



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Making It a Personal Goal to Learn More About the Constitution that Declares our Liberty and Shapes Our Lives

Just as the Catechism's teachings are foundational and irreplaceable to living the life of a faithful Catholic, the Constitution of the United States is the guide and the guard of the liberties it sets forth as the rights given to each of us from our Creator, including religious freedom.

To excuse ourselves from the responsibility to learn all we are able about this essential founding document is to disregard the danger, toil and immense sacrifices of those who won our freedom and to risk the loss of liberty. Not willing to lose this hard won freedom, the founders established a system of shared power with checks and balances. That systematic governance was and is reliant on the morality and knowledge of those who are governed by it.

If we choose to remain ignorant of the most basic knowledge of our Constitution, how can we possibly discern the truthfulness, intentions and intelligence of those we have chosen to protect our freedoms? Religious freedom is threatened daily. Thomas Jefferson wrote, "The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield, and government to gain ground." He and other founders often counseled that the only sure repository for freedom is with the people, not the government.

Our founders had few books and no electronic media and yet endeavored to learn their Constitution, discuss its provisions and pass it to their children and grandchildren. And yet, in 1828 Arthur Stansbury wrote the most popular school text ever which was the Catechism of the Constitution. Rev Stansbury was concerned that knowledge of the Constitution was waning and he feared the loss of essential freedoms due to ignorance of our rights.

Debates and discussions of our freedoms and responsibilities are ineffective unless we have knowledge of the Constitution. We assume that some vague, amorphous, non-specific force called "The Constitution" will guard our equality and protect all that is critical to our lives as well as our families and our future generations. In fact, there is no protection if we choose ignorance.

"... Cities may be rebuilt, and a People reduced to Poverty, may acquire fresh Property: But a Constitution of Government once changed from Freedom, can never be restored. Liberty once lost is lost forever. When the People once surrender their share in the Legislature, and their Right of defending the Limitations upon the Government, and of resisting every Encroachment upon them, they can never regain it." John Adams to his wife Abigail Adams