

“The Propagation Society—More Free Than Welcome”

[Nathaniel Currier]

ca. 1855

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This cartoon was published independently by Nathaniel Currier circa 1855. “The Propagation Society- More Free than Welcome” reflects the Americans point of view on the Irish Catholic immigrants in 1855. In the cartoon the priest is bombarding the Americans to step aside so that they can take over all spiritual welfare. Embedded into the cartoon is a message of an anti-Catholic group the “Know Nothings” and their attempt to get rid of the Irish Catholics.

“The Propagation Society” is a catholic proselyting organization, a propagation of faith. Brother Jonathan holds out the bible while saying “we Know –Nothing but this book for all spiritual welfare”, alongside him leaning against the flagpole is “Young America” saying “you will not put the mark of the beast on America”. By analyzing the cartoon and what each character I found that the Americans view of Catholics was mostly that of fear of them taking over. This is an Anti-Catholic cartoon reflecting the nativist’s perception of the threat posed by the Roman church influence in the U.S through Irish immigration and their catholic education.

