

Your Turn Who Guards the City?

By Joan Hensler
Councilwoman
City of Rochester

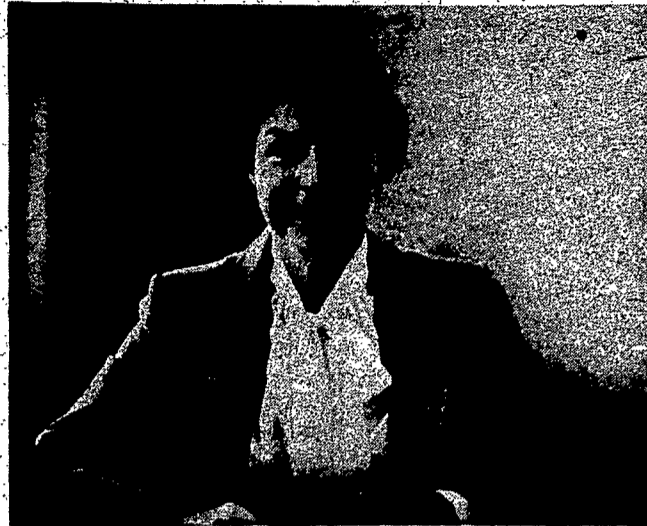
The Psalmist of the Old Testament tells us that "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep vigil."

Who guards the City? Many groups very often feel they are serving that function. Pressure groups, labor unions, conservationists, minority political caucuses, all feel inclined and called upon to guard the city, threatened by what they feel to be destructive forces, exclusive forces.

The groups I have mentioned have legitimate concerns about the problems that face our City, any city. It can be Elmira, Auburn or Rochester. Citizens do understand and, in many cases, have valuable advice to give and significant contributions to make. Elected Councilmembers, in a very real way, reflect the myriad groups existing in our society. They each, whether district or at-large councilmembers, have their own unique constituency as they enter office and, while in office, they develop new friends and advisors. It is an exciting and growing experience. If your elected representatives are serious, they will try to hear as many views and seek out as much constructive advice as possible. The elected Council gives voice to many groups and power to those who normally might not be heard at all. The sensitivity and responsiveness of each official helps to color in the whole picture of need. In my time on City Council, I have been amazed at the variety of experiences I have had and the willingness of others to share theirs that has encouraged creative problem solving.

In a discussion of recently vacated school buildings, many residents had valuable input and did extensive research to give the council more information than they might have been able to gather themselves. This made it easier to arrive at a well-informed policy decision.

The large number of human service organizations in Rochester have helped me to better understand the real needs of persons in the heart of our city, who are suffering and in



Councilwoman Joan Hensler.

need of help. My understanding, however, would not be complete without the hours of time spent by concerned and committed Churchmembers, who have been willing to share with me their insights and dreams as they live with and attempt to serve the poor. This knowledge I bring to the policy-making sessions on the floor of Council Chambers, and my input, hopefully, enlarges the understanding of my fellow Councilmembers. The process would never work without all the input and the freedom and power on my part to influence decisions. Responsibility is co-shared, to be translated into policy.

"Who guards the City?" Is it the North East Block Club Alliance, GEM, United Auto Workers, the Council at St. Michael's Church? Yes to all of these... and many more... when they share and insist on participating in the dialogue concerning city planning.

Those who are elected are the authors of policy. They must see that the administration translates their goals and policy into programs that are effective and that they address the

In this series, widely known persons, at the newspaper's request, will present their thoughts on varied issues. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the newspaper. Other readers are also invited to submit articles for "Your Turn" and the decision as to whether they are used will be the editor's.

problems expressed. There are different roles in guarding the City. One is looking outward, representative, responsive, translating needs into program priorities, learning and responding to the signs of the times. To me, that is my role as an elected representative, prayerfully supported by my faith community.

The other is administrative and functionary, developing the practical programs to fit policy.

To me, these are distinct and separate roles. There are tensions between the two, and there needs to be. I am continually discovering the fine line between vision and implementation, between the possible and the practical, between advocating and actually achieving. There are some who wish to combine the two.

In some cities where I have been in touch with legislators, the council does not have the freedom to develop contacts and input because its role is that of a watchdog over the administration. It is an adversary role, not a partnership. I believe co-mingling roles is counter-productive.

The important role for me, as a legislator and policy-maker, is to be an advocate; to broaden any contacts with the community, to investigate new and exciting resources within the community-at-large that could help our City meet the challenges of the future. There will always be conflict where these roles interface because of the fine line between both functions.

"Does the Lord guard the City?" I fervently hope so! He does to the degree that the believing community remains committed to its involvement in the political life of the city, and continues offering guidance to those who have been elected.

Looking Back...

From the pages of the Courier-Journal.

75 years ago this week — The diocese was in high gear preparing for the consecration of Bishop Thomas F. Hickey as co-adjutor Bishop of Rochester. Four archbishops were anticipated at the event, and all the bishops of New York province as well as the ordinaries of Cleveland and Savannah. The consecration, slated for May 24, was to be presided over by Bishop J.M. Farley of New York.

...

50 years ago this week — St. Margaret Mary Church announced the celebration of three Masses on Sunday. "The congregation is a flourishing one," stated the announcement, "and the Church societies are full of vim and vigor."

...

25 years ago this week — Banner headlines proclaimed the ordination of the Class of 1955. For the first time in the history of the diocese, the ordinations would take place simultaneously in two places. Some of the class would be ordained in Elmira by Bishop Lawrence B. Casey and some would be ordained in Rochester by Bishop James E. Kearney. The date was set for June 4.

Dr. Joseph L. Hogan, principal of DeSales High School in Geneva, was listed as the baccalaureate speaker for ceremonies at Nazareth College May 29. The Salk vaccine that conquered polio was administered to more than 5,550 pupils in Rochester parochial schools, a year after its successful trial run.

...

10 years ago this week — "More Violence; Religious Leaders Call for Peace," proclaimed the page one headline for the story which began with an account of the slaying of James Earl Green and Phillip L. Gibbs, by police gunfire at Jackson State (Miss.) campus, following rock throwing incidents. The second account stated, "Demonstrations continued across the United States in the aftermath of the United States invasion of Cambodia."

Bishop Hogan joined other religious leaders in condemning "any escalation of the Vietnam War."

President Richard M. Nixon was named Churchman of the Year by Religious Heritage of America, for "carrying his deep religious commitment into the presidency."

A headline ran: "Abortion Dispute May Reach Supreme Court." Holy Cross Parish in Dryden opened its new church. Crozer Seminary announced it would move to Rochester and join Colgate Rochester and Bexley Hall.

Fr. John Reedy



Looking for the Lord

Father Drinan's Decision

Father Robert Drinan is a good priest, a good Jesuit. Obviously his constituents also thought he was a good congressman; they've been reelecting him since 1970.

Because I have some idea of how difficult it must have been for him to accept Rome's order to withdraw from public office, my long-standing respect for him as a priest has only increased.

Still, in spite of that respect, I think Father Drinan's service in the House of Representatives offers support for my own reservations about priests and religious serving in public office.

(At this point I haven't seen the reasons offered by Rome for the decision, but I'm sure the Holy Father will be pleased to know that he and I are in substantial agreement.)

Because Father Drinan has been subjected to vicious criticism which went far beyond legitimate political disagreement, which challenged his fidelity to the church, I want to offer my opinion of the criticism.

From personal acquaintance and from my knowledge of his work, I know that he is an exceptionally gifted man. He has a sophisticated intellect and an educational

background far superior to those demonstrated by his colleagues in Congress.

In spite of all the bitter denunciations, I have never seen a position of his — an article, a speech or a vote — which I did not consider to be within the options allowed by a sophisticated understanding of Catholic moral teaching.

Often his positions were not the ones I held, but I could understand how he reached his judgments while holding the same principles I find in the authoritative teachings of the church.

Some of Drinan's critics can be written off as the

kind of people who sniff out any scandal they can find and then claim to be outraged by it. But there are many others whose understanding of theology, of theological reasoning, of political processes is such that they quite honestly could not see how a priest could arrive at his judgments on legal issues relating to abortion.

And this was the focus of attention; little comment was given to his effectiveness in supporting a whole range of human and social values proclaimed by church authorities.

The difficulty is that the specific political choices presented to a congressman do not come like neatly packaged cases from the old textbooks of moral theology. They come entangled with all kinds of other considerations. What would be the side effects of a particular piece of legislation? Will my vote make any difference in the final outcome? Is there any preferable alternative possible in which my ethical values could be preserved? Does the specific wording constitute good law? Would

it survive legal tests? And many, many others.

A responsible Catholic legislator would have to consider all the issues and make his best judgment according to his conscience. In political activity, he has to work with compromise while trying to avoid a compromise of his basic principles.

But even a gifted, dedicated legislator (which I consider Father Drinan to be) finds it difficult, if not impossible, to communicate clearly how his values are preserved through the maze of issues involved in specific decisions.

And that is the problem. In general, people who represent the church should be able to witness clearly to the values proclaimed by the church. We are most free to do this outside the practical demands of politics.

I regret that Father Drinan will be leaving congress. In my opinion, it will be a loss for congress. But in his obedience he has certainly given clear witness to the priority of his values.

Sunday Scripture Quiz

I. Gospel Reading:
Jn 20:19-23 — We receive the Spirit Jesus promised.

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 the appropriate box. The first one is done for you.

13	P	A	S	C	19	E	23
14	T	U	R	O	20	22	24
15	M	T	M	21	23	24	25
16	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
17	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
18	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
19	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
20	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
21	56	57	58	59	60	61	62
22	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
23	70	71	72	73	74	75	76
24	77	78	79	80	81	82	83
25	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
26	91	92	93	94	95	96	97
27	98	99	100	101	102	103	104

II. First Reading:
Acts 2:1-11 — 120 believers relax and wait for the Spirit.

Phrase: When the _____ of _____ came it found the _____ gathered in one _____ Suddenly from up in the _____ there came a _____ like a strong driving _____ which was heard _____ through the _____

III. Second Reading:
1 Cor. 12:9-13 — The Spirit puts love in our talents.

Phrase: There are different _____ but the same _____ there are different _____ but the same _____ there are _____ who accomplish _____ of them in every _____

Answers on Page 9

1. Holy Spirit descended:	P E N T E C O S T
2. Wrongdoing:	26 34 56 63
3. Small, round:	9 60 36 67 16
4. Men's name:	28 71 44 35 6
5. A farce:	38 30 33 40
6. Slang for "you":	88 47 81 23
7. Time measure:	37 23 34
8. To focus:	31 14 66
9. A dwelling:	46 70 30 54 65
10. To strike:	16 27 57
11. Mythical being:	43 4 63 48 41
12. Ourselves:	12 3

Passage I words: Pentecost, age, yeast, aim, fatty, his, on, six, Diane, house, sham, buddy

Passage II words: Pentecost, place, house, noise, breathred, sky, all, wind, day

Passage III words: Spirit, God, Lord, gifts, one, different, ministries, all