

## THE PARISIAN CATHOLIC PRESS AND THE FEBRUARY 1848 REVOLUTION

The spark that ignited the 1848 Revolution in France was the cancellation of a large protest demonstration which was to precede a 22 February political banquet in the XII arrondissement of Paris. The immediate issue was the right to hold meetings (the right of assembly), but the underlying issue was one of political power and reform. That this action led to a revolution which overthrew the Orleanist monarchy and instituted a republic surprised everyone. One might think that the Catholics in France who were by far and large royalist would bemoan the end of a monarchy — much as many had done when the 1830 Revolution replaced the Bourbon Charles X with the Orleanist Louis-Philippe. The Catholic periodicals which existed in 1848, however, tell another story about the reception of this mid-century revolution in France. They are valuable but neglected resources which elucidate what Catholics thought and what their concerns were in 1848. While many Catholics (and especially clergy) did retain legitimist sympathies, equating religion with a particular political orientation obscures the fact that there were other views. After surveying the Catholic press of 1848, this article examines how that periodical press was affected by and how it responded to the February revolution and the proclamation of a new republic.

### **Catholic periodicals in Paris in 1848**

At the time of the February 1848 Revolution, twenty-two Catholic periodicals <sup>(1)</sup> were published in Paris (See Figure 1.). Only three (*L'Ami de la religion*, *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, and *Journal des villes et des campagnes*) had existed throughout the July Monarchy; two others had the same name as earlier periodicals (*Le Correspondant* and *Le Mémorial catholique*), but the former had disappeared in 1831 and reappeared over a decade later in 1843, and

(1) The Parisian Catholic Press during the July Monarchy is the subject of my forthcoming manuscript.