

The Presidents and Religion

By Religious News Service

The religious affiliation and views of any president in office are of public interest.

But what about presidents of the past?

Worship practices, theological opinions and church ties, or lack of them, among the succession of White House residents are often lost in history's footnotes.

Virtually everyone knows that John Kennedy is, to date, the only Roman Catholic to live at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. No Jew or Eastern Orthodox has been elected to the nation's highest office.

It is, therefore, safe to conclude that all but one president fall within the Protestant category, yet on the question of church membership nothing so simple as counting up denominations is possible. Episcopal and Presbyterian affiliations have been most frequent.

Contrary to some impressions, not all presidents have held formal membership in Churches; some who were members did not attend religious services regularly. The lives of most indicate religious faith, although the style of that faith shows many variations. Woodrow Wilson was close to being a theologian in a formal sense. His father was a Presbyterian minister and the President discussed religion frequently.

James Madison on the other hand was reluctant to discuss his beliefs publicly, although along with Thomas Jefferson he was a foremost champion of religious liberty.

Less seems to be known of the religion of James Monroe and Warren G. Harding than any other presidents. Monroe had Episcopal ties; what he thought about spiritual matters remains a mystery.

"Little or nothing of the inner commitments" of Harding is on record, according to a recent study of presidential religion.

Dr. John Sutherland Bonnell, author of the study published as Presidential Profiles (West-

minister Press, says Harding "did not join any church until after he had become an influential citizen of Marion (Ohio). Then he became a member and later a trustee of the Baptist Church. This relationship would become of increasing importance to him as he advanced in political life. After his election a friend wished him Godspeed. He replied: 'Yes, God help me, for I shall need it.'"

Dr. Bonnell added that Harding's "scandal-ridden term of office made his words prophetic."

According to data compiled by Dr. Bonnell, all chief executives since Chester A. Arthur have been church members.

Dwight Eisenhower grew up in a family belonging to the River Brethren, a part of the Mennonite tradition. He joined the United Presbyterian Church on the day of his inauguration in 1953. Some say he chose that denomination because Abraham Lincoln, the founder of the Republican party, attended Presbyterian services.

Andrew Jackson went to church with his wife Rachel throughout their married life. He even built a Presbyterian church for her near their estate in Tennessee. It was not until after his wife's death, following his election in 1828, that he fulfilled a promise to her by being baptized and making a "profession of faith."

Polk is possibly the only president who literally became a church member on his death bed. He and his wife were faithful worshippers at First Presbyterian church in Washington during his term and Polk had a Presbyterian heritage.

But he confided in his diary in 1845 that his religious inclinations favored the Methodist Church. A few days before he died in 1849, he was baptized by a Methodist clergyman.

William McKinley was a zealous Methodist. While the White House worship services of President Nixon, who has a Quaker background, are believed to be unprecedented, McKinley invited his friends to sing hymns

at the executive mansion on Sunday evenings, as did Rutherford B. Hayes.

Hayes, Andrew Johnson and Ulysses Grant attended Methodist churches without joining. Many historians discount reports that Grant made a late-life decision to join. Hayes summed up his religious sentiments this way: "I am not a subscriber to any creed. I belong to no church. But in a sense satisfactory to myself and believed by me to be important, I try to be a Christian."

The nature and style of George Washington's church relation and religious persuasions are matters of debate. His attendance at worship was probably spotty; he kissed the Bible at his first inauguration and he spoke often of divine Providence.

Just how personal he considered Providence is open to question. Like many of the founding fathers, and especially Jefferson, Washington had deist (universalist) tendencies in theology.

Two presidents, Millard Fillmore and William Howard Taft, were Unitarian members. Fillmore was rebuffed by his denomination on the slavery issue after he left the White House, and he drifted away from the Church of his youth.

James Madison made the most forceful strides for religious liberty of an early president. Not so well remembered but quite significant in the 19th Century was Andrew Johnson's forceful opposition to the anti-Catholic Know-Nothing Party.

James Garfield was a lay preacher of the Disciples of Christ before turning to politics.

The practice of Lyndon Johnson, the other Disciples president, of attending many churches is not atypical of chief executives across the years. Johnson went often during White House years to Episcopal churches —

his wife is Episcopalian — and to Mass frequently with his daughter, Luci, a Catholic.

Few Presidents have had academic training in theology; all have said they wanted to avoid religious partisanship. Some slips have occurred. For example, Thomas Jefferson, author of the Bill of Rights, was troubled by Calvinistic doctrine, as he understood it, and did not hes-

itate on occasion to register grievances against Presbyterians.

William Howard Taft, the Unitarian, told a rally in 1910 that Protestants, Catholics and Jews agreed that the Sunday School was "absolutely necessary." That could hardly have pleased Catholics and Jews since the Sunday school was then a Protestant institution.

After treatment is well advanced, girls are allowed out on dates, but only after the boy and his family have been interviewed.

"Our program is unique," she explained. "We permit mothers to keep their babies with them. We have a nursery and nursemaid, and now take care of six babies with two more expected."

"Half our girls are outside, either studying or working. Now we have four in college, three studying psychology and one studying to be a teacher. We have three at commercial schools. Another is working in an office and the rest are in the house."



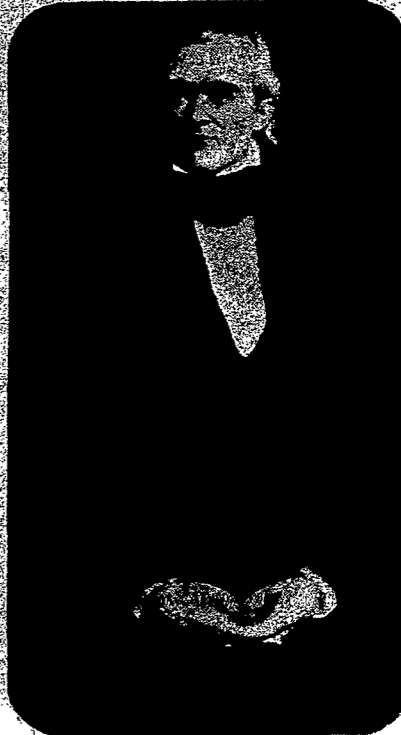
GARFIELD



LINCOLN



KENNEDY



POLK

'Man of the Year' is a Nun

San Juan, P.R. — (RNS) — Sister Maureen Wainman, OP, founder of the first drug-free clinic for female drug addicts in Puerto Rico, was named — believe it or not — to receive the San Juan Star's "Man of the Year" award.

Editor Andrew Viglucci said the selection was based on the Catholic nun's "years-long record of unselfish service to the less fortunate members of the

Puerto Rican society, particularly in Old San Juan" where her rehabilitation center is situated.

(Viglucci is the brother of Carmen J. Viglucci, editor of the Courier-Journal.)

Sister Maureen, 48, has been a member of the Dominican Sisters of Amityville, N.Y., for 30 years, and for 12 of those years operated a clinic for the needy in Old San Juan where she was a

Polish Cardinal Invited to U.S.

Warsaw (RNS) — Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, the first American Catholic prelate to visit inside the Soviet bloc, has invited Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski, primate of Poland, to visit the United States.

Cardinal Krol publicly issued his invitation at a Mass in St. John's Cathedral here, Oct. 12, which drew a capacity attendance of about 3,000 worshippers.

Speaking directly to Cardinal Wyszynski, Cardinal Krol said:

"I extend my hand to you and ask that you accept, not only my personal invitation, but the invitation of the people of God of America and the Church in the United States, to pay us a visit. We will receive you with a warm heart, just as you have received us."

Earlier, at a news conference in the anteroom of the primate's palace in Warsaw's rebuilt Old Town, Cardinal Krol said his Polish host had been invited

to the U.S. several times, most recently in 1966 during the 1,000th anniversary of the Polish Catholic Church. He, however, was not allowed to go to the U.S. while Wladyslaw Gomulka was head of Poland's Communist party.

Church-state relations began to improve noticeably after December 1970, when Edward Gierk replaced Gomulka as Communist party chief and launched a program aimed at "normalization" of government ties with the Catholic Church in Poland and with the Vatican.

The very fact that the American was given a Polish government visa this time is indication of the "improved atmosphere."

In 1966, his planned trip to Poland, and that of other U.S. bishops, was canceled by Polish government authorities only two weeks after he had been told that a visa would be issued to him.

Courier-Journal

Wednesday, November 1, 1972

BUYERS GUIDE

"Quality Shopping With Confidence"

Visit our show rooms—Select a real Bargain—Complete line Rugs, Furniture, Appliances, etc.

Charlotte Appliance
TONY AGOSTINELLI
Lake Theatre—3200 Lake Ave.
663-5050

WARNER'S LIQUOR STORE
HINCHEY ROAD
AT CHILI AVE.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES
CHILSON PHARMACY
1704 Monroe Ave.
473-6402
Prescription DELIVERY SERVICE

ST. ANDREW'S PARISH
PRESCRIPTIONS
Carefully Compounded
MANDELL'S PHARMACY
Hy Mandell
467-0879 266-9554
DRUGS-COSMETICS-SUNDRIES
Portland Ave. at Norton

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO
DEWEY AVE. PHARMACY
Prescription Specialists
COSMETICS—TOILETRIES
PHOTO FINISHING
2910 Dewey Avenue 865-2210

SPECIAL LOW ADVERTISING RATE OF \$4.76 PER INCH ON 13-WEEK BASIS

Small Reps 39.2
Large Reps 194.0