

Catholics in Conflict, 1900-1945

Conference

28 – 29 May 2025

King's College London

Call for Papers

From internal doctrinal struggles and external persecution to the effects of wars and civil strife, the Catholic Church has been affected by and endured conflicts of different kinds since its earliest emergence as an institution. This was no less true in the 20th century, and the period from 1914 to 1945 in particular, as the Church and its members confronted not only the two World Wars and a multitude of local and regional conflicts, but the great social and political upheavals of the period. While the human experience through this tumultuous period was shared by all people, including those of entirely different denominations, it is also the case that the particular history and commitments of Catholicism suggest that the Catholic experience may provide a distinct perspective and offer case studies that cross disciplines and approaches. This extends from the role of the Catholic Church and Catholic institutions, Catholic theologians and public figures, and ordinary people identifying as Catholic or working within Catholic contexts, to the ways in which the Catholic viewpoint itself provides a unique transnational and transhistorical lens.

In May 1945, Pope Pius XII gave a “cry of humble and ardent gratitude” as he looked to the end of the war, and issued a prayer to “implore also of divine omnipotence and goodness” to the end of warfare in the Far East. Marking 80 years from that address, and the anniversary of the end of World War Two, this conference seeks to encourage and develop interdisciplinary engagement with the study of Catholics and Catholicism amid military and social conflicts centred in particular on the period between 1900-1945. Recognising that many of the movements, trends and causes of that critical phase were the outworking of longer and deeper strands, we welcome contributions from historians, literary scholars, social and political scientists, theologians and others with an academic interest in the period related to the themes of the conference with a focus in any historical aspect of the period. For the purposes of the conference, “conflict” should be understood in the broadest sense to refer to social and political tumult as well as warfare and kinetic battles, and we encourage consideration of individuals and case studies from a wide geographical range, including people and places that may have been overlooked or ignored.

We invite submissions for short exploratory 5-minute presentations, full 20-minute papers, and proposals for round-table discussions. The conference is open to academics across fields and career stages; current doctoral students and early career postdocs are especially encouraged to apply.

Proposals should include a title, an abstract of c. 300 words, your current or most recent academic affiliation, and a brief CV. Please state whether you are submitting for a short or a full paper.

Please submit proposals to Joshua Madrid and Alastair Lockhart: joshua.madrid.21@ucl.ac.uk and ASL21@cam.ac.uk by **Friday 14 March 2025**.

Thanks to the generous sponsorship by the **Centre for the Study of War Experience** at **Regis University**, registration fees and food will be covered throughout the conference.

