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Provides a perspective on how Catholics, the largest single religious group in the United States, have interacted with American culture throughout the history of the country and up to the present day.

This volume in the American Religious Experience series chronicles the history and present situation of the Catholic Church and the American Catholic subculture in the United States. Catholics have had a long history in America, and they have often had conflicting demands: should they remain loyal to the authority of the pope in Rome, or should they become more accommodating to American culture and society? The Catholic Experience in America combines historical, sociological, philosophical, and theological and religious scholarship to provide the reader with an overview of the general trends of American Catholic history, without over-simplifying the complex nature of that history.

The Catholic Experience in America examines many different aspects of what it's like to be a Catholic in United States today, including: the diversity of Catholicism within the Church, including the issues of race, ethnicity, and gender; major turning points in American Catholic history, and how they have affected the everyday experience of American Catholics, such as immigration and nativism, the separation of church and state, and the election of John Kennedy as president; how the Church has handled such contemporary issues as homosexuality, birth control and abortion, and religious education; and the rise and fall of a Catholic subculture capable of providing a Catholic religious identity in America.

The volume includes several appendices to further the readers understanding of the Catholic experience in America, including brief discussions of key documents and Church organizations, a glossary of terms, and basic demographic and statistical information.