

# The Controversial Life of the First Catholic Priest Elected to Congress



## Bob Drinan: The Controversial Life of the First Catholic Priest Elected to Congress by Raymond A. Schroth

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English  
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Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 428 pages



Robert F. Drinan, a Jesuit priest, became the first Catholic priest elected to the U.S. Congress in 1970. His life and career were marked by controversy, as he challenged traditional Catholic teachings on issues such as abortion and the Vietnam War.

### Early Life and Education

Robert Frederick Drinan was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on November 15, 1920. He attended Boston College High School and then Boston College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1942. After graduating from college, Drinan entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and was ordained a priest in 1951.

Drinan continued his education at Georgetown University Law Center, where he earned a law degree in 1955. After graduating from law school,

Drinan taught law at Boston College Law School for several years.

## **Political Career**

In 1970, Drinan was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Democrat from Massachusetts' 4th congressional district. He served in the House for 10 terms, until his retirement in 1980.

During his time in Congress, Drinan was a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War and a strong advocate for civil rights and social justice. He also challenged traditional Catholic teachings on issues such as abortion and contraception.

Drinan's outspoken views on controversial issues often put him at odds with the Catholic Church hierarchy. In 1973, he was censured by the Vatican for his support of abortion rights. However, Drinan refused to retract his views, and he continued to speak out against the Church's teachings on this issue.

## **Later Life and Legacy**

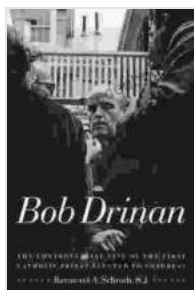
After retiring from Congress, Drinan continued to be active in public life. He taught law at Georgetown University and American University, and he served on the board of directors of several organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Abortion Rights Action League.

Drinan died in Washington, D.C., on January 28, 2007. He was 86 years old.

Drinan was a controversial figure during his lifetime, but he was also a respected and influential voice for social justice. He was a pioneer for Catholic priests in politics, and he helped to change the way that the Catholic Church viewed issues such as abortion and the Vietnam War.

## Additional Resources

- Washington Post obituary
- New York Times obituary
- America magazine article



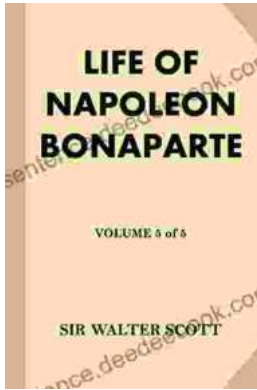
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