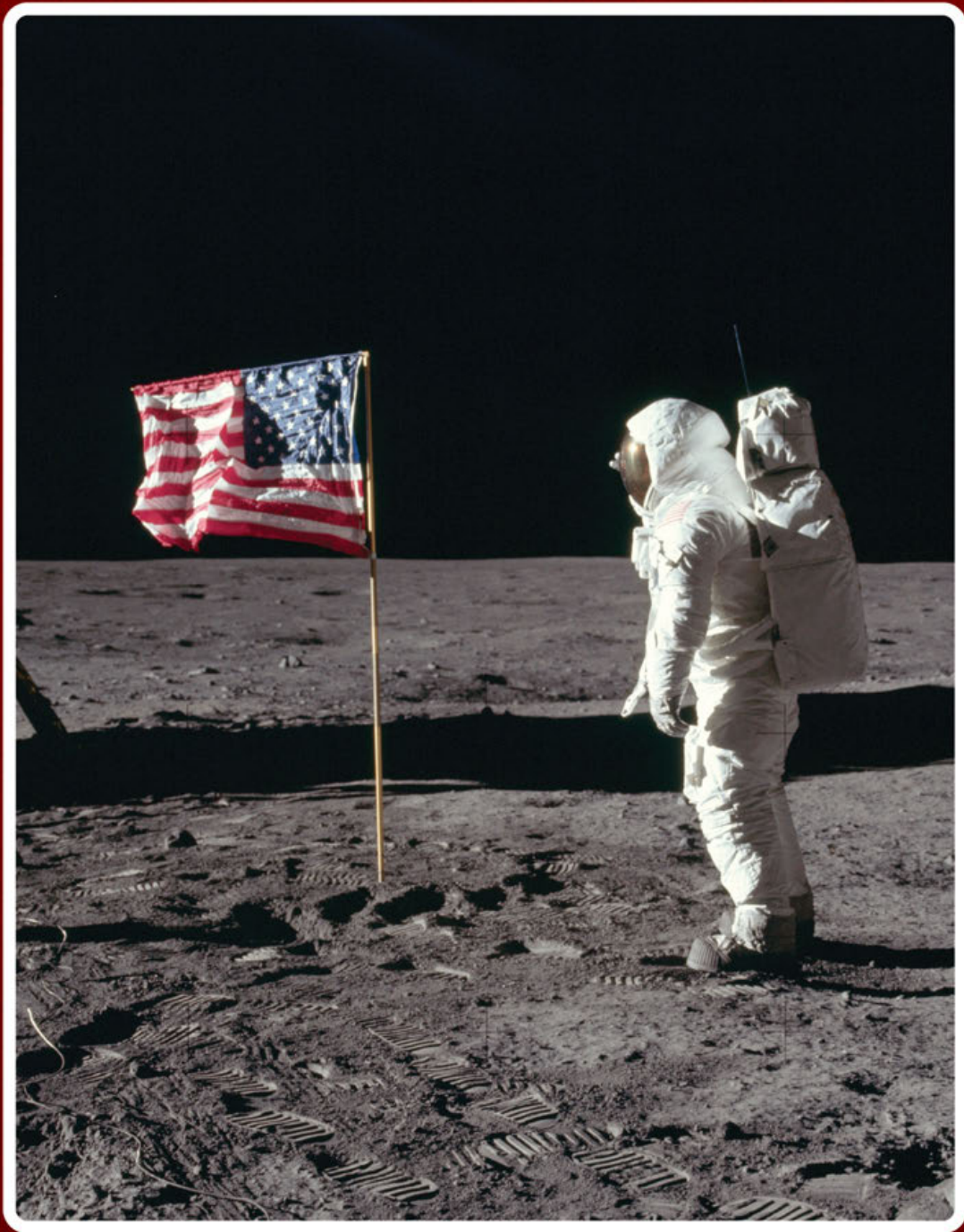


AMERICA FORGE OF FREEDOM

Volume Two: From 1865



SETON PRESS

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On the last day of his life, Abraham Lincoln pardoned a Union soldier charged with desertion. Lincoln's death changed the course of the nation for decades to come.

Lincoln's Assassination

On April 14, only five days after General Lee's surrender, **John Wilkes Booth**, a Southern sympathizer, shot President Lincoln. Lincoln and his wife Mary had been attending a play at **Ford's Theater** in Washington D.C. Booth snuck into the president's unguarded theater box on the balcony and shot President Lincoln. Shouting "*Sic Semper Tyrannis*" ("*Thus Always to Tyrants*"), Booth leapt from the balcony onto the stage below, breaking his leg in the fall. In the confusion, he limped away, escaping to Virginia. Lincoln died from his wound early the next morning.

The authorities found and arrested three conspirators in the assassination plot the same week. On April 26, sheriffs cornered John Wilkes Booth in a barn on Garrett's Farm. When Booth refused to surrender, the barn was set on fire. Booth died from a gunshot, whether self-inflicted or from his pursuers, no one knows for certain. However, many historians believe that **Thomas "Boston" Corbett**, a sergeant in the Union Army, shot Booth. The other conspirators were quickly tried and hanged.

Abraham Lincoln's murder deprived our badly splintered nation of a leader who earnestly sought to "bind up the nation's wounds" and build a bridge of understanding and assistance. In his second Inaugural Address, Lincoln had spoken in true Christian charity of working "with malice toward none" and "with charity for all." His death meant that rebuilding the war-devastated South would be the work of other men. It would fall to Lincoln's vice-president, **Andrew Johnson**, to oversee the reconstruction of the South.

Andrew Johnson Succeeds Abraham Lincoln

If President Lincoln had lived, his desire to engineer a righteous peace between North and South, coupled with his political ability, might well have bound "up the nation's wounds." The awesome burden of national leadership after his death became the responsibility of President Andrew Johnson. Historians have not generally rated Johnson high among U.S. presidents, but since he led the nation in a time of such suffering and strain, his choices deserve careful consideration.

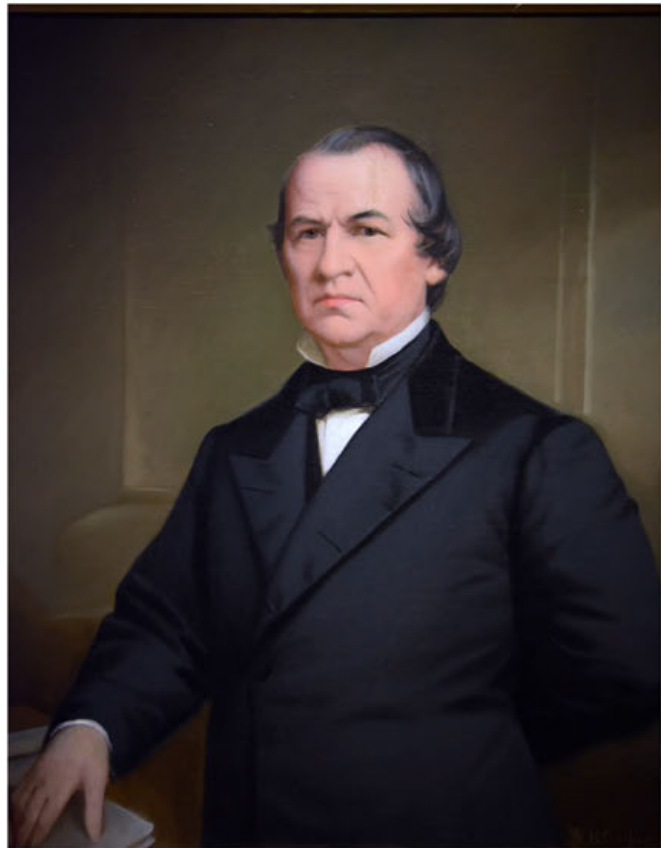
Born in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1808, Andrew Johnson became a tailor's apprentice at a young age. After his apprenticeship, he worked as a tailor in dozens of villages, in return for food and lodging. He finally settled in Greeneville, Tennessee, married and raised a family. Johnson lacked a formal education and his young wife tutored him in math and writing. One of the sources she used to teach him to read was the U. S. Constitution.

Friendly, but also cautious and shy, Andrew Johnson was resolute in the tasks he set for himself as a young man. Those who knew him, respected him for his determination to learn and his honesty. For these reasons, his friends asked him to run for public office. Over time, Johnson served as an alderman and a mayor before being elected to Tennessee's House of Representatives. Eventually, he served in the United States House of Representatives, as governor of Tennessee, and as a United States senator.

President Andrew Johnson did his best to fulfill Lincoln's plan of reconciliation, not punishment, with the South. President Johnson began by issuing a proclamation pardoning all the states and everyone responsible for seceding from the Union, with the exception of the Confederacy's most prominent leaders and anyone who had mistreated black Union troops. He urged the former Confederate states to elect officials and organize governments that would repeal the Declarations of Secession, repudiate the Confederate war debt, and ratify the **Thirteenth Amendment**, which had been adopted on December 6, 1865, abolishing slavery.

Johnson and the Congressional Republicans

Andrew Johnson had been chosen to run as vice-president in 1864, even though he was a Democrat. Nevertheless, his relationship with the Republicans in Congress had always been quite friendly. The moderate Republicans liked Johnson because he had always favored small farmers over large plantation owners. Johnson also wanted to improve public education. The moderate Republicans saw him as a "man of the people." When Johnson issued amnesty to the Confederates, something the moderates felt that Lincoln



President Andrew Johnson



Columbia, South Carolina in 1865. The photograph has been taken from the steps of the capital building. The once beautiful city, one of the jewels of the South, has been almost completely destroyed.

certainly would have done, they felt Johnson had acted properly and they supported him. They wanted the former states to re-enter the Union as full members as soon as possible. The former Confederate states should hold elections for congressmen and senators and send them to Washington.

However, another group of Republicans, called the **Radical Republicans**, expected Johnson to act more harshly toward the South. They too recalled that Johnson had supported small farmers over plantation owners, whom Johnson had once called “traitorous aristocrats.” The leader of the Radical Republicans, a congressman from Pennsylvania named **Thaddeus Stevens**, felt that the federal government should confiscate large Southern plantations and divide this newly-acquired land among the recently freed slaves.

Johnson could not support both plans. A clash with the Radical Republicans seemed inevitable. The confrontation would be historic!

Congress Rejects Johnson’s Plan for Reconstruction

By the end of 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery, had been ratified by three-fourths of the states and became part of the U.S. Constitution. Despite slavery’s official abolition, many Southern states passed laws called **Black Codes**, which state officials designed to restrict the social and economic conditions of freed slaves. While the Codes gave freed blacks some rights, such as the right to own property, overall the Black Codes reduced black Americans to an almost slavery-like situation. For example, the Codes in some states, such as South Carolina, prohibited freed blacks from working at any occupations other than farming or household work, that is, the same jobs they performed as slaves, unless they paid a tax. Because some Southerners were extremely concerned about freed blacks “getting into trouble,” the black codes in many states required black Americans to sign yearly labor contracts. If they refused, or broke a signed contract, they could be arrested or sentenced to perform unpaid labor. The black codes also treated vagrancy among blacks very harshly. Blacks who could not provide evidence of employment could be arrested and sentenced to unpaid labor to pay the fine.



Sunday Morning in Virginia by Winslow Homer (1877). Set in a former slave cabin, Homer depicts a nicely dressed teacher instructing three black children to read using the Bible.

Of course, Northerners found these Black Codes reprehensible. It appeared that the South had passed the Thirteenth Amendment, but did not mean to implement it. Southern elections to Congress did little to assuage Northern concerns.

President Johnson and the moderate Republicans had encouraged Southerners to send representatives to the U.S. Congress. However, the Republicans perhaps did not expect that the people of the South would elect the same men to Congress who had just led the Confederacy. For example, in 1866, Georgia elected **Alexander Stephens**, the former Vice-President of the Confederacy, to the U.S. Senate. The Senate refused to seat him. (A few years later, Stephens wrote a book defending the South's right to secede and denouncing the North's aggression.) In fact, the members of Congress refused to seat the senators and representatives elected in the former Confederate states. The Radical Republicans, who controlled Congress, were adamant that it was Congress, not the president, who had the authority to decide how and when the Southern representatives to the Houses of Congress would be readmitted. Many congressmen resented what seemed to them as President Johnson's infringement on their own congressional right and lawful power. Consequently, members of Congress refused to recognize the "Reconstruction" state governments that had been organized at the president's command. They rejected Johnson's plan for Reconstruction of the South. Moreover, because the Republicans had won the 1866 congressional elections in a landslide, they controlled more than three-fourths of the House seats. As a result, they could override any presidential veto. President Johnson was virtually powerless before the Republican Congress.

Congress Reconstructs the South

Having rejected President Johnson's plan of Reconstruction, the Republicans in Congress now implemented their own vision of Southern Reconstruction. In March 1865, President Lincoln, in an effort to support former slaves and alleviate their desperate plight, had established the **Freedmen's Bureau**.

Administered by the U.S. army and managed by Union soldiers, the Freedmen's Bureau sought to supply food, clothing, and shelter to Southerners, both black and white, who the war had impoverished. Efforts were made to find jobs for the destitute and open schools for the children. The Bureau was empowered to relocate people to new locations where their opportunity to gain worthwhile employment was greater. The Bureau proved very successful at negotiating work contracts between freed blacks and their new employers. The Bureau also gave public land to former slaves and opened a number of "care centers" to assist the feeble and the elderly.

Probably the Bureau's finest achievement was providing funds to various private missionary societies which allowed them to establish primary and secondary schools to educate freed blacks. By 1870, perhaps as many as 250,000 black students had received the benefit of an education sponsored by the Freedmen's Bureau. Of the nearly two dozen black colleges started with the support of the Freedmen's Bureau, the most famous is undoubtedly **Howard University** in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1867, it was named in honor of Oliver Otis Howard, the Bureau's commissioner and the university's president from 1869 to 1874.

Congress had created the Freedmen's Bureau as a temporary fix to the war's problems. They authorized its existence only until one year after the war ended. Thus, in early 1866, Congress passed a bill *re-authorizing* the Freedmen's Bureau. President Johnson vetoed the bill. He said that he agreed with Congress in wishing to grant more opportunities and independence to black people. However, he had serious concerns about



The Thankful Poor by Henry Ossawa Tanner. Despite the efforts of numerous good people after the Civil War, too many blacks lived in a condition of semi-slavery and terrible poverty. Here a grandfather and his grandson give thanks for the meager meal they are about to eat.



Justice John Marshall Harlan. Justice Harlan, whose family had owned slaves, was the only Justice to dissent from the decision in *Plessy*. He wrote that in time *Plessy* would “prove to be quite as pernicious” as the *Dred Scott* decision. He went on to write that “our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.” Sadly, Harlan not only held the minority opinion on the Court, his belief was in the minority among most white Americans.

practice racial segregation if they wished. It was not unconstitutional for them to do so.

In 1896, the Supreme Court handed down its landmark decision on segregation, *Plessy v. Ferguson*. In *Plessy*, the Court ruled that even segregation by the states was permissible as long as the states made a “**separate but equal**” accommodation for blacks. The “separate but equal” language of *Plessy* made segregation the law of the land. Blacks would be forced to ride in the back of buses. They would have their own bathrooms, water fountains, and even cemeteries. Blacks would have separate facilities, but those facilities would never be equal.

CHAPTER 20 REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions:

1. Who killed Abraham Lincoln? Where did it happen?
2. Who became president after Lincoln was killed?
3. Who were the “Radical Republicans?” Who was their leader?
4. What were the “Black Codes?”
5. What did the 13th Amendment do?
6. What did the 14th Amendment do?
7. What did the 15th Amendment do?
8. What was the “Freedman’s Bureau?” What were its major goals?
9. Explain some of President Grant’s scandals.
10. Who were “carpetbaggers?” Who were “scalawags?”
11. Why was the Presidential election of 1876 “questionable?”
12. What was the Compromise of 1877?
13. What officially ended the “Reconstruction Era?”
14. What was a poll tax? What was a “literacy test?”
15. What is the significance of *Plessy v. Ferguson*?

Identify the following:

1. Andrew Johnson
2. Impeachment
3. Ku Klux Klan
4. “Boss” Tweed
5. Horace Greeley
6. Samuel J. Tilden

The Church in the Second Half of the 19th Century



John Neumann discusses construction of a Catholic school.

Introduction

During the second half of the 19th century, the Catholic Church in the United States faced many of the same issues that it had encountered since colonial times, e.g. providing the Sacraments to the faithful, educating Catholics in their Faith, evangelizing non-Catholics, and dealing with anti-Catholic bigotry. The latter half of the 19th century did not present new challenges *per se*, but rather presented these old challenges in new ways. America's Catholic bishops sought to address these issues as the Catholic Church grew larger and became a larger part of American society.

Thus, America's bishops focused on strengthening and improving the Catholic school system; increasing the number of American priests and nuns; establishing Catholic newspapers; evangelizing non-Catholics,

especially Black and Native Americans; and fighting anti-Catholic bigotry. Later in the century, with the growth of corporations and “big business,” the Catholic Church also took a strong stand in favor of the family and the working man. Moreover, as the Church grew, she became the largest private social welfare organization in the nation, creating hospitals, orphanages, soup kitchens, and associations like the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which provides clothes and food to the needy.

The Growth of the Church from 1800 to 1850

In 1800, there were probably less than 25,000 Catholics living in the United States. This represented an insignificant percentage of the overall population. Fifty years later, the number exceeded 1,000,000 and represented about 5% of the total population. While Catholics tend to have large families, immigration from Ireland and other Catholic nations was the main cause of this massive increase.

While most Protestants in 1800 had probably never even met a Catholic, by 1850 tensions between Catholics and Protestants, always an underlying current in American society, began to flare. These tensions were enhanced by Protestant preachers delivering anti-Catholic sermons from their pulpits, as well as by teachers in the Protestant public schools seeking to “save” Catholic school children. By 1850, America’s Catholic bishops felt that they needed to hold a national conference to establish national policies, especially concerning the education of children. In 1851, Pope Pius IX granted permission for the Catholic bishops in the United States to hold their first national, or **Plenary Council**.

The First Plenary Council

The First Plenary Council was convened in Baltimore in 1852. Six archbishops and twenty-six bishops attended. Archbishop **Francis Kenrick** of Baltimore presided as the Apostolic Delegate. The assembled bishops approved the Acts of all the previous seven Provincial Baltimore Councils.

The Council’s main focus was the creation of a Catholic school system. The bishops saw how Protestant teachers in the public schools worked to convert Catholic students. For the bishops, this posed a threat not only to the Church, but also to the parents of these children. The Council directly addressed the role of the Church in education when it declared that “bishops are exhorted to have a Catholic school in every parish and the teachers should be paid from the parochial funds.” Bishops should “begin these schools whenever possible in their dioceses, since Catholic boys and girls are in grave danger in educational institutions which are not directed by [Catholic] religious motives.” Thus, the national parochial school system was born.

The Council also adopted various rules for parish and diocesan governments. The Council discouraged marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics. It also warned against lay interference in Church affairs, which was becoming a problem in the United States. Lay Protestants always had leading roles in their churches’ operations. Protestants had the right to choose their pastors as well as to fire them. Some Catholics in the United States were beginning to believe that they too had this “right.”

The primary and lasting significance of the First Plenary Council was its impact on Catholic education. Although Catholic school systems existed on a city-wide basis, especially in Philadelphia and New York City, no attempt had been made by the bishops to create a *national* system or unify the local systems.



Archbishop Francis Kenrick



Stained glass window of St. John Neumann from his shrine in Philadelphia

St. John Neumann, who became Bishop of Philadelphia in March 1852, took the few existing Philadelphia Catholic schools and organized them into the first **diocesan** school system. He increased a handful of parochial schools to 200. For this reason, he is sometimes called the “Father of the Parochial School System.”

The Second Plenary Council

In 1852, Massachusetts, under the influence of Horace Mann, the “Father of the American Public School System,” passed a compulsory education law. Seemingly a rather benign law, it required that students between the ages of 8 and 14 attend public school for at least twelve weeks per year. “Seemingly benign,” because although children could attend “approved” private schools, most immigrants, that is, Catholics, could not afford these schools, which meant they were forced, under penalty of law, to attend public schools. Three years later, in 1855, Massachusetts took its “benign” law to the next step when it required that the Bible be read in school. Of course, this meant the Protestant, *King James*, version of the Bible. In 1852, the Plenary Council had specifically called for priests to openly oppose the use of the *King James Bible* in the public schools. Massachusetts, though acting at the state level, reflected the actions being taken at the local level in communities throughout the United States.

In response to the compulsory attendance laws, Catholics, in fairness, sought public funding for Catholic schools. **John Hughes**, the Bishop of New York from 1842 to 1864, led this movement. Although

he failed to obtain state funding for Catholic schools, he did convince New York's governor to allow Catholic students in the public schools to be allowed to use the Catholic Bible rather than the Protestant version.

Even such small concessions inflamed the anti-Catholic bigotry of the Nativist movement. By the 1850s, the Nativists had become even more violent. However, Bishop Hughes, who would now earn the nickname "Dagger John," refused to sit idly by while Nativists burned his churches and murdered his parishioners. The bishop armed 1,000 Irishmen with rifles. They defended Old St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City against the Nativist mob.

Happily, in addition to these negative events, the Church received several blessings between 1852 and 1866. The huge increase in immigration during the 1850s doubled the Catholic population in the United States. The number of parishes multiplied from 1,411 in 1852 to 3,366 in 1866. However, the massive increase in population, as well as the serious social, educational, and political issues facing the Church after the Civil War, caused the bishops to appeal to Rome for permission to convene a second Plenary Council.

Granted permission by the Holy See, the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore met in 1866. Seven archbishops, thirty-eight bishops, three abbots, and more than one hundred and twenty priests attended the Council. To demonstrate that one could be a good Catholic *and* a good American, the bishops invited President Andrew Johnson, who also attended.

As with the First Council, the Second Council focused strongly on education. Among its mandates, the Council issued decrees that Catholic teachers working in public schools should be hired to work in Catholic schools when possible. Second, every parish should build a parochial school. Third, parents who send their children to public school should send their children to Sunday catechism classes at their local church for doctrinal instruction and sacramental preparation, especially for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. The Council Fathers also recommended that a Catholic university be built in the United States.

With the end of slavery, the priests and bishops at the Council recognized that the Church had a duty to minister to freed slaves. Among its decrees, the Plenary Council passed a resolution asking priests to dedicate as much time as possible to the service of helping educate Blacks, especially Black children.

Once again, the attempts by Catholics to create their own school system and raise their children in their faith inflamed the passions of anti-Catholic bigots in the United States. Nevertheless, the drive on the part of priests and bishops to build Catholic schools could not be stopped. Determined to raise a generation of children taught in Catholic schools, these leaders began to build, and build, and build!

The Third Plenary Council

In 1866, about 2.5 million Catholics lived in the United States. By 1884, that number had more than doubled. Once again, immigration accounted for the huge spike in Catholic population. Once again, the bishops feared that children not attending Catholic schools would fall prey to the evangelization efforts of teachers in the public schools. In 1875, some bishops, concerned with low attendance in the parochial schools, even wrote to the Vatican office responsible for the propagation of the Faith, seeking advice on



Bishop John Hughes

Faith of Our Fathers made Bishop Gibbons a celebrity. His sermons even began to attract non-Catholics who appreciated his perspective on Christianity.

During his life, Bishop Gibbons would write several more books, including *Our Christian Heritage* (1889), *The Ambassador of Christ* (1896), *Discourses and Sermons* (1908), and *A Retrospect of Fifty Years* (1916). He also wrote numerous articles for various magazines. Because his writing style was simple, straightforward, and engaging, even Protestants read his books and magazine articles, especially on controversial issues.

In 1869, along with Bishop James McCloskey, Bishop Gibbons attended the First Vatican Council in Rome, where he also voted in favor of Papal Infallibility. In July 1872, Pius IX named James Gibbons bishop of Richmond, Virginia. He served as bishop of Richmond until the Pope named him bishop of Baltimore in May 1877. In 1886, Leo XIII elevated James Gibbons to the rank of cardinal, making him the second American to be so honored.

The following year, Cardinal Gibbons, who had been one of the leading voices at the Third Plenary Council to advocate for the creation of a Catholic University of America, became its first Chancellor. In 1903, he had the honor to participate in the papal conclave that elected Pope Pius St. Pius X, the first American ever to vote for the pope.

Cardinal Gibbons' greatest efforts lay in the social arena, where he worked tirelessly on behalf of the rights of working men and women. Through Gibbons' efforts, Catholics were allowed to join the Knights of Labor. In 1887, Gibbons presented a letter to Pope Leo XIII explaining why Catholics should be allowed to join the Knights of Labor, or any other labor union. Basically, the letter sought to explain how the labor and political situation in the United States differed from that in Europe. Gibbons pointed out that in American labor unions, Catholic workers held no animosity toward the Church, unlike so many European unions, run by Communists who saw the Church as their mortal enemy. As a result of his excellent explanation, the Pope allowed Catholics to become union members.

Cardinal Gibbons' influence extended well beyond the Church. Many American presidents sought his advice. Some became his close friends. In 1917, former President Theodore Roosevelt said of Cardinal Gibbons: "Taking your life as a whole, I think you are the most respected, venerated, and useful citizen of our country."

James Cardinal Gibbons died on March 24, 1921. He was buried in Baltimore Cathedral, where he had been baptized eighty-six years earlier. Five years before his death, the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper had written of him, "The Catholic Church has given many distinguished prelates and priests to its work in this country, but none who has inspired the same general confidence and the same earnest esteem."



Cardinal Gibbons embraces Theodore Roosevelt

Catholic Social Programs

Bringing aid and comfort to the less fortunate is a vital part of the Catholic Faith and the Catholic Church. Since the days of the Apostles, the Church has been concerned with people's spiritual welfare as well as their physical welfare. Catholic history is filled with many wonderful examples of men and women who have expressed their love of God and of neighbor by aiding needy people, especially families. The Church in America has always tried to help the poor, the disabled, immigrants, the homeless, the sick, and the neglected. Various types of Catholic agencies provide care for them all. As part of that work, the Church has diligently spread the Gospel, as more and more Catholic organizations have been established to care for people in every kind of need.

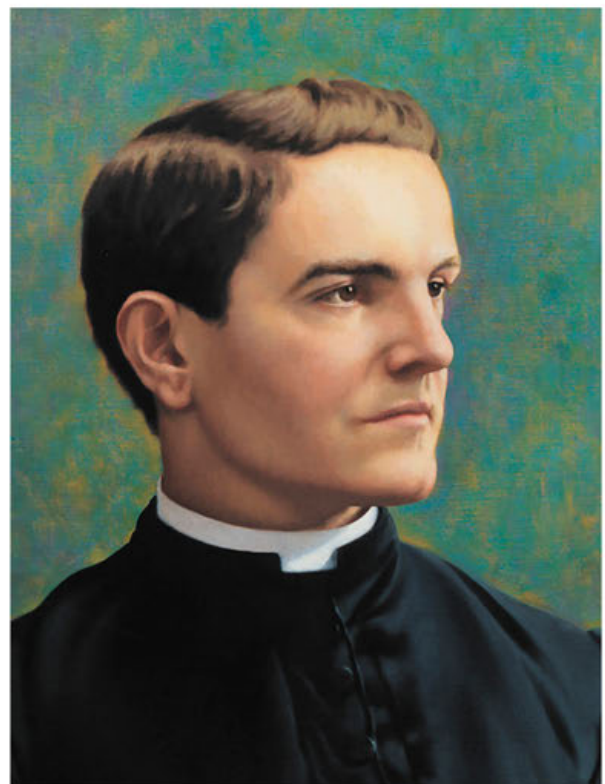
Of the various Catholic social service organizations, the **Society of St. Vincent de Paul** is one of the best-known. **Bl. Frederic Ozanam** and a group of his friends founded the Society in Paris, France in 1833. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in America came to Saint Louis in 1845. By the end of the century, it had grown into a major Catholic service organization. It is still very active, especially in large cities. The Society is staffed by men and women who visit distressed and indigent families in their own parishes. If physical aid is required, families are given food, clothing, and shelter. If spiritual help is needed, the case is always referred to the local pastor. Inspired by their patron, who was a model of Christian charity, Vincentians duplicate the works of St. Vincent de Paul and have become living examples of the charity of Christ.

The Third Plenary Council had created a commission to study evangelization of America's Black and Native American populations. The commission determined that a national association was needed that would more efficiently coordinate the Church's activities among Native Americans and Blacks. In 1874, a Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions was established. Later on, the Bureau established the **Black and Indian Mission Office**.

In 1882, **Fr. Michael McGivney** founded the **Knights of Columbus**, which began as a way to help working men pool their resources to help each other and their families. However, the Knights soon began helping anyone in need. Today, the Knights of Columbus support a wide range of activities, such as promoting vocations and pro-life activities. They especially help the handicapped and needy families, and have helped pay for Catholic education of children, whether in the local parish, at a high school, or in home schooling. The Knights were instrumental in adding the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1950s.

The **National Society for the Propagation of the Faith** was organized in the United States in 1897 under the direction of the Holy See. It performs two principal functions. First, it serves as the Church's main source of increasing awareness of her worldwide missions. Second, it generates financial support for those missions. The work of the Society is so vital that each diocese has a director. Their duty is to collect funds for the foreign missions and to educate the faithful in the value of these missions.

As our nation grew, so did the need for charity. At the turn of the century, it became clear that charitable activities had to be better organized to meet the needs



Portrait of Fr. McGivney

of modern society. In 1910, Cardinal Gibbons created the **National Conference of Catholic Charities**, now called **Catholic Charities, U.S.A.** It has become the major service organization of the Church in the United States, serving a network of more than 1,200 agencies and institutions. As their website says, they support “a wide range of programs and services that protect, strengthen and empower the most vulnerable people in our society.” They accomplish this goal by providing food, shelter, and counseling services to teenagers, parents, the elderly, and many others.

The Catholic Church at the Turn of the Century

By 1900, about 11 million Catholics lived in the United States, representing about 14% of the entire population. Most lived in the industrial Northeast. Following the decrees of the Three Plenary Councils of Baltimore, America’s Catholic bishops had dedicated themselves to creating a robust parochial school system that rivaled the government-run public school system. By 1900, about 3,500 parochial schools operated in the United States. The bishops could say, “Mission Accomplished.” In the next century, America’s Catholic schools would become the envy of the world, attracting even leading non-Catholics to send their children for an education.

By 1900, the United States no longer had the status of “mission territory.” It had one cardinal, over ninety bishops, and more than 12,000 priests. The Church in America was not merely financially independent, but becoming wealthy. In the next century, the United States would become the leading financial supporter



The Mustard Seed by Vincent Van Gogh

of nearly all Catholic projects worldwide. Meanwhile, Catholic social service organizations sought to help America's needy through a variety of programs.

Although Catholics still faced prejudice, by 1900 they were increasingly accepted into American society. Terrence Powderly, a Catholic, led the Knights of Labor. Numerous Catholics joined labor unions. Both major political parties sought the "Catholic vote."

As the 20th century began, the Church would continue to face the same challenges it had in the previous century. However, it was larger, better funded, and better prepared for the challenges. To paraphrase St. Matthew (13:31-2): In 1800, the Church in America was like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds. However, when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches. By 1900, the American Church had become a large bush. In the next century, it would become larger still.

CHAPTER 24 REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions:

1. What were some of the issues the Church faced in the second half of the 19th century?
2. What was the main focus of the First Plenary Council of Baltimore?
3. Who presided over the First Plenary Council of Baltimore?
4. Who is known as the "Father of the Parochial School System?" Why does he have that honor?
5. During his time as Archbishop of New York, how did John Hughes work to improve the Catholic schools in his diocese? How did he deal with the "Nativists?" What was his nickname?
6. What were some of the mandates the Second Plenary Council issued regarding education?
7. What is the "Blaine Amendment?" How did it originate?
8. Who presided over the Third Plenary Council? What was its main focus? What very famous book did the Council instruct be written?
9. What was the name of James Gibbon's best-selling book? Why did he write it?
10. What was the relationship between Cardinal Gibbons and the Knights of Labor? How did Cardinal Gibbons help the Knights?
11. Who was America's first cardinal? Who was the second?
12. Who was the first American to vote in a papal election?
13. Where is the Catholic University of America located?
14. Who founded the Knights of Columbus?
15. Why was the original purpose of Knights of Columbus? What is its current purpose?
16. Who founded the National Conference of Catholic Charities?

Identify the following:

1. Mother Katherine Drexel
2. John Lancaster Spalding
3. Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau
4. *Rerum Novarum*
5. Bible Belt



Quintessential image of Ronald Reagan. Ronald was a patriot who loved America and believed America could be better. His 1980 campaign slogan “Let’s make America great again,” summed up his inherent belief in American exceptionalism and his own personal optimism about the future. In his acceptance speech for the nomination for president at the 1980 Republican National Convention, he said, “For those without job opportunities, we’ll stimulate new opportunities.... For those who’ve abandoned hope, we’ll restore hope and we’ll welcome them into a great national crusade to make America great again.” Other presidential candidates would use the line “make America great again,” most notably Donald Trump in 2016.

Introduction

As with any historical “era,” historians do not always agree on the precise moment of its beginning or ending. However, most historians agree that the “**Reagan Era**,” *the period of American history dominated by Ronald Reagan and his conservative philosophy*, started about 1976, when Ronald Reagan narrowly failed to obtain the Republican presidential nomination. It continued until at least 2008, when Barack Obama was elected president. Some historians believe that the Reagan Era continues even today.

Like most men who initiate “eras,” Ronald Reagan led a movement that was greater than he was. Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal” survived long after he did. Much of it, like Social Security, remains ingrained in American life. Likewise, the “**Reagan Revolution**” fundamentally changed American society because of Reagan’s conservative beliefs about the Cold War; national defense; the federal Judiciary, especially the Supreme Court; and the economy.

President Gerald Ford

Following the resignation of Spiro Agnew, Richard Nixon faced a serious problem: finding his replacement. Many Republicans would have been excellent choices. For example, Barry Goldwater or one of his followers, like Ronald Reagan, seemed like logical candidates. However, the choice had to be approved by the Democrat-controlled Congress. They were never going to approve Goldwater or any other staunch conservative. In fact, they were not going to approve anyone who was not a moderate *or* who had a good chance of being elected president in 1976. When Nixon asked Congress whom they would approve, their advice was unanimous. As Democrat Speaker of the House Carl Albert later said, “We gave Nixon no choice but (Gerald) Ford.”

Gerald Ford was the perfect candidate for the Democrats. Ford had been elected to the House of Representatives from Michigan’s 5th congressional district in 1949. By 1974, he had served in Congress for 25 years. During that time, he had failed to write a single piece of major legislation. He was known in both Parties as a moderate. He was virtually unknown outside of his own congressional district. Thus, *Gerald Ford was an unknown moderate congressman*, that is, the perfect candidate for the Democrats. As a result, Congress voted overwhelmingly to elect him vice-president. When Richard Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974, Gerald Ford became the only man ever to become president who had never been elected either president or vice-president by the American people.

Interestingly, Gerald Ford did seem to understand his own limitations. He realized that he was not an original thinker or a visionary. But he was a hard worker and he was honest. In making a clever comparison of presidents and automobiles, he would famously quip, “I’m a Ford, not a Lincoln.”

President Ford was acutely aware that the Executive branch had to undergo sweeping changes if he, or any occupant of the Oval Office, were to recover the people’s trust. Fortunately, Ford made friends easily. People described him as “a helpful next-door neighbor who could be trusted.” Despite the difficult problems that marked the early days of Ford’s presidency, millions of Americans began to believe that he was “one of us,” rather than “one of them.”

The Economy

In addition to the still-lingering Watergate Scandal, Republicans had to face serious economic issues during the 1974 midterm elections. The nation was beset by recession, inflation, and a sinking economy. To find answers to fix America’s economic troubles, President Ford held meetings with some of the nation’s wisest economists. Based on the meetings, Ford decided to cut back on federal spending.

The Democrats, however, blamed Nixon and Ford for the poor economy. The Democrats wanted to increase government spending in hopes of stimulating the economy. However, the Republicans said that spending more money would not stimulate the economy, but would only cause prices to rise.



Gerald Ford's official White House portrait. With his relaxed posture and his pipe, the artist has portrayed Ford as an intellectual; however, Ford was not an original thinker.

In the 1974 midterms, Americans voted against the Republicans and Richard Nixon, who many Americans felt had betrayed the nation. As a result, the Democrats increased their majorities in both Houses of Congress. The Democrats passed bills increasing aid to public housing, education, and health care. President Ford vetoed these bills, explaining that such massive spending would damage the economy, not help it. Although Democrats had a majority, they did not have the two-thirds majority necessary to override a presidential veto. Most of the bills never became laws.

The economic situation worsened in early 1974 when OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) announced they were *quadrupling* oil prices. The price increase was catastrophic because of America's dependence on foreign oil. That increase in oil prices pushed inflation over 11%, three times its normal annual average. The measures that Ford implemented failed to stop the slide in unemployment. During the 1973 to 1975 recession, 2.3 million jobs were lost. By May 1975, unemployment peaked at 9%.

In early 1975, Congress sent President Ford a bill that cut taxes, which he signed. The economy began to improve. By early 1976, the recession had ended.

The Mayaguez Incident

On May 12, 1975, just days after the fall of Saigon, the *Mayaguez*, an unarmed American merchant ship, was captured by members of the *Khmer Rouge*, the Communists who controlled Cambodia. The *Mayaguez* was sailing past Cambodia in international waters when Khmer Rouge gunboats attacked it. The Communists demanded that the captain sail the boat to Cambodia where the Khmer Rouge held the crew hostage.

President Ford demanded the Communists immediately release the ship and the thirty-nine Americans on board. When the Cambodians ignored Ford's ultimatum, he ordered an attack. U. S. Marines stormed the ship and Koh Tang Island, where the American government believed the Communists were holding the *Mayaguez* crew. In the poorly managed attack, forty-one soldiers lost their lives. Tragically, the *Mayaguez* crew was not on the island or the ship! The Cambodians had released them just as American military operations began.

Despite the loss of life, most Americans were impressed with President Ford's quick and decisive action against the Communists. Occurring just a few days after the fall of Saigon, it gave people the feeling that



In this caricature, artist Mort Drucker depicts President Ford and Speaker of the House Carl Albert in surgical gowns working desperately to revive a deathly ill patient – the American economy. Carl holds a jar of blood with a dollar sign, the idea being that an infusion of cash will help the patient. Ford wears a “WIN” button on his gown. Ford’s answer to defeating inflation with a slogan: Whip Inflation Now (WIN). Sadly, it was not a winning strategy. (National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gift of Time magazine.)

America had achieved at least a small victory in what seemed like the final days of the Vietnam War. Of the *Mayaguez Incident*, President Ford wrote in his memoirs, “*All of a sudden the gloomy national mood began to fade. Many people’s faith in their country was restored and my standing in the polls shot up...*”

The Helsinki Accords

In summer 1975, in an attempt to lessen Cold War tensions, thirty-five nations, including the United States and the Soviet Union, sent emissaries to Helsinki, Finland. The delegates sought to make the borders of European nations permanent in the hope that the Soviet Union would not invade and conquer the smaller nations of Europe. The U. S. also asked the nations to pledge to respect and support basic human rights, especially the right to life. Those who opposed the **Helsinki Accords** said it merely helped the Soviet Union maintain its current chokehold over the nations of Eastern Europe. Despite significant opposition to the Helsinki Accords, Ford signed them anyway. However, because the Accords were not a treaty, they had no force of law. In essence, they were a set of noble ideals.

The Accords had little effect on the Soviet Union. Its leaders failed to follow either the letter of the Accords or its spirit. To many Americans, Ford had made a foolish blunder in signing them.



President Ford and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev sign the Helsinki Accords

Happy Birthday, America

On July 4, 1976, most Americans celebrated the nation’s **Bicentennial**, the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The divided populace came together to celebrate our shared history rather than our political differences. A wave of patriotism washed across the country as Americans staged various celebrations. Every major city unleashed spectacular fireworks displays.

One of the leading events was *Operation Sail*, a procession of sixteen beautifully decorated, tall-masted sailing ships from around the world. *Operation Sail* launched in New York City, where millions of people lined the harbor or watched from the windows of tall skyscrapers on Independence Day. One week later, the ships paraded into Boston Harbor. In both cities, the public toured the majestic ships.

Gorbachev and Reagan planned to meet in Geneva in late 1985 to discuss reducing nuclear weapons. However, a potential problem existed. Two years earlier, Reagan began research to build a space-based defense system known as the **Strategic Defense Initiative** (SDI). If it worked, SDI would shoot down nuclear ballistic missiles in space before they reached their targets. Reagan, who earnestly sought to abolish nuclear war, felt that SDI, which was purely defensive, would make nuclear war impossible. In fact, at one point, Reagan even mentioned giving SDI to the Soviets. However, the idea of SDI upset Gorbachev and the Soviets. Nevertheless, at their meeting in Geneva, Reagan and Gorbachev issued a statement saying that neither nation would seek to achieve military superiority over the other. (**Note:** SDI was canceled in 1993 because of cost concerns.) After Geneva, Reagan and Gorbachev continued to negotiate privately to reduce weapons.

In October 1986, Reagan and Gorbachev met in Reykjavik, Iceland. No agreement was reached because Gorbachev opposed Reagan's development of SDI. Despite their disagreement, the nations continued to negotiate the reduction of nuclear weapons.

On June 12, 1987, Reagan gave one of the finest speeches in American history. As he stood before the Brandenburg Gate in front of the Berlin Wall, he spoke not only to those present but to Mikhail Gorbachev. To Gorbachev he said, *"There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"*



A few days before he wrote the Brandenburg Gate speech for President Reagan, speechwriter Peter Robinson spent some time in West Berlin. One evening he joined a dozen West Berliners for dinner. These men and woman had different professions and political views. After a bit of small talk, Robinson asked them, "Have you gotten used to the wall?" The Germans looked at each uneasily. Then one man raised an arm, pointed, and replied, "My sister lives twenty miles in that direction, I haven't seen her in more than two decades. Do you think I can get used to that?" Another man related how every morning on his way to work he walked past a guard tower where a soldier watched him through binoculars. "That soldier and I speak the same language. We share the same history. But one of us is a zookeeper and the other is an animal, and I am never certain which is which." Another woman spoke up, suddenly angry. She pounded her fist on the table. "If this man Gorbachev is serious with his talk of glasnost and perestroika (openness and reform) he can prove it. He can get rid of this wall." With this background Robinson wrote his magnificent speech and Reagan delivered it brilliantly.

Such an impassioned plea would have fallen on the deaf ears of previous Soviet leaders. However, Gorbachev truly seemed interested in peace and change. In 1987, Reagan and Gorbachev met in Washington, where they signed a treaty agreeing to eliminate their short- and intermediate range nuclear missiles. It was the first time that the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed to eliminate nuclear weapons. Reagan signed the treaty because it could be verified. As he said, “Trust, but verify.”

In December 1988, Gorbachev renounced the Soviet policy that had held Eastern Europe enslaved for more than forty years. His announcement signaled to the people of Eastern Europe that they could establish truly democratic governments in their nations. In June 1989, the people of Poland and Hungary quickly chose freedom from Communism. On the evening of November 9, 1989, ten months after Ronald Reagan had left office, East Germans gathered at the Berlin Wall, the symbol of the Cold War. They began smashing it with hammers. Over the next few days, the hammers became bulldozers. Soon the Berlin Wall had fallen. The Cold War was over.

Ronald Reagan’s Legacy

During his presidency, Ronald Reagan created wealth and freedom for the United States of America. He created freedom for Eastern Europe. In short, his legacy is one of freedom and prosperity. Ronald Reagan accomplished what every truly great leader wishes. He left the world a better place than he found it.



President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev in Reykjavik, Iceland.

CHAPTER 33 REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions:

1. Why was Gerald Ford the Democrat's perfect choice to be Nixon's vice-president?
2. What qualities did Ford have that gave him an opportunity to be a good president?
3. What was the Mayaguez Incident? How did Ford handle it?
4. What were the Helsinki Accords?
5. What is the "Time of Choosing" Speech? Who gave it? Why was it given?
6. What was Ronald Reagan's political philosophy?
7. Why did Carter pardon the draft dodgers?
8. What is OPEC? How did OPEC add to America's energy crisis?
9. What steps did the federal government take to address America's energy crisis?
10. What is ANWR? Why did it become controversial?
11. What forms of renewable energy did the federal government promote?
12. What are the Camp David Accords? What nations and leaders signed the Accords?
13. What caused the Iranian hostage crisis? What did President Carter do to end the crisis? How did the crisis end?
14. What were Ronald Reagan's three main concerns as President? How did he plan to address them?
15. What was Reagan's basic economic plan?
16. What is the Reagan Doctrine? Where was it first applied? Was it successful?
17. What was the Strategic Defense Initiative?
18. Why was Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court so controversial?
19. What was Solidarity? How did it help end the Cold War?
20. What does "stagflation" mean?

Identify the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mikhail Gorbachev | 6. Misery Index |
| 2. Sandra Day O'Connor | 7. Geraldine Ferraro |
| 3. Jesse Jackson | 8. Operation Sail |
| 4. Walter Mondale | 9. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński |
| 5. Antonin Scalia | 10. Space shuttle |



**Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis
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