

"America, America,
God shed His grace
on thee."

www.graceinaction.org
July 2006

GRACE IN Action

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™



The eagle symbolizes the U.S., and also
St. John the Evangelist Comstock

NEW Parables Liberty through discipline

There was a woman who was obsessed with the idea of freedom. She never committed to times or dates on her calendar because she didn't want to feel tied down. She didn't wear a watch, so she was habitually late. The woman detested lists. She refused to plan ahead for meals before she went to the grocery store. As a result, she often ate more expensive, less healthful convenience food. At the mall, she bought whatever she wanted at the moment, and that made her feel free; but she was shackled with credit-card debt. The woman cleaned the house only when she felt like it, so she lived most of the time fettered by chaos and clutter. Though she was fond of animals, she resisted adopting a pet because she did not want responsibility to interfere with her sense of freedom.

There was a man who also valued freedom. However, he found freedom through discipline. Cleaning the house regularly meant that his home never got extremely dirty. Cleaning did not feel like a huge task, and he had no panic when people stopped by unannounced. Before he went to the grocery store, he planned his meals for the week so he had ingredients on hand to prepare healthful meals. He managed his time well enough that he even found hours to volunteer; and he managed his money well enough that he had achieved financial independence and was able to make contributions to his favorite charities. Best of all, keeping commitments to family and friends gave him the satisfaction of knowing he was reliable and surrounded by love.



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July

CELEBRATE

- 4 Independence Day
- 11 St. Benedict
- 22 St. Mary Magdalene
- 29 St. Martha
- 31 St. Ignatius of Loyola

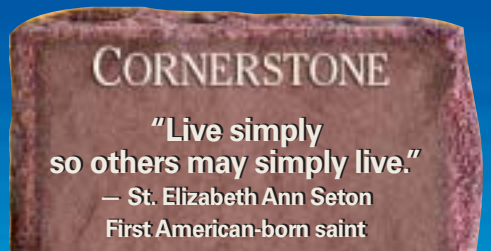


FAITH Fact

Divine truth sets us free

The Declaration of Independence helped to achieve freedom of religion, yet practicing Catholicism in America was a hard-earned right. In Maryland, established by Catholics in 1634, Catholics could not vote or hold major office. Persecution of Catholics continued after the adoption of the First Amendment.

In an 1884 pastoral letter, the U.S. Catholic bishops wrote: "A Catholic finds himself at home in the United States; for the influence of his Church has constantly been exercised in behalf of individual rights and popular liberties. And the right-minded American nowhere finds himself more at home than in the Catholic Church, for nowhere else can he breathe more freely that atmosphere of Divine truth, which alone can make us free."



CORNERSTONE

"Live simply
so others may simply live."

— St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
First American-born saint

MODERN Disciple

Golden anniversary of sterling Catholic's death

John Francis Noll, fifth bishop of Fort Wayne, Ind., and founder of Our Sunday Visitor newspaper, was one of the most influential Catholics of his day. His accomplishments are legion; he made his mark on nearly all of the major Catholic ventures of his time. Many of the institutions and works that he founded or influenced are still thriving today, 50 years after he died, on July 31, 1956.

As a Catholic priest, and later as bishop of Fort Wayne, he was editor of the national Catholic weekly newspaper Our Sunday Visitor, which he founded in 1912. Archbishop Noll was the first to promote offering envelopes as a way to systematically support the Church. Through the newspaper, offering envelopes,



Archbishop Noll

and numerous books and pamphlets — of which Grace in Action is a descendant — he spoke to a nation of Catholics to educate them in their faith and promote the spirit of Catholic action.

He founded a religious order of women, now known as the Victroy Noll Sisters, to teach underprivileged Mexican children in the Southwest. The legacy of his

charity lives on in the Our Sunday Visitor Institute, which annually distributes funds to Catholic organizations.

He used his newspaper to promote fund-raising for the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, the completion of which had languished through the Great Depression and World War II due to lack of funds. His campaign raised approximately \$7 million.

Archbishop Noll was also involved with the early days of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (now the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops) and the Legion of Decency.

Our Sunday Visitor celebrates the life of the late Archbishop Noll at our website: www.graceinaction.org

SOWING Seeds

Freedom is not permissive, but permission

“The life of a Christian steward, lived in imitation of the life of Christ, is challenging, even difficult in many ways; but both here and hereafter it is charged with intense joy.”

— *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*
U.S. Catholic bishops' stewardship pastoral

The joy associated with a life of Christian stewardship is in keeping with the Founding Fathers' notion of the “pursuit of happiness” that is an American's inalienable right.

What truly makes you happy? Most people who live stewardship attest to the truth that the life of giving brings joy. Like him or not, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the first and only Catholic president of the United States. Kennedy had a sense of stewardship, as evidenced by one of his most famous quotes: “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.”

The Catholic steward is called to take citizenship seriously and to take action: Promote social justice; protect human rights; make sure to vote. Freedom includes responsibility, along with rights. Who are your heroes in the fight for freedom of the human spirit?

OurSundayVisitor

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TRY This Holy Smoke

This month, as Americans traditionally light sparklers, firecrackers and Roman candles, fire up some incense, too. Incense has been part of Catholic ritual since the Magi brought frankincense to Baby Jesus. Hebrew tradition held that God had ordered a special altar of incense set up near a tent sanctuary built by Moses (see Ex 30:1-7). Twice daily offerings of incense were made in Solomon's temple.

From Latin, meaning “to burn,” incense symbolizes the ascent of prayer and good works to God. Used for purification and to aid prayer, incense becomes a prayer itself, conveying an offering not in words but in scent and sight. If offering incense, be sure to follow carefully the manufacturer's safety tips.



YOUR Feedback

For a future issue, we're collecting Catholic quotes. Thanks to readers who have responded by submitting suggestions from prayers, Scripture, saints and other Catholic sources. If you have some Catholic words of wisdom, please share them with us. We'll share them with the entire Grace in Action audience, 190,000 strong and in 47 states. Our addresses appear at left. Thank you for reading and for writing to Grace in Action.