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## Chancellor's Update

# Benedict XVI Renews America

“From the dawn of the Republic, America's quest for freedom has been guided by the conviction that the principles governing political and social life are intimately linked to a moral order based on the dominion of God the Creator. The framers of this nation's founding documents drew upon this conviction when they proclaimed the self-evident truth that all men are created equal and endowed with inalienable rights grounded in the laws of nature and of nature's God.” (Pope's speech - South Lawn 4/16/08)

With the first breath of this new Republic, our Founding Fathers proclaimed to the world an imperishable self-evident Truth that all men are “created” NOT as a matter of **Faith** but as a matter of **FACT**. How are they created - “**EQUAL**.” “They are endowed with certain inalienable rights that among these are Life, Liberty and (it doesn't say happiness but) the pursuit of Happiness.” If you look up the word, *pursuit*, in any sizeable dictionary it means with the **HOPE** of over-taking. They did not guarantee happiness but only the pursuit of happiness. These self-evident Truths were not original with our Founding Fathers, but were the political thought and theory of St. Thomas Aquinas of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and of the great Jesuits of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, in particular those of Cardinal St. Robert Bellarmine, SJ. A short comparison from the Declaration of Independence and the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Robert Bellarmine will show us that Jefferson and Madison had knowledge of these writings. Lord Acton, writing in his “History of Freedom” (p. 82), remarks, “The greater part of the political ideas of Milton, Locke, and Rousseau, may be found in the ponderous Latin of Jesuits.”

### Equality of man

Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights."

Bellarmino: "All men are equal, not in wisdom or grace, but in the essence and nature of mankind" ("De Laicis," c.7) "There is no reason why among equals one should rule rather than another" (ibid.). "Let rulers remember that they preside over men who are of the same nature as they themselves." ("De Officiis Princ."c.22). "Political right is immediately from God and necessarily inherent in the nature of man" ("De Laicis," c. 6, note 1).

St. Thomas: "Nature made all men equal in liberty, though not in their natural perfections" (II Sent., d. xlv, q. 1, a. 3. ad 1).

### The function of government

Declaration of Independence: "To secure these rights governments are instituted among men."

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Bellarmino: "It is impossible for men to live together without someone to care for the common good. Men must be governed by someone lest they be willing to perish" ("De Laicis," c. 6).

St. Thomas: "To ordain anything for the common good belongs either to the whole people, or to someone who is the vice-regent of the whole people" (Summa, la IIae, q. 90, a. 3).

### **The source of power**

Declaration of Independence: "Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Bellarmino: "It depends upon the consent of the multitude to constitute over itself a king, consul, or other magistrate. This power is, indeed, from God, but vested in a particular ruler by the counsel and election of men" ("De Laicis, c. 6, notes 4 and 5). "The people themselves immediately and directly hold the political power" ("De Clericis," c. 7).

St. Thomas: "Therefore the making of a law belongs either to the whole people or to a public personage who has care of the whole people" (Summa, la IIae, q. 90, a. 3). "The ruler has power and eminence from the subjects, and, in the event of his despising them, he sometimes loses both his power and position" ("De Erudit. Princ." Bk.I, c.6).

### **The right to change the government**

Declaration of Independence: "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government...Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient reasons."

Bellarmino: "For legitimate reasons the people can change the government to an aristocracy or a democracy or vice versa" ("De Laicis," c. 6). "The people never transfers its powers to a king so completely but that it reserves to itself the right of receiving back this power" ("Recognitio de Laicis," c. 6).

St. Thomas: "If any society of people have a right of choosing a king, then the king so established can be deposed by them without injustice, or his power can be curbed, when by tyranny he abuses his regal power" ("De Rege et Regno," Bk. I, c.6). The foregoing information and for other comparisons of paragraphs and sentences are contained in the writings of Rev. John C. Rager, "Catholic Sources and the Declaration of Independence." *The Catholic Mind* XXVIII, no 13 (July 8, 1930).

**We thank President George W. Bush for inviting and receiving His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI on the South Lawn of the White House and Pope Benedict for reminding the American people of their honorable and grandiose position in the history of nations. We also say with the Pope:**  
**GOD BLESS AMERICA.**

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