

American Minute with Bill Federer

The Public Faith of JFK - "All men are brothers ...
God ... placed us on Earth together."

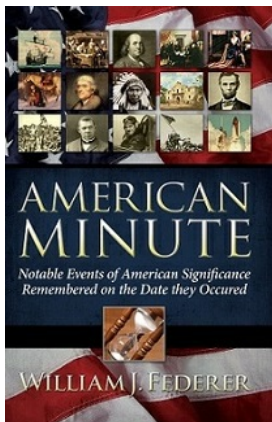
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The 1963 movie, *PT 109*, depicted **John F. Kennedy's** heroic action in the Pacific during World War II ...

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His patrol boat was struck by a Japanese destroyer, injuring his back, yet he helped the survivors swim several miles to shore.

It was the first movie about a sitting President released while he was still in office.

John F. Kennedy was awarded the Navy's medal of heroism during World War II.

He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his book *Profiles in Courage*.

Born MAY 29, 1917, **John F. Kennedy** was the youngest "elected" President at age 43.

Theodore Roosevelt was the youngest to "assume" the Presidency at age 42 when William McKinley was shot.

Kennedy served just 1,036 days before being shot.

He was one of 8 Presidents who died in office, and one of 4 who were assassinated.

In the Introduction to a 16-volume *American Heritage New Illustrated History of the United States* (Dell Publishing Co., 1960), **John F. Kennedy** wrote:

"History, after all, is the memory of a nation.

Just as memory enables the individual to learn, to choose goals ... to avoid making the same mistake twice ... so history is the means by which a nation establishes its sense of identity and purpose ..."

Kennedy continued:

"Knowledge of history is ... responsibility to those who ... sacrificed to pass on to us our precious inheritance of freedom ... and ... **responsibility to those who will come after us** ... to whom we must pass on that inheritance."

Kennedy stated in his Inaugural, January 20, 1961:

"I have sworn before you and **Almighty God** the same solemn oath our forbears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life.

Yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe - The belief that **the rights of man come not from the**

generosity of the state but from the hand of God ..."

Kennedy concluded:

"Let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that **here on earth God's work must truly be our own.**"

John F. Kennedy stated at the Presidential Prayer Breakfast, February 9, 1961:

"**This country was founded by men and women** who were dedicated ... to ... **a strong religious conviction ...**

The **Puritans** and the **Pilgrims** of my own section of New England, the **Quakers** of Pennsylvania, the **Catholics** of Maryland, the **Presbyterians** of North Carolina, the **Methodists** and **Baptists** who came later."

Kennedy proclaimed a National Thanksgiving Day, October 28, 1961:

"It is a good thing to **give thanks unto the Lord.**"

More than three centuries ago, the **Pilgrims**, after a year of hardship and peril, humbly and reverently set aside a **special day upon which to give thanks to God** for their preservation and for the good harvest from the virgin soil upon which they had labored.

Grave and unknown dangers remained. Yet by their **faith** and by their toil they had survived the rigors of the harsh New England winter.

Hence they paused in their labors to give **thanks for the blessings** that had been bestowed upon them by **Divine Providence ...**

... I ask the head of each family to recount to his children the story of the first New England Thanksgiving,

thus to **impress upon future generations** the heritage of this nation born in toil, in danger, in purpose, and in the conviction that right and justice and freedom can through man's efforts persevere and come to fruition **with the blessing of God.**"

John F. Kennedy issued a Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, November 7, 1962:

"Over three centuries ago in Plymouth, on Massachusetts Bay, the **Pilgrims** established the custom of gathering together each year to express their **gratitude to God** for the preservation of their community and for the harvests their labors brought forth in the new land ...

Let us renew the spirit of the **Pilgrims** at the **first Thanksgiving**, lonely in an inscrutable wilderness, facing the dark unknown with a faith borne of **their dedication to God** and a fortitude drawn from their sense that all men were brothers."

Kennedy proclaimed a National Day of Prayer, September 28, 1961:

"**Our founding fathers** came to these shores **trusting in God**, and in reliance upon His grace. They charted the course of free institutions under **a government deriving its powers from the consent of the people.**

In the General Congress assembled **they appealed** the rectitude of their intentions to the **Supreme Judge of the World**, and 'with firm reliance on the **protection of Divine Providence**' they mutually pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their most sacred honor.

... During the deliberations in the Constitutional Convention they were called to daily prayers, with the reminder in **sacred Scripture** it is written that 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it,'

and they were warned that **without the concurring aid of Providence they would succeed in the political building 'no better than the builders of Babel ...'**"

Kennedy added:

"In every succeeding generation the people of this country have emulated their fathers in **defending their liberties** with their fortunes and their lives.

Conscious of our continuing need to bring our actions **under the searching light of Divine Judgment**, the Congress of the United States by joint resolution approved on the seventeenth day of April 1952 provided that

'The President shall set aside and proclaim a suitable day each year, other than a Sunday, as a **National Day of Prayer**, on which **the people of the United States may turn to God** in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals ...'"

He concluded:

"Now, Therefore, I, **John Fitzgerald Kennedy**, President of the United States, do set aside and proclaim Wednesday, the fourth day of October 1961, as the **National Day of Prayer**.

Let us all pray, inviting as many as may be visitors in our country to join us in our prayers, each according to his own custom and faith, for our Nation and for all peoples everywhere in the world;

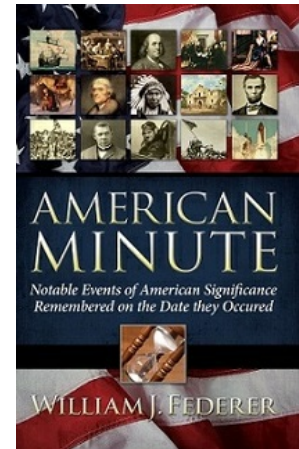
and most especially- **For Divine guidance in our efforts to lead our children in the ways of truth ...**

... For willing hands and a spirit of dedication, that, in awareness that **this Nation under God has achieved its great service to mankind ...** we may move forward in

the unconquerable spirit of a free people, making whatever sacrifices that need be made to **neutralize the evil designs of evil men ...**

Recognizing our own shortcomings may we be granted forgiveness and cleansing, that **God shall bless us** and be gracious unto us, and cause His face to shine upon us as we stand everyone of us on this day **in His Presence."**

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John F. Kennedy addressed the National Conference of Christians and Jews, November 21, 1961:

"It has always seemed to me that **when we all** - regardless of our particular religious convictions - **draw our guidance and inspiration**, and really in a sense moral direction from the same general area, **the Bible, the Old and the New Testaments**, we have every reason to believe that our various religious denominations should live together in the closest harmony ...

The basic presumption of the moral law, **the existence of God, man's relationship to Him** - there is generally consensus on those questions. So that we should set a happy model for the world."

At the Annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast, March 1, 1962, **John F. Kennedy** stated:

"I believe, to build a closer and more intimate association

among those different faiths in different countries ... who are **united by a common belief in God**, and therefore united in a common commitment to the moral order ...

... In our program this morning there is a quotation from Lincoln which I think is particularly applicable today.

He said, '**I believe there is a God**. I see the storm coming, and I believe He has a hand in it. If He has a part and a place for me, I believe that I am ready.'

We see the storm coming, and we believe He has a hand in it; and if He has a place and a part for us, I believe that we are ready."

On October 11, 1962, John F. Kennedy issued a National Day of Prayer:

"Whereas **faith in Almighty God** was a dominant power in the lives of our Founding Fathers; and

Whereas they expressed this **faith in prayer**, and in this posture members of the Continental Congress mutually pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor; and

Whereas each succeeding generation has shared that **faith**; and

Whereas in full recognition of **our dependence upon Almighty God** and for our continuing need of His great blessings, the Congress of the United States by joint resolution approved on the seventeenth day of April 1952 a provision that

'The President shall set aside and proclaim a suitable day each year, other than a Sunday, as a **National Day of Prayer**, on which **the people of the United States may turn to God** in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals' ...

... Now, Therefore, I, **John F. Kennedy**, President of the United States, do set aside and proclaim Wednesday, the seventeenth day of October 1962, as the **National Day of Prayer**.

On this day, let us all pray, each following the practices of his own faith. **Let us pray for our Nation and for other nations of the world ...**

We especially **ask God's blessing** upon - Our homes, that this integral unit of society may nurture **our youth and give to them the needed faith in God**, in our Nation, and in their future ...

that this generation may experience the fruits of peace and may know the real meaning of brotherhood **under God."**

Kennedy stated February 9, 1961:

"No man who enters upon the office to which I have succeeded can fail to recognize how **every President** of the United States has **placed special reliance upon his faith in God ... that the Lord 'will be with thee. He will not fail nor forsake thee.**

Fear not - neither be thou dismayed' ...

... In this nuclear age, when the horizon of human knowledge and human experience has passed far beyond any that any age has ever known ... **we turn back ... to the oldest source of wisdom and strength, to the words of the prophets and the saints**, who tell us that faith is more powerful than doubt ...

Let us go forth to lead this land that we love, joining in the prayer of **General George Washington** in 1783,

'that God would have you in His holy protection, that He would incline the hearts of the citizens ... to entertain

a brotherly love and affection one for another ...

and finally that He would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with ... the characteristics of the **Divine Author of our blessed religion**, without an humble imitation of whose example we can never hope to be a happy nation."

John F. Kennedy stated in a radio and television address, July 11, 1963:

"It ought to be possible ... for every American to enjoy the privileges of **being American without regard to his race or his color** ...

We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is **as old as the Scriptures** and is as clear as the American Constitution."

John F. Kennedy stated February 9, 1961:

"I had an opportunity in the White House the other day to talk to a group of men and women from the **Baptist World Alliance** who have been missionaries, some in the Congo, one lady who has been in Bengal, India, since 1926, others who have been in Thailand and Korea ...

I regard (religion) as **the essence of the differences which separate those on the other side of the Iron Curtain and ourselves.**

The struggle is (between) ... as I attempted to say in my inaugural, that **the blessings which come to us come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God --**

and this alternate concept, that the state is the master and the people the servants."

Kennedy stated:

"The question for our time is not whether **all men are brothers**. That question has been **answered by the God who placed us on Earth together**.

The question is whether we have the strength and will **to make the brotherhood of man the guiding principle of our daily lives.**"

Kennedy lit the National Christmas Tree, December 17, 1962. stating:

"With the lighting of this tree, which is an old ceremony in Washington and one which has been **among the most important responsibilities** of a good many Presidents of the United States, we initiate in a formal way the Christmas Season.

We mark the festival of **Christmas** which is **the most sacred and hopeful day in our civilization**.

... For nearly two thousand years **the message of Christmas**, the message of peace and good will towards all men, has been the guiding star of our endeavors ...

Pause from their labors on the 25th day of December to **celebrate the birthday of the Prince of Peace** ...

We still need to ask God to bless everyone."

John F. Kennedy wrote to Brazil's President, Janio da Silva Quadros, January 31, 1961:

"Once in every 20 years presidential inaugurations in your country and mine occur within days of each other. This year of 1961 is signalized by the happy coincidence

...

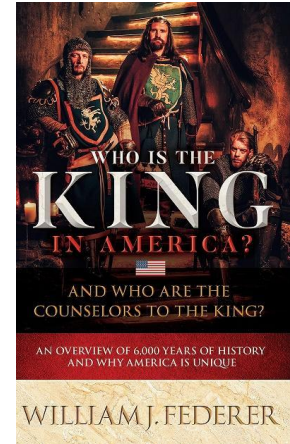
To each of us is entrusted the heavy responsibility of

guiding the affairs of a democratic nation founded on Christian ideals."

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