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## Welcome to Faith Quest at Historic St. John's and Carroll Chapel!

Today you are going to use your powers of observation to learn about the Carroll Chapel (also known as St. John's Chapel) and some of the people who lived around the area in the early days of our country. \*

Begin your quest by finding the replica of the Carroll Chapel that stands in the middle of the cemetery. True — this isn't the original chapel, which fell apart years ago. The current building you see was built in the 1950s. These days, it is not open to the public, although you can make an appointment for a tour by calling the office at the main church of St. John the Evangelist (301-681-7663). For today, stand on your tippy-toes, look through the windows, and use your imagination to take you back more than 200 years into our country's past. To find out what year the original St. John's Chapel is thought to have been built, answer the following questions and put each answer on the blanks below.

1. How many tabernacles are there? (By the way, the original tabernacle from the chapel is currently with the Visitations Sisters at Georgetown, and the original altar stone is at Archbishop Carroll High School.)
2. How many candles do you see on and by the altar (including the red sanctuary candle)?
3. How many wooden planks is the front door made of?
4. How many chairs are lined up? (They don't look like they are original, do they? They're not! They are temporary while the pews await restoration.)

\_\_\_\_\_

How many years before the American Revolution was the original chapel built? Not very long, was it? Do you know what life was like for Maryland Catholics at that time? On the eve of the outbreak of the American Revolution, colonists were abuzz and uncertain about the way their relationship to King George was deteriorating, but life was improving in one way for Catholics.

Years before, Catholics in Maryland — even though they had founded the colony with principles of religious tolerance in 1634 — had lost political authority and subsequently lost many freedoms

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\*Special thanks to Betsy Tebow and Geraldine Bonin for graciously providing much of this information.

due to anti-Catholic sentiment. In 1704, laws “to prevent the growth of Popery” were passed so that Catholics were not allowed to participate in public life, vote, enter certain professions (such as teaching or law), educate their children in the Faith, or even build churches. Catholics could only attend Mass celebrated in a private home.

So, when Fr. John Carroll, S.J., returned in 1774 to his native Maryland from Europe, where he had been educated and ordained, he first started celebrating Mass in the manor home of his mother, but the congregation — grateful to have a priest minister to them — grew rapidly. Since the oppressive restrictions that Catholics had been living under were being eased, a chapel was built here in Rock Creek (the area now known as Forest Glen), the first parish in what is now Montgomery County. From this base near his mother’s home, Fr. John Carroll ministered to the needs of Catholics in a wide area, often riding horseback 24 or 30 miles to visit the sick and even traveling 50 or 60 miles once a month to Virginia, to minister to a congregation of Catholics where his sisters lived.

St. John’s Chapel was not the first church built in the colonies, nor even in Maryland, but it owns a unique place in our history and has been given a special nickname because of the prominence of its founding priest, Fr. John Carroll. He did not remain simply a parish priest at St. John’s Chapel for very long. In 1784, Fr. John Carroll received word that he had been appointed “Superior of the Mission in the Thirteen United States of North America.” This duty compelled him to leave Rock Creek in 1786 and go to Baltimore. In 1790, he was selected as the first bishop of the United States (at that time the diocese of Baltimore covered the entire nation) and was appointed the first archbishop of Baltimore in 1808. He also founded Georgetown University and helped establish Georgetown Visitation, St. Mary’s Seminary, and Mount St. Mary’s in Emmitsburg, MD.

Many of John Carroll’s family members are buried in the cemetery around the chapel, although he is not — as archbishop of Baltimore, he is buried in the cathedral there. Find out what the special nickname for St. John’s Chapel is by strolling among the gravesites and answering the questions on the following page. Fill in the blanks with the letters from the boxes (in order) to spell out the missing word.

The Carroll Chapel is called “the

\_\_\_\_\_ of the Church in America”

To discover the missing word above, go inside the fenced area near the chapel, up to the corner near the sidewalk. Find a marker placed in the ground by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in memory of Daniel Carroll II, John Carroll’s older brother. No one knows for certain where Daniel Carroll is actually buried, but in recognition of his importance in early American history, the DAR installed this memorial here. What did Daniel Carroll do?

He was a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Continental Congress

and he was a \_\_\_\_\_ of both the Articles of Confederation

and the U.S. \_\_\_\_\_.

(Note that Daniel Carroll did not sign the Declaration of Independence, but another member of the illustrious Carroll family did: Daniel’s cousin, Charles Carroll of Carrollton — and he was the only Catholic to do so.)

In the next row of gravestones, find the large arch-shaped stone with the monogram “IHS” in the center of a cross. This is the headstone of Eleanor Darnell Carroll. Who was she?

She was the \_\_\_\_\_ of

Archbishop \_\_\_\_\_.

(John Carroll’s father is buried in Upper Marlboro, where he died in 1750.)

How old was she when she died in 1796? \_\_\_\_\_-two.

As you know, her son was made 1st \_\_\_\_\_ of Baltimore.

Next to Eleanor’s headstone is a cross for her granddaughter, Catharine Digges, “relict” (i.e., widow) of George Digges. And next to Catharine is an old stone that’s hard to read. Part of the words are missing, but this is the stone for Ann Brent.

She was the daughter of \_\_\_\_\_ Carroll, Esq., which means she was John Carroll’s older sister.

Ann’s children certainly seem to have loved her, didn’t they? Catharine was one of them and William (next stone) was another.

Not far away, find the gravestone of another of Ann Brent’s children, Robert Brent (John Carroll’s nephew). It is in the shape of a large cross with the monogram “IHS” on it. Who was he?

He was the first \_\_\_\_\_ of Washington, D.C.!

**ANSWER**

So — what is this place you're at known as? After the first chapel fell apart, a church was constructed in its place in 1850, but the number of Catholics in the area continued to grow so that a larger church was needed. In 1893, when Cardinal Gibbons laid the cornerstone for the historic stone church you see today, the Very Rev. Thomas O'Gorman of Catholic University spoke on the occasion:

"Saint John's, Forest Glen, was **the Bethlehem of the Church in America** and Baltimore was the Jerusalem. From this spot had sprung the Catholic hierarchy of this country; on this spot was planted the mustard seed from which had grown a great tree; and Saint John's Chapel founded here by Father Carroll, has impregnated the entire continent with Catholicism — Father Carroll, in this country, was the father of religious civilization as George Washington was of temporal civilization..."

Historic St. John's, the stone church, is also called Our Lady Queen of Poland and St. Maximilian by the Polish community who use it. The main church, St. John the Evangelist on Georgia Avenue, was built in 1962. More information about the history of St. John's is provided on the last page of this activity guide. On your way back to the grotto to stamp your passport, notice the grave of Fr. Charles Rosensteel, pastor of St. John's for 38 years (1898-1936) — it is by the tall statues near the rectory — and the bust of one of the Church's newest canonized saints in front of the rectory.

Thank you again for your visit here today! Perhaps you'd like to say a prayer written by Archbishop Carroll before you leave. You'll find the prayer on the next page.

Feel free to send photos, posts, or tweets to share your experience at this site with other Faith Questers:

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God bless you.

### **Prayers for the Church and for Civil Authorities**

*Composed by Archbishop John Carroll in 1800*

We pray Thee, O almighty and eternal God, who through Jesus Christ hast revealed Thy glory to all nations, to preserve the works of Thy mercy, that Thy Church, being spread through the whole world, may continue with unchanging faith in the confession of Thy name.

We pray Thee, who alone art good and holy, to endow with heavenly knowledge and sincere zeal of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the government of His Church, our own Bishop, all other bishops, prelates, and pastors of the Church; and especially those who are appointed to exercise among us the functions of the holy ministry, and conduct Thy people into the ways of salvation.

We pray Thee, O God of might, wisdom and justice, through whom authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted and judgment decreed, assist with Thy holy spirit of counsel and fortitude the President of the United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness and be eminently useful to Thy people over whom he presides: by encouraging due respect for virtue and religion, by a faithful execution of the laws of justice and mercy, and by restraining vice and immorality.

Let the light of Thy divine wisdom direct the deliberations of Congress and shine forth in all the proceedings and laws framed for our rule and government, so that they may tend to the preservation of peace, the promotion of national happiness, the increase of industry, sobriety and useful knowledge, and may perpetuate to us the blessings of equal liberty. We pray for their excellencies, the Governors of our States, for the members of the Legislature, for all judges, magistrates and other officers who are appointed to guard our political welfare, that they may be enabled, by Thy powerful protection, to discharge the duties of their respective stations with honesty and ability.

We recommend likewise to Thy unbounded mercy, all our brethren and fellow citizens through the United States, that they may be blessed in the knowledge and sanctified in the observance of Thy most holy law, that they may be preserved in union, and in the peace which the world cannot give, and after enjoying the blessings of this life, be admitted to those which are eternal.

Finally we pray Thee, O Lord of mercy, to remember the souls of Thy servants departed who are gone before us with the sign of faith and repose in the sleep of peace: the souls of our parents, relatives, and friends; of those, who, when living, were students of this College, and particularly such as are lately deceased; of all benefactors who, by their donations or legacies to this College, witnessed their claim to our grateful and charitable remembrance. To these, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light, and everlasting peace, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Amen.

*From the College Manual of Prayers, 1959*

### **A Brief History of St. John's**

- 1774 Rock Creek Mission is established by its first resident pastor, Fr. John Carroll, S.J., on the estate of his mother, Eleanor Darnell Carroll. The first church, now called St. John's Chapel, was a modest frame building with whitewashed siding. It had a tiny choir balcony, a special pew just outside the sanctuary for the Carroll family, and a section set aside for slaves from the nearby plantation.
- 1786 Fr. John Carroll, having been appointed "Superior of the Mission of the thirteen United States of North America" two years previously, left Rock Creek (the area now known as Forest Glen) and took up residence in Baltimore. After that, the litany of his success is part of national history: founder of Georgetown University, first bishop in the U.S., first Archbishop of Baltimore, and more. Jesuit missionaries attended the faithful of the Rock Creek area, until St. John's parish became a mission of the newly formed St. Mary's parish in Rockville in 1813.
- 1850 A second church is built after the original chapel fell to pieces. Nothing remains of the second church, but at this time the building officially became St. John's Church.
- 1889 Fr. Charles Rosensteel becomes pastor at St. Mary's with oversight of the St. John's mission. He soon realized that a larger church was needed at St. John's. But because of all the graves so close to the Chapel, he decided to build a new church on another corner of the property. In 1893 construction of the stone church (the third church at St. John's) began and was dedicated in 1894. This is the stone building you see today, now called "Historic St. John's." It is also called Our Lady Queen of Poland and St. Maximilian by the Polish community who use it. Fr. Rosensteel was appointed resident pastor at St. John's in 1898, a position he held for many years. His dream was to build a school and he began to save money for the project. By the time he died he had accumulated \$44,585.58 for the school.
- 1936 Fr. Joseph Kennedy becomes the third pastor of St. John the Evangelist. He restored what is now the Historic church and rectory. He also bought the property on Georgia Avenue and began building the school, which opened in 1950 with the Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters to run it.
- 1956 A replica of the Carroll Chapel is built and dedicated.
- 1962 The new and modern St. John the Evangelist church located at 10103 Georgia Avenue is dedicated.