



# **New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era**

*Kathleen Sprows Cummings*

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American Catholic women rarely surface as protagonists in histories of the United States. Offering a new perspective, Kathleen Sprows Cummings places Catholic women at the forefront of two defining developments of the Progressive Era: the emergence of the "New Woman" and Catholics' struggle to define their place in American culture. Cummings highlights four women: Chicago-based journalist Margaret Buchanan Sullivan; Sister Julia McGroarty, SND, founder of Trinity College in Washington, D.C., one of the first Catholic women's colleges; Philadelphia educator Sister Assisium McEvoy, SSJ; and Katherine Eleanor Conway, a Boston editor, public figure, and antisuffragist. Cummings uses each woman's story to explore how debates over Catholic identity were intertwined with the renegotiation of American gender roles.

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