

G T S P A MISSI T N S

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Catholics helped found the United States of America

By Cecelia Reynolds
Contributor

As we approach the 257th celebration of Independence Day, it is important to remember that the very seeds of our great nation were sown by people searching for religious freedom. They longed for a place to choose their religion and freely practice it without fear of persecution in all its forms.

Although many think only Protestants held the key roles in the founding of the United States, there were some integral men and women who helped solidify Catholics' place in the new country, both by their patriotism, enlightenment ideals and their actions, which were often risky both to their wealth and their very lives.

Maryland was founded by a Catholic,

George Calvert, for Catholics, the only colony to claim this distinction. However, even there Catholics found themselves prohibited from holding public office and were



on the receiving end of discrimination and mistrust from a largely Protestant population in the surrounding colonies. After proving their patriotism and courage, they eventually were able to hold state and national offices within the government as many came to realize being a Catholic was not in opposition to the desire for liberty and independence from England.

Originally, many viewed Catholicism as being at odds with patriotism, proclaiming Catholics could only be loyal to Rome. After men like Charles Carroll, John Barry, Thomas Fitzsimmons, and others risked lives and fortune for the cause of independence,

early Americans recognized that patriotism could be compatible with Catholicism.

It seems redundant to modern Catholics, but love of country and a desire for freedom are contained within the teachings of Catholicism.

The American Revolution is a wonderful part of our history. To none ought it be more thoroughly known in all its fullness and detail than to Catholics.

Well declared was it by the last Council at Baltimore that the Providence of God led

to the formation of this Republic. Our Prelates spoke with the voice of Infallible Truth, almost, when they enunciated these words: "We believe that our country's heroes were the instru-



ments of the God of Nations in establishing this home of freedom." ("Catholics and the American Revolution")

Charles Carroll

Charles Carroll is probably the most well known as the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence. Carroll was considered the wealthiest man in the colonies, whose wealth would be seized by the British if the "American experiment" failed.

Carroll was descended from Irish nobility and his great grandfather insisted his father go to America in 1688. Charles Carroll the settler quickly grew his land holdings and his son, Charles Carroll of Annapolis, grew in wealth and respectability. Charles Carroll of Carrollton became the heir to this wealth and land.

The family owned many estates and their example of just treatment and desire for it from Great Britain placed them squarely on the patriot side of those in the colonies.

Charles was educated in Europe where he embraced enlightenment ideals such as natural law, liberty, progress, toleration, fraternity, constitutional government and separation of church and state — not the royalist perspective as one may have thought.

When he returned to the colonies with his law degree, it was in the middle of the rejection of the Stamp Act by the colonists. Carroll immediately saw the injustice and was outspoken about Britain's unlawful actions, as the Stamp Act went against the British constitution.

Carroll believed that it was every Englishman's "privilege from birth ... of being taxed with their own consent." (McClanahan) Carroll firmly believed that the only way to secure these rights was to join the cause and ultimately the War for Independence with his fellow colonists.

Carroll was a staple in Maryland and the colonial government, even before he could legally vote or hold office because of his religion. He was appointed to the first Continental Congress and helped create the Maryland Constitution and Declaration of Rights.

Because of his involvement in politics, "Maryland later lifted the ban on Catholics holding public office." (LaForce)

In later years, Carroll became a member of the Maryland legislature and then a representative to the new United States Congress. His ardent love of country did not conflict with his strong Catholic faith.

Andrew Salzmann, a professor of American Catholic history at Benedictine College explains, "Revolutionary-era Americans did not see any incompatibility between Carroll's Catholicism and America's fledgling republic, which both shared Enlightenment ideals." (LaForce) He viewed holding office as a duty.

See page 8

Gospa Missions

Mission Statement: Gospa Missions is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Evans City, PA.

It was established in A.D. 1990 for the purpose of evangelizing the world's people to the Catholic Church.

Gospa Missions is dedicated to serving our Lord, spreading devotion to His Blessed Mother and general faith-building. We are obedient to our bishop, spiritual directors and the Magisterium.

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Gospa Missions' religious goods store, Amazing Grace, is also available for your conference or event.

This newsletter is dedicated to the Holy Spirit. May we always do God's will.

A Message from Mary Rutkoski

Hello, again, everyone.

Let me introduce to you the editorial that Tom worked so hard on for August 1995.

That's 28 years ago that Tom picked up his pen to explain how much he really loved the Catholic Church of America and the Blessed Mother. He wanted to help you all understand what it meant to him – and what it should mean to you too.

Tom travelled to so many places, all over the world. He finally got me to go along with him – he needed help! The outcome of those travels often did not work out well for him. There were denials by bishops in Tom's attempt to explain that the parish members didn't really believe Jesus is alive in the Eucharist. There were also letters sent to him that were nasty and mean.

The letters that Tom received often went like this, "How dare you interfere!" Let God be God."

Then Tom stood back and spent time thanking God for so many reasons, especially for God giving him a second chance to love Him. He promised to listen to the Holy Father as he taught his flock, and that is our responsibility still. And it is the responsibility of being Catholic.

Tom asked you to join him in daily Mass, fifteen decades of the rosary each day, and fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays on behalf of ourselves, our priests and our Church. Please join me in living out his request. Please pray for Tom. We know he's praying for us.

Choose whose side you are on

By Thomas Rutkoski Founder

As I place in this newsletter information to indicate the deterioration of the Catholic Church of America, it would seem to be devastating news. As I personally have been asked not to speak in a diocese by a bishop because he said he didn't need my help, one would say that is his right.



But if you knew that when I asked what he had against me and he couldn't say, would that make you wonder? He preferred to ask "What would you tell my people?" I replied that I would explain that they really don't believe Jesus is alive in the Eucharist.

He replied "For sure I don't want you speaking here." In light of this, could a person earnestly think that this a sad situation? The current statistics prove the statement to be true.

I truly do feel compelled to muster as many people as possible to pray for our Church. I do feel compelled to lay down my life for the cause. But am I right?

A person from Phoenix, Arizona — and this really upsets me — didn't have the guts to sign or address his or her complaint letter, read me the riot act about my getting

involved and sounding an alarm. I always throw out all unsigned letters, but I got far enough into this letter, before I realized it wasn't signed, to get the crux of it all, and then I threw it away.

The letter began, "God is purging the Church and the world. How dare you interfere! Let God be God."

The writer believes I have no right to question what is happening to the Church. Excuse me, but am I not my brother's keeper? On the other hand, is she right? Should we just stand by and let our Church deteriorate?

See top of page 3

Tom's editorial continued

I think not! I further think we all will be held accountable for our lack of desire to do something. But I don't think any of this is bad news.

I thank God for choosing one of the lowliest, most sinful creatures He could find. I thank Him for pulling me from the very edge of the fire and giving me a job in the vineyard. I thank Him for giving me a second chance and I will try all the days of my life to fan the ember He has placed in me into flames.

This is the good news and no one can be happier about the good news than I. I rejoice in God, my Savior! So don't ever get me wrong when I point to things that need fixing. I am following the Light and that Light will lead me home. To the unsigned person, I say, "Get thee behind me."

I will listen to the Holy Father as he teaches us, the laity, our responsibility. And that is the responsibility of being Catholic!

Please join me in daily Mass, 15 decades of the rosary each day and fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays on behalf of ourselves, our priests and our Church. Let's all sound the alarm. Choose today whose side you are on.

Reprinted from August 1995.



Our Lady's Power Hour

with reflections by
His Excellency
Bishop Joseph Strickland

We will be praying
for our families, our Church and our
country
WEDNESDAY NIGHTS
at 9 p.m. EST

To join, sign up at www.gospa.org and click on the banner at the top of the page.



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www.gospa.org July 2023 3



An update on Gospa Missions, Abode for Children

By Chris ReynoldsPresident
Gospa Missions and Abode for Children

I'm excited to update you on how things are going here at the mission. It has been a busy six months with a revamp of our website with easier filtering, more products and a new cleaner look. We have been working hard on the retreat we have planned for Aug. 19 with some great speakers, Holy Mass, confessions and of course our store. If you haven't visited the store in Evans City lately stop by and see all the new items. Don't forget to check out our new website and see some of the great blog posts created by our staff (gospa.org).

I also want to update you on Abode for Children. Father Allam was here in May for his annual visit and report. We received an update on the previous year and talked about the future Junior College for Girls.

I am happy to announce we were able to raise the \$120,000 needed for phase one of the project, taking advantage of the matching funds that a generous donor put forth. Next is raising the phase two amount of \$120,000. Can you make a pledge over the next year to help us raise the balance of \$240,000 needed to open for the 2024-2025 school year?

Our website allows for automatic pledges to be paid by debit or credit card. This will cut down on cost of sending reminders. There is a banner at the top of the page for "Girls Junior College." You can

also make a pledge using the enclosed slip and send in a check to Abode for Children.

Despite their impoverished and challenging backgrounds, the children at our orphanages and school are a great source of hope for the future! And this year, it is our hope to give the girls there an even brighter future by providing them with a safe, faith-filled home to continue their education at a junior college.

While some of the children have lost their parents, most children who live in our orphanages and attend our school are "social orphans," meaning that their parents are still living, but work jobs that are incredibly demanding and for very low wages. These conditions make it impossible for them to be present and provide for the needs of their children. By providing these children with a high-quality education, we equip them to build a better life for themselves and their future families, ending the cycle of poverty.

Girls are especially at risk to this cycle of poverty. Education beyond the tenth grade is not widely accessible for girls, and their lack of education means that, at best, they are resigned to the same low wages their parents earn. At worst, they may be married off at a young age for a dowry simply to relieve a financial burden on their family. It is heartbreaking that these young women face such a grim reality.

With the education gained at a junior college, a young woman can lift her family out of dire poverty. Instead of menial

labor, working in the local farm fields, or a sweat shop, she can earn a good living in an office or other businesses that pays more than a subsistence wage. This is life-changing for her, her parents, and her future husband and children.

You can help end the cycle of poverty by giving generously today. If you have any questions, please call or email Jessica jessica@gospa.org or myself chris@gospa.org.

Father Allam has returned to India and the children have returned to school for the year. He sent a message that they received letters from their sponsors and local children and were very excited. They had a Eucharistic procession and Holy Mass to celebrate the returning to school. We will have new children joining the orphanage since our graduates have moved on.

On the home front here at the mission, we have been working hard trying to clean up our Abode for Children database and automate some of our systems for reminders, receipts and thank you letters to reduce cost and staff time.

Please don't forget Our Lady's Power Hour on Wednesday nights continues to grow, please join us at 9 p.m. EST. There is a link on our website or you can register and an email reminder will be sent to you with the link. Our Lady asked us in most of her apparitions to pray the Rosary and we take this request seriously.

Please pray for us as we will be praying for you.

New school year begins at Abode for Children



Students and staff pose for a photo on the first day of classes.





Students receive letters from their sponsors on the first day of classes.



Above, students take part in Adoration of the Eucharist. Right, female students hold up the letters from their sponsors.



www.gospa.org July 2023 5

God bless you!

By Ann Walker Gospa staff

Does this picture conjure up thoughts of feeling under the weather and sneezing up a storm? I think about religious freedom when I hear someone sneeze. Why? Well, when my friend's daughter said, "God Bless You" to a fellow high school student, her teacher responded — in front of the class, "Don't you dare try to spread your religious views onto the class." The highschooler was mortified.

The boy had already responded, "Thank you." It was just a statement that so many people say all the time — a pleasantry that people voice to one another when they sneeze. Most likely, they don't even know why they say it. They just do it out of habit. I wonder what God thinks about this. I think He would be disappointed.

This isn't meant to talk badly about the school system. There are many teachers who do a great job, no matter where they are teaching. However, this particular scene illustrates that not only individuals can get physically sick with colds. America seems to be going through its own illness.

Many ills in society took hold when religion was taken out of the school system. America was built on freedoms. I think about the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights which guarantees many freedoms, including the freedom of speech and the freedom of religion.

I feel that I missed out by not getting to know our founder Tom Rutkoski. When I look through Gospa's newsletters from the past, I can see that Tom had some very strong opinions.

Throughout his editorials, Tom's love for God and America was evident. He could see that changes were taking place in American society, and he wasn't afraid to voice any disapproval. I wonder if Tom envisioned a day when we would no longer be able to say, "God bless you" to someone who sneezes.

Now that I am working at Gospa Missions, I realize how wonderful it is to be able to pray several times each day. We have the freedom to praise our Lord as well as offer prayers for those who have requested it. I can see that a lot of people are



Image by Mojca-Peter from Pixabay

hurting. Life can be challenging, and when we are able to lift prayers up for others, it gives us strength. You can feel the Spirit of God moving through us to reassure us that things will be okay since He stands by our side. When others feel like they have to say something disparaging just so they feel better, I end up praying for them. Maybe they need to be blessed.

Where did the term, "God bless you" come from? There are many theories. The one I remember from my youth had to do with the Bubonic Plague and how people blessed each other when they sneezed because they knew how bad the illness was. They wanted God to protect their loved ones in case they couldn't fight off the disease.

If we rely on that definition, then it is heartbreaking when we hear that high school students may be afraid to say something that they have been saying since they were children. Most people don't even give it a second thought when they utter those words. Why should anyone have to worry about something so innocent?

Why would anyone be offended by hearing the words "God bless you?" Just mentioning God's name doesn't mean that someone is trying to force others to accept their religion.

However, when I hear that people are so easily offended by a simple choice of

words, it appears they are using their love of things other than God as their own type of religion. I think about how many times I have heard words that have offended me. Sometimes it is best to keep quiet and offer up silent prayers for those who feel the need to say discouraging words. I try to think about what they are going through that makes them feel the need to say unkind things.

Maybe they are going through something that I'm not aware of. Maybe they are unaware of what they are saying. It is when someone repeatedly says demeaning things with intent to discourage others that I feel is particularly disappointing to God.

I know my friend's daughter was pretty upset when she was called out in front of her classmates. My friend did her best to calm down her daughter and tried to get her to remember that people have different points of view. Others' views don't have to make an impact upon us — we can choose to rise above.

I think many of us were raised to show a level of respect towards authority figures like the teacher in the classroom. Since I often worry about speaking up, I usually try to "play the game" of going along to get along, but at some point, we need to think about what God desires for us such as speaking truths. We still have the freedom in America to have our faith and speak our truths.

Psalm 27:1 says, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" We shouldn't be afraid to stand up for what we believe in when it honors God. What if Tom had given into those who tried to discourage him from pursuing Our Lady's mission?

Not everyone will agree with us. We just need to respond in a courteous way. God will be in our corner if we stand by Him. Hopefully, our prayers for them will be the seed that will plant a new attitude in them or maybe even us! If people can see that we respond in a kind way, they may be surprised and might just learn something positive themselves.

May God bless all of us and help us to move forward with the hope that we can get back to a time when people don't have to think so hard about simple sayings.

Summer reading options from Amazing Grace bookstore

"The Liberty Threat: Attack on Religious Freedom in America Today," by James Tonkowich

057-0104, \$14.95

In "The Liberty Threat," James Tonkowich explores the development of religious liberty, from ancient Rome to the birth of America to the current day. With powerful examples fresh from today's courts, Tonkowich documents the growing and increasingly brazen efforts to drive religion from the public square. "The Liberty Threat" is both a chilling wake-up call and a clear call to action for Christians everywhere.



"Pray. Think. Act. Make Better Decisions with the Desert Fathers," by J. Augustine Wetta, O.S.B.

059-0475, \$17.95

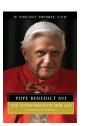
Benedictine Father Augustine Wetta reaches back into monastic history to answer one of the most critical questions facing young people today: "How do I make up my mind?" With his characteristic wit and novel approach to classical art, Father Augustine looks to the wisdom of the Desert Fathers to unearth an ancient and highly efficient method for resolving life's most pressing dilemmas — even in the midst of distractions, temptations and disruptions.



"Pope Benedict XVI: The Conscience of Our Age," by D. Vincent Twomey, S.V.D.

059-0473, \$19.95

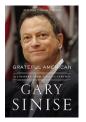
Divine Word Father D. Vincent Twomey, a former doctoral student of Joseph Ratzinger and longtime friend of the pope offers a unique double-presentation of the man, Pope Benedict XVI -- a theological portrait that encompasses both an overview of the writings, teachings and thought of the brilliant theologian and spiritual writer, as well as the man himself, his personality traits and how he communicated with others.



"Grateful American: A Journey from Self to Service," by Gary Sinese

059-0422, \$18.99

Theater icon, award-winning film and television star and American patriot Gary Sinise shares the never-before-told story of his journey from troublemaking Chicago kid to cofounder of the legendary Steppenwolf Theater Company, world-famous actor and tireless advocate for America's active duty defenders, veterans and first responders.



"Light and Leaven: Challenge of Laity in the Twenty-First Century," by Bishop Joseph E. Strickland 051-0221, \$15.95

Bishop Joseph Strickland is one of the Catholic Church's boldest and most courageous leaders. His outspoken support of orthodox faith and morals, the sanctity of unborn life and reforming Catholic institutions have made him a hero even to Catholics outside his small East Texas diocese. In "Light and Leaven," he offers a forthright perspective on the state of the Church and the world today and calls on the lay faithful to meet its challenges unflinchingly.



"The Desecrators: Defeating the Cancel Culture Mob and Reclaiming One Nation Under God," by Matt Schlapp and Deal W. Hudson

059-0460, \$27.95

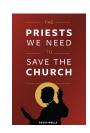
The Desecrators tear down not only monuments but human nature, the biblical-natural conception of marriage, the family, parental rights, fact-based education, traditional moral values and the Church, to name a few. In this powerfully provocative book, Matt Schlapp and Deal W. Hudson provide firsthand accounts of the Desecrators' actions and intentions, including their remarkably angry and uncharitable treatment of President Donald Trump, which Hudson and Schlapp uniquely observed.



"The Priests We Need to Save the Church," by **Kevin Wells**

057-0164, \$17.95

From scores of insightful interviews with modern priests, exorcists, seminary formators and even disillusioned laity, Kevin Wells draws forth a blueprint for priestly holiness that can once again fill our Church with priests abounding with sincere, supernatural faith, on fire with God's love, and moved by the irresistible impulse to save souls, no matter the cost to themselves.



"Blessed Carlo Acutis: A Saint in Sneakers," by **Courtney Mares**

052-0219, \$17.95

Discover the inspiring story of Blessed Carlo Acutis, the first Millennial to be beatified by the Catholic Church. This tech-savvy teen has shown the world that computer coding and video games are not mutually exclusive from sainthood.



"The Hidden Treasure: Holy Mass," by St. Leonard of Port Maurice

825-0044, \$9.95

This book describes the great spiritual power of the Mass, how it holds back the wrath of God, its wonderful eternal and temporal benefits. It also provides several excellent ways to pray at Mass. "Hidden Treasure" is the prototype book on the Mass for all other books on the same subject; others basically repeat what this small book contains. It was published in the nineteenth century with the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur. This book is still relevant today.



"Architects of the Culture of Death," by Donald de Marco and Benjamin Wiker

057-0131, \$19.95

ing the culture of Death.

DeMarco and Wiker have given the Culture of Death a clear definition and frightening immediacy. They have exposed its roots by introducing its "architects." In a scholarly, yet reader-friendly delineation of the mindsets of twenty-three influential thinkers, they have made clear and palpable the aberrant thought and malevolent intentions that have gone into shap-



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July 2023 7 www.gospa.org

From page 1

Carroll was concerned with keeping government and its agents unbiased and warned against too many perks for those in government, as this would only serve to corrupt them. Such "career politicians" as they would be called today, "cannot act with a freedom and independency becoming a representative of the people." (McClanahan)



John Barry

A Catholic Irish immigrant from Philadelphia, John Barry, was the first Commodore of the Navy. Handpicked by George Washington, he

helped shape the U.S. Navy to a strong military force able to defend the new country. John Paul Jones and he would share the title, "Father of the US Navy." (Pehanich)

Mary Waters

Mary Waters, another Irish immigrant, was a patriot who set up hospitals in Philadelphia to treat soldiers primarily during the Revolutionary War. (LaForce) These hospitals later helped set up an infrastructure of hospitals throughout the colonies, staffed by religious sisters whose charism was nursing, and provided care for all, not just the rich.

The new nation was beginning to look less like a group of colonies and more like a cohesive, Christian nation who valued all and offered care and help when needed.

Bishop John Carroll

Charles Carroll's cousin, John Carroll, was a Jesuit priest. During the Revolutionary War, Fr. Carroll tended to Catholic colonists and European Catholics who joined the War for Independence. Later he became



the first bishop to the United States at the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin to the Papal Nuncio. Bishop Carroll "tirelessly helped the Church in American grow and established colleges and monasteries... He was the first to consecrate the country to our Blessed Mother under the title 'Immaculate Conception.'" (McClanahan)

Daniel Carroll and Thomas Fitzsimmons

John Carroll's brother, Daniel, was a signer of the Constitution along with Thomas Fitzsimmons, the only two Catholics to become framers of the Constitution. Fitzsimmons, who led a unit for the Continental Army, was known for his leadership. Daniel was asked by Washington to find a "suitable site" for the capital. Daniel Carroll donated one of pieces of land and convinced the owners of the adjoining tracts to donate theirs as well. He was one of two people who laid the cornerstone for the capital. (LaForce)

These Catholics made their mark on the fledgling country, emphasizing the ability to respect freedom of religion, an essential part of a country founded on liberty and justice for all.

These are just a few samples of Catholics who went above and beyond in the early years of our great nation. Catholics represented only around 2 percent of the colonial population. (Pehanich) Their contributions, however, did not go unnoticed by the executive branch of the United States.

In March, 1790, George Washington replied to a congratulatory letter from Bishop John Carroll on behalf of the Catholic clergy and laity. In it, he thanks them for their part in the Revolutionary War and expresses his hope that they continue to help shape the country "in the permanent duration of its Freedom and Independence." (From George Washington to Roman Catholics in America)

Washington continues to express the importance of having all play a part in government. "As mankind becomes more liberal they will be more apt to allow, that all those who conduct themselves as worthy members of the Community are equally entitled to the protection of civil Government. I hope ever to see America among the foremost nations in examples of justice and liberality. And I presume that your fellow-citizens will not forget the patriotic part which you took in the accomplishment of their Revolution and the establishment of their Government: or the important assistance which they received from a nation in which the Roman Catholic faith is professed." (From George Washington)

Images from Wikimedia

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Vicar for Evangelization,
Diocese of Pittsburgh

Canon Matthew Talarico Provincial Superior, Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, USA

Dr. Ray Guarendi Psychologist, radio & TV host

Chris Reynolds President, Gospa Missions

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