



CATHOLIC TEXTBOOK PROJECT

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PHOTOS / INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE

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CATHOLIC TEXTBOOK PROJECT ANNOUNCES HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS AND PRIZES

Catholic Textbook Project, the premiere publisher of history and social studies textbooks for Catholic schools, today announced the Catholic students and schools winners of the non-profit publishing company's first-ever history essay contest.

In Catholic Textbook Project's 2015 History Essay Contest, students were challenged to choose a Catholic historical character and describe how he or she influenced the times in which he or she lived. The contest ran April-May and was open to students in Catholic schools—parochial, private or homeschooled, grades 5-8. Nearly 2,000 entries were submitted and prizes were awarded to both student and school winners.

“We received an overwhelming response to this history essay contest; far more than we expected,” says Glen Mueller, chairman of Catholic Textbook Project. “It was wonderful to see, especially since many of the submissions were of such exceptional quality that our judges did not find it an easy task to pick the best essays.”

Contest organizer Katherine Zehnder noted: “Students, teachers and schools should all be commended on the broad range of entries, the quality of writing, and the insight into how faith burned in the hearts of so many men in women of history, to the point that it compelled them to act heroically in the face of poverty, ridicule and persecution. From Vince Lombardi to Saint Paul, we enjoyed the vast presentation of noble souls whose Catholic faith determined their actions. Thank you to all participants!”

Winners are as follows:

- **Grade 7/8 Catholic School Division: Kendal Rowan, of Saint Augustine School, New Orleans, LA**
Kendal wrote on St. Katherine Drexel who used the entirety of her vast inheritance to found schools and universities for Native and African Americans across the United States, most of which still operate today.
- **Grade 5/6 Catholic School Division: Thomas Lyon, of St. John Vianney Parish School, Janesville WI**
Thomas wrote on Frédéric Ozanam who, upon being attacked for his Faith by his college professors, began to understand that he had to really live the beatitudes. He founded the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which now is the largest helper of the poor in the world, serving more than 14,000,000 people annually in more than 140 countries.
- **Grade 7/8 Catholic Homeschool Division: Delaney McCartney, of Gilbert, AZ**
Delaney wrote about Queen Isabel of Spain, who was not only a strong and wise ruler of Spain, but also changed history by helping Christopher Columbus pursue his dream of exploration.
- **Grade 5/6 Catholic Homeschool Division: Zoe Wenzholz, of Green Bay, WI**
Zoe wrote about St. Isaac Jogues, who through his courage and great love for the Indians, planted the seeds of faith in North America.

The award prizes are as follows: Catholic student winners Kendal, Thomas, Delaney and Zoe will each receive \$100. The Catholic schools at which Kendal and Thomas attend—St. Augustine Catholic school in New Orleans, and St. John Vianney Catholic school in Janesville, WI, will each receive a \$400 gift certificate for the purchase of Catholic Textbook Project textbooks. The families of Catholic homeschool student winners Delaney and Zoe will each receive their choice of a Catholic Textbook Project textbook.

In addition, the judges chose **Honorable Mentions** in the Catholic School Divisions as follows:

- **Honorable Mentions: Grade 7/8 Catholic School Division:**
 - **Sam Van Straten, from Notre Dame Regional School, WI**
Sam wrote on Louis Pasteur, whose faith drove him to want to uplift the dignity of man through unprecedented scientific discoveries, including the process of pasteurization, vaccines and disinfectant protocols, all of which have saved millions of lives.
 - **Gabriella Iacano, from St. Teresa Regional School, Runnemede, NJ**
Gabriella wrote on Mother Teresa, a great soul who poured her life out to love and help the poorest of the poor and who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and its reward of one million dollars, all of which she gave to the poor.
- **Honorable Mentions: Grade 5/6 Catholic School Division:**

- **Isaiah Thompson, from St. John Fisher School, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA**
Isaiah wrote on St. Peter Claver, a Spaniard who learned of the Jesuits while studying in college and realized he must serve God until death like a slave. He did so, spending the remainder of his life as an apostle of faith to the slaves in Cartagena, feeding and ministering to them as the ships rolled into port, baptizing over 300,000 of them, and showing the joy of God's promise of eternal life in his unwavering love.
- **Anna Schmidt from Regina Academy at St. John the Baptist, Ottsville, PA**
Anna also wrote on St. Katherine Drexel. Her essay illustrated Katherine's being asked by Pope Leo XIII to found an order of Sisters, how she spent more than \$20,000,000 of her own money to found more than 50 missions, and how she spent her 96 years in service to others.

“The enthusiastic response of teachers and students to our first-ever history essay contest is especially rewarding because it echoes our mission and our growth,” adds Mr. Mueller.

Catholic Textbook Project’s History/Social Studies textbook series for grade range 5-12 has become an increasingly popular choice by school principals and educators nationwide. The series is now used in Catholic schools in more than 50 dioceses. According to Michael Van Hecke, a seasoned headmaster and founder of the publishing company, rigorous historical accuracy, a superior writing style that engages student interest, and inclusion of significant Catholic historical contributions are key reasons given for the publisher’s accelerated growth.

The Catholic Textbook Project textbooks currently publish a five-volume series includes *From Sea to Shining Sea: The Story of America*, *All Ye Lands: World Cultures and Geography*, *Light to the Nations I: The History of Christian Civilization*, *Light to the Nations II: The Making of the Modern World*, and *Lands of Hope and Promise: A History of North America*. Highly praised teacher manuals and student workbooks are available for each of the elementary and middle-school volume. Development of four additional volumes, suitable for grades 1-4, is set to begin as soon as funding is complete.

To learn about the history textbooks and the publisher’s new, limited-time payment options, go to the “Contact Us” page of the website (www.CatholicTextbookProject.com) or call 1.888.610.3354.

About Catholic Textbook Project. Founded by a headmaster who was unable to find good history/social studies textbooks for his students, and unable to convince existing Catholic publishers to produce such textbooks, Michael Van Hecke, M.Ed., culled a select group of scholars, professors, educators, editors and book designers and launched Catholic Textbook Project (a 501c3 nonprofit). These history/social studies textbooks are the first to be published for Catholic schools in more than 50 years. For more information or to explore the textbooks, go to <http://www.CatholicTextbookProject.com>.