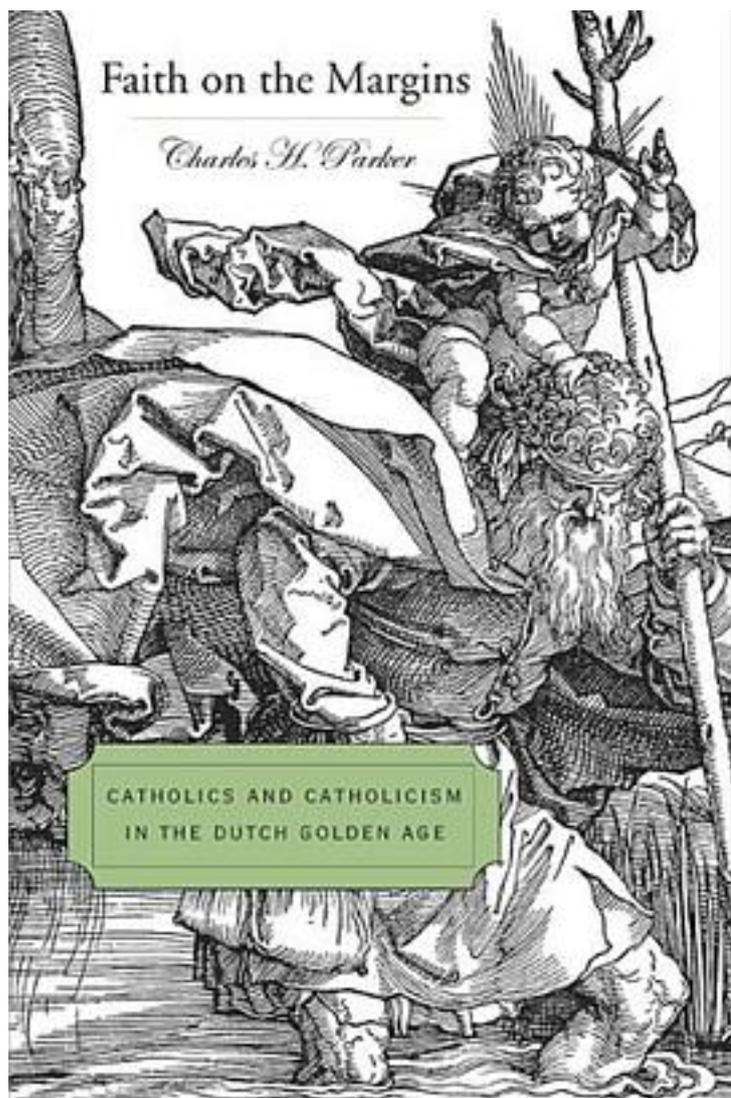


Faith on the Margins



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In the wake of the 1572 revolt against Spain, the new Dutch Republic outlawed Catholic worship and secularized all church property. Calvinism prevailed as the public faith, yet Catholicism experienced a resurgence in the first half of the 17th century, with membership rivalling that of the Calvinist church. In a wide-ranging analysis of a marginalized yet vibrant religious minority, Charles Parker examines this remarkable revival. It had little to do with the traditional Dutch reputation for tolerance. A keen sense of persecution, combined with a vigorous program of reform, shaped a movement that imparted meaning to Catholics in a Protestant republic. A pastoral organization known as the Holland Mission emerged to establish a vigorous Catholic presence. A chronic shortage of priests enabled laymen and women to exercise an exceptional degree of leadership in local congregations. Increased interaction between clergy and laity reveals a picture that differs sharply from the standard account of the Counter-Reformation's clerical dominance and imposition of church reform on a reluctant populace. There were few places in early modern Europe where a proscribed religious minority was so successful in remaining a permanent fixture of society. *Faith on the Margins* casts light on the relationship between religious minorities and hostile environments.

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