

NYC HOUSES OF WORSHIP NEED PROTECTION

[Bill Donohue](#)

Houses of worship need enhanced protection these days from anti-religious bigots. In recent times, virtually every major religion has had some of their houses of worship vandalized or invaded. Moreover, congregants have been subjected to taunts and threats. At stake is the First Amendment right to freely practice our religion.

While this is a nation-wide problem, it is a pressing concern to New Yorkers. Jews, in particular, have been targeted more than any religious group. What happened last November was despicable. Two hundred protesters showed up outside Manhattan's Park East Synagogue holding vile anti-Jewish signs. They also yelled vicious comments at Jews going to synagogue, taunting them ferociously. This was totally unprovoked and totally indefensible.

Fortunately, the New York City Council elected a Speaker in January who is standing up against these bullies. Julie Menin is leading the fight against attacks on all houses of worship. I [wrote to her today](#) expressing our support for her efforts, requesting we play an active role. She is being sent [recent news releases](#) I have written on this subject.

Included in this batch are statements I have made about Mayor Zohran Mamdani. As you can see, his religious messaging is very troubling, and his penchant for hiring religious bigots is just as ominous. This does not bode well for the future, which is why the Catholic League supports Speaker Menin's call for legislation that would provide greater protection for houses of worship.

The First Amendment means nothing unless it is enforced. That

means that those who seek to undermine religious liberty must be defeated. The Catholic League is delighted to join the fight.

WHO ARE THESE LGBTQ+ PEOPLE ANYWAY?

[Bill Donohue](#)

They really are different. They are not like the rest of us. A recent Gallup poll sheds some light on this phenomenon.

In 2012, only 3.5 percent of Americans identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or something else (they must be the + people). Today the figure is 9 percent. Most of these people, 5 percent, say they are bisexual; the fewest are transgender (they appear to be bottoming out). Demographically, they are an interesting bunch.

Gallup found that young people, women, Democrats and city residents were the most likely to be LGBTQ+ (there was no significant difference on the basis of race and ethnicity). That's true, though it is incomplete. Other variables should have been probed.

The older the person is, the more likely he is straight. This is true across the board for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Overall, 23.0 percent of 18-29 year-olds identify as belonging to one of these four subgroups, but only 2.3 percent of seniors do (those 65+). This stands to reason given that traditional moral values have been sliding for decades, eclipsed by radical individualism.

Women are more likely than men to belong to one of these subgroups. What the researchers did not report is that girls are the biggest users of social media, and this explains why they are also the most likely to identify as a trans person. Social media can be a debilitating force, one that preys on the emotionally vulnerable.

Gallup says that Democrats are more likely to be LGBTQ+, and that is because they are the most supportive of their status. True. But why? Democrats, much more than Republicans, favor big government, but that has nothing to do with being straight or not. Something is missing. That something is religion and education.

Gallup, as well as other pollsters, has consistently found that Democrats are by far the most secular segment of the population: they are much more likely to be agnostic, atheist or have no religious affiliation. We know from a mountain of data that these people are the least likely to support traditional moral values.

Those with graduate degrees—especially those with post-graduate degrees—tend to be secularists, and are thus given to prize autonomy over traditional moral values. They are disproportionately urban dwellers, and have always been more inclined than rural folks to reject religion and a traditional understanding of sexuality; nothing has changed. The diversity that city life affords may generate a “live and let live” attitude, but beware of popping the champagne: like any value, its extreme manifestations have a corrupting effect.

California is home to the “live and let live” population, and this helps to explain why the young people who live there are 40 percent more likely to identify as transgender than the national average. The greater the tolerance, the greater the number who experiment, and with that comes all the negative consequences associated with this mentally challenging condition. Not something that deserves our applause.

In other words, it is not surprising that farm boys who go to church are not likely to show up at an LGBTQ+ event. Indeed, just imagining what this would look like boggles the mind—guys with straw hats, overalls and a Bible dancing around with a Pride flag!

Nope. That's for the deracinated, the ones who think they can follow their own moral compass and live happily ever after. Good luck with that.

ENDING THE ABA'S INCLUSION TRAP

[Kyle Nazareth](#)

In January, [Texas](#) and [Florida](#) took bold steps that could reshape legal education nationwide by ending the American Bar Association's (ABA) role as the sole gatekeeper for bar admission. These decisions mark the beginning of the end for the ABA's monopoly and expose a deeper problem: the organization's [accreditation standards](#), particularly its aggressive push for "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI), and hostility toward religious institutions.

For decades, the ABA dominated legal education, setting standards that nearly every state required for bar eligibility. The ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar enforced seemingly neutral requirements on faculty qualifications, bar passage rates, and curriculum. Yet beneath the [appearance of neutrality](#), the ABA has increasingly imposed progressive mandates on law schools while [threatening](#) the schools' accreditation. For example, Standard 206, though suspended since early 2025 and extended through August 2026,

originally required law schools to demonstrate “concrete action” toward diversity in student bodies, faculties, and staff with respect to race, ethnicity, and gender.

Critics, including [21 Republican state attorneys general](#) and the [Trump administration](#), argued that this DEI standard violated civil rights laws and the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2023 ruling in [Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard](#). U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi [urged](#) the ABA to drop the standard entirely, warning that even vague “commitment to diversity” language could expose state bars to legal liability and jeopardize the ABA’s federally recognized accreditor status.

The ABA’s DEI initiatives have gone beyond accreditation, sometimes resulting in overt discrimination. In 2024, following complaints, the ABA revised its Judicial Clerkship Program to remove [race-based quotas](#). Separately, in early 2025, after conservative advocacy groups [urged the EEOC](#) to investigate further alleged race-based preferences, the ABA [broadened eligibility criteria](#) for its Diversity Clerkship Program.

In February 2025, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Chair Andrew Ferguson restricted FTC political appointees from holding ABA leadership roles or participating in ABA activities in an official capacity, citing the organization’s [history of partisan advocacy](#), including biased judicial-nominee ratings and amicus briefs on affirmative action, transgender ideology, capital punishment, and abortion. And in 2024, the ABA adopted [Resolution 503](#) opposing state government requirements to display the Ten Commandments in public schools, citing the historical constitutional canard of “separation of church and state.”

The ABA also has a pattern of conflict with religious law schools. In August 2025, the organization [found](#) St. Thomas University College of Law in Miami out of compliance with the nondiscrimination Standard 205(c), likely because the school

declined to fund an LGBTQ student group's [Pride Parade trip](#), citing its Catholic mission. Though subsection (c) explicitly protects religiously affiliated schools' ability to align policies with their faith, the ABA treated fidelity to Church teaching as a violation of equality. Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier [defended](#) the Catholic law school, condemning the move as "discriminatory" and anti-religious, vowing to protect state schools from such overreach. Consequently, on December 5, 2025, the ABA backed off, issuing a [public notice](#) concluding that St. Thomas University College of Law was in full compliance.

Similar clashes have occurred before. Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School [faced complaints](#) about the school's alleged practice of expelling students who left the Mormon faith or were in homosexual relationships. The ABA investigated but ultimately [closed the investigation](#) without action. Regent University School of Law had a prolonged accreditation struggle in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with ABA accreditors questioning a required [faculty statement of faith](#) and [tenure policies](#) as threats to academic freedom. Only after considerable adjustments did it gain full accreditation.

These cases reveal inclusion's irony: the ABA promotes inclusion while punishing schools holding traditional religious beliefs on sexuality and morality. Secular schools can enforce progressive norms, but faith-based schools risk losing accreditation for refusing to host activities at odds with their doctrine. This is coercion, not neutrality.

Texas and Florida's move away from the ABA favors ideologically neutral criteria, affordability, and open debate. Governor Ron DeSantis said Florida's choice ends the ABA's "[highly partisan](#)" gatekeeping. States like Ohio and Tennessee may soon follow.

The Catholic League applauds these steps. When one group controls accreditation in the name of inclusion, it ends up

excluding dissent, religious liberty, and varied academic approaches. Ending the ABA's dominance advances true pluralism, allowing law schools to thrive without sacrificing their mission.

MEDIA BIAS MARKS STORY OF TRANS KILLERS

Bill Donohue

Major media outlets, with rare exception, are engaged in a massive cover-up of the identity of transgender shooters in Canada and Rhode Island. They don't want the public to conclude the obvious: those who falsely claim to be of the opposite sex are mentally impaired and a disproportionate number are increasingly violent. What happened in both venues is disturbing enough without lying about the identity of the killers.

On February 10, 2026 Jesse Van Rootselaar, an 18-year-old man who falsely claimed to be a woman, entered the Tumbler Ridge Secondary School in Tumbler Ridge, Canada and opened fire on students and teachers. The shooter killed seven people, including six students, injuring dozens more before committing suicide.

On February 16, Robert Dorgan, a 56-year-old man who falsely claimed to be a woman, opened fire at a high school hockey game in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. He shot and killed one of his sons, as well as the mother of his children, and critically shot his other two sons and a family friend. He then fatally shot himself. It was later revealed that he went through gender reassignment surgery and was described as having a

narcissistic-personality disorder.

If it were not for sexual identity politics, every media outlet would (a) identify the killers are transgender and (b) identify them as male. Not only did the media, overall, merit an "F" on these measures, many were inconsistent with how they depicted the two incidents.

TV

ABC mentioned the Canadian shooter was transgender and referred to him as "she." It mentioned the Rhode Island shooter's name change and did not use any pronouns to describe him.

CBS said the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "she." It also mentioned that the Rhode Island shooter was transgender but referred to him as "he."

NBC reported the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "they." It mentioned the Rhode Island shooter name change and referred to him as a man.

PBS said the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "she." It mentioned the Rhode Island shooter's name change, and referred to him as "he."

CNN reported the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "she." It mentioned the Rhode Island shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "he."

MSNOW did not mention the Canadian shooter was transgender, and did not use any pronouns to describe the Rhode Island shooter.

Fox News mentioned the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to the Rhode Island shooter as "he."

Newspapers

New York Times mentioned the Canadian shooter was transgender, and did not use a pronoun to refer to the Rhode Island shooter.

Washington Post did not mention the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "she." It mentioned the Rhode Island shooter was transgender, and did not use pronouns to refer to him.

Los Angeles Times did not mention the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "she." It said the Rhode Island shooter was transgender, and did not use pronouns to refer to him.

USA Today mentioned the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "she." It mentioned the Rhode Island shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "he."

Chicago Tribune did not mention the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "she." It mentioned the Rhode Island shooter was transgender, and did not use pronouns to refer to him.

Associated Press did not mention the Canadian shooter was transgender, and referred to him as "she." It mentioned the Rhode Island shooter was transgender, and did not use pronouns to refer to him.

Here are some observations to ponder.

NBC is so illiterate, and ideologically bankrupt, that they falsely referred to a man as "they"? To top it off, NBC actually apologized for calling a Swedish skier who is a biological woman but falsely claims to be a man as "she." But she is a "she"!

Notice the way the same media outlets that falsely referred to the Canadian shooter as "she," invariably referred to the Rhode Island shooter—correctly—as "he."

Which begs the question: Are the Canadian people so far gone that the media dare not accurately tell them that a man who identifies as a female is in fact a male?

Just as bad, have the media no uniform standards, inventing different ways to describe the same phenomenon?

Are they that corrupt?

Conservative Media Embrace Transgender Language

[Michael P. McDonald](#)

The AP Style Guide sets the tone for both print and electronic media, even conservative outlets are impacted. Consider what the AP Style Guide has to say on the matter of transgender ideology. It commands writers to only use preferred pronouns and makes allowance for the use of the singular “they.” The guide promotes the unscientific notions “sex assigned at birth” and “nonbinary/gender fluid” people. Indeed, the AP Style Guide appears to be ripped right out of the manifesto of the most militant trans activist.

While Fox News and the *New York Post* have reputations of representing right of center perspectives, in recent years both outlets have quietly embraced the woke left’s distortion of the English language and rejection of the laws of biology in the name of transgenderism. Both have used, and continue to use, the approved language of transgenderism in their reporting, making them virtually indistinguishable from their competitors in the mainstream media.

For instance, on January 13, 2026, both Fox News and the *New York Post* featured stories about the Supreme Court examining the ability of the states to protect girls' sports from boys. Both outlets refer to the male athletes involved in the legal challenge with feminine pronouns.

In other instances, both outlets take pains to avoid pronouns altogether and continually refer to the individuals by their last names. While this at least solves the pronoun problem, the articles are inevitably framed around "transgender women" but never once is it acknowledged that this is a man who falsely claims to be a woman. This appears to be both outlets' preferred strategy when dealing with high profile figures such as Congressman Sarah McBride (DE-D), the only member of Congress that openly claims a transgender status. Although on August 2, 2025, *New York Post* used female pronouns to refer to McBride.

With that said, there have been some efforts to reflect biological realities and respect the rules of grammar. However, the only time either Fox News or the *New York Post* observes these is when reporting on individuals who claim a transgender status that have committed serious crimes. Though this appears to be a more recent development.

For instance, in 2022 both outlets covered the case of Demetrius "Demi" Minor, who killed his foster father stabbing him 27 times. Minor claimed to be a woman and was incarcerated in New Jersey's only female prison. During his time in the women's prison, Minor had sex with two female inmates who became pregnant.

Of course, if you read the article posted on Fox's website on July 17, 2022, you may not have realized this was about a man in a women's prison. The headline reads, "NJ transgender woman transferred from women's only prison after impregnating 2 inmates, report says." The sanity, not to mention the rules of the English language, rapidly deteriorates from there. When

CROSSHAIRS

[Bill Donohue](#)

Christianity in the Crosshairs is available from TAN Books at tanbooks.com. Type the name of the book in the search engine at the top of the page and get 50% off with the coupon code CGS50.

Amazon is currently sold out but is taking orders that will ship next month. It is also available from Barnes & Noble, Target and other booksellers online.

The average Joe spends his time at work, and with his family and friends. He may vote, but politics is not his passion. He basically wants to be left alone. But the ruling class—the decision makers who run our institutions—won't let him. They are interested in getting him to do what they think is in his best interest. They don't need to consult him, and that is because they know better.

Radical intellectuals and activists are just as arrogant, and just as intrusive. They entertain grandiose plans about socially engineering society, and they have all sorts of plans on how to steer the average Joe. Just like the ruling class, they feel confident in making decisions for him.

What unites the ruling class and radicals is power. They lust for it. Why? Their goal is to control the average Joe, getting him to dance to their every beat. But he is not easy to control, and that is because his primary allegiances are to his family and religion. If they can pry him away from the grip of his family and religion, there is a good chance he will find a sense of community with them. Then they can proceed to implement their vision of the good society.

Standing in their way, more than any other factor, is Christianity. It is committed to the family and traditional

moral values, and that is something that makes elites uneasy and radicals unhappy.

It used to be that the ruling class and radicals stood in opposition to each other, but something new has been happening. There has been an alignment of large sectors of the ruling class and radicals. They may still clash, but more often than not they have joined hands. There is one big wrinkle—the success of Donald Trump. It is clear that he has punctured the ruling class bubble (which explains why many hate him). But there are still large sectors of elite decision makers who have broken bread with radical thinkers and activists. They have Christianity in the crosshairs.

The ruling class has almost nothing in common with the average Joe. They are wealthy, well educated and are mostly secularists who devalue, if not disparage, Christianity. President Ronald Reagan knew them well. In a famous speech he gave branding the Soviet Union the “evil empire,” he quoted from C.S. Lewis’s *Screwtape Letters*. Lewis warned that the greatest evil in the world was being done by the “quiet men,” the clean-cut men who run our institutions.

Yes, it is the “quiet men” who run our institutions that we need to guard against, many of whom have adopted the radical agenda. What they seek was best said by Bill Ivey, a ruling class member who advised Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign in 2016. Speaking of elite Democrats, he said, “we’ve all been quite content to demean government, drop civics and in general conspire to produce an unaware and compliant citizenry.”

That is their goal—to establish a “compliant citizenry.” To achieve this goal they rely on “soft totalitarianism.” Unlike the violence that is practiced by the architects of “hard totalitarianism” (Hitler, Stalin and Mao), they seek to seduce and coax the average Joe to do what they want him to do. Pope Saint John Paul II warned about this development, saying the

elites want a subservient population.

Radicals despise religion, in general, harboring a special hatred for Christians. They know that as long as the average Joe lays anchor with his religion, he is not likely to bow to their secular appeals. In some instances, radical activists resort to violence, as in firebombing crisis pregnancy centers. Appeals have also been made by educators and celebrities to shoot Trump supporters.

Their allies in the ruling class are more careful, preferring to unleash the FBI to spy on ordinary Catholics. The Biden administration took direct aim at pro-life Catholics and Protestants, thus doing the dirty work egged on by radical intellectuals and activists.

To be sure, there are good members of the ruling class and there are good intellectuals, professors and activist Americans who seek to make our society better. But there are way too many on the other side, elitists, writers and activists who are working overtime to hurt our country. They have chosen to disable the family and religion because if they succeed in doing so they will be well on their way to securing victory.

The ruling class and radicals want us to despair. Let's make sure they fail.

Christianity in the
Crosshairs: Fighting the

Assault on Catholic Culture | Bill Donohue

Conor Gallagher, CEO of TAN Books (Saint Benedict Press), sat down with Bill Donohue to discuss the mounting cultural and political pressures on Western civilization—and why Christianity remains the primary target. Drawing from his new book, *Christianity in the Crosshairs*, Bill argues that the West's understanding of human dignity, liberty, and moral order flows directly from Christianity, and that efforts to marginalize the faith are inseparable from broader attempts to reshape society.

Over the course of the hour-long conversation, Bill also explains:

- The connection between welfare policy and the breakdown of the African-American family
- The vital cultural need for strong fathers
- The role of family life and parenthood in providing meaning in life
- And much more!

To watch, click [here](#).

**NOTHING IS MORE
COUNTERCULTURAL THAN LENT**

[Bill Donohue](#)

We live in a world where self-absorption reigns supreme. Accordingly, the concept of self-denial is incomprehensible to

most, and an anathema to others. Yet this is what Lent means. It is the most countercultural idea in America, and indeed in the entire Western world. That's because we've lost our moorings, which are grounded in Christianity.

The dominant culture celebrates self-indulgence, not self-denial. Drug users are only one example.

The streets of New York abound in smoke—the sweet smell of marijuana is everywhere. This is also true in many urban areas, as the pace of legalization quickens. Some, like the editorial board of the *New York Times*, which supported legalization, are now shocked to learn that a record number of Americans are hooked on drugs, jamming hospitals and driving recklessly. Habitual users are psychotic, functioning like zombies. Their non-stop vomiting should be a wake-up call, but it isn't. This is the cost of "liberation."

The dominant culture also celebrates gambling, yielding similar results.

We not only can bet on games, we can bet on each play. Bookies have been replaced by phones, and allegiance to the home team is waning as the only thing that matters is winning. Some ballparks, like the home of the Washington Commanders, even have betting stations for fans too bored to simply watch the game. A growing number of young men are addicted to gambling, finding themselves deeper in debt. This is the cost of "liberation."

Many young women chose sex to satisfy their craving for self-indulgence. If they wind up pregnant, they find their "solution" at a Planned Parenthood clinic. Young promiscuous men are just as irresponsible, looking to medical technology to rid themselves of their self-induced diseases. This is the cost of their "liberation."

Self-denial is admittedly not easy, and it is more difficult in societies that glamorize self-indulgence. But it is a

virtue that actually does liberate.

One way to show someone that we love them is by making sacrifices that redound to their benefit. Making sacrifices requires a degree of self-denial, giving up something to aid someone else. Mother Teresa could not have comforted those in her employ without great sacrifice, and it was her capacity for self-denial that allowed her to prevail.

Like any virtue, self-denial atrophies if it is not practiced, the results of which are inauspicious for everyone. A society that views self-denial as oppressive is nurturing narcissism, not selflessness. Yet that is what we are doing, led, as always, by the ruling class.

Self-indulgence is not only self-destructive, it is ultimately anti-social. We are all affected by those who allow their appetites and passions to conquer them, and that is why it is incumbent on those who occupy mantles of moral authority—clergy, parents and teachers—to welcome Lent, regardless of their religious convictions.

BILL DONOHUE'S NEW BOOK NOW AVAILABLE

Christianity in the Crosshairs: Ruling Class and Radicals Find a Common Enemy, by Catholic League president Bill Donohue, is now available. Published by TAN Books, it details how many of those who run our institutions have embraced the politics of the Left. But they can't win unless they disable the family and Christianity.

The goal of the ruling class and radicals is the creation of a

“compliant citizenry.” Nothing motivates them more than control: they are masters of thought control and behavioral control. Unlike the tyrants of old, they opt for democratic despotism, the soft version of totalitarianism. Christians, however, remain an obstacle to their ends, which is why they are caught in their crosshairs.

Praise for Christianity in the Crosshairs

“Secular elites have placed Christianity—and especially Catholicism—in the crosshairs for decades. Few have taken fire and flak like Bill Donohue. The bold Donohue and his fearless Catholic League have bravely taken on the ruling elites for decades. Now, you can, too. This book will help equip the faithful to fight back.”

—Paul Kengor, PhD, professor of political science, Grove City College, editor of *The American Spectator*

“Bill Donohue shows how cultural elites and activist networks often align in ways that marginalize the family and religious faith, with Christianity frequently in the crosshairs of the debate. His argument is carefully researched, lucidly written, and genuinely illuminating. It’s a valuable guide for Christians—and for anyone who wants to understand what’s driving today’s cultural conflicts.”

—Tony Perkins, President, Family Research Council

“With his no-nonsense style, Donohue combines eye opening, real-life stories with solid research of the current decline of our culture. Readers will be encouraged as they see how in the end, despite the many storms that swirl around us, the ruling class and raging radicals are no match for deep faith and strong families.”

—Teresa Tomeo, host of EWTN’s Catholic Connection

“There is no better social scientist writing in America today

than Bill Donohue. Writing in a bold, direct style, he lays bare how today's 'elites'—as they call themselves—and today's radicals have formed an unholy alliance to destroy faith and family—and how those of us who treasure both must fight back.”

—Steven W. Mosher, President, Population Research Institute

George Washington: A Champion for Catholics

[Kyle Nazareth](#)

As Presidents' Day dawns, reminding us of the leaders who shaped our nation, it's fitting to revisit the unparalleled legacy of George Washington, the holiday's original honoree. Our first president was a monumental leader; he led the Continental Army through the Revolutionary War, unified the discordant states during the framing of the Constitution, and steadied a young nation. And unlike many in the Founding generation, Washington defied widespread anti-Catholic prejudice, establishing the religious liberty central to America today.

Anti-Catholic bias ran deep in early America. Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. called it “the deepest bias in the history of the American people.” Many of the first colonists were Puritans and Congregationalists; they came to America to escape persecution by the Church of England, whose doctrines they associated with Catholicism.

As a result, many early Americans linked their faith with liberty and Catholicism with tyranny. They believed Catholics could never be fully American because allegiance to the Pope

and obedience to Church hierarchy seemed incompatible with republican self-government. Anti-Catholic rhetoric later framed the American War of Independence as resistance not only to Parliament but also to Rome. Colonial laws reflected this hostility.

Yet Washington championed religious liberty for Catholics, viewing it as the government's "very first imperative," according to scholar Michael Novak. In a 1785 letter to George Mason, Washington wrote that "no man's sentiments are more opposed to any kind of restraint upon religious principles than mine are." He insisted that good citizens be "protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of their own conscience."

To Bishop John Carroll, the first U.S. Catholic bishop, Washington wrote that growing liberalism would ensure all worthy citizens are "equally entitled to the protection of civil Government." He praised Catholic patriotism and Catholic France's vital aid during the Revolutionary War, affirming their full and equal place in the American experiment.

Washington put these convictions into action. During the War's 1775–1776 Quebec Campaign, he banned the anti-Catholic "Pope's Day" (called Guy Fawkes Day in Britain) effigy burnings on November 5, calling them "ridiculous and childish" and "monstrous" whilst seeking alliances with Catholic France and Canada. He warned his forces against any disrespect or contempt toward the Catholic residents of Quebec.

Washington was also impressed by Catholics for their brave contributions to the cause of independence. Among them was Commodore John Barry (first U.S. Navy officer under Washington), aide Captain John Fitzgerald, French ally Marquis de Lafayette (highly esteemed by Washington), and Charles Carroll of Carrollton—the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence—who financed the war, served on the Board of War supporting Washington, and became his friend.

Personally, Washington showed warmth towards Catholicism. He occasionally attended Catholic Mass, led a delegation from the Constitutional Convention to a nearby Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church, visited America's first Catholic college, financially supported the construction of Catholic churches, and displayed religious paintings of the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist at Mount Vernon. Reports from his aides and servants note he made the Sign of the Cross before meals and prayer, a distinctly Catholic gesture. Biographer Ron Chernow observed that Washington "believed in the need for good works as well as faith," diverging from the typical Protestant emphasis on salvation through faith alone.

In a society that deemed Catholicism subversive, Washington treated Catholics as equals and friends.

Catholics returned the regard. Bishop Carroll praised Washington's religious respect in 1790 and eulogized him twice after his death in 1799, calling him America's truest friend and Providence's instrument. Pope Leo XIII, in 1895's *Longinqua*, cited the "well-known friendship" between Washington and Carroll as the model of harmony between the U.S. and the Church. Pope Pius XII in 1939's *Sertum Laetitiae* called Washington and Carroll "close friend[s]," an example of the reverence for Christ that grounds America's morality, prosperity, and progress.

America has always had competing impulses toward the Catholic Church: one generous and confident, another fearful and tribal. Washington is worth celebrating because he chose the better impulse. He was a true friend to the Church when Catholics needed it, paving the way for their emancipation from vicious laws and biases against them.