



CAN A CATHOLIC
BE A
GOOD AMERICAN



BY
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PREFACE

The little pamphlet, here published, is a small contribution by the author to the cause of better understanding between the various creeds of our great country. Misunderstandings come from the activities of ignorant or uncharitable individuals. Toleration is the ripe fruit of not only gentle breeding but of instructed minds. Men have always and always will differ upon every subject under the sun. This is as should be. We all have developed under separated circumstances, different streams of thought have moulded our minds. Yet we all should be broad and charitable enough to allow our neighbor the right to his own ideas. If we can not agree with him, let us at least respect him for his honest opinions. If we feel and think he is very wrong, let us feel sorry for him and try to enlighten him.

Among all the subjects upon which men differ, religion perhaps holds the first place. This widespread difference of ideas owes its origin to the above stated causes. Early influences, accidents of birth and race, with many other reasons influence the faith of nations and individuals.

In these United States, we have been formed into one people from the union of men and women from every country under the sun. They came here with their own ideas from other lands, and little by little have become part and

parcel of this land. All claim to be and most all are good Americans. Many races have become one people. Many creeds too dwell in our land. Some came here to escape persecution in other parts of the world. This is the land of the free.

Let us hope that it will always remain the land of the free. That no religion will ever deny another the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Let us all love and serve God as our hearts and mind direct us. Let us be generous to those who can not think as we do. Let us not forget their rights, in our love for our own rights. The good God sees many of his children walking in evil ways, knows that many of them neglect and forget Him; yet upon all He sends His daily blessings, the bright sunshine, the refreshing rains. If He can so tolerate his erring children, we, puny mortals should follow His great command and "love one another."

CAN A CATHOLIC BE A GOOD AMERICAN

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Undoubtedly you have often heard this question asked by those outside and ignorant of the history of the Catholic Church. They answer quickly and simply "No." The reason generally given is that Catholics owe allegiance to a foreign power. That Catholics can not be trusted by President, King or Emperor. Such an attitude of mind comes from a simple misunderstanding of the difference between church and state, from the inability of some to grasp the fact that there are two powers in the world—the power of God and the power of man. As Christ expressed it, one must render to God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. He said His Kingdom was not of this world. The church says the same thing today. Its kingdom is not of this world, but it has to live and operate in the world.

The question of the patriotism of Catholics is not a purely imaginary subject. There are facts in this matter. Facts that support only one side. Our side. We defy any man to produce a historic fact from the long history of our country to support the claim that Catholics are **not** good Americans. We have been here a part and parcel of this great land from the day Columbus landed upon its shores, to this very hour. When, where have we failed in our duty? On the other hand, history's pages are

crowded with uncontested facts to support the claim we make that no body of citizens have been more patriotic than Catholics in the United States.

Let us begin in our own times. Way down in the southern part of Mississippi there is a small Catholic community known as De Lisle. In proportion to its habitants more young men from this Catholic community went voluntarily to the Great War than from any other section of our country. The Pope did not keep them at home. They remembered the old adage, "Mori pro patria," to "die for one's country." Many of them did lay down their lives on the fields of France.

In that same great war, yet fresh in our memory, a Catholic was among the first three American boys to die upon the battlefield. The very first officer was a Catholic, as was the first death in the navy that of a Catholic sailor. Were these men good Americans?

Before that great war, the North and South, fought like two bad brothers. When the immortal president of the South, Jefferson Davis, was about to be condemned to death as a traitor, who defended him? The most prominent lawyer of the time, a Catholic, with a good Irish name...O'Connor. Let us refresh our memory today.

Not only with sword, but with pen, more powerful, Catholics contributed to our land's history. A Catholic, James Randall, wrote the great song,

"My Maryland." A Catholic, Daniel D. Emmett in the year 1859 wrote that yet more famous song "Dixie Land." It was the priest Father Ryan, who left so many enduring poems of the South, The Conquered Banner, The Sword of Lee, and others.

Back yet further in our history we may go, to the times of the war of Independence. If we are able to celebrate the Fourth of July each year, it is because in our hour of need Catholic France came to our aid. That Catholic country furnished \$3,000,000.00 and gave us a navy that bottled up Cornwallis at Yorktown, cooperating with Washington and Rochambeau in the final move that ended the war and insured our victory.

Let me here introduce a too little known page from the history of that period. On May 7th, 1928, America and France paid just tribute to De Grasse, a hero of the Revolutionary war. At Tilly, in France, a requiem mass was said for him, attended by Ambassador Myron T. Herrick, Marshall Foch and other dignitaries. The heart of Francis Joseph de Grasse was borne to the high altar in an urn of bronze. As Lieutenant General of the naval forces of Louis XVI of France, this French Catholic assembled a fleet of warships and dispersed the British fleet. Ambassador Herrick hailed this French Admiral as "an officer on whose skill courage and devotion depended the whole fate of our Revolutionary War." He quoted Washington's own letter to De Grasse, in which he said the surrender of

Yorktown "the honor belongs to you." How many Americans are acquainted with the important part this French Catholic played in our early history?

Another Catholic hero of that war is Jack Barry, the father of the American navy. The English Lord Howe offered him \$80,000.00 and a high position in the English navy but this Catholic proved a good American and did not betray his country.

These are only a few high lights from the long history of Catholics in the United States. It is easy, simply to make an accusation. It is not so easy to substantiate the accusation. When you hear some one question the loyalty of Catholics, ask them for proofs. We can prove what we say. Can they?

We are at the same time not unmindful of the glorious record of our fellow citizens of other denominations. We would say that no nation has produced a more loyal citizenship than has been bred in our land. We claim to be part of this tradition. We have stood the test in every emergency, from Bunker Hill, to Bull Run to Belleau Woods and with God's help we Catholics will always be found side by side with our fellow citizens in any future hour of need.

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