



Final Report

Working Group: Slavery—Legacy and Reconciliation

John Carroll University

Spring 2018

## Preface

Rev. Robert L. Niehoff, S.J., president of John Carroll University from 2005 - 2017, notified the John Carroll Community in September 2016 that Georgetown University's Working Group on Slavery, Memory and Reconciliation issued its public report. In his email communication, Fr. Niehoff shared the fact that Archbishop John Carroll (1735-1815) not only took part in the management of the Jesuit plantations and in slaveholding at some level, but that he also owned at least one slave who was given his freedom in Archbishop Carroll's will. Fr. Niehoff also announced that he would convene a working group, and in a campus communication in October 2016, Fr. Niehoff shared the membership of the Working Group: Slavery-Legacy and Reconciliation (WGSLR) which represented alumni, students, board of directors, faculty, and staff. Fr. Niehoff gave the working group the following charge:

1. To assist the University community to come to a better understanding of our history including our Jesuit heritage (graced and disgraced);
2. To assist the University community to address the abiding, systemic racial social injustices in our nation in a more profound and efficacious way; and
3. To make recommendations that will assist the University to better serve its mission relative to racial social justice.

This report offers an overview of the activities of the Working Group including information on the process, research, and recommendations. It is organized into the following three major sections:

## WORKING GROUP ON SLAVERY: MEMORY AND RECONCILIATION

### **Section I: Introduction**

The first section outlines the Working Group's activities during the six months that they met (November, 2016 - May, 2017).

### **Section II: The Research**

The second section outlines the process used to gather information about the history of slavery in the Catholic Church and slaveholding with the Carroll family and Archbishop John Carroll.

### **Section III: The Recommendations**

The third section outlines the recommendations that were developed by the Working Group.

## WORKING GROUP ON SLAVERY: MEMORY AND RECONCILIATION

### **Membership of the Working Group**

Martin Connell, S.J., (co-chair), Associate Professor, Department of Education and School Psychology

Sherri Crahen, (co-chair), Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

John A. Ambrose '15, Administrative Assistant, Political Science Department & Nonprofit Administration Program

Tina Facca-Miess, Associate Professor, Department of Management, Marketing, and Logistics

Jean Feerick, Associate Professor, English Department

Theron Ford, Associate Professor, Department of Education and School Psychology

Evelyn Jenkins-Gunn '72G, Alumna

Dan Kilbride, Professor, History Department

Diane McTier, Administrative Assistant, Office of Mission and Identity

Terry Mills, Assistant Provost for Diversity and Inclusion

Ed Peck, Vice President for the Office of Mission and Identity

Donald Phillip, '95, Alumnus

Dwight Venson '17, Student; President of AAA (African-American Alliance, name changed to Black Students in Action)

## **Section I: Introduction**

The Working Group consisted of 13 members, including alumni, faculty, staff, and students. The Working Group committee met five times over six months. Additionally, smaller sub-groups were established to focus on different aspects of our work. One sub-group focused on researching the history of slavery in the Catholic Church and slaveholding with the Carroll family and Archbishop John Carroll. Another subgroup was a collaboration of some members of the Working Group and members of Black Students in Action (BSA) to offer a panel discussion regarding the experiences of JCU African-American alumni. The Working Group was also involved in organizing a listening session with members of the campus community regarding our namesake's slaveholding and the history of race relations on our campus. A list of the dates for the Working Group meetings as well as events hosted by the Working Group are included in Appendix A.

### **Learning the History**

The Working Group focused on becoming familiar with historical issues and as members of the group identified books or articles, these resources were placed in a google share drive to be available for reading and discussion. A list of materials referenced by the Working Group is included in Appendix B. The history sub-group focused on identifying resources so that we could learn more about the Carroll family, Archbishop John Carroll, and Charles (the slave of Archbishop John Carroll). Through the research process, a member of the group also discovered that Archbishop John Carroll owned a second slave named Alexis.

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On Wednesday, February 22, 2017 the Slavery Working Group co-sponsored a panel discussion with Black Students in Action which was attended by 85 members of the John Carroll community. The purpose of this presentation was to share with the John Carroll community information that the committee had learned up to this point to better understand slaveholding in the United States as well as slaveholding within the Catholic Church. Information was also provided on the role that the Carroll family played in slaveholding as well as Archbishop John Carroll. Historical information was shared about how John Carroll University was established and named.

### **Understanding the Experiences of John Carroll African-American Alumni**

As part of better understanding how African-American alumni experienced John Carroll University, the Slavery Working Group co-sponsored a panel discussion with BSA called "Our Story" which was held on Tuesday, February 28, 2018. Five alumni participated in the panel with a moderator who posed questions to understand how African-American students experienced the academic and social aspects of being a student at John Carroll. Panelists shared positive and negative experiences about what it feels like to attend a predominantly white institution and why they chose to attend John Carroll.

### **Listening to Our Community - Next Steps**

Members of the Slavery Working Group invited the campus community to attend a listening session on Wednesday, April 19, 2017 to gather information and suggestions from the community as to how we acknowledge our history and grow in

our commitment to justice for all people. The Working Group reviewed the suggestions received and offer recommendations for next steps in the third section of this report.

## **Section II: The Research**

To support our endeavor, the group conducted in-depth research of Archbishop Carroll, his family, specifically, and more broadly on the intersection of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and higher education institutions. The racism that became intricately linked with the institution of slavery led the group to examine racism in the United States of America, (USA) from early Colonial times to the present. A bibliography and a select list of research materials investigated by the WGSLR is listed in Appendix B of this document. Fr. Niehoff stipulated that the process of the working group be intricately connected to the products it delivered. Toward that end the group attended to the following:

1. Ensuring that the process is marked by dialogue that engages the entire University community;
2. Using the wealth of resources here at the University (expertise and experience of faculty, staff, students, and alumni) – and call on resources beyond our community as needed;
3. Bringing to bear the social teaching of the Church; and
4. Employing the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm as a way to carry out its work.

## History

### *Background: The Catholic Church, the Jesuits, and Slavery*

The last years have seen a focus on the history of slaveholding by Jesuits in the United States. In large part this attention is due to the work done at Georgetown University, a Jesuit university where in 1838, high-ranking Jesuits affiliated with the University sold 272 slaves to plantations in Louisiana in an effort to pay off debts and keep the nation's first Catholic University afloat.

We at John Carroll University, founded in 1886 by German Jesuits who were refugees of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, are not directly implicated in this practice. However we are certainly involved in the legacy, for Archbishop John Carroll, the founder of Georgetown University and our namesake, owned slaves.

Before presenting what the Working Group has learned about Archbishop Carroll's slaveholding, it will be helpful to consider how it was that Catholics generally and Jesuits more specifically could have participated in such an abhorrent practice. The work of Fr. Thomas Murphy, SJ, is helpful in this regard.

Murphy (2014) notes that in part, Catholics' participation in slaveholding was a morally corrupt way for them to assert themselves in the face of their maltreatment by the Protestant majority. Catholics' owning slaves announced to their fellow citizens that they held the same political rights as their fellow citizens. The influence of the political philosophy of John Locke (d. 1704) regarding the relationship of property and citizenship was strong in the 17th and 18th centuries. Holding property, whether land or chattel, was considered a fundamental civil liberty. In the face of the belief among



some English Protestants that the profession of the Catholic faith meant forfeiture of all political rights—including the right to hold property—prompted Catholic colonists to assert these rights ever more firmly. Gifts of slaves to the Jesuits by lay people accomplished two goals according to their sights: (1) Supporting the Church as they were duty-bound and (2) Asserting their freedom as Catholics in the face of their own persecution. It is a cruel irony, of course, that their freedom was asserted by the enslavement of others.

Internal Church politics was at work as well according to Murphy (2014). The Jesuit order was suppressed in 1773. Without an order, the disbanded members looked to the plantation system in Maryland as touchstone for their identity and solidarity. Interfaith antagonism played a part, too. In an era marked by hostility, the Protestant roots of abolitionism repelled many Catholics. In a similar vein, the abolitionist movement was eschewed by many Catholics because its philosophical basis was found in part in Enlightenment thought, which was held suspect by Church authorities following on the heels of anti-Church sentiment after the French Revolution.

By the 1830s, a combination of financial crisis and their fear of Nativism led the Maryland Jesuits (the order had been re-established by this time) away from slaveholding. The Jesuits had been horrible estate managers. They had hoped that profits from their plantations would subsidize costs at Catholic academies like Georgetown. As that hope dimmed and lacking the conviction that manumission was an alternative, Jesuits' solution to these problems was the mass sale of the slaves to a planter in Louisiana in 1838—272 men, women, and children, starting with a

sixty-five-year-old man named Isaac and his children, for the price of \$115,000 (roughly \$3.3 million today when adjusted for inflation) to be paid over ten years.

Though there had been papal decrees and other missives decrying slavery, there was no consistent absolute condemnation of the practice by the Catholic Church. That would emerge only later. As Murphy (2004) concludes, “This is a legacy that the Jesuits of the United States and the church as a whole still struggle to assimilate.”

### *The Carroll Family*

Historically, the Carroll family played an important role in the formation of the United States. This is especially significant given their Roman Catholicism. Below are short biographies of three prominent members of the Carroll family, including Archbishop John Carroll, which have been taken from the Catholic Education Resource Center’s website (Carter, 2001).

- **Charles Carroll of Carrollton** (1737-1832) was the most illustrious and best known of the Carrolls. He was immensely wealthy, and was reputed by fellow Declaration signers to be the richest among them, richer even than John Hancock. Charles was the only signer whose property — Carrollton — was mentioned in the Declaration of Independence. In addition to a household staff, the Carrollton property contained orchards, livestock, a cedar mill and even a small factory for making clothes. The huge staff proved logistically difficult because Carroll’s legal skills did not easily translate into managerial skills. It was actually the employment of over three hundred slaves that caused Charles Carroll more

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difficulty because he expressed personal discomfort at the notion of human slavery.

- **Daniel Carroll of Rock Creek** (1730-1796) was a member of the Continental Congress (1781-1783), and a signer of the Articles of Confederation. He was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and one of only two Catholic signers of the United States Constitution. (The other Catholic signer was Thomas Fitzsimons of Pennsylvania). At the Constitutional Convention, Daniel Carroll played an essential role in formulating the limitation of the powers of the federal government. He was the author of the presumption — enshrined in the Constitution — that powers not specifically delegated to the federal government were reserved to the states or to the people.
- **Archbishop John Carroll** (1735-1815), Daniel Carroll's younger brother, was educated in Europe, joined the Jesuit order, and was ordained a priest. He founded a private school for boys and named it after the town where it was located, Georgetown, a port on the Potomac River that later became part of Washington, D.C. He went on to be elected — by all the Catholic priests in America — to become America's first Catholic bishop. He later became Archbishop of Baltimore. In any procession of American bishops, the archbishop of Baltimore always goes last in recognition of its role as America's oldest diocese. In 1789, John Carroll founded the college in Georgetown that later became known as Georgetown University.

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In June of 1783, with a few Jesuits and five other priests who had found their way to Maryland, John Carroll formed a group that called itself the Catholic Church in America. They reported to Bishop Talbot of London whom they deemed to have Church jurisdiction over them, but Bishop Talbot would not own to any relationship with the Americans whom he deemed rebels. In 1791, he convened the first diocesan synod in the United States. The twenty-two priests in attendance laid down detailed precepts for administering the Sacraments, for conducting mixed marriages, and for observing rules for fast and abstinence.

John Carroll was an intimate of Washington. He wrote a prayer at the time of Washington's inauguration asking God's blessing on the president, Congress, and government of the United States — a prayer still very much in use today. Out of gratitude for John Carroll's support during the war, Washington gave a modified version of the seal of the United States to the institution that is now Georgetown University, and that seal is still in use. (It might be said that John Carroll gave the seal to Washington.)

During a period when the Revolutionary War was going badly, Washington asked John Carroll to join a mission to Canada to seek the support of the French for the colonies. Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll of Carrollton were the others on the four-man mission. While it failed, it established a relationship with the French, much influenced by the Catholic faith they held in common with the Carrolls. It bore fruit years later at

Yorktown, where the largely Catholic-financed French fleet cut off supplies to British general Charles Cornwallis, and Washington was able to force Cornwallis to surrender and bring the war to an end.

Despite their enormous contributions to the American founding, the three Carrolls somehow fell below the radar screen of recognition as full-fledged Founding Fathers. Perhaps that was because they were Catholics in a country and a culture that for many years was overwhelmingly Protestant.

*Archbishop John Carroll and His Role in Jesuit Slaveholding*

Archbishop John Carroll played a significant role in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. As such, his personal views on slavery and slaveholding were extremely relevant to the research conducted by this Working Group.

So, what were his personal views on slavery? The evidence, thus far, confirms that Archbishop Carroll tolerated slavery. He was not an abolitionist. He is never on the record as having called for the abolishment of slavery. He did, however, advocate for the humane treatment and religious education of slaves (Mich, 1986), and eventually, for the “gradual emancipation” of slaves. “Gradual emancipation” means emancipation through manumission by masters, rather than by law. His view was that gradual emancipation of a plantations’ slaves allowed for families to be kept together and for elderly slaves to be provided for. He is quoted as saying, “To proceed at once to make it a general measure, [*that is, to abolish slavery by law*], would not be either humanity toward the Individuals, nor doing justice to the trust, under which the estates have been transmitted and received” (Hennesey, 1983).

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At the time of this writing, this Working Group has been able to identify the names of two enslaved people owned by Archbishop John Carroll. The first was named Charles. He is specifically identified, and referred to, in Archbishop Carroll's will (Hanley, 1976). Carroll bequeathed Charles to his nephew, Daniel Brent, while specifying that Charles be freed within a year after Carroll's death. Carroll also requested that Charles be given \$50 from his estate at the time of his freedom. The second was named Alexis. He served as Archbishop Carroll's servant until he was sold in 1806 by Carroll to a wealthy Baltimore gentleman known as Mr. Stenson. Alexis is described as "an active alcoholic". Carroll thought that Mr. Stenson would be in a better position to "tutor the slave in right behavior". Instead, Stenson sold Alexis, shortly after purchasing him from Archbishop Carroll, at a much steeper price, thus making a profit for himself (Murphy, 2001). When Carroll heard this news, he is quoted as communicating to James Barry on 21 July 1806, "So much for this depraved young man who has banished from himself happiness & comfort" (Hanley, 1976a, pp.76-77).

It is Archbishop Carroll's unique place in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States, in conjunction with his prominence within the Jesuit order itself, that the name "The John Carroll University" was chosen for our institution in 1923. The "The" before John Carroll University was removed shortly after, in 1932. Gavin (1985) quotes a Jesuit communication that stated, "If the change [*in name*] were necessary the Jesuits were 'willing to build with the ideals of John Carroll as their background; ... willing to live in the light of that tradition, and more than willing to cast in their lot and

to identify their cause with that of the great Churchman, Educator, and Patriot'" (pp. 128-131).

### **Section III: Our Recommendations**

The Working Group offers to the University President the following recommendations resulting from our research, campus presentations and conversations, as well as a community listening session that was held in April 2017:

- As part of the campus-wide Ignatian Heritage and Jesuit Mission display, create a permanent historical exhibit to educate members of the community about Archbishop John Carroll, the Jesuits, and the role they played in slaveholding.
- Consider giving the bust of Archbishop John Carroll less prominence on campus.
- Add a plaque to the bust of Archbishop John Carroll to acknowledge his history with slaveholding and share information with prospective students and parents when they are visiting campus.
- Work with academic departments to develop course(s) and learning modules or projects to deepen students' understanding of slavery and its enduring contemporary manifestations.
- Foster change in campus climate and culture by:
  - Improving the Bias Incident Reporting process;
  - Recruiting and retaining a more diverse campus community;
  - Re-establishing the Chief Diversity Officer position;
  - Increasing opportunities for members of the community to be educated on cultural competency;

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- Improving senior leadership response to negative events that impact our community; and
- Developing a strategic plan for diversity and inclusion.
- Provide appropriate funding to support the above initiatives.

Over the course of our work, a few individuals suggested that the University consider changing its name. Others suggested the removal of the bust of Archbishop John Carroll that is located on the quad. After careful deliberation, the consensus of the Working Group was to recommend that the University maintain both its present name and the bust of Archbishop John Carroll. We came to this conclusion because we feel that they serve a purpose: They are constant reminders of our legacy and of the constant need for our community to understand and actively address issues concerning racial social justice.



## Appendix A: Schedules

### *Meetings*

November 17, 2016

December 6, 2016

January 11, 2017

February 8, 2017

March 28, 2017

### *Events*

February 22, 2017

'Our History' – A panel presentation co-sponsored by the Working Group and Black Students in Action regarding the history of slavery in the Catholic Church and slaveholding with the Carroll family and Archbishop John Carroll.

February 28, 2017

'Our Story' - A panel presentation co-sponsored by the Working Group and Black Students in Action with African-American Alumni discussing their experiences at John Carroll.

March 14, 2017

Dramatic Monologue - Evelyn Jenkins Gunn, African American Alumna and Granddaughter of a slave (*event cancelled due to inclement weather*).

April 19, 2017

Topic: Listening Session: Roundtable discussion to gather information/suggestions from the community as to how to acknowledge our history and grow in our commitment to justice for all people.

**Appendix B: References**

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