



# The U.S. of A. Three Heroic Women

By MARY T. BUSH

Shortly after the conclusion of the Peace of Paris, 1783, a South Carolinian wrote, "The American war is over, but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution . . . nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed." Today, we are aware that the Revolution is still not completed. There is continuing the struggle to achieve in practice some of the ideas contained in the Declaration of Independence, ideas of equality and human rights. Yet, we are also aware that significant gains have been made since 1776.

Discussion of rights today often involves the role of women in American society and in the Catholic Church. There have been many outstanding women associated with the Church in America. Every diocese has had its number. As we celebrate our bicentennial, it is fitting to recognize three great women whose lives give evidence that the Church in America has long played a role in the on-going American Revolution.

Elizabeth Bayley Seton (1774-1821) witnessed the events connected with the birth of the nation. Born an Episcopalian, of French, English, Dutch stock, she became a convert to Catholicism in 1805, shortly after the death of her husband. Later she founded the first native-American community of religious women, the Daughters of Charity in America, an order to assist the poor, to visit the sick, to comfort the sorrowful, and teach the innocent. Elizabeth Seton founded schools, hospitals, orphanages. Her life was an integral part of the history of the Church in America as it related to the fields of education, charity and social service. The eventual establishment of St. Joseph's Academy in Emmitsburg, Md., proved to be the seeds of the parochial school system in this country. A woman of hope and optimism, she is the only native born American to have achieved canonization. (1975), which accomplishment was due to her inner life which flourished in the midst of involvement and concern.

Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917) came to America from her native Italy in 1889 when the Church was being transformed into an immigrant Church. Mother Cabrini had founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Italy, and although she had dreamed of becoming a missionary in the Orient, she accepted the call of Leo XIII to go to America in the midst of post-Civil War anti-foreignism. Her particular challenge was to care for the large number of Italian immigrants then being exploited and neglected.

She worked many years servicing the needs of these immigrants — in New York, Chicago, New Orleans, in mining regions of Colorado, and on the West coast. She accomplished things which seemed beyond her strength, due in no small part to her own talent for organization and to her business capacity.

In the days before much state or federal aid, before institutionalized philanthropy, before offices of Human Development, she was able to open the hearts as well as the pocketbooks of many Americans who saw her hospitals, schools, religious and social centers, who saw her sisters answering the call of the distressed and visiting the imprisoned (in Sing Sing and elsewhere), began to respect her immigrants and began to cast aside their prejudices. In 1946 when she was canonized as the first American citizen saint (having been naturalized in 1909), Pius XII called her "an extraordinary woman whose courage and ability were like shining lights."

Mother Katharine Drexel (1855-1955) was born into a wealthy Catholic family of Philadelphia — a family noted for its philanthropy in

aid of the poor and destitute. Her special concern became America's own neglected minorities — the American Indian and the American Negro. With encouragement from Leo XIII, she eventually established her own order, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored.

She was a woman of culture who dedicated her fortune, her name, and her life to the interest of these minorities, some of whom lived on isolated reservations, while others lived in cities or rural areas, isolated by prejudice. She set up schools, homes for children, hospitals, service centers. She established foundations in the North, South, and West. With her own money from a trust left her by her father, she aided 26 dioceses. One of the most far-reaching of her projects was the establishment of Xavier University in New Orleans, the only Catholic College founded for black students. In all, Katharine Drexel gave over \$12 million of an inheritance to her own and other orders.

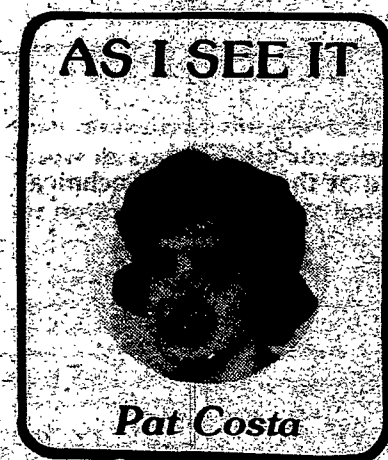
These three women played important roles in the history of the Church in America — in the fields of education, charity, social service. All were heroic women; all were good Americans interested that Americans, regardless of race or color share in the country's privileges. They tried to develop in those they served the character and high ideals of citizenship on which the republic was built. Beyond that, they were women of faith who saw that there were souls to be saved, and they lighted the lamp of faith. Their lives give evidence of the idea of the continuing completion of the American Revolution and they are examples of "Robert Southey's,

"What will not woman, gentle woman dare?"

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### Book Donation

Sister Ambrose, principal of St. Ann's School in Hornell, was recently presented a check for \$160 to assist in the presentation of the newly adopted religion book to be used in the schools of the diocese starting this fall. Presenting the check is Francis Argenti, vice-president of the Alumni Association. The funds were realized by the association's recent membership drive and other special events.



Some thoughts from a convention watcher

The first political convention I remember watching on TV was in 1956 when Estes Kefauver beat our Jack Kennedy for the vice presidential nomination after Adlai Stevenson threw the selection of a running mate to the delegates.

Obviously I was more interested in the attractive physical characteristics of the loser than anything else because I remember little more than hoping that the whole dreary, time-consuming, boring process would be over and I could get back to watching the current TV dramas which were "Playhouse 90" or "Studio One."

The 1960 campaign changed all that. By then I was a general assignment reporter with a daily metropolitan newspaper and in a plummy series of assignments actually got to trade anecdotes with Mrs. Henry Cabot Lodge, had a tete a tete with Ethel Kennedy in her hotel suite and even got to rub knees in the backseat of a convertible with Ladybird Johnson to say nothing of ending up in LBJ's hotel room in a mix-up over room numbers, watching the candidate comb his hair. My big disappointment that same year was in a crowded ballroom where I stood two feet from Jack Kennedy, who by then was even handsomer, and could not see him because of the crush of people.

Since then I have been an avid observer of the political scene, still not understanding all of the mechanics behind a campaign, the conventions, the primaries, etc. But in the intervening years I have learned at least that handsome is as handsome does and that a candidate with a winsome daughter or two is assured of more publicity than one without. And a candidate who has an impulsive mother will do even better.

Because of an out of town visit I missed portions of this Democratic convention that I wanted to see (and viewed parts I wished I'd missed.) We did make a point of catching Midge Constanza

seconding Carter's nomination and thought she handled herself with an aplomb belying a relatively short political career. Anyone who would attempt to analyze the relative merits of the three networks' coverage should have three heads since the act of watching one means missing coverage on the other two.

The personal preference here is for staying with Walter Cronkite, although Harry Reasoner comes in a close second. Again, it is a subjective response but I find the Chancellor-Brinkley team annoying principally because the urbane manner both seem to try for translates on my screen as more boredom than sophistication.

Carter appears to make effective use of a television screen although I heard comments ranging from "sincere" to an unprintable one word summation.

In the long run I think ABC had the right idea. I'm not sure that gavel to gavel coverage has anything more to offer than selected highlights except of course for the sponsor who has more time to see his message spread from coast to coast.

But whatever the feeling here about the convention just passed, you can be sure we'll be stationed in front of the set for the one coming up.

### CYO Joins Summer Youth Project

The CYO is participating in the Summer Youth Employment Program through the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau. Thirty-nine teenagers are coordinated by Thomas Harris, acting director of CYO Inner City Outreach Program.

"These youngsters are working at a variety of jobs in CYO programs and with other agencies in Monroe County," Harris stated. "It's an eight week educational experience for them as well as an opportunity to earn \$2.30 per hour."

The teens are assigned to such programs as CYO Day Camp, CYO Project Poder, but also with other service organizations including Volunteers in Partnership, Monroe County Bar Association, Office of Black Ministry at the Pastoral Center, Brick Presbyterian Church, St. Francis Xavier Church, Urban Park, Catholic Family Center and others.

As part of the summer job experience, CYO began the program with a two-day work orientation workshop at Rochester's St. Michael's Church, conducted by the CYO Program Services staff.

The Summer Youth Employment Program is federally funded, administered by the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau.

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