



Written by [Dennis Behreandt](#) on December 5, 2023

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History: The Anchor of Civilization

Some who think of such things will say that they feel the weight of history, and they deplore it. This view makes the very legacy of the ages of civilization nothing but mere oppression of the present, and perhaps a danger to the future. You may have guessed that those who hold this view are largely of our modern “liberal” class who point accusingly to the past from the velvet cushions of their gilded lives and cry injustice. For these — the haughty, self-centered, pampered, and tamed of the elitist class — history is to be overcome at first and then erased at last as a necessary step in the construction of a future Marxist paradise.

Contrary to this unpleasant and despicable viewpoint, the reality of history is that it is much more like gravity, anchoring our perceptions to the unshifting ground of truth while holding together the planetary systems of our families, the galaxies of our culture, and the universe of our civilization. For the Marxists, this — the ultimate power of history — must be obfuscated at the least, or overturned entirely within the minds of men, so that the blasphemous utopia of their dreams might be built of the cold iron and steel of the now.

Ironically, if our present Marxist “liberal” intelligentsia has its way, what they will deliver to the world is not the new earthly paradise that figures both in their yearning propaganda and in their fever dreams, but a new dark age of despair and destruction. The curtain was pulled aside on this in the wake of the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, when the demonic rage of the Marxist barbarian mindset was loosed in a torrent of terror, fire, and destruction on the innocent cities of the Republic.

Rather than being a weight to be cast off, then buried and forgotten, history is our inspiring memory of the blood, sweat, toil, and tears of our past generations, expended to the last in the building of our families, cities, culture, and civilization. It is the record of achievement that should inspire us today.

Perhaps beyond any other holiday, Christmas is the time when reflection on the achievements of the past is most salutary. In this issue of *The New American*, we engage in just this sort of reflection, first with our cover story by executive senior editor Steve Bonta, who takes you back in time to the Carolingian Renaissance and the stunning Christmas coronation of Charlemagne. The key importance of this story, though, is not necessarily the coronation itself, but the recognition of the civilizational impact of that event via its symbolic representation of the importance of the Carolingian achievement both in advancing European civilization in its cultural and political spheres, and in furthering the cause of Christendom writ large.

Also in this issue, Father James Thornton — a priest in the Orthodox tradition — takes a look at the life and work of none other than the great Saint Nicholas. As you will read from Fr. Thornton, during his life Nicholas was renowned for his Christian generosity, and that reputation comes down to us even in the present day as we commemorate him as Santa Claus — derived from the Dutch *Sinterklaas*. For those who erroneously and occasionally maliciously state that “there is no Santa Claus,” Fr. Thornton’s reflections on the beloved fourth-century Bishop of Myra are a potent and inspiring corrective.

From *The New American*, I wish you all a happy, merry, and joyful Christmas.



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