

Bishop John Carroll & Catholic Church in Early U.S

Research to gain an understanding of challenges which the Church and Catholics faced in the new Nation.

Using the resources provided from the *Catholic Encyclopedia for Home and School*, *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, and *The Dictionary of Catholic Biography*, **with your group**, answer the following questions.

1. Where and when was John Carroll born?
2. a. Where did he go to school, outside of America.?
2. b. Why do you think he had to leave America to get this education?
3. What religious order did he join?
4. Around what year do we think Carrroll was ordained a Catholic priest? (this was NOT in America!)
5. In 1776 Fr. Carroll went to Canada at the request of the Continental Congress with his cousin Charles Carroll (signer of the Declaration of Independence) and with another very famous American.
 - a. Who was this famous patriot?
 - b. Why did Carroll and the others go to Canada?
- C. What do you think this tells us about Fr. Carroll's feelings for "his country"?

6. In 1782 Fr. Carroll formed a plan to organize Catholic priests and churches in the new United States. The Catholic priests in the U.S asked the Pope in Rome to appoint a leader of the “missionary” church in the U.S.

- a. Who did the Pope put in charge of all the priests and Catholic churches in the U.S.?

7. What did Fr. Carroll do during these early years to encourage rights for Catholics and to fight against prejudice?

8. When and of what diocese (= *see*) was Carroll named the First Bishop of the United States?

9. Where did Carroll have to go to be consecrated/ordained as a bishop?

10. How did Bishop Carroll help to begin Catholic education in schools for boys and young men and those American men hoping to become priests?

11. What was Bishop Carroll’s influence on Elizabeth Seton and how did he encourage the education of girls?

CARROLL, JOHN

First Catholic bishop of the U.S., Archbishop of Baltimore; b. Upper Marlborough, Md., Jan. 8, 1735; d. Baltimore, Dec. 3, 1815. The third of seven children of Daniel and Eleanor (Darnall) Carroll was born of a distinguished family. Through his father he descended from Keane Carroll of Ireland, the elder brother of Charles Carroll who migrated to Maryland and served there as attorney general. Through his mother he was related to the Darnalls, whose American branch was founded by Col. Henry Darnall, brother-in-law of Lord Baltimore.

Early Years. Carroll's education began at home with his mother, who had been educated in France; later he attended Bohemia Manor, a short-lived Jesuit school in northern Maryland. In 1748, with his cousin Charles a signer of the Declaration of Independence, he went to St. Omer, conducted by English Jesuits in French Flanders. He entered the Jesuit novitiate at Watten in 1754 under Father Henry Corbie and in 1755 became a Jesuit scholastic. Completing the scholasticate at Liège, he taught philosophy there, made his profession in 1771, and then taught at the Jesuit college in Bruges. The exact dates of his ordination and renouncing of his father's legacy cannot be documented, but the former probably took place in 1769 and the latter between 1764 and 1771.

After teaching a few months at Bruges, with his superior's consent he toured the Continent as tutor to Charles Philippe, son of the English Lord Stourton. His journal of the tour (1771-73) offers interesting comments on the central and southern Europe of that time. In the summer of 1773, he became prefect of the sodality at Bruges, where he received news of the dissolution of the Society of Jesus by papal action on July 21, 1773. In October, Austrian officials invaded the college and he was arrested. On the intervention of the English Lord Arundell of Wardour Castle, he was released and went to Wardour as family chaplain until the spring of 1774.

Return to America. Carroll returned in 1774 to live with his mother at Rock Creek, Md. In 1776, the Continental Congress persuaded him to accompany Charles Carroll, Samuel Chase, and Benjamin Franklin to Canada in an effort to win the province to the side of the Colonies in their revolt against England. Arriving in Montreal in April, he was shown no courtesies on the order of Bp. Joseph Briand and had to offer Mass privately in the house of Father Pierre Floquet, a former Jesuit. After the commission's failure, he went to Philadelphia with the ailing Franklin, earning his gratitude for his "friendly assistance and tender care."

After his return to Rock Creek, his zealous ministry soon necessitated the building of St. John's Chapel at Forest Glen on the property of his brother Daniel, one of the framers of the Constitution; he also had to travel 60-mile journeys to reach a Virginia congregation.



Archbishop John Carroll.

Desiring to protect former Jesuit properties in the new nation and to organize the clergy for a more effective ministry, in 1782 he devised a plan that was in substance adopted in 1784, creating a "Form of Government, Rules for the Select Body of Clergy, and Regulations for the Management of Plantations." The American clergy petitioned Rome to name Father John Lewis their superior; but when a vicar-general was appointed, Carroll, on Franklin's recommendation, was made head of the missions in the provinces . . . of the United States" on June 9, 1784. During the next six years he visited his territory, reported to Rome on conditions (March 1, 1785), and publicly defended the beliefs and rights of Catholics in the new Republic.

In 1784, he published the *Address to the Roman Catholics of the United States of America*, defending the Faith against the attacks of the apostate Jesuit Charles Wharton, whose *Letter to the Roman Catholics of Worcester* had appeared in Philadelphia earlier that year. In the Philadelphia Columbian of December 1787, he answered attacks on religious liberty made in its pages, saying: "Freedom and independence acquired by the united efforts, and cemented with the mingled blood of Protestants and Catholic fellow-citizens, should be equally enjoyed by all." In the *United States Gazette*, June 10, 1789, under the name "Pacificus," he reiterated the principle that the Republic had been created by the "generous exertion of all her citizens to redress their wrongs, to assert their rights, and to lay its foundations on the soundest principles of justice and equal liberty." In December 1789, he composed an "Address of the Roman Catholics" to President Washington, congratulating him on his office and reasserting that Catholics had a well-founded title to justice and equal rights in return for their exertions in the nation's defense.

First U.S. Bishop. In 1788 Rome had decided to create the first diocese in the U.S., and on Sept. 17, 1789, Pius VI ordered the bull prepared naming Carroll bishop of Baltimore, thereby confirming the choice of the American clergy. (See BALTIMORE, ARCHDIOCESE OF.) His consecration took place Aug. 15, 1790, in Lulworth Chapel on the estate of Thomas Weld in Dorset, England, with Bp. Charles Walmesley presiding and Father Charles Plowden preaching the sermon.

As first Catholic bishop, Carroll set a precedent for cordial relations between the government and the hierarchy. In 1791 at his first synod, he initiated the custom of public prayers for the president and the government. He influenced Washington to ask Congress for an appropriation to support the work of two priests among the native people of the Northwest Territory. Carroll also visited Washington in retirement at Mount Vernon and preached the first president's eulogy at St. Peter's Church in Baltimore on Feb. 22, 1800.

His relations with Jefferson were equally cordial, and when the Louisiana Territory was purchased in 1803, he secured Jefferson's protection for the Ursuline nuns and their properties. In return, he appointed to Louisiana priests devoted to American principles, eliciting Jefferson's comment that he had perfect confidence in Carroll's

"patriotism and purity of views." Although opposed to the War of 1812, he defended Madison for his religious principles and his endeavors to preserve peace. In tribute to his patriotism, Carroll was invited to speak at the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Monument in Baltimore but had to decline because of illness.

Interest in Education. Carroll was also a promoter of culture. From its founding until his death, he was president of the Baltimore Library Company and instituted its printed catalog. Under his auspices Catholic colleges for men were founded in Maryland at Georgetown (1788), Baltimore (St. Mary's, 1799), and at Emmitsburg (Mt. St. Mary's, 1808). Academies for girls were begun at Georgetown (Visitation, 1799), Emmitsburg (St. Joseph's, 1809), and Bardstown, Ky. (Nazareth, 1814).

The foundation of the first distinctly American community of religious women, the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, was due to his encouragement of their founder, Bl. Elizabeth SETON. He had first heard of Mrs. Seton through the Filicchi brothers of Leghorn, Italy; the younger, Antonio, interested him in her conversion in 1804. Carroll confirmed her in New York on May 25, 1806. Two years later he encouraged her to start a school for Catholic girls in Baltimore. In March 1809, he permitted her to take vows, insisting, however, that she accept a dispensation from complete poverty so that she might provide for her five children. During her first difficult years as superior of the small community in Emmitsburg, Carroll was her support and mentor. When on Jan. 17, 1812, he confirmed the rules for her community, although they were substantially those of the French Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, he saw to it that modifications allowed for conditions in the United States and for Mother Seton's peculiar situation as religious superior and mother of five children.

Significance. Carroll's leadership and administration of the Church in the U.S. fixed traditions that later enhanced its prestige. His devotion to religious freedom and his delineation of the relations of the Church with Rome in spiritual matters defined and gave proof of the compatibility of Catholicism and democracy. His charity was endless. In these difficult years he measured each crisis by the ultimate and common good not only of the Church but also of the nation. He lived to see independence declared, won, and again preserved in the War of 1812; the Catholic population quadrupled and the clergy doubled. As Cardinal Gibbons expressed it: "His aim was that the clergy and people should be . . . identified with the land. . . . From this mutual accord of Church and State there could but follow beneficent effects for both." Enfeebled by age and illness, Carroll received the last Sacraments on Nov. 23 and died on Dec. 3, 1815. He was buried in the chapel of St. Mary's Seminary, but in 1824 his body was removed to the Cathedral (later Basilica) of the Assumption.

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