

BISHOP JOHN CARROLL AND WOMEN

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Introduction

This is the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Catholic Bishopric in the United States. During the year, no doubt, the memory of John Carroll will be evoked in lectures and homilies across the United States. It seems safe to say that more has been written about Carroll than any other American Prelate. Four standard studies of Carroll's life and times have appeared between 1843 and 1955.¹ The publication of *The John Carroll Papers* in 1976 sparked a scholarly "cottage industry," which has produced a spate of articles.²

It was while studying the Carroll Papers that my own current interest was aroused, quite frankly, by accident. Several strong statements Carroll made about women piqued my curiosity and led me to examine all that he wrote about or to women, and they to him. I next investigated the status of women during the time of the Enlightenment in order to determine whether or not Carroll was a man of his times, in this matter.

During the course of my research, I decided that it would be quite legitimate to look at America's first Bishop from the perspective of the current pastoral on women, *Partners in the Mystery of Redemption: A Pastoral Response to Women's Concerns for Church and Society*, which is being prepared by a writing committee of the United States' bishops. Although some of the issues being addressed today, such as women's ordination to the priesthood, were unthinkable in Carroll's time, others are perennial. Since today's bishops have called for a "profound" examination of the collective episcopal conscience, we will include our first bishop posthumously in that exercise.³ During the course of my talk, seven questions will be asked the audience concerning Carroll's sensitivity to women. A positive or a negative response is required for each. When the score is tallied, feminists can determine whether Carroll should be declared a saint, "viva voce," or excised from the pages of American Catholic history.

An exciting part of the process which of the three most recent pastorals written by the American bishops has been the intense dialogue which has accompanied them. In some sense it might be anachronistic for me to speak of Carroll being in dialogue with women; the sheer difficulties of communications would preclude that. He did, however, write to or about a remarkable number of women. The index of the *John Carroll Papers* includes the names of approximately 140 women. In the Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore there is correspondence from more than 60 women.

Carroll's female correspondents included, not surprisingly, his sisters, nieces and other relatives. Letters to his sisters, especially, are often brimming with family news. Several reveal the fact that the aristocratic gentleman was not above indulging in a bit of gossip about women; yet, they also reflect a delicate sense of decorum. He reported to his sisters that their "former maid Kitty, by too much pertness, has displeased her mistress so much, that she ... has hired her out." In a letter to his youngest sister, Elizabeth, he wryly described the recovery of "old Mary," a servant, "as a remarkable instance in favor of temperance," and then let the matter drop. In the same letter, Carroll registered concern over a young niece who had her portrait painted as a surprise gift for him. Carroll confessed, "... she is a great favorite with me, yet I would not like to have so young a portrait in my room, without that of any of my elder female relatives. He would "dispose of it, where it may be placed with more propriety."⁴

Many of the women who wrote to Carroll knew him only by reputation. They came from all stations of life, from that of princess to that of pauperess. The Russian Princess Amalia Gallitzen and her daughter exchanged letters with Carroll. Maria Rivardi wrote to Carroll from a debtors' prison in Philadelphia, where she had been sentenced for insolvency.⁵ The women's letters reflect a wide diversity of education, from very learned to barely literate.⁶ The issues which they addressed range from the mundane to the profound. There is a note which accompanied gifts of "pots of jelly" from Havana. A lay friend wrote him a short meditation on death towards the end of the Archbishop's life.⁷

Women, even those who had never met him, often made numerous and varied requests of Carroll, which, by today's standards, would be considered odd jobs for a bishop. He was asked to act as an employment agency, securing fit maids for ladies of means and work for those who needed it.⁸ Carroll served as a kind of entertainment committee or travel agent for visitors wanting to tour Baltimore and for female relatives who wished to travel abroad.⁹

The letters indicate that women asked Carroll to be a one-man "Bureau of Missing Persons" and locate the sister of Joanna Barry's maid. He was to find out why John Weeks, a seminarian studying in Rome, had not written to his mother in four months.¹⁰

Carroll was also expected to act as a coin exchange, legal intermediary, bill collector, and delivery man, among other roles. Some years after the Revolutionary War, one Eleanor Lister had entrusted some legal tender for redemption to Carroll when he was in London for Episcopal consecration. The notes were "Old Continental," and the good bishop later had to write to inform the woman that they were of little value.¹¹

Carroll was asked that he acquire the power of attorney for an Aggie Walsh, in order for an estate to be settled.¹² A more painful task involved collecting money owed to two poor women from the estates of his brother Daniel and his friend Joanna Barry.¹³ Mrs. Jay asked Carroll to deliver "two letters and a parcel" to a Mrs. Ridley. Finally, a "little friend" Anna C. de Neusville, wrote on behalf of her mother, who wanted Carroll to be the godfather of her new baby girl. (It seems that he complied.)¹⁴

Carroll's French correspondents were both religious sisters and lay women. Despite the florid, extremely humble and absolutely necessary French refinements demanded of eighteenth-century conventions, one is struck by the bits of femininity inserted into letters to such a high prelate. Inquiries were made about the marital status of his nieces. Carroll made similar inquiries of his correspondent's relatives. A lay friend, Miss Marsan, formerly of Baltimore, confessed that the earth tremors near her residence in Charleston, South Carolina, frightened her. The letters placed great emphasis on health, both Carroll's and her own. Marsan's esteem for Carroll prompted her to send him "a small box of cigars and a little purse..."¹⁵

These excerpts from Carroll's correspondence suggest to me that women were not in awe of either Carroll's ecclesiastical position or the societal status of his family. They found him quite accessible.

John Carroll has been convincingly portrayed as a man fully acquainted with, and imbued by, the spirit of the Enlightenment. Joseph Chinnici has demonstrated the significance of this in Carroll's spiritual life. Carroll's theological anthropology emphasized the convergence, not the rupture, between the life of grace and human aspirations.¹⁶ This positive anthropology, it seems, allowed women to be treated in a more egalitarian way than certain strains of the later Romantic movement permitted.

As a native of Maryland, Carroll was heir to a tradition, brought from England, in which the laity were used to seeing priests irregularly and under secret conditions. Thus, lay people were largely responsible for maintaining their own Catholicity. In his study of *The English Catholic Community: 1570-1850*, James Bossy suggests that these conditions allowed women to enjoy a special status in the Catholic community. At least among the gentry, they sustained the practices of Catholic life by observing the fast days and feasts. When English Catholics were debating the possibility of laymen being entitled to a voice in the selection of bishops, one anonymous writer looked forward (hypothetically) to 1790 when bishops' elections would be dependent on women's votes. The expressed hope was that these bishops would issue more sensible and practical regulations concerning abstinence and fasts.¹⁷

Jay Dolan has assured us that it is safe to assume that women in Maryland during the 17th and 18th centuries enjoyed a special status and played roles similar to those of their English cousins in sustaining the rhythms of Catholicity. Widows were the object of solicitude. They were often left a larger share of their husband's estate than required by law.¹⁸

The piety of the day also fostered a spirit of what can be called, for lack of a better term, moderate egalitarianism.¹⁹ Richard Challoner's popular book, *The Garden of the Soul: or, A Manual of Spiritual Exercises* was an invitation to the reader.

"In the midst of your work Make a closet in your Heart for Jesus Christ, invite him in and there entertain him Set yourself with Magdalen at his feet and make frequent aspirations of love. . "

This practice was intended for members of both sexes. His devotions for confession are also instructive. Duties towards parents and children do not distinguish between father and mother. 'Abuse of the marriage bed' is described in non-sexist language.²⁰

Perhaps the most telling prayer of the period is "The Prayer of Compact," found in *The Pious Guide to Prayer and Devotion*. Given the fact that the devotion required the "confederates" to spend "eight or ten minutes every day in consideration of the passion and sufferings of Jesus Christ" before they said the prayer, it seems ideally suited for married couples, and family devotion.²¹

John Carroll's sermons, particularly those on matrimony and on the duties of parents, reflect this same kind of sexual non-differentiation.²²

Women and the Gospel

With these preliminary remarks in mind, let us now turn to the Pastoral, *Partners in the Mystery of Redemption*. It opens by reminding the reader of the testimony of the Samaritan Woman who was "empowered by Jesus to proclaim his name...."²³ In 1788, John Carroll revealed to Robert Plowden, his English ex-Jesuit confidant, that "Female Missioners are not much to my taste!" Plowden had told Carroll of the work of Donna Maria Antonia de San Jose de la Paz who had been spreading interest in the "Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola." Despite his negative reaction, Carroll informed Plowden that he "wanted to hear more of the wonderful woman..." and hoped that he would "not be blind to the wonderful works of God, if he chuses [sic] to make use of such instruments for the salvation of the world." In a subsequent letter, Carroll thanked Plowden for the "edifying accounts of Donna Maria Antonia." "The works of God", he continued, "are wonderful indeed.. " The last reference to Donna Maria in the Carroll-Plowden correspondence appeared in 1792. The Bishop informed his English friend that he had received a French pamphlet from "one of the Neales," entitled *l'etendart de la femme forte de nos jours*. Carroll confessed that the pamphlet interested him, because it carried "the history of the extraordinary American Female Missioner, Donna Antonia, farther than I knew of before."²⁴

1. Based on Carroll's comments about Donna Maria, how would you rate his appreciation for women as bearers of the gospel message?

Women as the Problem

At the beginning of *Partners*, the bishops acknowledge that women asked that the Pastoral not be written "as if women were the problem"²⁵ If one is asked to look for the area in Catholic thought where the attitude of "cherchez la femme" has been most prevalent, it is probably in reference to priestly celibacy. In this context, Bossy points out that there were "indications of anti-feminism" found among the eighteenth century English gentry. He concludes that such should not be surprising "in a body whose strongest instincts have been ... for a celibate priesthood."²⁶

Carroll had to deal with a number of problematic priests, "a medley of clerical characters."²⁷ Some were involved with women. His letters to Plowden reveal his reactions.

Shortly after he had been appointed Superior of the Missions in 1784, Carroll suffered a public embarrassment. Charles Wharton, a close relative and friend and a native Maryland ex-Jesuit, had become an Anglican in England before he set sail for America. He announced his decision publicly, and it was printed abroad and at home. Carroll responded. In the conclusion of his lengthy treatise, he reminded Wharton of his vow of celibacy and that he was "married to a heavenly spouse If he should violate his contract, he would commit adultery, "though he should a thousand times call it marriage."²⁸

Two years later, Carroll informed Plowden that:

My unfortunate friend [Wharton] ... is lately married. Had he not taken that step of marrying, I should have entertained hopes for him, but now I fear, he has placed an insuperable bar to his return.²⁹

In 1791, Carroll returned to the matter of Wharton. He reported to Plowden that he was "unpopular amongst his neighbors, and defeated in two or three attempts to get a living in the Protestant Episcopal ... Church..." Seven years later he informed Plowden that his information that Wharton had considered returning to the church was

totally unfounded. Far from having taken the step ... he is, to all appearance alienated from us forever. Some months ago he lost his pretended wife. Tho I have good reason for believing, that his life was very unhappy with her (independently of the insanity, with which she was afflicted in her last years) yet he published a mighty sentimental elegy to deplore her loss ...³⁰

Despite Carroll's gloomy assessment, Wharton served his adopted church with distinction. He became rector of St. Mary's Church in Burlington, New Jersey, and died there in 1833. He held John Carroll in warm regard until the end of his life.³¹

Another ex-Jesuit, a former student of Carroll's, also caused him worry. Carroll reported to Plowden that he had not seen John Lucas since the latter came to America, but heard that Lucas had "greatly involved himself, and leads a cat and dog life with the sweet partner of his bed. It is reported that he is become very sottish. ..." Carroll put some of the blame for "all these unfortunate young men" such as Lucas, not on women, but the Pope. Clement XIV had suppressed the Jesuits, and thus set the young ones adrift "into the wide world" where they had "fallen into all its prodigality and criminal excess" Carroll lamented, "What a number of these unfortunate men will the unhappy Ganganelli have to answer for?"³²

After having lived almost twenty years with the rich widow whom he had married shortly after he arrived in Maryland, Lucas, in Carroll's words, "quitted his woman whom her side is become very penitent." Before Lucas was restored to the ministry, one of the stipulations laid down by Carroll was that Lucas would not "frequent the house of the Mrs. Lucas's future residence."³³

In the context of clerical celibacy, it is instructive to look at the comments Carroll made to Plowden about the medieval star-crossed lovers, Abelard and Eloise. In 1787 Joseph Berington, an English apologist, whose work Carroll had greatly admired, published a history of Abelard and Eloise.³⁴ "With what view or to whose edification cannot conceive," Carroll noted tartly to Plowden. Carroll was sorry to see "a man who manages his pen so well" run after "fleeting and dishonourable applause." The American expressed the hope that Berington had "treated with delicacy, a very indelicate subject." Carroll continued:

If you have a mind to know how indelicate, look into Natalis Alexander's Ecclesiastical history, where are I remember, extracts from her original letters; & from wch [sic] I infer that she was not only an unfortunate, but most impudent woman in the former part of her life. In her later years, I hope she made reparation."³⁵

Carroll passed over in silence the fact that Abelard, the gifted philosopher and famous teacher at Paris, was twice the age of his beautiful protegee and a cleric in minor orders when their celebrated affair began. The romantics have it they spoke more of love than philosophy. History reports that the philosopher was castrated by the girl family in revenge for the dishonor he had brought to Eloise.³⁶

It is true that there are bits of Eloise's letters in Alexander's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. In his commentary on them, Alexander wrote that Eloise's letters reflected "imprudence and feminine levity." In her second letter to Abelard, in which she recalled her former insane love for him, she assured him that, "although the name wife is more holy ... to me the name friend, or if you will not take offense, concubine, will always be the sweetest."

Perhaps that was indiscreet. The preceding information given by Alexander, however, makes it clear that Abelard was the initial aggressor. It was he who persuaded the "noble virgin's" guardian, Fulbert, to place his young ward under Abelard's tutelage, a move Abelard calculated, according to Alexander, "quotidiana conversationis familiarem efficeret."³⁷

Why would Carroll hold such a jaundiced view of Eloise? She died as abbess of the Benedictine Abbey of the Paraclete. Natalis Alexander was certainly not much of a help. I think, however, that Carroll's vision was clouded by his annoyance with Berington, who had linked Carroll's name to his own in a campaign against clerical celibacy.

2. In the light of Carroll's comments on Wharton, Lucas, Abelard and Eloise, did Carroll view women as a problem?

The Dignity of Motherhood

In Chapter II of *Partners*, entitled "Partners in Relationships," the family as the basic unit of society is addressed, and the dignity of motherhood is affirmed.³⁸

John Carroll would have no difficulty resonating with this section. He had a warm and tender relationship with his mother, Eleanor Darnall (1706-1796), daughter of an old Maryland family, closely allied with the Baltimores. In 1748, when the future bishop was scarcely a teenager he left home to attend school at St. Omer, the emigre English college in French Flanders. He remained abroad and became a Jesuit priest. After the suppression of the order in 1773, Carroll returned to Maryland to live with his widowed mother in Rock Creek, "a retired part of the country." He and his mother must have gotten along very well, for he told his friend Plowden that he enjoyed "great domestick [sic] felicity." Carroll's feelings for his mother were often expressed in his letters to Plowden. The mothers of the two men were "early and inseparable" friends, probably schoolmates.³⁹

It was not until Carroll was appointed Superior of the Mission in 1784 that he was obliged to leave his mother because her residence was not "convenient to... [his] business."⁴⁰ In 1790, prior to his departure for Episcopal consecration in England, Carroll spent "a few days of leisure" with his "good mother." Plowden wrote to congratulate Carroll's "aged mother who will receive y[ou]r first episcopal blessing, with uncommon comfort and devotion. . ." ⁴¹

When the devoted son feared that his mother was close to death, Carroll wrote:

What a comfort it is on such an occasion to reflect that her whole life has been one continued series of virtuous actions, and even of such perfection, as is practiced by few religious."

In 1796 Eleanor Darnall Carroll died at the age of ninety-two. Since his episcopal consecration in 1790, he never missed spending part of a summer with her. Weeks passed before he could bring himself to inform his friend Plowden that "My good and venerable mother closed her long and may I add her holy life" ⁴²

Perhaps it was the early separation from his own family for such a long period of time that made Carroll admire a closely-knit family. One such family for whom Carroll had deep affection was the fancy of James and Joanna Barry, wealthy Catholic Irish immigrants and generous church benefactors. Their correspondence, which extends over a period of some fourteen years, reveals a depth of feeling mutually shared.

Tragedy struck the Barry family in 1803 and dogged them relentlessly. The father and the younger daughter became seriously ill; the mother suffered a serious accident. Carroll wrote to give both comfort and advice to "a family which is so much entitled to my love and respect" ⁴³

By the end of 1805, Joanna's "darling Mary" was dead. In what can only be described as a heart-rending letter, which also provides a glimpse of the family's piety, Joanna recited the melancholy events to the bishop. Unaware that the end was so near, Mary, before retiring for the evening,

kneled to her prayers as usual then sat down to hear the chapter of the day in Challoner, which I read, and repeated the usual prayers ... at half after one she woke with a pain she sat up in bed took the crucifix in her hand, kissed it- and to about half the Litany [sic] when she expired like a lamb...."

"Our sorrow, My Dear Friend," Joanna continued:

is sorrow for removed virtue and innocence ... I know you will pardon me for intruding those particulars on you - you loved my children, they most tenderly and gratefully loved you ... If [James] Barry and my invaluable Ann are spared I am blessed far beyond my merits.⁴⁴

Soon the father was dead. In 1808, the widow took her surviving but ill daughter, Ann, to Madeira in a desperate effort to restore the girl's health. Carroll's high regard for Ann is made clear in the gentle rebuke he sent to a close mutual friend, Elizabeth Seton. She had written Carroll that she thought Ann's illness was psychosomatic. Carroll countered that he was

indeed fully sensible of her anguish for the loss of poor Mary, and then of her Papa; but being equally persuaded of her resignation to the will of heaven and that no one knows better how to apply to her heart the motives of resignation, I do not apprehend such an effect from her sensibility, as that, to which you seem to allude"¹

In a letter dated May 3, 1809, Joanna poured her heart out to Carroll. Ann was dead and the mother was filled with remorse for having taken her to Madeira, for they both regretted "being so far removed from the worthy Bishop Carroll. . ." All of the suffering had taken its toll. Joanna confessed:

... I am not even as religious as I was, nor as resigned as I ought - this last cruel trial has undermined the little piety I had - health, strength, and spirit, indeed, I think my memory is failing..."

One month later, Joanna thanked Carroll for his:

long, kind, and interesting letter ... May Heaven reward your goodness in taking such pains to comfort a heart broken, unhappy Woman, I do what I can for relief, and yet my sorrows last..."

On the eighteenth of October, 1810, Carroll lost the last of that beloved family. In an obituary the Archbishop wrote:

She [Joanna] died, not merely the victim of disease, 'tho she underwent a [torn] painful one, but likewise of her exquisite sensibility ... The loss in particular of her oldest and last surviving daughter ... inflicted a wound on the Mother's heart, which death alone could heal. The perpetual struggle between a virtuous submission to the appointment of providence, and maternal tenderness gradually undermined her constitution: yet under all her afflictions, her more than female fortitude exerted itself to the last in the performance of the offices of friendship towards those, for whom she cherished that sentiment; still more, if possible, in discovering and relieving ... the victims of wretchedness and disease. No one, not even those, who were most intimate with her, knew half the extent of her charities; so careful was she to conceal them. Excelling thus in this first of Xtian virtues, it is unnecessary to add, it was accompanied by all the other exercises of a holy and truly Christian life...⁴⁷

This is the final tribute from the man who called Joanna Barry that great "example and model of... [the female] sex."⁴⁸

There were other mothers, too, whom Carroll held in esteem. The Russian princess Amalia Gallitzin had put her young son, Demitrius, under Carroll's protection. She confessed to him that she knew her son's faults: "laziness and vanity are the enemies of his salvation." Carroll wrote to assure her that the prince would be kept busy at St Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and that he would personally "see to it that he be occupied in such manner as to leave him not a moment for indifference or laziness."⁴⁹ Carroll kept his promise. Gallitzin became a priest and distinguished himself as the omnipresent missionary of western Pennsylvania. So much for his laziness and a mother's intuition. The cost of parting with her dear son, however, was not overlooked by Carroll. He wrote:

The sacrifice which you make ... of an only son, cherished by you, and who deserves to be so, is the most worthy testimony of how much zeal for the glory of God, and charity are superior to the sentiments inspired by flesh and blood.⁵⁰

3. Overall, how do you rate Carroll's respect for motherhood?

Education and Collaboration

Part III of the pastoral, "Partners in Society," gives high grades to the "Church's support of education for women through the Catholic school system and the work religious congregations have done ...⁵¹ When Carroll toured Europe in the early 1770s, he was very much impressed with the free educational system he saw operating in Protestant Baden-Dourlach where both boys and girls were educated "in things appropriate for their sex ." Later, as Bishop, he tried to persuade the trustees of the congregation in Baltimore to begin a subscription drive for building "useful edifices, especially a Free School for the gratuitous education of poor Catholic children. ." do not doubt that he had both males and females in mind.⁵²

When Carroll learned that the ex-Jesuit Charles Neale in Antwerp was eager to bring a group of "Theresians" [Carmelites] to America, Carroll was not entirely enthusiastic. He told Charles Plowden, "I rather wish for Ursulines Carroll wanted a convent school for girls as a companion to the boys' school at Georgetown; therefore, he needed teachers for girls. Three of the four Carmelites who came to America were native Marylanders. The fourth was English. All were well educated, and could fill the need for girls' teachers. Without the nuns' knowledge, Carroll wrote for and received a dispensation from Pius VI which would allow the women to open a school. In his letter of March 1, 1793, Carroll assured the Prioress, Ann Matthews, in religion, Mother Bernadine Teresa of St. Joseph, that:

it gave him [the Pope] incredible joy to find that you were come hither to diffuse the knowledge and practice of religious perfection, and adds, that considering the great scarcity of labourers, and the defect of education in these states, you might sacrifice that part of your institution to the promotion of a greater good."⁵³

This issue involves more than education, but touches upon the "working with women collaboratively," called for in Partners.⁵⁴ James Hennesey, S. J., a self-confessed Carroll enthusiast, has found this episode in his life disappointing. Hennesey has faulted the first and, at that time, the only bishop in the United States for his failure to discuss his plans with the first and, at the time, the only religious superior in the nation. Rather, Carroll presented Mother Bernadine Matthews with a fait accompli.⁵⁵

The Carmelites had been in Port Tobacco for three years before Carroll received the dispensation. He could have discussed the possibility of the women entering the teaching ministry with those directly involved.

The episode does admit another interpretation, however. Recently, the current archivist of the first American Carmel has spoken of the "collaborative model" of governance which existed between Carroll and Carmel. Sister Constance Fitzgerald, O.C.D., has pointed to the fact that the nuns said, "No, thank you" to the dispensation. Carroll never again mentioned it to them, and their exchanges continued to be eminently cordial.⁵⁶

There is no doubt that Carroll was deeply disappointed by the nuns' refusal. Seven years later he complained to Charles Plowden that the Carmelites would not "undertake the business of female education, thó the late Pope, soon after their arrival, recommended it earnestly to them. ." Carroll thought, rightly or wrongly, that the chief opposition to his plan came from Charles Neale.⁵⁷ At least, Carroll never held that against Neale or the nuns. Despite the drastic shortage of priests, Carroll never assigned Charles Neale to any other duty than that of chaplain and confessor to the Carmelites. When the Jesuits were re-established in 1805, however, Robert Molyneux the superior, had other plans. The nuns, believing that they were to lose Neale, their friend and protector, asked Carroll to intercede. Carroll replied:

[Neale] is not at my disposal; his regular Superior may require his removal without consulting me, . . . and it seems that he intends to exercise that prerogative ... without advising me ... Remonstrance and intreaty are all that is left to me: and these I have used in an address [written to Molyneux] yesterday.

Carroll even entered into collaboration almost bordering on collusion with the Prioress, Mother Claire Joseph Dickinson, in order to help his friend. He suggested that she do as follows:

... use some very persuasive argument to draw him [Molyneux] to your house, where you might explain to him fully the disadvantages, which would inevitably ensue from Mr. Neale's [sic] departure.⁵⁸

Neale was never removed.

The story of John Carroll's friendship with the convert Elizabeth Seton, pioneer foundress of Catholic parochial education and the first American Sisterhood, is well-known. In 1809, as Seton took her first steps toward founding a religious order, she and her recruits moved from Baltimore and Carroll's patronage and guidance. He surrendered "as much as a bishop can surrender" with such grace that "Seton was never reproached by his disappointment," according to his biographer, Annabelle Melville. She claimed that Carroll always favored Seton's side of the question in any difficulties she encountered with her male Sulpician superiors in Emmitsburg.⁵⁹ In 1811, Carroll gave final sanction to the rule of conduct and plan of government of the Daughters of St. Joseph, later known as Sisters of Charity. He was pleased to note that the only connection between the Sisters and the Sulpicians in the future would be one of charity.⁶⁰

In letters to others, Carroll commented on various plans to bring Sisters to America. His questions are always the same: do the women speak English? This would enable them to teach. If they did not, he discouraged their coming. How could they earn a livelihood?⁶¹

The preceding section raised two issues on which to grade Carroll:

5. his support for female education
6. his collaborative style with women

Women Religious

The life of women religious is described as a public sign "of the universal call to holiness," in Part IV, "Partners in the Church,"⁶² Carroll appreciated Elizabeth Seton not only for her work in female education, but also for the quality of her spiritual life. In a letter to Robert Molyneux, S. J., Carroll declared unequivocally that Seton was "a Saint" a designation Carroll used exceedingly sparingly.⁶³

Although the Carmelites at Port Tobacco would not teach, Carroll valued their presence. In a report to the Roman Congregation written in 1792, Carroll acknowledged that "Their example, a novelty in this country, has aroused many to serious thought on divine things."⁶⁴ He thanked the nuns personally for their "very great charity ... b giving me so valuable a share in your religious exercises. . ." He was "exceedingly pleased at the increase of your most religious family. Every addition to it," he wrote, "I look upon as a new safeguard for the preservation of the diocese."⁶⁵

Carroll also had high praise for the religious women of Europe, "often of the first nobility." They dedicated their lives to "the unfortunate victims of poverty and disease ... to this loathsome exercise of humanity without expecting any rewards on this side of the grave."⁶⁶ Carroll expressed some reservations, however, when it came to assigning Simon Brute, a talented priest, to St. Mary's Seminary. The prelate was afraid that the Sisters nearby would

insensibly ... multiply their prayers and entreaties to confer with him on their spiritual concerns ... and perhaps confess to him. If the Abp, [sic] or other superiors deny the indulgence, discontent will ensue.

Carroll feared that Brute's talents would be diverted in order to "fill the office of a Director of some devout women." He assured Brute's superior that he was not disparaging or devaluing that ministry, but any holy, prayerful priest, "acquainted with sound principles of divinity, is competent to that employment.. " Should Brute go to teach at the seminary, Carroll urged "that he never be employed at the Sisterhood without necessity."⁶⁷

6. Based on the above information, how do you want to rate Carroll regarding women religious?

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

In the concluding pages of *Partners*, we read that "Mary stands as a model for all Christians of what it means to be a partner with God in the work of salvation."⁶⁸ Devotion to Mary played an important role in Carroll's own life. As a young priest, he served as Prefect of the Marian Sodality at Bruges. The Jesuits promoted this devotion as an aid to fostering personal piety, cultural development, and apostolic zeal among their students.⁶⁹ In America, Carroll defended devotion to Mary against attacks from both Protestants and a few Catholics. In response to an anti-Catholic article, which had been published in the *Columbian* magazine in 1787, Carroll, as the Superior of the Missions, informed the editors that sheer prejudice or ignorance would cause Protestants to accuse Catholics of "reverence[ing] as Deities, Mary, Peter, Paul ... that these are the substitutes of the Heathenists' Jupiter and Juno. . ." Carroll set about defending the intercessory power of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, which, he made clear, was not the "turpetude of idolatry."⁷⁰

Almost a decade later, a work by Joseph Berrington, "An Examination of Events termed Miraculous, as Reported in Letters from Italy," drew a comment from Carroll. The English apologist's essay was an attack on the cult of miraculous Madonnas, a notable instance being one at Anconda, Italy in 1796, where the Madonna was reported to have opened and closed her eyes. Carroll told Charles Plowden that " ..the assertions in this last work," if they were accurately cited by Berrington's opponents, "are subversive of the credibility of Gospel miracles and consequently of Christianity."⁷¹

Carroll was ready to accept Marian miracles, but not myths. Catholic piety had led to the creation of the notion that Maryland was named in honor of Our Lady, and Charles Plowden believed it. Carroll did not let devotion cloud historical facts. He simply reported to Plowden that such was not the case. Maryland had been named for Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles the 1st.

Although the colony had not been named for the Blessed Virgin, Carroll placed his diocese under her protection, and dedicated his pro-cathedral to her Assumption. At the conclusion of the sermon he preached on the occasion of possessing the pro-Cathedral, December 12, 1790, the Bishop noted that piety decays wherever devotion to the Blessed Lady decays.⁷² Emblazoned upon Carroll's episcopal coat of Arms is the Virgin and Child, surrounded by thirteen stars.

The following year, during the first Diocesan Synod, Carroll exhorted his

Venerable Brethren to venerate with great devotion the Most Blessed Virgin, and to commend the same devotion often and earnestly to their flocks, so that they might realize that by her patronage a shining citadel has been set up in their midst."⁷³

In his report to the Roman Congregation in 1792, Carroll asked the Holy Father to grant additional indulgences beyond the "plenary indulgence long granted to the faithful of this diocese, from the Sunday preceding the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and throughout the octave." He explained that he was most anxious to induce his flock "to adopt so great a patroness, and to implore her unflinching care for the Christian people of this diocese."⁷⁴

Carroll was not alone in fostering devotion to Mary. In *A Manual of Catholic Prayers*, compiled by the ex-Jesuit Robert Molyneux and published by Robert Bell in Philadelphia in 1774, Marian devotions are common. A "Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary" assured the reader that approaching the heart of Jesus through the heart of Mary

is the doctrine and the very spirit of God's church ... This consideration has engaged the sovereign Pontiffs and head Pastors of the Church, to give the self-same sanction to the pious practices instituted in honor of the sacred Heart of Mary, as they give to the adorable heart of Jesus ...⁷⁵

A contemporary audience might view this as Mariolatry. Carroll, however, was more moderate. In his exchange with the editor of the *Columbian*, he counters the suggestion that Catholics believe that Mary can "command her son; impera filio..." to do her bidding. If any Catholic had ever made this claim, it was due to excessive zeal, which Carroll did not condone. "Mistake me not," he wrote, "I intend not to justify such a prayer, which is ... in a literal sense, even impious." Carroll claimed, perhaps not quite accurately, that all Roman Catholic prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary, "evidently denote her immense inferiority to, and entire dependence on the divinity." ...⁷⁶

That Carroll should have devotion to Our Lady is not unusual. Why he chose Mary under the title of the Assumption as patroness, however, is not entirely clear. It is true that his episcopal consecration took place on the fifteenth of August, but that does not resolve the question completely. The reason that this problem intrigues me so is that Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, came to dominate American Catholic piety. James Hennessey, S. J., has shown that the theological anthropology surrounding the declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was one that emphasized the rupture of nature and grace.⁷⁷ This was typical of some Romantic thinking, and greatly at variance with Carroll's position. I believe that the position of women suffered under the Romantic movement, and it is tempting to speculate about how different images of Mary may have affected women's status in society and vice versa. Since, however, Carroll has not left any explanation for his choice, it remains a vexing question.

7. You, on the other hand, have enough evidence to evaluate Carroll's Marian devotion and tally your entire score.

Conclusion

Overall, the audience rated John Carroll an average "5.5" out of a possible "7" as highest score. Although this is a good showing, it is not high enough to declare him the patron saint of feminists.⁷⁸ Carroll was a man of his times, yet in many ways he was an advanced thinker. He appreciated and respected women. He earnestly wanted them to have the advantages of education. Though overburdened by a crushing load of official correspondence, he took the time, for example, to lighten the burden of a grief-stricken woman and to keep mothers informed about their absent children.⁷⁹ To his credit, there is much to be admired and episcopal lessons still to be learned from the life of our venerable first bishop and archbishop.

Notes

John Carroll Brent, *Biographical Sketches of the Most Reverend John Carroll* (Baltimore, 1843); John Gilmary Shea, *The Life and Times of the Most Reverend John Carroll, Bishop and First Archbishop of Baltimore* (New York, 1888); Peter Guilday, *The Life and Times of John Carroll, Archbishop of Baltimore, 1735-1815* (New York, 1922); Annabelle Melville, *John Carroll of Baltimore, Father of the American Hierarchy* (New York, 1955).
 Thomas O'Brien Hanley, ed. *The John Carroll Papers* (3 vols., Notre Dame/London, 1976) [Henceforth JCP]; cf. John J. Tierney, "Another View of the John Carroll Papers;" *Catholic Historical Review*, 64 no. 4 (October 1978):660; James Hennessey, S.J. "An Eighteenth Century Bishop: John Carroll of Baltimore," *Archivum Historiae Pontificae* 76 (1978):171-204; id., "The Vision of John Carroll;" *Thought* 54 no. 214 (September 1979):322- 333; Philip Gleason, "The Main Street Anchor: John Carroll and Catholic Higher Education," *Review of Politics*, 38 (1976): 576-613; Joseph M. McShane, S.J., "John Carroll and the Appeal to Evidence: A Pragmatic Defense of Principle;" *Church History* 57 no. 3 (September 1988):298-309.
 (First Draft, Washington, D.C. 1988), 1. [Henceforth Partners]
 JCP 3:83-84, 91-93.
 Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore [Henceforth AAB] 8B-N7, [undated] [Amalia Princess Gallitzin] to Carroll; AAB 8A-N1, Same to same, Amsterdam, July 31, 1804; AAB 8A-Q5, Same to same, 1809[?]; AAB, 8A-Q4, Princess Marianne Gallitzin to Carroll, April 8, 1807, AAB, 3V 10, Same to same, Saint Petersburg, August 8, 1808; AAB 3V 11, Same to same, April 30, 1810. For Carroll's response see JCP 11:71-74, 105-106, 453-55; AAB. 7D9, Marie Rivardi to Carroll, Debtors Apartment, Philadelphia, March 10, 1815.
 AAB, 5B 1, Elizabeth Lusby to Carroll, Annapolis, May 8, 1801 wrote a touching letter about her poverty and asked "father" Carroll to get a "Catekism" for her, perhaps illegitimate son. James Hennessey, S.J. *American Catholics* (New York/Oxford, 1981), 81, has identified Amalia von Schmettau (Princess Gallitzin) as one of the "Munster Circle" of Catholic intellectuals.
 AAB, 8,A-S1, Catherine Lachaise to Carroll, Havana May 18, 1809; AAB 3C3, Helen [Deumey] Sully to Carroll, Augusta, Georgia, June 11, 1814.
 JCP 2:176; 2:163.
 JCP 3:110-111; 3:342.
 JCP 2:404; 2:540.
 AAB, 5A4, Lister to Carroll [n.d.]; JCP 2:69.
 JCP 1:235
 AAB, 7T 3, Mary Spalding to Carroll, Montgomery County Rock Creek near Georgetown, April 20, 1810; AAB, 2 T 2, Fanny Conlin to Carroll, New York, July 16, 1813.
 JCP 1:510; AAB, 5S3, same to same, Boston, March 13, 1804; AAB, 5A3, Anna C. Linzey to Carroll, West Cambridge, October 13, 1810 sends greetings from "your little God Daughter..."
 AAB, 10 1-4, same to same, Charleston, February 28, 1811; AAB 10 1-2, same to same, Charleston, January 16, 1812; AAB, 5G3, same to same, Charleston, August 23, 1812; AAB, 5G2, same to same, Charleston, February 8, 1812, talks of "une petite Boite de Cigares, et ... une petite Bourse. . ."
 Hennessey, S.J., "Eighteenth Century Bishop;" Joseph Chinnici, *Living Stones* (New York/London, 1988) 12.
 James Bossy, *The English Catholic Community: 1570-1850* (London, 1976) 112-115, 333.
 Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience* (New York, 1985) 83.
 It should be noted that John Carroll was not egalitarian in reference to slavery. He did not condemn the institution for either men or women. See JCP 1:343; Carmelite Monastery, Baltimore [Henceforth CMB] 9, Carroll to [Mother Bernadine Matthews] Jan. 28, 1797, speaks of the gift of a "negro or mulatto" woman from "a person in this town." The stipulation is that she is never "to be free."
 (7th ed., corrected. Philadelphia, 1774), 184; 223-231.
 Pious Guide, 110-111.
 JCP 3:424-433; 447-450.
 Partners, 1.
 JCP 1:312, 351; 2:53. To this point, I have not been able to locate the pamphlet.

Partners, 3.

Bossy, English Catholic Community, 152.

JCP 1:389.

For Carroll's response to Wharton's Letter to the Roman Catholics of Worcester see JCP 1:82-144, quote on 140. Thomas W Spalding, "John Carroll: Corrigenda and Addenda," *The Catholic Historical Review* 71 no. 4 (October 1985):514, has identified Wharton as Carroll's "first cousin once removed."

JCP 1:222.

JCP 1:541; 2:251.

Spalding, "Carroll: Corrigenda," 514; Joseph Agonito, "Ecumenical Stirrings: Catholic-Protestant Relations during the Episcopacy of John Carroll," *Church History* 45 (Spring, 1976):369-70.

JCP 1:56-7.

JCP 1:251, 547.

Joseph Berington, *The History of the Lives of Abelard and Eloise*, comprising a period of eighty-four years, from 1079 to 1163. (London, 1787); JCP 1:253-54, 274.

JCP 1:253-54, 274.

Elizabeth Hamilton, *Heloise* (Garden City, NY, 1967) 30; Abelard told his story in *Historia Calamitatum*; see J. I Muckle, *Medieval Studies* 12 (Toronto, 1950).

Natalis Alexander, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Mancini (14) In8, Saeculum XI et XII "De varia Petri Abelard, Fortuna, Erroribus, Damnatione et Poenitentia," 44-65; on 51, Alexander wrote, "Inprudenter ac muliebri levitate. . and quotes Eloise, amorum insaniam in memoriam revocat ... Et si uxoris nomen sanctius ... dulcius mihi semper existit amicae vocabulum: aut si non indignaris, concubinae. . " quotes on 51 and 45.

Partners, 18-19.

JCP 1:32, 58, 70.

JCP 1:167.

JCP 1:490; AAB, 6M 12, same to same, September 25, 1790.

JCP 2:40; Melville. Carroll, 161, gives the quote.

JCP 2:456.

AAB, IM2, same to same, New York, December 11, 1805@

JCP 3:51.

AAB IN2, same to same, London.

JCP 3:124-125, emphasis mine.

JCP 3:30.

AAB 8B. M7, same to same [n.d.1; JCP 2:71-72.

JCP 2:453-4, emphasis mine.

Partners, 45.

JCP 1:16; 2:466. See also JCP 3:463-64.

JCP 1:312; CMB 3, same to same.

Partners, 77.

James Hennesey, S.J., "To Share and to Learn: A Keynote Address," in *Religious Life in the U.S. Church: The New Dialogue* (ed. Robert J. Daly, S.J., et al.; New York, 1984), 58.

Sister Constance Fitzgerald, O.C.D., panelist in "The Church of Baltimore Celebrates its Bicentennial" series at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen. Hers was one of three presentations on November 16, 1988, in a session entitled, "Religious Communities from the era of John Carroll: the Jesuits, the Carmelite Sisters and the Sulpicians."

Telephone interviews January 11, 18, 20, February 19, 1989.

JCP 2:319.

CMB, 15, Carroll to M. Dickinson, Baltimore, June 29, 1806.

Melville, Carroll, 184; see JCP 3:51-52, 113-15, 119-120, 267-68, 369 for Carroll's letter to Seton; see Ellen Kelly and Annabelle Melville, eds., *Elizabeth Seton: Selected Writings* (New York, 1987), 261-274 for Seton's correspondence with Carroll.

JCP 2:155-57

JCP 1:312; 2:88; 117; 319.

Partners, 73.

JCP 3:65.

JCP 2:32.

CMB 7, Carroll to Matthews, Baltimore, February 20, 1795;

CMB 8, Carroll to Matthews, Baltimore, November 9, 1795.

JCP 1:88.

JCP 3:199-200.

Partners, 80.

Joseph de Gilbert, S.J., *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (Saint Louis, MO, 1972), 297-98.

JCP 1:260-61.

JCP 2:216-17 & n.2. cf. JCP 2:264-5 where Carroll denounced a priest who "harangued against devotion to the Blessed Virgin."

JCP 1:475; 478.

JCP 1:532.

JCP 2:30.

Manual, 76.

JCP 1:260-61

James Hennesey, S.J., "A Prelude to Vatican 1: American Bishops and the Definition of the Immaculate Conception," *Theological Studies* 25 (September, 1964):409-415
21% of the audience rated Carroll a "7"; 26% a "6"; 29% a "5"; 13% a "4"; and 11% a "3". No one rated him lower than "3".