and 1851, the vision of more politically liberal Catholics like Frédéric Ozanam of a closer relationship between democratic regimes and the Catholic church seemed increasingly impossible. Affre's message of reconciliation faded fast in a post-June climate of fear and hostility, as many turned towards those who promised order and morality. By late November, Pope Pius IX had fled Rome, marking the beginning of an increasingly rightward shift in the Catholic church and cementing a spirit of reaction among some European Catholics. There was a coming together of church and state in the aftermath of 1848—but in the name of moral order and conservatism, rather than a greater accommodation of liberal ideals.¹²² Indeed, it can be argued that the events of 1848 helped set in train the culture wars that would shape the remainder of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to the turn towards Rome and resurgence of ultramontanist that followed the repression of revolution, the clergy became 'key figures in the development of a cultural counter-revolution ... [and] in the legitimisation of an authoritarian political regime'.¹²³

The case of Denis Affre, however—both his fatal decision to go to the barricades, and the efforts to memorialise him by both republican state and the French church—reflects a brief window in which conciliation seemed not just possible, but highly desirable. Affre's actions as a would-be arbiter of peace reflected the cautiously friendly relationship that had developed between the French Catholic church and the new republic since February 1848. In death, as this article has shown, he was hailed as a symbol of reconciliation, a dual martyr for both the *patrie*

122. Price, *Church and the State in France*, pp. 124–5.

123. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

and religion. In his furious response to the *coup d'état* of December 1851, Victor Hugo highlighted the symbolic role of the Panthéon in the slow death of the Second Republic, arguing that Louis-Napoleon 'drove a sacred nail into the wall of the Panthéon' in returning the building to the church, 'and he hung his *coup d'état* on this nail'.¹²⁴ Yet only three years earlier, the Panthéon might have become a venue to cement the *rapprochement* between the church and moderate republic. The archbishop's elevation to the status of national hero by the republic, as Babaud-Larivière's plans for Affre's memorial show, would present him as a patriotic example to educate successive generations, and in so doing might help to end any lingering antagonism between the church and the republic.

The tense debates in the National Assembly in July 1848 over the location of Affre's state-funded statue reveal the mutual suspicion that still lingered between the French Catholic church and some elements within the republican government. As had so often been the case in its history, the Panthéon once again became a site of contestation, as republicans sought to claim the archbishop of Paris as a model of republican patriotism while some Catholics revealed a distinct unease with the idea of remembering *le bon pasteur* in the same place as godless *philosophes*. However, the insistence of the vicars-general on locating the statue in the cathedral of Notre-Dame may, when considered alongside their efforts to collect and conserve Affre's relics, also suggest another motivation for centring commemoration around the metropolitan cathedral. The diocese was keen to make the most out of their fallen prelate by creating a kind of martyr cult around him, explicitly linked to martyrs of the past, and embedding him as a central icon within the newest parts of Notre-Dame. In this respect, Affre is a fascinating, early example of efforts to create a modern 'martyr of charity', pre-empting the increased usage of the term in the Catholic church in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Although the designation 'martyr of charity' remains an unofficial term in canon law, it was famously used by Paul VI in beatifying Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish friar who volunteered to die in place of a fellow prisoner at Auschwitz.¹²⁵

Most significant of all is the message of healing a fractured republic that underpins so much of the memorial culture that surrounded Affre and his death. It has been suggested that the focus on the archbishop's sacrifice in June reflects the coming together of the twin forces of reaction and order, the church and an increasingly right-wing government, reflecting a definitive break in the Second Republic. As this article shows, however, a closer examination of the narratives of Affre's death, how contemporaries understood his actions, and most importantly the

124. Victor Hugo, *Napoléon-le-petit* (1852; Paris, n.d.), p. 65.

125. On Kolbe as martyr, see K.L. Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why* (New York, 1996), pp. 144–7.

diverse ways in which they sought to remember him, complicates this picture. In the wake of his death, Affre's message was presented not as one of rupture but of reconciliation. This *bon pasteur* could transcend divisions of faith and politics to become a benign, rallying figure for unity and forgiveness in the aftermath of a bloody civil conflict. This contrasts with the triumphalism, and particularly the demonisation of the defeated insurgents, seen in so many other responses to the June Days. The care taken by the government and the diocese of Paris *not* to apportion blame for the archbishop's death, and indeed the insistence of some eyewitnesses that the fatal shot had come from the side of the forces of order, is particularly striking in this context, given how easy it would have been to vilify the insurgents for this transgressive act. Instead, the visual and material culture and long-term commemorative plans that marked Affre's death framed him as a dual martyr: of patriotism and charity, transcending religious and secular divides to unite those on either side of the June barricades. His memory could offer a shared focal point for overcoming division, reminding citizens of the republic that—as Charles Lagrange imagined the message of a statue to Affre at the place de la Bastille—'all Frenchmen were brothers and friends'.¹²⁶ While these moves towards reconciliation ultimately failed, the presence of these themes in both secular and religious memorial culture around Affre sheds new light on our understanding of the June Days, and the relationship between the Catholic church and French republic in the turmoil of 1848.

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126. *Le Moniteur universel*, 18 July 1848.