

FR. ANDREW GREELEY

The Church

This is what has happened

in the American Church. A large proportion of the clergy

and the well educated laity

have lost confidence in the pol-

ities by which bishops are se-

lected. More than seven out of

ten priests in the country want

Eventually the pressures for

such a change will be irresist-

ible; the real question is how

much conflict the Church will

have to experience before it

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a change.

does come.

must say that I am surprised at one very frequent reaction to my suggestion that the only way out of the present structural crisis in the Church is the nomination of bishops by the priests and eventually the people of the diocese for which they are to be the witnesses to the rest of the

I am told that such a return to ancient practices would introduce "politics" into the Church and corrupt the selection of bishops.

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First of all, I don't happen to think politics is corrupt behavior. It is the ancient and honorable art of human government. Furthermore our separated brothers manage to select their leadership without any more controversy or "polariza-tion" than that which presently affects us and probably a good deal less.

As one Anglican priest remarked to me — not without appreciation of the irony of dramatic historical change implicit in his statement-"when our two communions are united again I think we may be able to teach some respect for the necessity of Church structure."

However, I wonder how my critics think bishops are currently selected if it is not by a political process? Do they think the Holy Spirit writes the name of the next bishop of Cahokia on a parchment paper with gold ink in a sealed room in the Vatican? The competition for dioceses is just as intense, the campaigns just as well thought out, the party lines just as clearly drawn as in any political process. The difference behind popular nomination and the present process is merely that in the former more people would be involved and the issue would be worked out in the light of day rather than in secrecy.

The second difference is extremely important. Secret politics is utterly demoralizing to those who are the victims of it — as the recent events in the American Republic have shown. Clergy and well informed laity have a vast folklore which in many cases is shockingly scandalous. I will not repeat any of these stories, not for fear of weakening anyone's faith, but because I have no way of knowing whether they are true — though like most of my colleagues I incline to believe the worst.

The point is that when a political process goes on in secret everyone is inclined to believe the worst — even if it turns out not to be true.

But surely no one thinks that it is an accident that so many American bishops in the last quarter century happened to be from Cleveland or New York. This is not to criticize the men who have come from either of these cities — and they in-clude in their number some of the best bishops in the country — but to suggest that a process might have been at work not unlike that which we in Chicago call "slate making," a process in which one man has an extraordinary amount of influence.

I am not against slate making — at least not in principle. But slate making, either civil or ecclesiastical, is a political mechanism and politics is likely to be both more effective and less corrupt when it goes on in public and not in private. The danger of secret politics is not so much that they are al-WAYS corrupt or even that they are more easily corruptible; it is that everyone suspects that they are corrupt and loses confidence in the political process.

St. Lawrence To Hold Auction

St. Lawrence Church will hold its second annual auction on Sept. 11, at 11 a.m., at 1000 North Greece Rd. Melvin Martin will be the auctioneer.

Items wanted are: books, toys, clothing, tools, furniture, dishes, lamps, or anything sale-

All donations are tax deductible. For pickup call Mrs. James Curtis at (716) 225-0290 or Mrs. Peter Grant at (716) 225-3987.

Donations may be delivered to 106 Mason Ave.

PENTECOSTALS MEET

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