

# Catholic Saints Among Those to be Honored in Garden of American Heroes Announced by Trump

Among those who will be memorialized in the National Garden of American Heroes include St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American saint; St. Katharine Drexel, the first born-U.S. citizen to be canonized; St. John Neumann; and St. Junipero Serra, the first saint canonized on U.S. soil.

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Donald J. Trump President of the United States speaks to a large crowd at "An Address to Young America" an event hosted by Students for Trump and Turning Point Action. (photo: Nuno21 / Shutterstock)

WASHINGTON — The National Garden of American Heroes will include statues of many notable Catholic figures, including five saints and numerous people who are on the path to sainthood.

President Donald Trump announced in [an executive order Jan. 18](#) that a garden will be built to “reflect the awesome splendor of our country’s timeless exceptionalism,” and to serve as a response to the spate of vandalism on statues during the summer of 2020.

“On (the National Garden’s) grounds, the devastation and discord of this moment will be overcome with abiding love of country and lasting patriotism,” said Trump. “America is responding to the tragic toppling of monuments to our founding generation and the giants of our past by commencing a new national project for their restoration, veneration, and celebration.”

The executive order included a list of names who will be featured in the park; Trump referred to these figures as people who embody “the American spirit of daring and defiance, excellence and adventure, courage and confidence, loyalty and love.”

“Astounding the world by the sheer power of their example, each one of them has contributed indispensably to America’s noble history, the best chapters of which are still to come,” said Trump.

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Ven. Fulton Sheen and Ven. Augustus Tolton, one of the first black priests in the United States, as well as Servant of God Dorothy Day, will be honored.

Jesuit Archbishop John Carroll, the first Catholic archbishop in the United States, will also be included, as will March for Life founder Nellie Gray, poet and activist Fr. Thomas Merton, and Fr. John P. Washington, a US Army chaplain who died helping save soldiers on the sinking Dorchester during World War II.

The first Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, is one of the 17 presidents who will be featured in the National Garden. Other Catholic political figures who will be honored include Charles Carroll, the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence; William F. Buckley; 20th century playwright and Congresswoman Clare Boothe Luce; and Antonin Scalia.

Catholic athletes who will be enshrined in the garden include Kobe Bryant, Roberto Clemente, Vince Lombardi, Babe Ruth, and Jim Thorpe.

Not everyone on the list was a U.S. citizen, or even lived in what is now the United States. Christopher Columbus, statues of whom were frequently targeted over the summer of 2020, is set to be honored in the National Garden of American heroes.

"The National Garden will feature a roll call of heroes who deserve honor, recognition, and lasting tribute because of the battles they won, the ideas they championed, the diseases they cured, the lives they saved, the heights they achieved, and the hope they passed down to all of us — that united as one American people trusting in God, there is no challenge that cannot be overcome and no dream that is beyond our reach," said Trump in the executive order.