

**Church  
And Politics**



**Sister Frances**

For many of us the very title of this column presents an immediate problem. "What," you ask, "do the Church and politics have in common?" "What about the separation of Church and State?" Well, for starters, they are both concerned about man and his world. If by religion you mean worship and worship alone, then there is no intersection. For the Christian, however, religion means a way of life, a day-to-day commitment to the person of Jesus. It means that "every social group must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire human family," (from Vatican II). Jesus came and spoke to man in his world; the Church today must do the same.

If we see politics then as the way men govern their lives together (protect themselves, settle disputes, etc.) then we can easily see that the Church and

political concerns have much in common. This does not alleviate all the problems, though. The lessons of the past — especially those of the Middle Ages, when at times the Church and State seemed almost as one — make us move forward with caution and a certain amount of hesitation. We don't want to fall into the mistakes of the past but do want to begin to influence and help shape political decisions.

The ongoing debate about the elderly is a good example of an important political concern. Our culture is youth-orientated and, in many ways, makes the elderly second class citizens. Our faith tells us that the dignity of each person is important regardless of age. These different opinions are oftentimes transformed into political questions — eg, should the Social Security pension for the elderly be given a raise? The more question here is whether the elderly are entitled to the same material comforts that are enjoyed by the general population or whether they should be second class citizens.

Some political issues might not be so clear cut but we must begin to look at the whole question of politics and the Church for it grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to bettering the conditions for human life." — **Church in the Modern World**

**Bishops Urge Fast**

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declared: "The U.S. Catholic Conference goes on record in opposition to capital punishment." There was no elaboration on the statement. Bishop John May of Birmingham, Ala., who proposed it, said it was simply a policy statement that addresses itself to the times.

The NCCB also heard a committee report, which gave cautious approval of the charismatic movement within the Church, urging bishops and priests to make sympathetic and personal contact with leaders of the movement.

"We encourage those who already belong and we support the positive and desirable directions of the Charismatic Renewal," the Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices stated.

Archbishop John R. Quinn of Oklahoma City, committee chairman, stressed that the statement was the report of the committee and not of the entire conference.

He noted that the statement also pointed out "certain dangers and difficulties" in the renewal.

The statement was challenged from the floor by several bishops, some of whom said the conference should wait longer before giving any indication of approval to the movement. Others, while citing "some dangers" that could exist in the movement, said a definite statement on the renewal at this time was imperative.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen, retired bishop of Rochester, N.Y., warned of an overemphasis by some Catholics on the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the neglect of authority in the Church.

Bishop Floyd Begin of Oakland, Calif., noting that not enough is known about the nature of the movement, said the bishops should "take a firm hand" in relating to the control of the movement.

Archbishop Robert Sanchez of Santa Fe, N.M., cited the need for "mature leadership" by both priests and laity in the movement but added that if the bishops do not address themselves to the movement and do not take an interest in it, "then there will be no grounds to complain."

The document itself quoted at length from Vatican II on the Holy Spirit and the spiritual charisms evident in the Church. It stated that the "greatest authenticating sign of the Spirit is love" and that "love always bears witness to Jesus" through the Spirit.

It noted that the charismatic movement is making "solid progress" in some areas and that its reverential spirit merits encouragement.

Warning of two problem areas — elitism and biblical fundamentalism — which offend the teachings of the Church, the statement said there is also the danger that some of those involved in the movement might "ignore the intellectual and doctrinal faith and reduce it to a felt religious experience."

It called for careful scrutiny of such things as healing, prophecy, and praying in tongues, while observing that "such phenomena could be genuine manifestations of the Spirit."

**Archbishop Bernardin Elected President**

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati, 46, former general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC), has been elected to a three-year term as president of both bodies. Cardinal John J. Carberry of St. Louis was elected vice president.

Archbishop Bernardin, who succeeds Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, was elected in October the first Catholic prelate to the current permanent secretariat to the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

The archbishop, the first non-cardinal and youngest prelate to head the NCCB-USCC, received 143 votes of 248 cast on the second ballot.

Cardinal Carberry won the vice presidency in a third ballot runoff with Archbishop William Borders of Baltimore, 133 to 107.

Archbishop Bernardin, in addressing the hierarchy, said he was "personally honored" by the trust placed upon him by his fellow bishops, citing the "enormity and complexity" of the challenge.

**School Closing Can't Faze This 'Drug Store Santa'**

By MOLLY JUDGE

The closing of St. Bridget's elementary school last May because of inadequate funding is no obstacle for Neal Trama and his traditional Christmas party for St. Bridget's students.

"You wouldn't believe the poorness of the neighborhood these children come from. A lot of these kids come from broken homes and are underprivileged. It doesn't matter if the school's closed. The kids are still there and

**Unit Questions Nomination Of Rockefeller**

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — A U.S. Roman Catholic bishops' committee urged Congressional committees considering the nomination of Nelson Rockefeller to "question the nomination" because of the vice president designate's "present position on providing legal protection for unborn human life."

In a letter to the chairman of both the Senate Rules and Administration Committee and the House Judiciary Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee for Population and Pro-Life Activities of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) urged that the committees "ascertain that he (Mr. Rockefeller) will not use the office of vice president to promote a personal viewpoint on permissive abortion."

The letters were addressed to Sen. Howard Cannon (D-Nev.), chairman of the Senate Committee, and to Rep. Rodino (D-N.J.), chairman of the House committee.

(It was reported shortly after the letters were delivered that the Senate committee had approved the Rockefeller nomination, 9-0.)

The announcement was made by Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, outgoing president of the NCCB and the U.S. Catholic Conference at a press briefing winding up the NCCB-USCC annual general meeting here (Nov. 22).

Cardinal Krol told newsmen that the letters were not "official" statements of the entire bishops' conference, but he indicated that they were endorsed by the top leadership of the conference.

"I want to do something to help them," said Trama who runs his Christmas campaign at the Heath Drug Store at 121 East Ave., where he works.

Trama began the campaign 12 years ago by asking his regular customers and friends to donate a dollar toward the party. "I graduated from St. Bridget's in 1942 so the idea of doing a little something for the kids always interested me. All these dollars mount up. So, in the end, we have enough money to give the kids a party they won't forget," he said.

Last year \$1,000 was collected for the party. The money bought toys, candy, fruit, gifts like mittens and hats, cake and ice cream. There was even enough to hire a Santa Claus for the school children. If the child's family was extremely deprived, a food basket was sent to the student's home.

The remaining funds were given to Father Francis H. Vogt, pastor of St. Bridget's, to conduct outings, picnics and day camps

throughout the year for the children.

This year, Trama is planning on doing the same thing. The only difference will be that the school is no longer in operation.

According to Father Vogt, most of the children who attended the school were neighborhood kids. "They're still around in spite of the fact that they now attend Mt. Carmel or St. Michael's Schools. We also have a large ecumenical Sunday school with around 75 to 100 students attending. They will be invited too," he said.

Since St. Bridget's is housing a nursery school and a Head Start program, Trama mentioned that he may hold two parties for both groups of children.

"Even the gift of one dollar makes many people wake up Christmas morning with a good feeling inside. They have made a child happy not only on Christmas but throughout the whole year," he said.

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