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The American Way

by

Mr. Justice Matthew F. McGuire



THE CATHOLIC HOUR

THE AMERICAN WAY

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Two addresses delivered in the nationwide Catholic Hour, produced by the National Council of Catholic Men, in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company, on July 6, 1947 and July 13, 1947.

BY

MR. JUSTICE MATTHEW F. McGUIRE

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for the District of Columbia



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OUR WORLD TODAY

Address given on July 6, 1947

Never before, perhaps, since that momentous day over twelve hundred years ago when Charles Martel defeated the Saracen hosts on the field of Tours has what we like to call our Western Civilization stood more certainly in the balance. Then it was the crescent or the cross.

Then that Europe, which proclaimed its belief in a common culture and polity, which had its roots in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, was united. Today it stands broken and teetering on the brink and the hour is dark.

Only here, in our own America, does the fierce white light of human freedom and hope still shine brightly and defiantly through the encircling gloom the world over. For here, on this continent, far from its madding hates and alarms, men took the best the Old World had to offer and resolutely builded a new.

Despite the religious upheaval of the sixteenth century, they still clung to and believed in the long recognized fundamentals and gave them emphatic affirmation when they said, as they did say, in our Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

They thus gave more than lip service to their belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man—every man. They not only enshrined it forever in their declaration of freedom, but made it an integral part, also, of their charter of government—Our Constitution—the fundamental law of the land.

There were few debunkers in those days. No one had yet appeared to tell these men about their subconscious, as we have been told. Marx, with his gospel that economics explains not only history but everything, had yet to make his appearance, and Lenin had not yet made his bow upon the earthly scene to deny all morality taken from what he called "supernatural conceptions"—and no one had ever heard of the "class struggle."

Men still bowed their knee to the God of their fathers, although they differed and might

quarrel, and bitterly so at times, among themselves as to the time, the place, the manner and the circumstance.

Free-will was not to them, as some would tell us it is, the instinct of the herd or a mass illusion and, strangely enough, they were convinced that there was a moral order, above and beyond all government to which all man-made law must conform.

They were one with the cultural and intellectual tradition of the West and upon that foundation they reared what we like to call our American democracy.

This conception of men in their relation to their fellow men, not only pervaded the mass of the people as it does today, but, indeed, it was the view point and the conviction of those who were their educators and the fashioners of their polity.

And it is a significant thing that practically every institution of learning in America, before the advent of the state university, was founded either under the sponsorship or auspices of some Christian denomination. Not only were we a religious people, but our intellectual leadership was also. And if this was true of the period of the creation of the Union, we have it

graphically outlined in another period of our history—that of the great struggle between the States.

No one can read of the simple faith of Lincoln and not bless the land that gave him birth. Nor learn of the quiet and unobtrusive piety of Lee, and the deep religious fortitude of Stonewall Jackson and not conclude—and sadly—that we have travelled far, on more roads than one, since that fateful day when the dying sun of the Lost Cause set forever at Appomattox—not yet a hundred years ago.

For we, too, have felt the pull of that fearful tide that has made Europe a shambles, and many of us—sad to say—together with millions of others on that continent which was once the cradle of our culture, have repudiated the divinity of our common origin and ultimate destiny, and the traditions that bind us to our past. And it follows then as a bitter consequence that if there are no longer fundamentals on which men can agree—the only alternatives are force or chaos—and Hitler was infallibly right.

We have unlocked some of the innermost secrets of the universe. We boast that we hold in

our possession the accumulated knowledge of the centuries and yet, instead of ushering in the fabulous thousand years of peace, we glimpse a future darker than the darkest era in the long history of the race. And how can it be otherwise? When, for almost a century now, there has been waged by the new pagans and so-called intellectuals, on both sides of the water, a campaign of attrition against the distinction between right and wrong, they have labled it just another primitive taboo;—the Ten Commandments, they say, are a species of man-made effort, interesting as a code of outworn law, suitable to an unenlightened age, and to be classed with the “Don’ts” and “Do’s” of the Indian tribes, or as a curious phase of the folklore of the Jewish people. Man himself has been mechanized, as he has mechanized the world in which he lives, thus freeing him, so they say, from the tyranny of the world of ideas. But the truth is that man has been enslaved as he has never been before, in the mechanical world of his own creation.

Religion is branded, not openly, of course, as a sedative for those too weak to take life in stride, or as a drug made palatable and attractive, and admin-

istered to the masses by those who seek to fetter what is called the new-found freedom of the ordinary man and woman and to victimize and enslave them. While in what passes for the literature of the day, the uninhibited instincts of the brute creation are depicted unblushingly in the guise of the new art and the newer realism, as the true reflection of the customs, manners and, indeed, the morals of our enlightened day and age. There are no taboos any more—no reticences—they went out with the old morality—to such a pass have our so-called major thinkers brought us.

Marriage, the fundamental unit upon which a healthy state and nation must be built, is regarded as an affair of convenience—as our constantly rising divorce rate indicates. As a consequence, domestic society and the sanctity of the marriage bond have been weakened steadily over the years, until divorce, hitherto an anomaly, and at one time a badge of shame, has achieved distinction as the mark of smart living.

Only the other day one of our leading educators commented on what she called the “philosophy of absolute negation” found among our young college wom-

en, while the rising tide of juvenile delinquency gives further emphasis to the over-all picture. Now, all of this did not develop over night. It has been going on for a long time in our world, not only yesterday but today.

We are losing the old simple ideals of life which have made this country great and our contact with those first principles that are at once both our anchor and our bulwark. The attack has not been so much a frontal one in this country as it has been oblique, and, therefore, much more subtle. These ideals have been stolen from us—to our shame—in the name of art, literature, progress and advanced thinking.

But we are told that ours is a "learned" age. And as a consequence the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount went out with the fable of the creation and the story of Adam and Eve—which it is said, of course, no really educated and informed person could possibly believe in, as it does not square with the findings of science.

Man's only norm of conduct, certain moderns tell us, should be his own desires and feelings—while morals, so-called, change with the times and the prog-

ress of the race. And while it is true the Ten Commandments have played their part in the history of humanity, they are interesting only as history and as such they are dead.

For today is the age of the emancipated man who has shaken off, at least, the fetters of old beliefs and has come out from the shadows of the older learning. Today man is free and owes no allegiance to anyone except perhaps the state, the community, or some similar deified abstraction.

And so this civilization of ours staggers along its self-made road to destruction because mankind has forgotten all that has quickened, spiritualized and ennobled it. We give, for the most part, lip service to the form and ignore the substance. We throw away the fruit and are content with the husk.

But we are reminded we live in different times—and that constant experiment is the road to progress and so by means of this scientific approach and by observations and making repeated changes in both our viewpoints and in the pattern of our social behavior, we shall finally arrive at that millenium when

all men and women, too—will enjoy the golden age of human perfection. How sound is that?

Experiment and observation made no fundamental change in the characteristics of the atom—we may know more about them and it, but in essence the atom remains the same and so does man. No amount of experiment or change can alter his essence, his nature, his origin or his destiny. But education, we are informed, makes for virtue and the more you get in the way of education the better man or woman you ought to be—maybe—but there have been and are educated rogues, thieves, murderers, charlatans and hypocrites. Education that denies the origin of man and his destiny and regards him merely as a machine in the same category of those he has created, is the education of frustration and nihilism.

But why this gloomy and critical picture? Is it overdrawn? As was said to a visitor to London's St. Paul's when he asked for the location of the monument to its architect, Sir Christopher Wren, the answer is: "Look around you." These conditions exist today, and it is this

philosophy of indifference and frustration that is the forerunner of the fell disease that has brought the Old World to its knees. We are not immune.

These things are symptomatic. The crisis we face is neither economic nor political. It is a moral one and it is world-wide. Europe has fallen. We alone remain and we shall need courage and strength, as we have never needed them before, to sustain not only ourselves but the millions all over the world who look to us as the last strong bastion of freedom, for hope and for courage.

We can find them nowhere except by a reaffirmation of our belief in those first principles upon which the greatness of the Nation has been built and by a fresh and sincere acknowledgment of the divinity of their origin. So that not only our own freedom, springing as we know it does, from the almighty hand of the Author of All Good, may continue to flourish and to prosper, but that men of good will everywhere, under God's Providence, may come to know and love the beauty and feel the warmth of the same heavenly flame.

OUR AMERICAN WAY

Address given on July 13, 1947

The most cursory examination of our political history and the origin of our government will disclose that our American way of life has its genesis in the underlying and fundamental postulate of the spiritual kinship of men and the overlordship of God.

Our very coinage gives evidence of this fact, stamped as it is with the inspiration—"In God We Trust."

Yet we have seen that despite all of this, there has been a conscious and concerted effort in some so-called intellectual circles to lead us away from this fundamental concept.

Strangely enough science, the hitherto beginning and end of all things, as some would have us believe, and which commencing with the middle of the last century led the revolt from what was regarded as orthodoxy, has come to the turn of the road and today we discern a striking change. More and more, the men of science are lifting their eyes to the skies and seeing there, through the wonders of the microscope and the laboratory, convincing proof of the existence of

a Higher Personal Power Whom men call God—this is, indeed, a salutary sign.

For our western culture, deprived of its religious origin and foundation, cannot survive. For generations now, this hitherto universally acknowledged spiritual foundation has been attacked, not only in the world of science, but in the narrower purlieus of art and literature and, indeed, in nearly every form and medium of human expression with an almost satanic fury.

This has had its logical and frightful culmination in Europe and the end is not yet—while here in America there are those, deliberately or otherwise, who would lead us along the same terrible road.

Yet we Americans know that our American democracy and way of life is predicated on this very foundation. It is a way of life, for that reason, unique both in function and origin and as has been previously said, it has been set forth as a confession of fundamental principle in our own Declaration of Independence.

Let us examine again those oft-quoted words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

These words are the touchstone of American freedom and the foundation and bulwark of our American way. And if they were true in 1776, they are true today for truth never changes, but is eternal, like the Eternal Truth which it mirrors and out of which it springs.

Not only are they true, but our founding fathers regarded them as "*self-evident*." In other words, they are so compelling and so palpably apparent that they win the immediate assent of thinking men and no argument is necessary to prove or maintain them. They not only recognize the existence of God as the Supreme Overlord, but they recognize and give affirmation to the inherent dignity of the human personality and the unalienable rights of the individual man.

That is why it seems strange,

at times, to hear individuals give lip service to the form and deny the substance. For if our democracy is other than what the founding fathers say it is, then the rights of the individual man thus stated, either do not exist at all, as some say is the case, or they become subject to the whim of the majority or the group in power and whether that majority or that group takes refuge behind the facade of an instrumentality known as the State, or behind some other device of the moment makes little difference.

When we Americans speak of democracy we mean those certain basic rights which have been referred to. We mean that there is a code of justice that springs from the Divine; a code of right and wrong that is not subject to statutory change, as the Supreme Court of the United States recently said (*United States v. Girouard*):

"The victory for freedom of thought recorded in our Bill of Rights recognizes that in the domain of conscience there is a moral power higher than the State,"

and in giving our affirmance to such, as the founding fathers did before us, we make a declaration of principle, a profession, so to

speak, of social faith in those unalienable rights referred to. Thus, though we may amend our Constitution and do so radically, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights still remain the nation's political creed by which it stands or falls. This profession of social faith thus enshrined in our Declaration of Independence is deeply rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

This is what we mean by our American way.

President Roosevelt stated this very cogently in his address to the Congress on the State of the Union, on January 4, 1939, when he said:

"Storms from abroad directly challenge three institutions indispensable to Americans, now as always. The first is religion. It is the source of the other two—democracy and international good faith. Religion, by teaching man his relationship to God, gives the individual a sense of his own dignity and teaches him to respect himself by respecting his neighbors.

"Democracy, the practice of self-government, is a covenant among free men to respect the rights and liberties of their fellows. International good faith, a sister of democracy, springs from the will of civilized nations

of men to respect the rights and liberties of other nations of men. In a modern civilization, all three—religion, democracy, and international good faith—complement each other.

"Where freedom of religion has been attacked, the attack has come from sources opposed to democracy. Where democracy has been overthrown, the spirit of free worship has disappeared. And where religion and democracy have vanished, good faith and reason in international affairs have given way to strident ambition and brute force.

"... The United States rejects such an ordering, and retains its ancient faith."

This is what, in substance, distinguishes the American way from most others—this admitted and expressed religious genesis of the basic concepts of our freedom. And it is this—that Europe for the most part has repudiated, and which some of our so-called progressive thinkers, regard as interesting from the standpoint of history, as marking a phase in our political development, but entirely unworkable to meet the demands of what they call the "modern age"—and, as a consequence, it must be sup-
planted.

Indeed, we know now if we

have never known before, that in this retention of the ancient faith of which President Roosevelt spoke, lies not only the assurance of our own preservation, but the restoration of the remnants of the world that has abandoned it.

Out of such faith has sprung those things that are essentially ours, and those so-called bourgeois, if you will, of honor, morality, patriotism and love of God and home, upon which the greatness of this country has been built, which we find sneered at and ridiculed by those who would reduce us all to the level of the pig, and the world itself to the commonality of the sty.

Who would teach our young there is no law but that of desire; that we are all animals refined perhaps it is true, but blood brothers in direct descent from earlier progenitors flying from tree to tree in some arboreal jungle; that morality is synonymous with custom; that the pledged word is given only to

be broken when it serves the purpose to do so; marriage, a mere convention and a fetish of the unemancipated; and since there is no responsibility to a Higher Power, either here or hereafter, the smart way to live is to get what you can while the getting is good—only don't get caught!

No wonder so many of our young people feel lost and frustrated—because they have been so frightfully let down by the studied cynicism of those to whom they had the right to look for help and guidance.

We have seen the result of this philosophy of despair and negation in the old world. We, here in America, must turn back before it is too late. We must purge out the old leaven and reaffirm our belief not only in what President Roosevelt has called our ancient political faith, but in the Divine Source of All Good from which it springs. Therein lies sanity in a world gone mad—therein lies our only hope of a better world to be.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from the address of the late Patrick Cardinal Hayes at the inaugural program of the Catholic Hour in the studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930.)

Our congratulations and our gratitude are extended to the National Council of Catholic Men and its officials, and to all who, by their financial support, have made it possible to use this offer of the National Broadcasting Company. The heavy expense of managing and financing a weekly program, its musical numbers, its speakers, the subsequent answering of inquiries, must be met. . . .

This radio hour is for all the people of the United States. To our fellow-citizens, in this word of dedication, we wish to express a cordial greeting and, indeed, congratulations. For this radio hour is one of service to America, which certainly will listen in interestedly, and even sympathetically, I am sure, to the voice of the ancient Church with its historic background of all the centuries of the Christian era, and with its own notable contribution to the discovery, exploration, foundation and growth of our glorious country. . . .

Thus to voice before a vast public the Catholic Church is no light task. Our prayers will be with those who have that task in hand. We feel certain that it will have both the good will and the good wishes of the great majority of our countrymen. Surely, there is no true lover of our Country who does not eagerly hope for a less worldly, a less material, and a more spiritual standard among our people.

With good will, with kindness and with Christ-like sympathy for all, this work is inaugurated. So may it continue. So may it be fulfilled. This word of dedication voices, therefore, the hope that this radio hour may serve to make known, to explain with the charity of Christ, our faith, which we love even as we love Christ Himself. May it serve to make better understood that faith as it really is—a light revealing the pathway to heaven: a strength, and a power divine through Christ; and joys, bringing not only justice but gladness and peace to our search-pardoning our sins, elevating, consecrating our common every-day duties ing and questioning hearts.

106 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 40 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

Alabama	Birmingham	WBRC*	960 kc
	Mobile	WALA	1410 kc
	Montgomery	WSFA	1440 kc
Arizona	Globe	KWJR	1240 kc
	Phoenix	KTAR	620 kc
	Safford	KGLU	1450 kc
	Tucson	KVOA	1290 kc
	Yuma	KYUM	1240 kc
California	Fresno	KMJ	580 kc
	Los Angeles	KFI	640 kc
	Sacramento	KCRA	1340 kc
	San Francisco	KPO	680 kc
Colorado	Denver	KOA	850 kc
Connecticut	Hartford	WTIC*	1090 kc
District of Columbia	Washington	WRC	980 kc
Florida	Jacksonville	WJAX	930 kc
	Miami	WIOD	610 kc
	Pensacola	WCOA	1370 kc
	Tampa	WFLA	970-620 kc
Georgia	Atlanta	WSB	750 kc
	Savannah	WSAV	1340 kc
Idaho	Boise	KIDO	1380 kc
Illinois	Chicago	WMAQ	670 kc
Indiana	Elkhart	WTRC	1340 kc
	Fort Wayne	WGL	1450 kc
	Terre Haute	WBOW	1230 kc
Kansas	Hutchinson	KWBW	1450 kc
	Wichita	KANS	1240 kc
Kentucky	Louisville	WAVE*	970 kc
Louisiana	Lafayette	KVOL	1340 kc
	Lake Charles	KPLC	1490 kc
	Monroe	KNOE	1230 kc
	New Orleans	WSMB	1350 kc
	Shreveport	KTBS	1480 kc
Maine	Augusta	WRDO	1400 kc
Maryland	Baltimore	WBAL	1090 kc
	Cumberland	WTBO	1450 kc
Massachusetts	Boston	WBZ	1030 kc
	Springfield	WBZA	1030 kc
Michigan	Detroit	WWJ	950 kc
	Saginaw	WSAM	1400 kc
Minnesota	Duluth-Superior	WEBC	1320 kc
	Hibbing	WMFG	1300 kc
	Mankato	KYSM	1230 kc
	Minneapolis-St. Paul	KSTP	1500 kc
	Rochester	KROC	1340 kc
	St. Cloud	KFAM	1450 kc
	Virginia	WHLB	1400 kc
Mississippi	Jackson	WJDX	1300 kc
Missouri	Kansas City	WDAF	610 kc
	Springfield	KGBX	1260 kc
	Saint Louis	KSD*	550 kc
Montana	Billings	KGHL	790 kc
	Bozeman	KRBM	1450 kc
	Butte	KGIR	1370 kc
	Helena	KPFA	1240 kc

106 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 40 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

Nebraska	North Platte	KODY	1240 kc
	Omaha	WOW	590 kc
Nevada	Reno	KOH	630 kc
New Mexico	Albuquerque	KOB	1030 kc
New York	Buffalo	WBEN	930 kc
	New York	WNBC	660 kc
	Schenectady	WGY	810 kc
North Carolina	Charlotte	WSOC	1240 kc
	Raleigh	WPTF	680 kc
	Winston-Salem	WSJS	600 kc
North Dakota	Bismark	KFYR	550 kc
	Fargo	WDAY	970 kc
Ohio	Cleveland	WTAM	1100 kc
	Lima	WLOK	1240 kc
	Toledo	WSPD	1340 kc
Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	WKY	930 kc
	Tulsa	KVOO	1170 kc
Oregon	Medford	KMED	1440 kc
	Portland	KGW*	620 kc
Pennsylvania	Allentown	WSAN	1470 kc
	Altoona	WFBG	1340 kc
	Erie	WERC	1230 kc
	Johnstown	WJAC	1400 kc
	Lewistown	WMRF	1490 kc
	Philadelphia	KYW	1060 kc
	Pittsburgh	KDKA	1020 kc
	Reading	WRaw	1340 kc
	Wilkes-Barre	WBRE	1340 kc
	Williamsport	WRAC	1400 kc
Rhode Island	Providence	WJAR	920 kc
South Carolina	Charleston	WTMA	1250 kc
	Columbia	WIS	560 kc
	Greenville	WFBC	1330 kc
South Dakota	Sioux Falls	KSOO-KELO	1140-1230 kc
Tennessee	Kingsport	WKPT	1400 kc
	Memphis	WMC*	790 kc
	Nashville	WSM*	650 kc
Texas	Amarillo	KGNC	1440 kc
	Dallas	WFAA	820 kc
	El Paso	KTSM	1380 kc
	Fort Worth	WPAB*	820 kc
	Houston	KPRC	950 kc
	San Antonio	WOAI	1200 kc
	Weslaco	KRGV	1290 kc
Utah	Salt Lake City	KDYL*	1320 kc
Virginia	Harrisonburg	WSVA	550 kc
	Norfolk	WTAR*	790 kc
	Richmond	WMBG	1380 kc
Washington	Seattle	KOMO	950 kc
	Spokane	KHQ	590 kc
Wisconsin	Eau Claire	WEAU	790 kc
	La Crosse	WKBH	1410 kc
	Marinette	WMAM	570 kc
Hawaii	Honolulu	KGU	760 kc

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(Revised as of May, 1947)

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