

In Defense of Columbus

Articles published in *Columbia* magazine, collected by David Whatmuff, State Deputy of the Minnesota Knights of Columbus.

For much of U.S. history, Columbus has symbolized civic unity and the hope of building an inclusive society

by William J. Connell 9/1/2020

During the long summer of 2020, when scores of statues of Christopher Columbus have been vandalized or removed around the United States, it is important to remember why those statues were erected. How did Columbus come to be such an important figure in the popular imagination during most of the nation's history?

Above all it had to do with the possibility of building in the Western hemisphere a new civilization — one that would bring together European traditions and ideas with the Native American peoples, traditions and the flora and fauna of the new continent. What remains striking, after more than five centuries, is the hopefulness of this venture, and the belief that there was an opportunity to create a better way of life that immigrants to, and within, the New World still share today.

The first members of the Knights of Columbus were influenced by this vision and also instrumental in promoting it. Just two years after the death of the Knights' founder, Father Michael McGivney, councils enthusiastically participated in the first national Columbus Day, declared in 1892 for the quadricentennial of the great navigator's landing. For them and many others, Columbus was celebrated as a figure of civic unity and a symbol that immigrants, particularly Catholics, possessed a rightful share in American identity.

THE ATTRACTION OF 'COLUMBUS'

As early as the colonial period, the name "Columbia" was used as a figurative synonym for America. The poet Phillis Wheatley, an African American, wrote several striking poems in praise of Columbia during the Revolutionary War. After independence, the capital of the United States was sited in a district called Columbia, while artists represented Columbia as an allegorical female figure embodying the virtues and the hopes of a new civilization no longer bound to Europe.

It was especially after the Civil War, however, that Columbus soared in popularity. Much of this attraction can be explained by the explosion in sea traffic in the second half of the 1800s. The technological shift from sail to steam and the lower cost of travel opened the oceans to the masses on both sides of the Atlantic. As the first transoceanic seafarer, Columbus became a popular hero, and in the decades before and after 1900 he was admired in Europe almost as much as in the Americas. It was no coincidence that the many statues and monuments to him (Barcelona, Genoa, Buenos Aires, New York City) began to be built around that time.

It was also no coincidence that certain immigrant groups — Irish, Italians, Hispanics and other Catholics — that felt marginalized in a still WASP-dominated United States identified themselves with a universally admired historical figure who also happened to have been Italian, to have sailed for Spain, and to have brought Catholic

Christianity to the Western Hemisphere. Columbus could be presented as legitimating their presence at a time when anti-Catholicism and anti-immigrant nativism were quite common. This, of course, was the atmosphere in which the Knights of Columbus was founded.

When Father McGivney, the son of Irish immigrants, proposed a name for the fraternal and charitable organization in 1882, his choice was “Sons of Columbus.” After debate with the founding members — all of them laymen, most of them Irish — the group finally settled upon “Knights of Columbus.”

While “Knights” invoked the chivalric orders, with their code of ethics, aspiration to virtue and defense of the most vulnerable, the adoption of Columbus as patron signified that Catholics had been in the New World from the beginning — that is, from the very day that it became “New.”

As founding member William Geary put it, the name conveyed that Catholics “were not aliens” in America but rather participated in the very foundation of this new civilization. With respect to American society at large, the choice of Columbus was a comfortable one, since it embraced an existing and very popular object of admiration.

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CELEBRATING CIVIC UNITY

When President Benjamin Harrison first proclaimed Oct. 12, 1892, as Columbus Day, the idea — lost on present-day critics — was that the holiday would recognize both Native Americans, who were here before Columbus, and the many immigrants who were then coming to this country in astounding numbers. Like the Columbian Exposition dedicated in Chicago that year, it was to be about our land and all its people.

The 1892 Columbus Day parade in New York City was telling in this regard. Harrison had especially designated the schools as centers of the Columbus celebration, and thousands of public school students marched, followed by students from Catholic and other private schools, each wearing their respective uniforms. These included the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, the Dante Alighieri Italian College of Astoria and the Native American marching band from the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, which speaks volumes about the spirit of the original Columbus Day.

On the same day, 6,000 Knights of Columbus marched in a parade in New Haven, Conn., where a 600-voice choir, led by the choir director of St. Mary’s Church, performed a concert that included various national anthems. The event drew some 40,000 people, then the largest crowd in New Haven’s history.

In the years that followed, the Knights of Columbus encouraged Columbus Day celebrations around the country as well as monuments in Columbus’ honor.

In 1906, Colorado became the first state to declare Columbus Day an annual holiday, and within six years, the movement had taken on national proportions, with observances in 30 states.

The Ku Klux Klan was among the holiday’s strongest opponents, since it commemorated a man who was Catholic and a non-Anglo. Despite attempts to put an end to Columbus Day as a state holiday, it continued to

be observed. Oct. 12 was established as a national celebration by annual presidential proclamation in 1934; it became a federal holiday in 1968.

What sometimes gets overlooked in current discussions is that we neither commemorate Columbus' birthday (as is the practice for many public figures) nor his death date (when Christian saints are usually memorialized), but rather the date of his arrival in the New World.

Columbus Day marks the first encounter that brought together the original and future Americans. A lot of suffering followed Columbus' landing on San Salvador, and a lot of achievement, too. It was a momentous, world-changing occasion, such as has rarely happened in human history.

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CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS AND FAKE HISTORY

9/1/2017

by Gerald Korson

ONCE THE TARGET OF ANTI-CATHOLIC SENTIMENT, COLUMBUS IS OFTEN SLANDERED BY THOSE WHO MISREPRESENT HIS LEGACY

Driven in large part by political correctness and partisan academics and activists, it has become fashionable in recent years to criticize Christopher Columbus and the holiday named in his honor. A closer look, however, reveals the famed explorer to be a man of faith and courage, not a monster.

Many of Columbus' modern critics rely on a warped and politicized reading of history, and it is not the first time the explorer has endured such attacks. When a resurgence of anti-Catholic bigotry erupted in early 20th-century America, Columbus was a favorite target then as well.

Despite animus among some groups today, the majority of Americans view the explorer positively and with pride. In a K of C-Marist poll from December 2016, 62 percent of Americans expressed a favorable opinion of the explorer and 55 percent said they were in favor of Columbus Day, the holiday named for him. By contrast, fewer than 3 in 10 view Columbus unfavorably and only 37 percent oppose the holiday named for him.

Nonetheless, there have been political efforts to strip Columbus of honor, and the question of whether to continue to recognize Columbus Day is under review in many places. Some states and municipalities have removed the explorer's name from the holiday or eliminated the observance entirely.

A COURAGEOUS JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

Unfair attacks on Columbus, past and present, should not be allowed to obscure the truth about the man, his voyage and his motives. Born in Genoa, Italy, Columbus was a deeply Catholic explorer who was willing to go against the grain. He believed he could reach the shores of Asia by sailing a mere 3,000 miles west across the Atlantic. Such a passage would establish faster and easier trade routes than were possible through overland travel or by sailing south and east around Africa.

Scholars of his day calculated the distance to the Orient across the Atlantic at well over 7,000 miles, out of practical range for ships of the day. Those who were skeptical of the admiral's proposal did not hold that the earth was flat, as popular myth has suggested, but rather that it was much larger than Columbus believed. Despite his miscalculation, after 10 weeks Columbus did indeed find land — not the outskirts of the Orient, as he went to his grave believing, but an entirely new continent.

Later, as a nation began to coalesce out of the American colonies, its leaders recognized the admiral's legacy. "Columbia" served as an informal name for what would become the United States of America. The eventual designation of the nation's capital reflects the esteem the founders had for the Genoese explorer.

Beginning in the 1840s, waves of European immigrants swelled the ranks of Catholics in the United States, and along with that came an increasingly anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant backlash from the Protestant majority. Catholics were subject to discrimination, slander, ridicule, anti-Catholic propaganda and sometimes mob violence.

It was within this hostile climate that Father Michael J. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus in 1882. He and the founding Knights chose as the Order's patron Christopher Columbus — one of the few Catholics considered a hero of American history. Father McGivney believed the explorer represented both Catholicism and patriotism at the very root of America's heritage, thereby symbolizing that faithful Catholics also can be solid American citizens.

A decade later, as the Order celebrated its patron on the 400th anniversary of his discovery, President Benjamin Harrison proclaimed a national Columbus holiday. He called for "expressions of gratitude to Divine Providence for the devout faith of the discoverer, and for the Divine care and guidance which has directed our history and so abundantly blessed our people."

Colorado became the first state to establish Columbus Day in 1907, and others soon followed. In 1934, with strong urging and support by the Knights, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Congress made Columbus Day a federal holiday, mandating its first annual observance on Oct. 12, 1937.

ATTACKS OLD AND NEW

As the 1992 quincentenary of Columbus' arrival in the New World approached, vocal opposition to Columbus was heard from partisan and revisionist historians and activists who were often critical of Western civilization as a whole. That year, the city of Berkeley, Calif., changed Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day, and several other municipalities have made similar moves, often explicitly as a means of dishonoring Columbus.

In response to one such initiative in Baltimore, Eugene F. Rivers III, founder and president of the Seymour Institute for Black Church and Policy Studies, published an op-ed article Dec. 2, 2016.

"To celebrate one cultural group does not require that we denigrate another," he wrote. "Rather than renaming Columbus Day, why not add another holiday, Indigenous Peoples Day, to Baltimore's calendar in honor of Native Americans?"

The 20th century ended with criticism of Columbus and Columbus Day in certain quarters, just as the early 20th century had seen similar opposition.

When the Ku Klux Klan was revived in 1915 and targeted Catholics, Jews and minority groups whom they considered a threat to the nation's "Native, White, Protestant" identity, one of their targets was Columbus.

The Klan opposed the observance of Columbus Day, trying to suppress celebrations of the holiday at the state level. Klan members published articles calling Columbus Day a "papal fraud" and even burned a cross at a Knights of Columbus observance in Pennsylvania.

Today, one can still hear echoes of anti-Catholic prejudice in the modern attacks. For some, Columbus' sponsorship by Spain and introduction of Christianity and Western culture to the lands he discovered make him immediately suspect. The new wave of anti-Columbus attacks go so far as to say that Columbus intended nothing good.

"These criticisms primarily charge Columbus with perpetrating acts of genocide, slavery, 'ecocide,' and oppression," explained Robert Royal, president of the Faith and Reason Institute and author of *1492 and All That: Political Manipulations of History* (1992).

Nonetheless, a closer examination of the record reveals a different picture.

"The dominant picture holds him responsible for everything that went wrong in the New World," wrote Carol Delaney, a former professor at Stanford and Brown universities, in her book *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem* (2011). In her opinion, "we must consider his world and how the cultural and religious beliefs of his time colored the way he thought and acted."

In a 2012 *Columbia* interview, Delaney further explained that Columbus found the native peoples to be "very intelligent" and his relations with them "tended to be benign." He gave strict instructions to the settlers to "treat the native people with respect," though some of his men rebelled and disobeyed his orders, particularly during his long absences, Delaney added.

Columbus' voyage made the Old and New Worlds aware of each other for the first time, eventually leading to the founding of new countries in the Western Hemisphere. Diseases inadvertently carried to the New World by the Europeans caused the greatest number of casualties by far, killing some 90 percent of native populations according to some estimates.

"There were terrible diseases that got communicated to the natives," Delaney said, "but he can't be blamed for that."

A RENEWED DEFENSE

According to Royal, arguments against Columbus by modern critics often constitute a "new, contemporary form of the 'Black Legend'" — anti-Spanish propaganda dating back to the 16th-century that stereotypes Spanish explorers as uniquely cruel and abusive.

The writings of Bartolomé de las Casas — a 16th-century Spanish Dominican priest, historian and missionary — exposing the abuse of the native peoples are often cited in an effort to impugn Columbus. But while de las Casas lamented the suffering of indigenous people, he also admired and respected Columbus for his "sweetness and benignity" of character, his deep faith and his accomplishments.

"He was the first to open the doors to the ocean sea, where he entered the remote lands and kingdoms which until then had not known our Savior, Jesus Christ, and his blessed name," de las Casas wrote in his *History of*

the Indies. While cognizant that Columbus was human and made mistakes, de las Casas never doubted the explorer's good intentions, writing: "Truly, I would not dare blame the admiral's intentions, for I knew him well and I know his intentions are good."

According to Delaney, Columbus "fervently believed it was the duty of every Christian to try to save the souls of non-Christians," and it was this passion that "led him on a great adventure, an encounter such as the world has never seen."

Not surprisingly, popes since the late 19th century have praised Columbus' mission of evangelization. Pope John Paul II, while celebrating Mass at a Columbus monument in the Dominican Republic near the 1992 quincentenary, said the crossshaped memorial "means to symbolize the cross of Christ planted in this land in 1492."

In a speech to the young people of Genoa in May, Pope Francis talked about how a disciple of Christ needs the "virtue of a navigator," and he pointed to the example of Columbus who faced "a great challenge" and showed "courage," a trait he indicated was essential to becoming a "good missionary."

As it did a century ago, the Order is defending Columbus today. When Colorado lawmakers weighed a bill to repeal Columbus Day as a state holiday earlier this year, the Knights of Columbus helped lead the opposition. Recalling the Klan's earlier efforts to oppose Columbus Day, the K of C noted that the measure was not a progressive step but rather "regressive as it takes us back to what the Klan outlined in the 1920s in order to promote ethnic and religious resentment."

The Knights of Columbus has defended its patron from unfair attacks, urging that he continue to receive official recognition as a man of faith and bravery. Columbus represents the kind of heroic courage and religious faith that inspired the establishment of the United States. Although he surely holds special meaning for Catholics and for Italian Americans, Columbus is a figure all citizens of the New World can celebrate.

For this reason, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson said in his annual report this year, "We will continue to defend the truth about Columbus and Columbus Day."

The navigator who united two hemispheres was not a saint — but his momentous role in history should be celebrated

by Felipe Fernández-Armesto 9/1/2020

Misplaced vengeance topples Columbus' statues. Tweets traduce him. He was mendacious, self-righteous, humorless and mean. But his virtues — including dazzling bravery and ingenuous charm — balanced his vices. He was sympathetic toward cultures other than his own, including those of Native Americans: Detractors are unpardonably ignorant of that.

Hero? Yes. Villain? Of course, because you can't be one without the other. While sainthood is universal, heroism is partisan. Someone's hero is always someone else's villain.

To understand Columbus' follies and feats, one has to realize that social ambition drove him: the desire, as some of his men noticed, "to be a great lord." What mattered was not so much where he was going as whether, in a social sense, he would "arrive."

From his allusions we know that he read the 15th-century equivalent of stationbookstall pulp: Storybook heroes take to the sea, discover islands, battle monsters and become great rulers. That was Columbus' quest: to imitate in real life the romantic protagonists of sensational tales; or recreate, like the Knights of Columbus, a chivalric trajectory for modern times.

He was willing to take a risk that no real-life predecessor embraced: to ride the sea with the prevailing wind. Modern yachtsmen love breeze in their sails, but, until Columbus, seaborne explorers struggled outward against the wind, because the guarantee of a passage homeward was vital.

Columbus needed patrons. He hawked his services, extemporizing proposals suited to the audience of the moment. When he appealed to Ferdinand and Isabella, he emphasized what they wanted: a short route to Asia, where the world's richest economies beckoned. He scoured the literature. Misreading some data and misrepresenting the rest, he speculated that Asia might lie only "a few days" from Spain.

Geographers knew the size of the globe and realized that the distance was untraversable. The monarchs, however, had nothing to lose: Bankers and bureaucrats put up the money. In 1492, the king and queen commissioned the attempt, promising Columbus noble rank and ill-defined shares in any profit.

He juggled newfangled instruments of navigation to impress his men, like a conjurer waving a wand; in reality, however, he navigated by timing the hours of daylight and reading the corresponding latitude off printed tables. Stories of impending mutiny among fear-struck seamen were probably part of a legend of his own making: the lonely visionary, persevering in adversity.

The islands he encountered were disappointing, bereft of evidence of the proximity of the Orient. About the natives he was genuinely conflicted. He recognized them as rational, redeemable humans, admiring their nakedness as a token of dependence on God, like the nakedness of St. Francis, or as a relic of the classical Golden Age. On the other hand, it also repelled him as a reputed feature of "savagery."

As for the natives, at first they treated the strangers not as some in the United States do today, as “illegals” to reject or exploit, but as usefully objective arbiters, marriage partners, allies and holy men, touched with sanctity from the divine horizon.

The following year, however, Columbus’ return to what he called Hispaniola was disastrous. He found that 30 of his men, whom he had left on the island, were dead. The local chief blamed inland enemies for the massacre. Columbus set off with him on a punitive expedition, while desperados from Spain proved uncontrollable. The enterprise got ever costlier and less productive. Columbus’ main banker faced unmanageable debts. He fell back on a desperate, doomed expedient: enslaving natives. The monarchs banned the sale, ordering the liberation of the captives. Eventually, Columbus was recalled in disgrace.

He also turned to religion. He had begun to have visions on his way home on the first voyage, amid a terrible storm. Visions now multiplied. He found “prophecies” of his life in sacred and classical texts. He affected a Franciscan habit. Christopher became “Christoferens” — “bearer for Christ” — and the evangelization of *indios* became a reward worth more than riches. He wrote self-pitying poetry and petitions. His last few years were spent in disillusionment, begging the monarchs to meet their side of a bargain he had failed to fulfill.

Columbus’ legacy was inauspicious for the people whose islands were ravaged by disease and disrupted by intruders. It was equivocal for his heirs, who spent generations litigating against the crown. He left a myth of his own indomitability that suckered historians for centuries. The adamant Columbus of the old history books must be rebuilt in mercury and opal — poor materials for statues.

Eventually, however, almost everyone in the Americas claimed him, as if he were an adoptive founding father: Italians by right of birth, Spaniards by naturalization. Nineteenth-century immigrants in the United States — Jewish, Portuguese, even Polish, Greek, English and Scottish — invented “evidence” to link him with their own communities. Now, at an even more perverse stage of the myth, postcolonial “correctness” blames him for consequences he never foresaw.

What he really accomplished matters more than the myths. His discovery, not of America but of a viable route there and back, put sundered cultures in touch and opened unimagined prospects for commercial and cultural exchange.

He launched the greatest humanly induced upheaval in the course of evolution: Until Columbus’ second voyage — for perhaps 150,000 years — life forms had diverged as landmasses drifted apart. Now, convergent evolution began, swapping biota between continents, enriching diversity and multiplying sources of food.

Columbus helped launch departures in Western science. China had long been ahead in innovation. But, thanks to Columbus’ wind-riding technique, access to specimens, samples and observations from afar gave Latin Christendom the chance to catch up.

The empire he adumbrated encompassed more cultures and biomes than ever before: a creative — as well as destructive — arena of exchange. Outcomes included ways of life, food, thought, worship, work, language and art that enrich our world.

His legacy resembles his life: complex, morally equivocal and full of wonder. Few individuals are more worthy of commemoration.

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LESSONS OF HISTORY

Righting wrongs against Native Americans must start with a just appraisal of the past

by Patrick T. Mason

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following text was abridged from an editorial first published on RealClearPolitics.com.

Today's protestors — with great vigor but little historical sense — seem eager to look for scapegoats. They want to cast all blame for the atrocities committed against American Indians at the feet of Christopher Columbus. Such efforts only serve to whitewash and revise the true history of the Americas.

We need to remember our history, the good and the bad, so that we are not set up to repeat history's mistakes. We need to take an honest look at all our forefathers. We need to give them the credit they deserve for what they did well, while being mindful of the things that they should have done differently or better.

What we lose in the rush to scapegoat Columbus is perspective on how America came to the present moment in its troubled relations with Native Americans. Spain outlawed almost all enslavement of Indigenous people by 1500. Yet, 200 years later, enslavement of American Indians thrived in British Connecticut. In 1850, Peter Hardeman Burnett, the Gold Rush governor of California, summed up the Anglo-American perspective when he said, "It is inevitable that the Indian must go." By contrast, Columbus and the Spanish sought coexistence, however complicated that sometimes became.

Columbus Day is a day for us to remember that bold and courageous voyage in 1492 that led to the first sustained contact between two very different worlds. It is a day to remember the many good things that have come out of that contact, such as the founding of the United States, the first lasting democratic republic.

It is also a day to remember our failings as a country, such as the Trail of Tears and the forced removal and re-education of native children in the 20th century — episodes that occurred centuries after Columbus and that the explorer neither caused nor condoned.

Each day, I see the continued hardships facing the first people of the Americas. I see the poverty, the lack of quality education options, and the constant interference in Native American tribes' right to self-determination.

Instead of vandalizing statues or spreading misleading history, I would call on all Americans to follow the example of groups like the Knights of Columbus, and reach out to these communities or to those on the peripheries in your own neighborhood. Bring companionship to your lonely elderly neighbor. Form friendships with those who are suffering.

Rather than dubiously assigning blame to one man, together we can truly help make the United States a better place for all of us, and achieve a harmony and understanding between native and immigrant peoples that has too often eluded us in our history.

PATRICK T. MASON, a member of the Osage Nation and past state deputy of New Mexico, serves on the Knights of Columbus Board of Directors.

Five Myths About Columbus

Outrageous claims about Columbus need to be tempered by a sober look at the historical record

by Robert Royal 9/1/2020

At a moment when even George Washington and Thomas Jefferson are under attack, it was inevitable that the current unrest would also engulf Christopher Columbus. His case is unique, though, because unlike the others, few people — least of all those who took turns stomping on his statues — know much about him.

They assume that he brought slavery and genocide to the New World. Europeans did, of course, commit many sins. But they did not introduce new evils; all of them — including slavery and genocide — already existed among Indigenous peoples, as they did throughout the world.

One person who knew Columbus personally was the Dominican missionary Bartolomé de las Casas. He earned the name *defensor de los indios* (“defender of the Indians”) because of his passionate diatribes against exploiters of native peoples in the Americas. Las Casas did not spare Columbus from criticism, but he also defended him against those who blamed him for all the disorders and violence that followed the first contacts with Indigenous peoples.

The great explorer’s missteps, he said, were the result of ignorance and misjudgments about how to proceed: “Truly, I would not dare blame the admiral’s intentions for I knew him well and I knew his intentions were good.”

It’s good, then, to examine some of the contemporary charges against Columbus in order to assess him fairly.

Myth 1: He was a violent man.

Las Casas spoke of Columbus’ “sweetness and benignity.” Far from being a violent man, he often got into difficulties because he would be indulgent — toward natives and Spaniards — and would then take extreme measures against *both* when things got out of hand. He was a great navigator but a poor governor.

By his third voyage, he was cautioning Ferdinand and Isabella about who they were allowing to sail to the New World. He needed, he said, 60 missionaries to preach Christianity to arrogant and abusive Spaniards, and another 60 upstanding men to help him run the colony.

Myth 2: He committed genocide.

There was no “genocide” during these early voyages, though many natives died from unfamiliar diseases and clashes between two very different cultures. The Americas had been isolated from the rest of the world for millennia, which is why people here, though they had had their own plagues, were especially vulnerable to diseases from outside. Nonetheless, the Spaniards never intended to commit “genocide.” In even a cynical reading, a ready supply of native workers served Spanish interests.

Myth 3: He instituted the slave trade.

Columbus was not interested in the slave trade; his goal was to set up a trading post or, later, an agricultural colony on the island of Hispaniola, today's Dominican Republic and Haiti. He did, however, take slaves as prisoners of war, or where he found violations of natural law, such as human sacrifice or cannibalism — the only reasons Spain permitted. Slavery was never the admiral's intention, except as a — not very effective — way to maintain order in unprecedented circumstances.

Myth 4: He had only worldly interests.

People often claim that Columbus was motivated by “God, gold and glory,” but assume God was just a cover for worldly interests. In fact, his religious devotion was sincere. Among other things, we know from his writings that he felt that he had been given a role in spreading the Gospel to all nations, which had to happen before Christ could return. In later years, he often dressed as a Third Order Franciscan.

Myth 5: He did not accomplish anything extraordinary.

Many also claim that Columbus did not “discover” the New World. Those living here already knew where they were, the argument goes, and didn't need to be discovered. This is a half-truth. Indigenous peoples, of course, knew their own lands. They did not know that they were part of a larger world.

One reason we especially honor Columbus is that he began the process toward the one interconnected world that we now inhabit. Vasco da Gama sailed around Africa and reached “the Indies” five years after Columbus arrived in the New World. But great as that feat was, he only found a new route to longknown lands. Columbus, by skill, imagination and sheer grit gave us *the world*.

Columbus is often dismissed today on other grounds — usually by people who have come to hate “Western civilization” and, frankly, traditional Christianity. They want to blame him for everything wrong on these shores since 1492. Following that logic, though, he deserves some credit — and gratitude — as well, for the many good things that also followed his discoveries.

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Courage and Conviction: The True Story of Christopher Columbus

<https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/columbus/index.html>

A thorough examination of the life and legacy of the fearless discoverer of America, narrated by actor Chazz Palminteri, this film provides insight into Christopher Columbus' remarkable genius as a sea navigator as well as his deep desire to bring all nations to Christ. Through expert interviews and archival footage, we look at the origins of Columbus Day and the symbolic role that Columbus has for Catholic immigrants, especially Italian Americans. Finally, the film addresses the current indictments against Christopher Columbus with boldness and exposes the motives behind the attacks of revisionist historians. *Courage and Conviction* shows why Christopher Columbus remains not only a man worthy of admiration, but a noble icon of what it means to be a Catholic and an American.