

# Forum

## Politics Affects Everyone

By Lucien Morin  
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Having been involved in politics almost my whole life, I find it amusing to hear someone say he/she isn't interested in the political system. Whether we like it or not, we are in politics from the time we are born until after we pass on.

Lest we forget, politics is government, or government is the end result of the political process and it becomes very difficult to think of anything not affected by government, whether it is the water we drink, the food we eat, the air we breathe, or the car we drive. All are affected by government and politics.

Knowing this we still hear people say they are not in the least bit interested in politics. But is this true, or is it because they are confused and do not understand the way politics operates?

We often hear people condemn politics and politicians. Many times this condemnation stems from a lack of knowledge, but most of the time it comes from a dissatisfaction with things as they are. And yet people and businessmen and women are hesitant in becoming involved because "they don't have time," or "they may lose friends, customers or clients."

I believe the record proves just the opposite. More

people are becoming interested in government. I have found that more than ever before, people want to talk about government; they want to express their political beliefs and they want to see more qualified people putting their proverbial political hats in the ring to run for office.

I am convinced, if we are to survive as a free nation, and if the free competitive enterprise system is to survive, more people must become involved in politics.

In a free society, the line between politics and government is difficult to define. Politics shapes the character of government, and government affects every individual and business.

The great majority of people today are "political consumers." Their votes are the currency which they use to elect the candidates and platforms of one political party or another. Every person who foregoes his political responsibilities to other and more politically active persons should heed the words of former President Eisenhower: "politics ought to be the part-time profession of every citizen who would protect the rights and privileges of free people and who would preserve what is good and fruitful in our national heritage."

If we want good government, we must work for it. That means becoming involved in the political process. No matter how little or how much we contribute, it will be a meaningful and worth while experience because we have



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channeled our time and talents where they should and must be — in keeping good government via the political process.

President John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

The best assurance we can have of maintaining our choices in our community, state and country is to get involved and to participate in the political process that has made us the world's greatest nation.

## Martyrs Make Us Uncomfortable

The news bulletin reporting the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero left me with troubled thoughts.

The symbolism could not have been more powerful. He was the leader of the Catholic community in his country; culturally, El Salvador, is a Catholic nation. He had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and just a few weeks ago had been selected as the recipient of the peace prize of the Swedish Ecumenical Action organization.

And now, while standing at the altar offering the Eucharist, he had been shot. He was dead.

The assassins did not intend it, but by their violence they gave worldwide significance to this small churchman who offered his service and his life in a tiny country in Central America.

My thoughts were troubled because Archbishop Romero's perseverance in the face of threats to his life raised an inevitable challenge to me, to all who profess serious commitment to religious truth, to human values, to a cause.

On what issues would I be willing to persevere under



Fr. John Reedy

Looking for the Lord

the threat of death or imprisonment? Is my commitment a matter of words or would I be able to persevere in the face of this kind of opposition?

The challenge for me was direct because of the priesthood I shared with the Archbishop.

From what I knew of his actions, the threats to his life did not come from his endorsement of any particular political group. He preached against the poverty and suffering imposed on the most vulnerable people of his country; he preached against the violence which was being accepted as the final means of preserving power or of overturning it.

Relief of suffering and opposition to violence are basic elements of the gospel to which we both committed our lives. If my priesthood were being exercised in El Salvador or in one of the many other parts of the world in which similar

conditions exist, would I be able to live out that commitment or would I find some way of rationalizing, of blurring the gospel — just long enough to let me escape the most serious threats?

The most disturbing thing about such a challenge is that you can find no definite answer. The conditions in the United States at this time do not pose much of a physical threat to clergymen, no matter how radical their preaching.

But the possibility remains. Wherever power and possessions are threatened, there is a likelihood that they will be protected, even by violence. And wherever desperate human need exists, this need establishes a Christian claim on the resources which God has provided for the welfare of all people.

Would those of us who now see our Christian response to that need being fulfilled by payment of taxes

and by a contribution to the Campaign for Human Development be faithful to our belief if the alternatives were presented in more radical choices?

We're not sure; our uncertainty troubles us.

Basically, the witness of Archbishop Romero's life and violent death asks us: Do you value anything deeply enough to be willing to die for it?

If honesty, or cynicism leads us to answer "no," we are left with a cheapened view of our lives; we are left with less respect for ourselves.

If we think the answer is "yes, there are some values for which I would give my life," then we feel the need to identify those values.

And we face the additional question: If I would be willing to die for this value, in what way am I living for it?

The martyrdom of Archbishop Romero was his most inspiring sermon. Like most good sermons, it left us thoughtful, less comfortable with our own response to the Lord's invitation.

## Looking Back . . .

From the pages of the Courier-Journal.

**75 years ago this week** — An interesting fact gleaned from a Page 1 story on "The Good Old B. and O.," as the headline says. In the body type: "To a Catholic belongs the honor of laying the first stone and of being the first president of the first board of directors of the first railroad in the country, the venerable Charles Carroll."

We are always amazed at the amount of space the Courier of 75 years ago devoted to cosmetic pursuits. On Page 3, are lengthy pieces on lifting weights to improve the appearance of the neck, on colors the "well-dressed woman" would choose, on girdles, on veils, etc., etc.

And an unabashed use of a news column for the purposes of an advertiser! Under the head, which incidentally reads right into the story, "What Burned 15 Tons" and the story follows directly, "while I used only eleven tons. Your's (sic) wasn't Langie's gilt-edged, that's certain." "No, it wasn't but it will be this year, you bet Central office, Triangle Building, phones 930."

And the continuing challenge to the opposition Catholic Citizen to prove its claim of 10,000 circulation.

**50 years ago this week** — Banner headline on Page 1: "Five Thousand People Join in Protest of Religious Persecutions in Russia." Leading the meeting at Convention Hall was as fine an ecumenical group as has gathered before or since — Rt. Rev. Bishop David Lincoln Ferris of the Episcopal Church; Rabbi Jeremiah J. Bernham of Temple Beth-El; Rev. Whitney S.K. Yeapie (name smudged) of the Lake Avenue Baptist Church; and Rt. Rev. John Francis O'Hern, Bishop of Rochester. The community spirit was magnificent. The unity of opinion was inspiring.

**25 years ago this week** — "Catholic Grade Schools Enroll Over 3 Million" was the headline over a Washington story to which the Courier added the redundant kicker head, "An All-Time Record." In a similar vein on Page 1 was this optimistic headline, "Religious Life Seen Gaining in Popularity. U.S. Nuns Ranks Triple Since 1900." The story was gleaned from Time magazine.

And from that 1955 paper a hard-hitting editorial that still applies, unfortunately: "Our fellowmen are exploited, excluded, denied an equal chance simply because of their race or color. If Americans including the self-appointed spokesmen of anti-Communism, can't begin to adjust the obvious inequities in American life, then Yalta isn't just a city on the Black Sea. It is also a condition that afflicts the average American who calls himself a Christian."

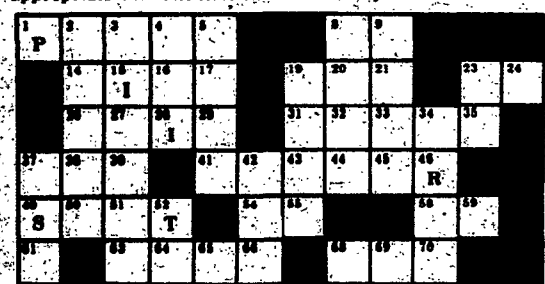
**10 years ago this week** — A four-column picture of the first tulips of spring was used to announce the first tabloid edition of this newspaper. And the lead story concerned the New York District of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians Guilds which branded the "abortion on demand" bill being re-considered in the State Assembly as "bad medicine."

And the Page 1 news that Bishop Hogan had arrived in Rio de Janeiro after a tiring and dusty seven days in south-central Brazil visiting three sister stations where Rochester Sisters of St. Joseph serve.

## Sunday Scripture Quiz

**I. Gospel Reading:**  
John 20:19-31 — Have "good" doubt that preserves an open mind.

Below is a key passage from Sunday's Gospel reading. You can determine what this passage is by finding the answers to the questions below the puzzle and then putting the letters in their appropriate box. The first one is done for you.



- 1. Sent by God: **S P I R I T**
- 2. "Doubling Apostle": **43 17 20 54 33 85**
- 3. "Thomas" means this: **37 14 34 51**
- 4. Our belief: **41 27 61 18 23**
- 5. To require: **68 2 38 25**
- 6. Finish line: **45 35 66**

Based on scripture readings for Sunday, April 13, 1980, C Cycle.

Following are key passages from Sunday's scripture readings. Fill in the missing words.

**II. First Reading:**  
Acts 5:12-16 — More believers were added to the Lord.

Phrase: Through the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_, many signs and \_\_\_\_\_ occurred among the \_\_\_\_\_. By mutual \_\_\_\_\_ they used to meet in \_\_\_\_\_ Portico. No one else \_\_\_\_\_ to join them, despite the fact that the people \_\_\_\_\_ them in great \_\_\_\_\_.

**III. Second Reading:**  
Revelation 1:9-11, 12-13, 17-19 — Fear not, Jesus lives.

Phrase: I \_\_\_\_\_ around to see whose \_\_\_\_\_ it was that \_\_\_\_\_ to me. When I did so I saw \_\_\_\_\_ lampstands of \_\_\_\_\_ and among the \_\_\_\_\_. One like a Son of \_\_\_\_\_ wearing an ankle-length \_\_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_\_ of gold about his breast.

### Answers on Page 11

- 7. A dwelling: **44 69 21 58 5**
- 8. Body of water: **36 50 3**
- 9. Water marker: **8 70 59 19**
- 10. Exclamation: **32 24 55**
- 11. Every one: **64 42 4 38**
- 12. Gives affirmation: **68 9 31**

**Passage I words:** Thomas, house, gee, twin, spirit, yea, need, sea, end, buoy, each, faith.  
**Passage II words:** Solomon's, wonders, hands, people, esteem, dared, held, agreement, apostles.  
**Passage III words:** Man, turned, lampstands, robe, voice, seven, gold, ash, spoke.