



We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition (A Sheed & Ward Classic)

John Courtney Murray

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The 1960 publication of *We Hold These Truths* marked a significant event in the history of modern American thought. Since that time, Sheed & Ward has kept the book in print and has published several studies of John Courtney Murray's life and work. We are proud to present a new edition of this classic text, which features a comprehensive introduction by Peter Lawler that places Murray in the context of Catholic and American history and thought while revealing his relevance today.

From the new Introduction by Peter Lawler:

The Jesuit John Courtney Murray (1904-67) was, in his time, probably the best known and most widely respected American Catholic writer on the relationship between Catholic philosophy and theology and his country's political life. The highpoint of his influence was the publication of *We Hold These Truths* in the same year as an election of our country's first Catholic president. Those two events were celebrated by a *Time* cover story (December 12, 1960) on Murray's work and influence. The story's author, Protestant Douglas Auchincloss, reported that it was "The most relentlessly intellectual cover story I've done." His amazingly wide ranging and dense?if not altogether accurate?account of Murray's thought was crowned with a smart and pointed conclusion: "If anyone can help U.S. Catholics and their non-Catholic countrymen toward the disagreement that precedes understanding?John Courtney Murray can."

. . . Murray's work, of course, is treated with great respect and has had considerable influence, but now it's time to begin to think of him as one of America's very few genuine political philosophers. His disarmingly lucid and accessible prose has caused his book to be widely cited and celebrated, but it still is not well understood. It is both praised and blamed for reconciling Catholic faith with the fundamental premises of American political life. It is praised by liberals for paving the way for Vatican II's embrace of the American idea of religious liberty, and it is

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