



The two main candidates for the US presidency in 2004: George W. Bush (here visiting John Paul II in the Vatican) and John Kerry.

'The Great Dream

**A Special
Inside the Vatican
Dossier
On The Issues
Facing Voters
In 2004
And Beyond**



Introductory Note: This *Inside the Vatican* dossier is an effort to assess the issues in the 2004 US election, and how Catholics are viewing those issues. It is an effort to inform

consciences on these issues, and thus we believe the dossier will continue to be of value even after the elections.

—*The Editor*

Dossier Introduction by John Mallon

The great dream of Catholics in the United States, especially since the waves of immigration beginning in the mid-19th century, was to *assimilate, assimilate, assimilate*. The drive was to overcome the discrimination that said “Irish need not apply” and the great Protestant suspicion of what those mysterious “papists” would do if they got into any position of authority. The fear was that the non-establishment clause of the United States Constitution would be surreptitiously breached and undue influence over American affairs would be secretly given to the Pope in Rome.

The long hoped-for assimilation appeared to arrive with the election of President John F. Kennedy, a handsome, young and Catholic president, in 1960. His election seemed to signify a new era in America. In his words, the “torch has been passed” to a “new generation of Americans, born in this century.” Prosperity was widespread, the great challenge of the Axis powers had been met, and domestic bliss and the “American dream” seemed within reach of all. Well... almost all. But soon the civil rights movement was to rise up demanding equality among the races, and young Catholics joined the struggle, including fresh-faced, crew-cutted clergy and smiling full-habited nuns.

Ever since the famous address by Kennedy to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in Houston, Texas, of September 12, 1960, the cliché surrounding Catholics in public life concerns whether the official will be “taking orders from Rome.” Of course, this was nonsense then and it is nonsense now. No Roman pontiff would ever “give orders” to the head of a sovereign state. He may state Catholic teachings with prophetic warnings or condemn certain policies, but that is not the same as “giving orders.”

With the Second Vatican Council, even the Church seemed to be getting into the act of social change. Where I grew up in the Boston area, every Catholic home had portraits of Pope John XXIII side by side with Jack Kennedy. They seemed to represent one movement. Rightly or wrongly this “movement” was affiliated with the Democratic Party. With its history of support for labor unions and other social causes, the Democratic Party was viewed as the party of the “little guy,” advocating for the immigrant, the needy and the downtrodden, and, in this, seeming to carry common cause with the Catholic Church. If you were Catholic you voted Democrat. Period.

Notwithstanding the nuclear threat, the times in the early 1960s were so optimistic (at least until the Kennedy assassination) it may have seemed that we were enjoying a type of “secular salvation” via “civil religion,” and the Catholic faith, which seemed to be thriving outwardly, didn’t seem as necessary inwardly. Faith flourishes under difficult times and, in America at least, these were good times.

Faith was compartmentalized in many lives and even John XXIII commented on “baptized pagans.” For many, the faith seemed antiquated, and many assumed Vatican II “fixed all that” and then lived accordingly, without a close look at what

the documents actually said. Instead of being perceived as the Church opening her arms to the modern world offering salvation, the Council was seen by many as genuflecting before the modern world in conversion and capitulation. It is no wonder that, in this climate, *Humanae Vitae* (1968) came as a shock.

Then, in its flurry to get behind various kinds of “liberation” movements, the Democratic Party forgot the “littlest guy” of all: the unborn child in the womb. “Women’s liberation” became inextricably tied to freedom from childbearing, while in the meantime being “liberated” to the “sexual freedom” they perceived men as having.

In 1973, a new “right” was invented in the name of “human freedom”: the right of a woman to kill the unborn child in her womb, according to her inverted *fiat* — i.e., “choice.” And this choice, which the Catholic Church declares to be an intrinsically evil act, has in turn become inextricably enmeshed as a central (if not *the* central) plank in the Democratic Party platform. Nevertheless, in the minds of many, the “symbiosis” between the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party remains, and is very difficult to dislodge. Jokes continue about the US Conference of Catholic Bishops being “The Democratic Party at Prayer.”

Liberalism in the Democratic Party was viewed as unquestionably morally superior to the Conservatism of the Republican Party. It was common to hear a priest a generation ago shake his head and shrug saying, “You just can’t be a Republican if you’re a Catholic.” And this remark passed as conventional wisdom, not inspiring anywhere near the sputtering outrage that questioning the Catholicism of pro-abortion Catholics does today. (It is worth noting that the very same people who falsely accuse the Church of silence during the Nazi regime and the Holocaust are often the very same people demanding that the Church stay out of current affairs, especially the abortion holocaust and the immoral policies of groups like the United Nations Population Fund.)

This Special Dossier of *Inside the Vatican* is not intended to be partisan, although some will inevitably perceive it as so. There is no morally ideal political party. But as a Jesuit friend said to me recently, “The Democratic Party has betrayed the Catholic Church.”

For many, the longed-for acceptance and assimilation into American society of a century ago became a blind liberal partisanship resulting in a compromise of the faith. This need not be. There is no inherent conflict between American democracy and Catholicism. In fact, it is the duty of Catholics to influence society by their witness and fidelity and, yes, their votes.

Opposing abortion is consistent with the best of America. It is not “imposing” religion, but rather it is a demand that laws against murder not be waived when it comes to the unborn, who, while not fully developed, are fully *human* from the moment of conception. For one group to claim the right to deprive the right of another group (the unborn) to live is tyranny, and will ultimately destroy any society that sanctions it.

To vote pro-life is American patriotism at its finest.

— *Mallon is a Contributing Editor to Inside the Vatican.*

“I, A Catholic Bishop”

by Thomas A. Szyszkiwicz



Exclusive: Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis

The archbishop of St. Louis, Raymond Burke, on his October 1 pastoral letter on politicians and abortion. The complete text is available on our web site, insidethevatican.com

Archbishop **Raymond Burke** ignited a controversy when, in January of 2004, he issued a pastoral letter and a notification

in the diocese of La Crosse (Wisconsin) telling pro-abortion politicians there they could not receive Communion if they did not publicly recant their position. When he was transferred from La Crosse to St. Louis, he made headlines when he said that he would deny Communion to Democratic presidential candidate Senator **John Kerry** (D-Mass.) if Kerry were to campaign within Burke's archdiocese. The controversy carried on through 2004 due to the presidential campaign.

On October 1, the Memorial of St. Therese of Liseux, Burke issued a pastoral letter to the flock of his archdiocese explaining Catholic teaching on the key issues to keep in mind when they vote. In an exclusive interview, Burke talks with *Inside the Vatican* about his letter, voting, politicians and his relationship with other bishops.

Do you find it in the least ironic that the Eucharist has become a hot topic in the secular United States in a presidential campaign?

ARCHBISHOP RAYMOND BURKE: Yes, I do in one sense; you wouldn't think it would be (an issue). But in another sense, it has to be, when you have Catholic politicians who are, knowingly and in a public way, taking positions that are contrary to the moral law. In one sense it surprises me, in another sense it doesn't.

With your notification to Catholic politicians in the diocese of La Crosse, you started a huge debate among the US bishops. A few have supported what you said and did, but the rest are divided. How do you view this division?

BURKE: I think that the good result of it is that the whole question of the worthy disposition to receive Holy Communion is being very much underlined. People are coming to an understanding that we can't claim some right to receive Holy Communion; I've heard people use that language which is very misguided.

The Eucharist is always a gift to us which we must be disposed to receive worthily. The good thing in it, I think, is that

people are becoming much more conscious about something that St. Paul addressed back in the early days of the Church and that is, how do you come to the Holy Eucharist, and in what state of mind are you to approach Communion? If you are not one with Christ in your life, especially with regard to serious moral questions, then you sin against the Body of Christ by receiving Holy Communion in that state.

I'm curious about what this has done to your relationship with your brother bishops. How did this go over at the June bishops' meeting?

BURKE: I certainly was able to speak my mind and people listened respectfully. I don't know how many agreed or disagreed with what I had done and what I said in the meeting, but at least I was able to speak my mind. I think it's clear that Cardinal [Theodore] McCarrick and his committee did not accept at all what I had done in La Crosse and believed that it should be viewed as the action of an individual bishop. I think that's what's fairly clear to me, and I think clear to everybody.

I suppose that what is involved here is the question of a bishop's relationship to the conference of bishops. I think in some people's minds there's a notion that has developed which I think is wrong and also I think damages very much the exercise of the episcopal office. And that is that a bishop cannot take action in such a question, even if he is convinced in his conscience that he must, without it first being studied by the conference of bishops and there being some kind of action taken at the conference level. If we follow that line, then in any kind of really critical question of pastoral direction or correction, the individual bishop doesn't act any more – and that's harmful to the flock.

I did what I knew in my conscience I needed to do as bishop of La Crosse and I didn't do it to embarrass any other bishop or to be a challenge to the conference of bishops. I believe it was something that, as a bishop, I was obliged to do; it didn't depend on the conference of bishops.

Did anyone at the Vatican read your letter before you published it?

BURKE: No, not that I'm aware. I don't think so, because there were no drafts floating around.

Some in your flock are claiming that you are interfering in the voting process, telling them how to vote...

BURKE: I'm not telling anybody how to vote in this sense: I'm not telling them for whom they should vote. But I am telling them how to vote in the sense of what are the moral requirements for the right exercise of the right to vote. In other words, I'm setting forth for them the moral considerations of which they have to take note in voting. But I'm not telling them for whom they should vote.

People have to read the pastoral letter – there isn't anything in the pastoral letter which is new; it's all what the Church has taught perennially. Then it's a matter of their conscience.

In that sense, I suppose to put it simply, I'm telling them how to vote in the sense that I'm telling them to vote accord-

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—Archbishop Burke



ing to their conscience and helping them to form that conscience correctly.

So now that they know in their conscience what the Church teaches, now they need to act according to their conscience.

BURKE: Exactly. That's my obligation as a bishop in such serious matters, to present the Church's teaching.

So you would reject the charge that you are supporting the Republican Party by what you wrote.

BURKE: Absolutely right, I reject it. It's not a question of supporting one party or the other. And people have told me I'm a hypocrite and that I really secretly am. That's not true. What I set forth is the Church's teaching.

Given what you wrote, does a Catholic really have a choice this year? Obviously, John Kerry is out of the question. But Bush has his problems, too, if he's elected...

BURKE: Yes, I have my difficulties with President Bush, too.

If he is elected and then taken out of office somehow, Dick Cheney, who supports gay "marriage," becomes president.

BURKE: Yes.

And Bush also supported pro-abortion Sen. Arlen Specter in the Pennsylvania primaries over pro-life Rep. James Toomey, showing that when it comes to political expediency, he is willing to reject his pro-life stand. And he is the first president to authorize federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. So what, then, does a Catholic do?

BURKE: I know there are some Catholics who have just thrown up their hands in this whole matter and said, "I'm not going to vote for anybody because there's nobody who upholds the moral law in its integrity."

My response to that is, you have to look for the candidate who will restrict as much as possible evils such as procured abortion, embryonic stem cell research, cloning, same-sex "marriage," euthanasia.

It's better to support a candidate, and I'm not telling people to vote for Mr. Bush or not, but you have to look for the candidate who will most restrict these evils. Then, at the same time, we need to insist with those who are elected to office that they uphold the moral law and address these questions, whether it be about embryonic stem cell research or whatever it might be.

What about voting for a candidate in, say, the Constitution Party, who is 100 percent pro-life? Is that a realistic kind of thing? It becomes a matter of prudential judgment on the part of the individual voter. But here's a person who doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell of getting into the White House. Is that basically like not voting at all?

BURKE: Basically it is. I used the term in the pastoral letter "viable candidate." But again, it has to be somebody who is going to limit these evils. If you have two candidates who are both...

Who are equally bad?

BURKE: Yes, exactly, both in favor of all of these positions which we view as intrinsically evil, well then, you'd be in a position in which you wouldn't be able to vote at all.

In your pastoral letter you begin with a story about a Bavarian sacristan's remembrance of the Nazi era. Are you making an equation here between what's happening in the US and what happened then? Or are you saying we're headed down that path or possibly headed down that path?

BURKE: What I'm doing here is I'm saying this situation is instructive for us because here was a situation in which a government was attacking a whole class of people, actually several classes of people, and somehow the general citizenry became cooperators in that. And we have to recognize that in the question, for instance of abortion, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, whatever it might be, a class of people are being excluded from the care for the common good. And we're responsible for that. And that's the reason I use that example.

I don't think it's a question of if we're heading down that way. I mean, it's a fact that 40 million unborn children have been aborted since 1973. In some way, and I make the point at the end of the letter, too, even as Catholics we have to ask ourselves, "What have we done?" If all Catholics would join those Catholics and other people

of good will who were working to promote the respect for human life, this situation wouldn't be what it is.

You also bring to mind your own final judgment. Is that something which is just not on people's minds today, even on bishops' minds?

BURKE: I can't comment on anybody else, but I know this – it's on my mind every day. That should be on every Catholic's mind. Part of our day is supposed to be at the conclusion of each day we make an examination of conscience and we pray the act of contrition because we realize that we have to give an account of our stewardship of God's gifts when we die and God may call us at any time. I think in the general population and even, sadly, among Catholics, perhaps because of poor catechesis or whatever, there has been first of all a loss of the sense of sin and if there's been a loss of a sense of sin, the corollary to that is the loss of the sense of the final judgment.

One final question – would you care to tell us how you plan to vote?

BURKE: (*laughs*) I'm going to vote in accord with the principles that I set out in my pastoral letter. How's that?

Szyszkiewicz is a frequent contributor to the Catholic press in the United States. He is formerly editor of The Catholic Times, newspaper of the Diocese of La Crosse.

"IF BOTH CANDIDATES WERE IN FAVOR OF ALL THESE POSITIONS WE VIEW AS INTRINSICALLY EVIL, WELL THEN, YOU'D BE IN A POSITION IN WHICH YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO VOTE AT ALL"

“Why We Will Not Vote”

by Mark and Louise Zwick



Many of us are struggling with the issue of how to promote a culture of life and a civilization of love. It is an issue that is of special concern during this season of election. The ancient question of how Catholics can participate in the political process and remain committed to the truth seems especially pressing.

The choices are not good. They are between one man who has consistently voted against protection for unborn children, and another who courted and manipulated the Catholic vote and then turned around and directly opposed Pope John Paul II on the Iraq War, leading the country into an unjust war. The Holy Father stated before the war began that this war would be a defeat for humanity which could not be morally or legally justified.

Some American Catholics working with the Bush administration and the press have succeeded in marginalizing the Pope on the issues of war and peace in the minds of many Catholics in America. Perhaps neither candidate takes seriously or is brave enough to face up to the serious issues between Israelis and Palestinians, whose conflict is at the heart of the problem of world peace and terrorism, as John Paul II has pointed out. How can it be that for Catholics in the United States the belief in the sanctity of the life of the unborn is tied up with endorsing war and the “manifest destiny” of the United States to run roughshod over other countries?

The Holy See speaks with one consistent voice. It is as if the teaching of our faith in regard to life issues is a garment without seams. There is no room for exceptions. Exceptions have gone by the wayside since William Buckley established cafeteria Catholicism some years ago with his response to Pope John XXIII’s encyclical *Mater et Magistra* when he said: *Mater si, Magistra, no* (“The Church as Mother, yes, the Church as Teacher, no”).

The Church as teacher calls us to live according to the Gospel, Church teaching, and the lives of the Saints. These teachings are not only opposed to abortion and war, the death penalty, and euthanasia, but also opposed to the consumerism and materialism which underlie the problems of abortion and war.

The campaign practices and responses of Churchmen have highlighted the problems of the Catholic Church identifying too closely with a particular political party in the hope that the Church would get something by doing so. There seems to be a danger of integralism, of the Church falling into the trap of the oneness with the state as occurred under Constantine if the Church in the US is wedded to a political party. In such a scenario, Catholic consciences may be compromised by policies which depend on deal-making and the wrong means to a good end or commitment to ends which are not appropriate. Constantinianism is always a temptation. However, the Church is wedded to Christ only.

There is an alternative way to act politically. We all have a responsibility in our community and to work for the common good—what Aristotle called politics in the much broader sense. We are not limited to political parties. Each one of us

must try to impact society in the best way possible.

Our experience at Casa Juan Diego, the Houston Catholic Worker, has affirmed our belief that it is possible to live in a creative, different way from that of our consumer and war culture. At Casa Juan Diego we are in the midst of the war between pro-choice and pro-life.

We don’t have a choice, however, when it comes to pregnant women. We have voted “Yes” to the birth of the child hundreds of times at Casa Juan Diego. These are the kinds of votes needed, rather than a vote for a man who might possibly do something. Dorothy Day, pro-life to the core (after a tragic abortion in her youth) and opposed to birth control, replied with demanding support for pregnant mothers and the poor, and gave such support herself.

Dorothy felt that little could be expected from the State in the present state of the State. For her, Holy Mother the Church was the better choice than that of Holy Mother the State. Dorothy did not vote. When asked if she voted for McGovern years ago, she replied, “I never vote; it only encourages them.” She did not put her great hopes in politicians.

The Catholic Worker advocated a consistent ethic of life. Dorothy and Peter presented a different vision and had a tremendous impact on the Church and the world in their time. They didn’t merely tack on non-violence to their Catholicism. Pacifism was an expression of their belief in the bonds of unity among members of the Body of Christ, for whom they, with the theologians, believed that every person made in the image and likeness of God was a potential member — and should not have bombs dropped on them.

The problem is that in order to maintain the consumer life style, another child often is considered too expensive. One political party insists that war must be waged against other countries to maintain our “quality of life,” just as the other party tries to ensure that poor people either here or in other countries not have many babies—it might impact the quality of life of those who have more in this world.

It is almost like the time of Francis when, as Pius XI said, there was constant warfare, the strong wished to force the weak to submit to them, there were struggles between political parties, horrible massacres, conflagrations and pillage, and the charity of Christ had become so weakened in human society as to appear to be almost extinct.

Peter Maurin said, “People are just beginning to realize how deep-seated the evil is. That is why we must be Catholic radicals, we must get down to the roots. That is what radicalism is — the word means getting down to the roots.”

It seems to us that the best thing we can do today in a society not too different from the time of Francis, is go to the roots of our faith and embrace the way of peace and life and the freedom given by God to us through the Church. The freedom we have been given in Christ is a great gift. It is a freedom that allows and demands pure means—not “the end justifies the means” — not expediency, not utilitarianism, not the murder of children in the womb, not the murder of children in war, but work to build the civilization of love.

Mark and Louise Zwick founded the Houston Catholic Worker in 1980, where they continue to receive homeless immigrants and refugees and give food to the hungry. Their book on the Catholic Worker movement will be published by Paulist Press in May of 2005.



Abortion and the “Catholic Vote”

By Judie Brown

As we approach the 2004 presidential election, the eighth since *Roe v. Wade*, the same old worn-out rhetoric is back again. Prior to each presidential election, the language seems to settle into the same style of hysterical hand-wringing. It always has; the 2004 campaign has followed the

same pattern.

Some say Catholics have a duty to vote for George W. Bush rather than John Kerry because one man is said to be pro-life while the other is clearly dedicated to abortion on demand. Some say that if Catholics fail to do their duty and vote properly in this election, the pro-life movement will be doomed to failure.

Haven't the past 31 years taught us anything? The uncomfortable fact is that members of both major political parties have occupied the White House since the Supreme Court's 1973 rulings, yet abortion continues unabated regardless of who holds the presidency.

Of course, it is possible that the next president will nominate a couple of Supreme Court justices, appointments that could or could not be helpful to the babies. Don't forget that it was a pro-life president, the beloved Ronald Wilson Reagan, who appointed Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and *Catholic* Justice Anthony Kennedy, neither of whom has lifted a finger on behalf of the pre-born.

So just how is this election any different? And why is the “Catholic vote” important?

To my way of thinking, there are better, more fundamental questions to be asking at this point. For example, it is an undeniable fact that abortion is an intrinsically evil act that is never, under any circumstance, condoned by the Church. But how many of the people surveyed who identify themselves as “Catholic” understand this basic truth? If we were to gather all this information about what a Catholic believes and knows to be true prior to finding out how he might vote, we would be confronted with a few shocking details. For example, if it is indeed true that at least half of all Catholics in the United States favor abortion in at least some cases, then it is clear that far too many Catholics have either not been taught basic teachings or have remained in the Church under a false notion. The false notion, of course, is that one can treat Catholic teachings just like one treats choices at a cafeteria — picking and choosing according to personal taste. Some teachings are okay on Friday; but over the weekend others are more appealing.

Sorry, but that kind of “Catholic” is really not going to vote based on solid Church teaching. But how many of these improperly catechized Catholics are out there? Only God knows. On the surface, at least, it's easy to say the answer to that question is: “far too many.”

The “Catholic vote” is, therefore, a nice phrase without much substance. Today, even the bishops of the United States cannot seem to agree that protecting Christ in the Holy Eucharist from sacrilege is serious enough to deny pro-abortion Catholic public figures access to Holy Communion.

One can deduce that these same bishops are not teaching with any continuity the fact that abortion is an act of murder, the fact that other “issues” are irrelevant when the fundamental right to life is denied an innocent human being, or the fact that nobody can favor the direct killing of innocent persons and be assured that his eternal salvation is not in jeopardy. I even know of a few bishops who speak as if they think “hell” is a merely a term and not a place.

Abortion is not going to stop because one man or another is elected.

Abortion is not going to stop as long as we rest on our laurels because a president signed a bill that will regulate one specific kind of murder at one specific stage in a pre-born child's life (which is precisely all the partial-birth abortion law does).

Abortion is not going to stop until... when? Until the majority of all Americans — not just Catholics — reject the act of abortion because it is sinful, because it is deadly and because it offends God. Then, and only then, will that same majority attain sufficient power — through God's grace — to see to it that abortion is erased from the political debate because it will be totally illegal with no exceptions.

Before his death, Jim McFadden's young son Robert, who was involved with his dad in the publishing of the *Human Life Review*, wrote something that his sister Maria found on his computer. It is worth reading, especially now when the emphasis on Catholic votes and White House residents has somehow blurred our vision:

In order to win this struggle we must avoid trying to win it. We must do what we do against abortion not because this or that action will secure us a victory but because it is right to perform that action. We can fight endlessly for good, moral legislation to save unborn children, but with the willingness to lose a fight rather than sacrificing principles to win. We can try to remember Christian charity and compassion for those among us who are risking their chances of eternal happiness by fighting against God. ... We must continue to educate, to provide the calm voice of reason and logic to counter the often-hysterical rantings of the other side. We must try to “play this game” as if we were on God's team, trying to follow His coaching and not as if we were coaching God.

Judie Brown is president and founder of American Life League, the nation's largest Catholic pro-life educational organization. She is a recognized expert on the sanctity of human life and member of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

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If the Vatican Could Vote

By Farley Clinton

American journalist **John Allen**, who writes from Rome for the *National Catholic Reporter*, well known for its progressive positions on many political and moral issues, raised eyebrows around the world in early October when he wrote that, in his judgment, based on talking

“informally” with “at least two dozen Vatican officials, ranging from cardinals to junior clergy,” and after “comparing notes with colleagues,” he had reached the conclusion that “if a secret ballot were to be held in the Holy See, Kerry would beat Bush about 60-40.”

This conclusion is astonishing to me.

Allen is not incorrect in discovering support for Kerry here in Rome.

But his report is quite misleading, because my own conversations in Rome and with officials of the Roman Curia, especially with many Americans — the only Vatican officials who can actually vote — suggest a depth of feeling here against **John Kerry** that is terrific. I would almost describe it as abject terror. I have never seen anything like it.

Fear of the example Kerry offers of a wholesale rejection of Church teaching preys on the minds of priests here who care about what will happen to American Catholics. The sight of a man constantly receiving Communion, who appears to want great political power largely so that he can promote abortion, has filled them with horror.

Generally in the past the fortunes of the political parties in the national elections, the choice of a new president, held no importance at all for the Church.

St. John Neumann, when he was bishop of Philadelphia, was absolutely indifferent to the outcome of the presidential election that brought **James Buchanan** to Washington in 1856. Neither outcome would harm the Church — the election would affect nothing he cared about, he told friends.

That was nearly 150 years ago, but traditionally bishops felt that way about any presidential nominee.

But John Kerry, in defiance of the words of **St. Paul** in the New Testament and of all Christian practice throughout history, publicly dissociates the reception of Communion from a concern about the basic morality always affirmed by Christians.

Voltaire, once in his life, after mocking religion bitterly for years on end, deliberately created a scandal by publicly receiving Communion. It was a huge scandal.

The situation is basically just the same with Kerry, except that he does it every week.

Kerry has claimed that a Pope or a Council — he once said he thought it was Pope **Pius XXIII** — had changed Catholic understanding regarding the demands of the moral law and the Commandments.

“Pope Pius XXIII” did not exist, of course, but to Kerry that does not matter.

Kerry as president threatens to fight the bishops for control of their own churches, to impose his own teaching in the place of theirs.

Catholics will not believe he is out of the Church unless the bishops say he is by excommunicating him. They will believe that the Church no longer teaches anything and that any amount of publicly, aggressively voiced unbelief is permissible to anybody.

But Allen’s report, if misleading, did contain a kernel of truth that Catholics everywhere should be informed about, and in this sense his report is important. Because there is hostility toward Bush in Rome.

As Allen writes: “Those (Vatican) dicasteries that deal with international politics tend to be more hostile to Bush. The Vatican opposed the Iraq war, it supports a stronger role for the United Nations, it backs the International Criminal Court, and it worries about inflaming Islamic sentiment in the Middle East — all positions of contrast with the Bush White House.... Moreover, the Vatican’s senior personnel often come from the *Accademia*, the Holy See’s school for diplomats, whose students are drawn from the same cultured European backgrounds as the staffers of foreign ministries in secular European states. Hence the same prejudices about Bush one finds in elite circles in France and Germany are also, to some extent, present in the Holy See.”

This is a useful insight — especially for those who would like to truly understand “how Rome works.” It helps explain how the positions Rome takes on some matters, evidently those not involving defined dogmas of the faith, can be shaped by the backgrounds of Vatican officials.

It is also accurate to note that, in political and diplomatic questions, **George W. Bush** diverged sharply from the positions favored by Pope John Paul II in organizing and defending his invasion of Iraq.

This Pope is, among other things, a great diplomatic Pope. He is seen vaguely, but I think sincerely, by the whole non-Catholic world as the leader — and the worthy leader — of the Christian world, and by many is seen as the most rational, impartial and humane public figure in the world.

At the time of the Iraq invasion — early 2003 — many American priests here actually opposed the Pope on this question of diplomacy, and loudly applauded Mr. Bush.

But this year things changed drastically. Among the Vatican personnel who once championed the war, it is striking how confidence in Bush appears to have largely faded away. The popularity of the invasion appears to have been dependent on a cheerful assumption that a war would be a smashing success quickly ending in an unequivocal victory. There have been a lot of reconsiderations. Hence the significant collapse of the strong support President Bush seemed to have 18 months ago. They can’t help but worry that Bush means finding no solution to the crisis that has been created, and Kerry, alas, is the only alternative permitted.

This accounts for the pro-Kerry sentiment Allen says he has found. But it reflects little true support for Kerry himself, for his positions. As one ecclesiastic said to me, “We are stuck with this two-party system.”



Pro-Choice Candidates and Church Teaching

By Archbishop John J. Myers

Amid today's political jostling, Catholic citizens are wondering whether they can, in conscience, vote for candidates who support the legalized killing of human beings in the embryonic and fetal stages of development by abortion or in biomedical research.

Responding to requests to clarify the obligations of Catholics on this matter, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, under its prefect, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, released a statement called "On Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion." Although it dealt primarily with the obligations of bishops to deny Communion to Catholic politicians in certain circumstances, it included a short note at the end addressing whether Catholics could, in good conscience, vote for candidates who supported the taking of nascent human life in the womb or lab.

Cardinal Ratzinger stated that a "Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in evil, and so unworthy to present himself for Holy Communion, if he were to deliberately vote for a candidate precisely because of a candidate's permissive stand on abortion." But the question of the moment is whether a Catholic may vote for a pro-abortion candidate for other reasons. The cardinal's next sentence answered that question: A Catholic may vote for a pro-abortion Catholic politician only "in the presence of proportionate reasons."

What are "proportionate reasons"? To consider that question, we must first repeat the teaching of the Church: The direct killing of innocent human beings at any stage of development, including the embryonic and fetal, is homicidal, gravely sinful and always profoundly wrong.

Then we must consider the scope of the evil of abortion today in our country. America suffers 1.3 million abortions each year — a tragedy of epic proportions. Moreover, many supporters of abortion propose making the situation even worse by creating a publicly funded industry in which tens of thousands of human lives are produced each year for the purpose of being "sacrificed" in biomedical research.

Thus, for a Catholic citizen to vote for a candidate who supports abortion and embryo-destructive research, one of the following circumstances would have to obtain: either (a) both candidates would have to be in favor of embryo killing on roughly an equal scale or (b) the candidate with the superior position on abortion and embryo-destructive research would have to be a supporter of objective evils of a gravity and mag-

nitude beyond that of 1.3 million yearly abortions plus the killing that would take place if public funds were made available for embryo-destructive research.

Frankly, it is hard to imagine circumstance (b) in a society such as ours. No candidate advocating the removal of legal protection against killing for any vulnerable group of innocent people other than unborn children would have a chance of winning a major office in our country. Even those who support the death penalty for first-degree murderers are not advocating policies that result in more than a million killings annually.

As Mother Teresa reminded us on all of her visits to the US, abortion tears at our national soul. It is a betrayal of our nation's founding principle that recognizes all human beings as "created equal" and "endowed with unalienable rights." What evil could be so grave and widespread as to constitute a "proportionate reason" to support candidates who would preserve and protect the abortion license and even extend it to publicly funded embryo-killing in our nation's labs?

Certainly policies on welfare, national security, the war in Iraq, Social Security or taxes, taken singly or in any combination, do not provide a proportionate reason to vote for a pro-abortion candidate.

Consider, for example, the war in Iraq. Although Pope John Paul II pleaded for an alternative to the use of military force to meet the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, he did not bind the conscience of Catholics to agree with his judgment on the matter, nor did he say that it would be morally wrong for Catholic soldiers to participate in the war. In line with the teaching of the catechism on "just war," he recognized that a final judgment of prudence as to the necessity of military force rests with statesmen, not with ecclesiastical leaders. Catholics may, in good conscience, support the use of force in Iraq or oppose it.

Abortion and embryo-destructive research are different. They are intrinsic and grave evils; no Catholic may legitimately support them. In the context of contemporary American social life, abortion and embryo-destructive research are disproportionate evils. They are the gravest human rights abuses of our domestic politics and what slavery was to the time of Lincoln. Catholics are called by the Gospel of Life to protect the victims of these human rights abuses. They may not legitimately abandon the victims by supporting those who would further their victimization.

Archbishop Myers heads the archdiocese of Newark. This column appeared in the Wall Street Journal on September 17.





Let's Make a Deal: Catholic Conscience and Compromise

By The Most Reverend **Charles J. Chaput**, O.F.M. Cap.

"If you sup with the devil, you'd better bring a long spoon."
— American folk saying

September is the month when election campaigns get serious. So it's also the traditional season for Catholic politicians to explain why their faith won't "dictate" their public actions.

Forty-four years ago this month (Sept. 12, 1960), John F. Kennedy delivered remarks to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association wherein he effectively severed his Catholic identity from his public service. It's OK to elect me president, he argued to a wary Protestant audience, because I won't let the Pope tell me what to do.

In pledging to put the "national interest" above "religious pressures or dictates," Kennedy created a template for a generation of Catholic candidates: Be American first; be Catholic second.

This was an easy calculus for Kennedy, who wore his faith loosely anyway. And it was certainly what the American public square, with its historic anti-Catholic prejudice, wanted to hear.

The Kennedy compromise seemed to work pretty well as long as the "religious pressures" faced by Catholic elected officials involved issues like divorce, federal aid to Catholic schools or diplomatic relations with the Holy See. Each of these issues was important, surely, but none involved life and death. None was jugular.

In 1973, by legalizing abortion on demand, the U.S. Supreme Court changed everything. The reason is simple: Abortion is different. Abortion kills.

The great Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke for the whole Christian tradition when he wrote: "Destruction of the embryo in the mother's womb is a violation of the right to live which God has bestowed upon this nascent life. To raise the question whether we are here concerned already with a human being or not is merely to confuse the issue. The simple fact is that God certainly intended to create a human being and that this nascent human being has been deliberately deprived of his life. And that is nothing but murder."

Resistance to abortion cuts across all religions. It's not a "Catholic" issue. In fact, it's finally not a religious issue at all, but a matter of human rights, reinforced by the irrefutable scientific fact that life begins at conception.

After 1973, because of *Roe v. Wade*, Catholic elected officials faced a choice. They could either work to change or at least mitigate permissive abortion laws, while at the same time trying to repopulate the courts with pro-life judges. Or they could abandon the unborn and look for a way to morally sanitize their decision. For those who chose the latter course, the leading Catholic political figure of the day stepped in to help them out.

Twenty years ago this month (Sept. 13, 1984), then-New York Governor Mario Cuomo delivered a speech at the University of Notre Dame that sought to give intellectual muscle to the Kennedy compromise. Cuomo, unlike Kennedy, was more educated about his faith. Cuomo, unlike Kennedy, had the benefit of seeing where Kennedy's Houston speech had finally led. But Cuomo, like Kennedy, was a man with presidential prospects. To what degree those prospects shaped the talk he gave — "Religious belief and public morality: a Catholic governor's perspective" — is unclear. But the results remain with us still.

Cuomo argued that "in our attempt to find a political answer to abortion — an answer beyond our private observance of Catholic morality" — he had concluded that "legal interdicting of abortion by either the federal government or the individual states is not a plausible possibility, and even if it could be obtained, it wouldn't work." He might privately oppose abortion but, in his view, he had no right to "impose" that belief on others.

In hindsight, Cuomo's speech is a *tour de force* of articulate misdirection. It refuses to acknowledge the teaching and formative power of the law. It implicitly equates unequal types of issues. It misuses the "seamless garment" metaphor. It effectively blames Catholics themselves for the abortion problem. It selectively misreads history.

In the end, Cuomo argued that "approval or rejection of legal restrictions on abortion should not be the exclusive litmus test of Catholic loyalty." With those words, he wrote the alibi for every "pro-choice" Catholic who has held public office since.

In deference to his understanding of pluralistic democracy, Governor Cuomo — despite his personal opposition to abortion — went on to resist repeated attempts to restrict abortion in his own state of New York. He also supported public funding of abortion for poor women.

His Catholic conscience apparently did kick in on selective issues though, whether "pluralism" liked it or not. Governor Cuomo vetoed legislative efforts to re-institute the death penalty — 12 times.

Next month, October, is Respect Life month. It's a good time to reflect on the meaning of the Kennedy-Cuomo legacy. In brief, it's OK to be Catholic in public service as long as you're willing to jettison what's inconveniently "Catholic."

That's not a compromise. That's a deal with the devil, and it has a balloon payment no nation, no public servant and no voter can afford.

Archbishop Chaput is archbishop of Denver, Colorado. This article originally appeared in The Denver Catholic Register, the newspaper of the archdiocese of Denver, reprinted by permission.



The Abortion Paradise of President Kerry, Catholic

By Austin Ruse

On his first day in office, President John F. Kerry will take Holy Communion from the hand of a Jesuit priest at Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown. Shortly thereafter he will retire to his new office in the White House and proceed to carry out his “personally opposed but” policy toward the deaths of millions of unborn children.

Like President Clinton, by his words and by his record, President Kerry’s essential and unchanged core belief is the abortion license. Unlike Clinton, who said abortion should be safe, legal and rare, Kerry makes no such cautionary assertions. With the stroke of a pen he will strike down the Mexico City Policy, thereby allowing millions of American dollars to fund abortion advocacy and even abortions themselves in foreign countries. The policy ensures that American money is not used to coerce foreign governments to change their laws on abortion. US money has also been used actually to perform abortions.

But that is not all.

Like Clinton, on his first day in office President Kerry will likely reverse federal regulations under Title X which forbids abortion referrals by federal employees.

Also like Clinton, he is likely to issue an executive order mandating abortions be performed in military hospitals. Again, like Clinton, he will reverse the ban on funding for fetal tissue transplants.

But he will not limit himself to reinstating various Clinton-era enormities. He will initiate some of his own.

With a stroke of a pen he will strike down all federal restrictions on American money going to support embryo-destructive research. The flood gates will be open for millions of dollars to be appropriated for this purpose.

He will begin to undo all and sundry tiny advances for life that were effected by President Bush. By executive order, President Bush has allowed federal funds to medically assist unborn children through a program called SCHIP. SCHIP funding for the unborn takes the rather dramatic step of federally recognizing the humanity of the unborn child.

Under President Bush, the Justice Department has stopped prosecuting abortion protestors under the so-called FACE Act, whereby those saying the Rosary too close to an abortion clinic were persecuted by federal lawyers. There is little doubt that a Kerry Justice Department will go right back to this practice.

Where he has been able, generally in Oregon, President Bush has worked to stop the advance of legalized suicide. He has even used Justice Department lawyers in this task. It is likely that President Kerry will reverse this trend and actually begin to assist other states to strike down laws on assisted suicide.

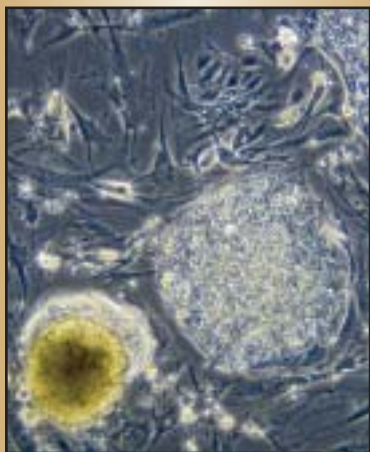
In the next four years, up to three Supreme Court Justices are likely to retire. Kerry has made it abundantly clear that he will only appoint judges who explicitly support *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* that have given us not just abortion on demand through all nine months, but in recent rulings abortion after birth. A leading judicial scholar in Washington DC says if this happens, we will be stuck with *Roe* and *Doe* for another 40 years at least, an entire generation. At today’s abortions rates, that’s another 52 million dead.

In the early days of his administration, it is expected Kerry will also refund the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), a UN agency that has lost its US funding after being cited by the US and British governments as being complicit in coercive population control programs in China. UNFPA is the leading UN agency in promoting not just population control but also the spread of abortion in reluctant countries. President Bush has halted UNFPA funding for the past three years.

Under President Kerry the international abortion scene will come alive. What I mean are UN conferences used to promote abortion. Under Clinton, there seemed to be one of these a year: the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Women’s Conference, the Rio Conference on the Environment and many others. Clinton negotiators worked assiduously to make abortion a universally recognized human right. Under Bush these conferences simply went away. Abortion proponents realized that with a strong pro-life US, their goals not only would not advance but might fall back. It is certain that these conferences would begin again, with a vengeance.

President Kerry will lie down each night and arise each morning thinking about how to advance the right to abortion, embryo-destructive research, euthanasia and a whole host of anti-life measures that his pro-abortion advisers are even now dreaming up.

Austin Ruse is president of the Washington D.C.-based Culture of Life Foundation. He is best known for his work in defense of life at the United Nations.



“PRESIDENT KERRY WILL LIE DOWN EACH NIGHT AND AWAKE EACH MORNING THINKING HOW TO ADVANCE THE RIGHT TO ABORTION”

A human stem cell



“Abolish the United Nations Population Fund”

Interview by John Mallon with Steven W. Mosher (photo)

“Finally, careful consideration should be given to the danger of this power passing into the hands of those public authorities who care little for the precepts of the moral law... Who will prevent public authorities from favoring those contraceptive methods which they consider more effective? Should they regard this as necessary, they may even impose their use on everyone.”

—Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* 17

Steven W. Mosher, president of the non-profit Population Research Institute, is widely recognized as one of the world’s leading authorities on the population question. Mosher came face-to-face with the nightmare of population control when he was the first American social scientist to live in rural China in 1979-80. What Mosher witnessed in China shocked him deeply. He saw pregnant women hunted down by population control police and subjected to forced abortion for violating China’s one-child-per-family law, women mutilated through forced sterilization, and women forced to endure life-threatening forms of birth control.

Mosher returned to his studies at Stanford University and wrote about the population control horrors he witnessed in China. Bowing to demands of the Chinese government, Stanford expelled Steve Mosher rather than grant him the Ph. D. he had earned. He was named president of the Population Research Institute (PRI) in 1996 by Father Paul Marx, O.S.B., Ph.D., who founded the organization in 1989.

What’s at stake in the current presidential election?

STEVEN MOSHER: What is at stake in the current presidential election is precisely the sanctity of human life and the integrity of the family. I think the positions of the candidates on the life issues are well known. John Kerry is in favor of abortion. George Bush is self-avowedly pro-life.

As far as the integrity of the family is concerned, by that I mean that couples have the God-given right to decide for themselves the number and spacing of their children. I think that President Bush respects that right. I think that John Kerry by his votes in favor of population control programs over the past 20 years in the U.S. Senate has clearly ceded those rights to government. That a very dangerous thing. We see in the case of China a government which has expropriated the people’s right to decide for themselves the number and spacing of their children, and we see the terrible crimes against women and children that result from that position. So I think there’s a very clear choice that the voters have between a candidate who is pro-natal in the broadest sense of the word, is open to new life, and a candidate who is anti-natal and opposed to new life.

You’ve spoken out forcefully against the methods of the United Nations Population Fund. What is the problem with what they’re doing?

MOSHER: The problem with what the United Nations Population Fund does is this: First of all it misrepresents what it is about. This is the United Nations Population Fund, after all. It is not the United Nations Maternal Health Fund, it is not the United Nations Pre-Natal Care Fund.

It is an organization that was set up in 1968 for the purpose of reducing fertility rates around the world, and over the past three and a half decades it has not deviated from that purpose. To give you one example, the UN Population Fund recently offered the government of Pakistan \$250 million in aid in return for the insertion of sex education programs in all of the primary and secondary schools throughout Pakistan — sex education programs which would not only provide — impose — sex education on young and innocent children but would also attempt to instill in them norms of small family size — to instill in them anti-natal attitudes.

The UNFPA demanded control over this curriculum and control over the budget of these programs. The government of Pakistan finally said no, that they did not want to cede control of their schools over to the UN Population Fund.

The time has come to abolish the UN Population Fund. We have been working for several years at not only defunding the UN Population Fund, but taking the moneys thus freed and putting them into child survival programs so that we can save the lives of children rather than focus our efforts on trying to prevent them from coming into existence.

What would a Kerry presidency mean?

MOSHER: I think the first day of a Kerry presidency would fairly closely resemble the first day of the presidency of William Jefferson Clinton. You recall that on January 23 of 1993 he did several things which set back that cause of life and family. One of the things he did was authorize the release of funds to the United Nations Population Fund.

These funds had been held up by the first Bush administration and the Reagan administration on the grounds that the United Nations Population Fund was participating in a program of forced abortion and forced sterilization in China. Clinton overturned that overnight.

He also did away with the Mexico City Policy which forbids US funds from going to any organization that promotes or performs or lobbies for the legalization of abortion. This was a policy that, I think, had the broad support of the American people, the majority of whom did not want their money going to abortion-performing groups overseas.

Clinton did this in the past, and Kerry — if the future is a Kerry presidency — would do precisely the same thing. This would set back human rights. Obviously it would set back the rights of women considerably in countries around the world. It would not be good for their general health or the health of their families either.

More information may be found at PRI’s Website at www.pop.org.



“It’s Still God, Country and Family”

Interview with Ambassador Ray Flynn

Flynn. Flynn, the former mayor of Boston, was and remains a pro-life Democrat.

Ambassador Flynn, you have been a prominent and well-respected pro-life political leader in Boston and the nation for many years. What should Catholic voters be thinking about as the national election approaches?

AMBASSADOR RAY FLYNN: As the US presidential election approaches, the question that the media usually asks is, “Are you better off today than you were four years ago?” As the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has responded, *this is the wrong question*. The question should be, “How can we — all of us — especially the weak and vulnerable — be better off in the years ahead?”

Lay Catholics must not abandon their responsibility as Americans to act on our faith in political life. Our Catholic tradition teaches us that responsible citizenship is a virtue and participation in the political process is a moral obligation.

You have been around politics a long time. You worked in many campaigns. What are some of the most offensive political statements that you have heard this year?

FLYNN: That four Massachusetts judges (not the people — not even the Massachusetts Legislature) changed the definition of marriage. Outrageous.

Another was when U.S. Senator John Kerry said he would only appoint pro-choice judges.

Another was when some Democratic U.S. senators said if you are a faithful Catholic lawyer, this disqualifies you from serving on the U.S. Supreme Court. This is anti-Catholicism at its worst.

Also, when pro-life Democrats were denied a role at the Democratic National Convention in Boston.

And, when bishops and priests have been photographed with pro-choice politicians receiving an honor from the Church. This creates the impression with Catholic voters that the life issue is just not that important. Bishops must exercise more order and discipline or the chaos and mistrust in the Church will continue.

And, when Catholic politicians say, “I am personally opposed to abortion, but I will not impose my religious beliefs on others.” As if issues like abortion and traditional marriage were not rooted in the common law.

Finally, when it is said that it is an act of discrimination to want to protect the sacred institution of marriage.

You have been a courageous and oftentimes the lone lay Catholic voice defending the Church. You were ridiculed

for this. Whom should Catholic leaders support in this presidential election?

FLYNN: The Catholic Church as an institution does not and cannot endorse candidates for political office, but Massachusetts’ Catholic bishops and the Massachusetts Catholic Conference have asked me and my organization, Catholic Citizenship, to help register and encourage lay Catholics to become more politically active.

Catholic Citizenship is a national lay political and education organization. It also cannot endorse candidates for public office, but its members certainly can. Catholic Citizenship positions must be consistent with our Catholic faith. As an organization, we are neither liberal nor conservative, Democrat nor Republican, but faithful Catholics and loyal Americans. Some of our members are Republican and others are Democrats. But many Catholics are like me, registered Democrats, but support the person who best reflects our Catholic values. As I often say, “It is more important for me to be a good American and a good Catholic, than a good Democrat or Republican.”

Without question, Catholic political influence in the US is at an all-time low. Even Catholic politicians do not pay much attention to Church teachings. Unlike other religious organizations and groups, we do not have the resources or organization to effectively fight back and advance our important message. I can’t imagine Jewish groups, the N.A.A.C.P., or gay and lesbian groups putting up with that kind of criticism that the Catholic Church receives from the media. They shouldn’t, and neither should we. So what do we do?

I recently returned from a six-day visit to Ohio, and encouraged and spoke to thousands of Catholics and respected Irish Catholic organizations like the Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.), to become more active in the national election. Catholics must carry the values of our Catholic faith in the voting booth, as the Knights of Columbus recently and effectively proclaimed. We must build on these efforts.

The Catholic approach to faithful citizenship begins with moral principles, which come from the Scriptures and Catholic social teaching. In this election year, first and foremost, there is a contrast between the two major political parties on the life issue. The Republican Party is pro-life and the Democrat Party is not. It is essential for Catholics to speak out on this central life issue. As the Church has said, “There must be a place at the table for children destroyed before they are born; for the hungry and those who lack health care; for families who need decent work; for wages, education, and hope for the future.” How can the poor and vulnerable have a real place at the table where policies and priorities are set? How can we protect our children, stabilize the sacred institution of marriage and strengthen the family? These are the right questions for Catholics to answer and work for change.

Ray Flynn is the former US ambassador to the Vatican.

A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE CATHOLIC PEOPLE OF TEXAS AND CIMARRON COUNTIES IN OKLAHOMA ON OUR MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY

By Father Stephen V. Hamilton, S.T.L.



Father Stephen Hamilton is representative of the many good young priests now working in parishes in America. He was ordained a priest in 1999 for the archdiocese of Oklahoma City. From 1995-2000 he studied at the North American College in Rome. He is currently pastor of St. Peter Church, Guymon, Oklahoma; Good Shepherd Church, Boise City, Oklahoma; and Sacred Heart Church, Hooker, Oklahoma. This Pastoral Letter may be also

found on his Blog (Weblog) at <http://gloriapatri.blogspot.com>

—The Editor

INTRODUCTION

The peoples of the world are in the midst of an escalating battle that raises almost daily questions about the morality of so-called advances in society. Indeed, with the good knowledge science provides us, and the power technology places in our hands, it seems that anything that can be done is done. Unfortunately, the Natural Law, placed in the very order of creation by God, is often ignored as some assume that the ability to do something is what establishes that action's morality. And still others take no care whatsoever to evaluate the morality of their actions.

In the past many years legalized abortion has dulled the conscience of our nation as more than 40 million babies have been sacrificed to the idolatrous god of choice. This sin against the most basic and fundamental of all rights — the right to life — has had tragic consequences for our nation. It has brought with it a host of other moral questions and undeniable evils.

I am convinced, too, that the scandal of sexual abuse and its cover-up in the Church has been very pleasing to Satan. The voice of Holy Mother Church is the very voice of Christ (cf. Lk. 10:16), and therefore the strongest of moral witnesses.

However, with the moral credibility of her leaders eroded, many find it much easier to disregard the Church and her teaching. Thus, in the past few months, it has been very sad to watch the confusion and scandal over those who would both claim to be Catholic, presenting themselves for Holy Communion, and who would avow, consistently and publicly, positions inconsistent with Catholic Faith.

I am aware that this has caused much confusion for you too. Indeed, there have even been some confusing words heard within our own parishes on this matter.

By means of this pastoral letter to you, Christ's faithful of Texas and Cimarron Counties in Oklahoma, I, your Pastor, wish to reflect upon Christ's teaching and the moral responsibility we each have toward our society. I have been moved to publish this letter following the good example of many bishops and priests who have sought to teach the flock in a similar way. To them I owe a debt of gratitude for the inspiration and the ideas which follow.

DUAL CITIZENSHIP

By human birth we become the citizens of our respective nations (in a wider sense, citizens of the earth) and by Baptism

we become citizens of Heaven (cf. Eph. 2:19). We must never lose sight that our focus and goal should ultimately be eternity and the kingdom that does not end; however, we must also care for this world, for we have been made its stewards by God who created it and called it good (cf. Gn. 1:26-31). The Catholic Church considers the proper development of this world and our dedication to our homeland to be a virtue, the virtue of patriotism. This civic virtue flows from the honor we give to our parents (filial piety) and those who have gone before us in this land.

The duty and moral responsibility to foster the good of all society should come as no surprise. How many times in the Old Testament does God instruct His People Israel of their moral responsibility to foster a world that is more just toward all? This is the reason for God's command to Israel to provide for widows, orphans, foreigners, exiles, and the poor (cf. Ex. 22:21-23). In the New Covenant, Jesus Christ does not revoke this moral responsibility to society. Rather, he extends the boundaries of this duty and calls his disciples to view all persons as brothers and sisters. For what we do to the least among us, we do to the Lord himself (cf. Mt. 25:40)! In fact, what we do to the least among us will be, Christ teaches, deserving of eternal reward or eternal punishment. The Second Vatican Council teaches that just as surely as it would be mistaken to disregard our earthly duties because we seek the city which is to come, the Kingdom of Heaven, "it is no less mistaken to think that we may immerse ourselves in earthly activities as if these ... were utterly foreign to religion, and religion were nothing more than the fulfillment of acts of worship and the observance of a few moral obligations. One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives" (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, December 7, 1965, n. 43a).

THE LEAST AMONG US

We rightly ask ourselves, who is the least among us? How do we best provide for the needs of the least among us? The unborn, the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the sick, the dying, the imprisoned, the uneducated, and those unjustly deprived of liberty are all examples of the least of our brothers and sisters. And we routinely seek to offer them help and to create a world where they have a voice. While there is legitimate debate about the best social policy for reducing poverty, increasing jobs, providing shelter, education, and health care, there are other injustices that are so evil that there can be no legitimate debate and Christ's faithful cannot remain silent so long as such evil persists.

We must recognize that there is a hierarchy of social issues. Certain issues depend upon others and, therefore, rank after

more primary or fundamental issues. Among the issues of our day, the right to life is the most basic and fundamental human rights issue. The Declaration of Independence, by no means intended to be a religious document, makes just such a claim: “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Without first securing the protection of all human life, it makes no sense to discuss how best to provide for the progress of that life. If life is not first secured, it is pointless to consider other issues. The Declaration of Independence would be severely weakened, if not rendered totally meaningless, if the order of unalienable rights was listed as liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and life. There is no liberty or pursuit of happiness to be had if we do not first recognize that the “inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2273). To put it simply, what kind of guarantee is excellent health care and education if whether one is allowed to live remains a question?

The Church’s teaching is consistent and clear: the deliberate and direct killing of an innocent human person is intrinsically evil, always wrong, and, therefore, can never be justified (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2258). The issues of abortion, euthanasia, and embryonic stem cell research (which destroys the human embryo) are just such intrinsic evils (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 2271 & 2277). I firmly believe, with all due respect for the many worthy needs of those around us, considering the absolutely weak, vulnerable, and silent status of the unborn, that it is the unborn human person who is the primary example of the least of our brothers and sisters. Our Holy Father has taught us, “[a]mong all the crimes which can be committed against life, procured abortion has characteristics making it particularly serious and deplorable” (Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae*, *The Gospel of Life*, March 25, 1995, n. 58a). To be Catholic, and truly in communion with Christ Jesus, requires that we never formally cooperate with intrinsic evil. In addition, as we must speak the truth about abortion, we cannot fail to clearly proclaim to all those impacted by abortion and its aftermath, that there is hope, healing, and forgiveness by the abundant mercy of God.

THE FORMATION OF CONSCIENCE

The human conscience needs special consideration due to the moral confusion of our society. Too often, the appeals to conscience made by many people are really more properly an appeal to individual opinion, or still worse, an appeal to a spirit of disobedience which refuses to recognize undeniable truth. The conscience of the human person is not an opinion or a feeling. Rather, it is the voice of God within us which assists the human person in evaluating and making a judgment to choose good and avoid evil. In the weakened condition of mankind, caused by original sin, the conscience must be properly formed by the truth. Once properly informed with the truth – and only then – the judgment of one’s conscience may be reasonably followed (however this does not necessarily mean one’s conscience is always free from error). The conscience is positively formed by recourse to the Natural Law, the revelation of God, and the teaching of the Church.

A particular item of moral confusion in our day is the appeal that many people make to the issues of capital punishment and

war. Capital punishment and war are often presented on the same plane as abortion and euthanasia. But such is not the case and cannot be supported by Church teaching. Though it is true that capital punishment and war should be last resorts, and “can rarely be justified, they are not intrinsically evil; neither practice includes the direct intention of killing innocent human beings” (The Most Rev. Raymond L. Burke, Archbishop of St. Louis, *Pastoral Letter on Our Civic Responsibility for the Common Good*, October 1, 2004, n. 30). The constant teaching of the Catholic Church has always recognized, and continues to recognize, the principle of legitimate self-defense. This principle affirms that individuals have the right to protect the good of their own lives and nations have the right, even a duty, to protect the lives of their citizens. This principle is not an exception to the intrinsic evil of deliberate and direct killing of innocent human life. Rather, it recognizes that in protecting human life, individuals and nations are not guilty of murder even if the aggressor is stopped with lethal force (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 2263-2267). Capital punishment and war fall within the realm of legitimate self-defense. We can and should long for the day when the standards of prison security we enjoy in this country will be found throughout the world, thus removing all cause for recourse to capital punishment. We can and should long for the day when the peace of civil order will be so stable that mankind may not need recourse to war. But to be absolutely clear, capital punishment and war, though they should be avoided, can be morally justified and are not intrinsically evil. Therefore, one who would treat capital punishment and war as life issues equal to abortion and euthanasia cannot reasonably claim to have a properly formed conscience or to enjoy the support of authentic Catholic teaching.

CONCLUSION

We have been given a high calling. The challenge to be God’s People in the midst of the darkness of the world carries with it many questions and problems. But we have been set in the midst of God’s creation, illumined by the light of Christ, so that our light may shine brightly. What good is light if it does not illuminate the path? What sense would it make to light a lamp and cover it up (cf. Mt. 5:14-16)? No, the light of our faith must shine to transform the world, bringing it more and more into conformity with God’s plan. Therefore, though our high calling is not without problems, the proper response can never be to fail to engage the world. Rather, we must always work to do the Lord’s will here and now.

My prayer is that these words of mine, insignificant though they may be, will be of help as we exercise our moral responsibilities in the upcoming elections. I firmly believe that my duty to you as your Pastor demands that I teach the Catholic Faith with clarity. Rest assured that my words are not intended to limit your freedom, but to help with the proper formation of conscience so that, evaluating the questions of our day, you may more joyfully choose the Truth, that it may set you free (cf. Jn. 8:31-32).

Through the intercession of Holy Mary, who brought to light God’s own Son, I ask God’s blessings upon each of you and your families, and I assure you of a place in my prayers and a remembrance in the Holy Mass.

Given at the parish of St. Peter, Guymon, Oklahoma, on this 3rd day of October, “Respect Life Sunday,” in the Year of Our Lord 2004.

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE COMMUNION CONTROVERSY

By Thomas A. Szyszkiwicz

Catholics, politics and Communion have been major questions in this year's U.S. presidential elections. There are two separate but related issues at play here. The first is whether or not politicians who vote pro-abortion may receive Communion and the second is whether Catholics who vote for pro-abortion politicians commit mortal sin or not. Here's a history of the issues.

2002 - Nov. 24 On this, the Solemnity of Christ the King, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issues "A Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life." The document addresses the issue of relativism and prioritizes the order in which issues considered in the political realm must be considered by the Catholic involved in political life.

2003 - Dec. 4 The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reports – two days after the announcement that he had been named archbishop of St. Louis – that Bishop Raymond Burke of La Crosse, Wis., had written private letters to three politicians in his diocese warning them not to present themselves for Communion because of their public stand on abortion. One is State Sen. Julie Lassa (D-Stevens Point), who leaked the letter, and another is suspected to be U.S. Rep. David Obey, also a Democrat. Obey later reveals in an article in the Jesuit magazine *America* that he was one of the three. The third is not made public.

2004 - Jan. 8 Bishop Burke issues a Notification in *The Catholic Times*, his diocesan newspaper, telling Catholic politicians, "Therefore, in accord with the norm of can. 915, Catholic legislators, who are members of the faithful of the Diocese of La Crosse and who continue to support procured abortion or euthanasia may not present themselves to receive Holy Communion. They are not to be admitted to Holy Communion, should they present themselves, until such time as they publicly renounce their support of these most unjust practices." He also issued a pastoral letter on the subject of Catholic participation in political life.

Even though the Notification was published on Jan. 8 when Bishop Burke is only administrator of the diocese, it still had the force of law since it was dated on Nov. 23, 2003, a little more than a week before he was named to St. Louis.

That Nov. 23 also happened to be the Solemnity of Christ the King. Sources said the bishop had received questions from his clergy about how to implement the Doctrinal Note from the CDF which had been published the previous year.

Jan. 14 Archbishop Alfred Hughes of New Orleans issues a pastoral letter telling pro-abortion Catholic politicians to refrain from receiving Communion. However, he does not invoke Canon 915 telling priests and others to refrain from giving it to them.

Jan. 29 Only days after he was installed in St. Louis, Archbishop Burke tells a reporter that Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) should not present himself for

Communion in the archdiocese of St. Louis, and if Kerry was in the archbishop's Communion line, he "would give him a blessing or something" but not give him the Eucharist. This sets off the "Kerry Communion watch" and photo-ops, like his ski trip in Idaho when he showed up for Mass late and in ski clothes.

April 23 Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, held a press conference to present the new instruction, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*. During the course of questioning, he is asked about the U.S. election and whether or not Sen. Kerry should be denied Communion. He declined to answer the question noting that it's up to the U.S. bishops to deal with that. Reporter Greg Burke with Fox News then asked him if a priest should refuse Communion to a pro-abortion Catholic politician. Cardinal Arinze offered this response: "Yes. If he should not receive, he should not be given."

That comment from an African curial cardinal seen as a *papabile* who is known to speak his mind, sent U.S. bishops scrambling. Bishop Wilton Gregory, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a press release that ignored the cardinal's second comment and concentrated on the first. He also said a task force of bishops was looking into the issue.

Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington, D.C., the leader of that task force, speculated that his brother was not speaking in his official capacity.

April 29 Bishop Joseph Galante, the former coadjutor of Dallas and now the ordinary of Camden, N.J., tells Gov. Paul McGreevey that if he's planning on attending his installation the following day to forget about receiving Communion. The governor is an ardent supporter of abortion and had recently signed legislation using state funds to do embryonic stem cell research. Later, it is revealed that the governor had been more than unfaithful to his wife – he had had some sordid affair with another man.

May 1 Bishop Michael Sheridan of Colorado Springs, Colo., issues a statement telling Catholics in his diocese that anyone who votes for pro-abortion politicians needs to go to Confession and repent before receiving Communion. Media reports get confused and say that the bishop will deny Communion to them. The bishop later denied that as something impossible to do since voting is a private act.

During this month, various bishops make statements on the issue. Some, like Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, clarify what Catholic teaching is without pronouncing on the issue of denying Communion. Others, like Cardinals McCarrick and Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles, say they will not turn the Eucharist into a "weapon." Most, however, are silent and none ventures where Archbishop Burke did.

June The June meeting of the USCCB is supposed to be a retreat and focus on whether or not the U.S. should hold a synod, a plenary council or a regular USCCB meeting to address the roots of the clerical sex abuse scandal. However,

two issues come to dominate the meeting – whether or not they will authorize another audit of their dioceses to see if they are in conformity with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People which they had passed in Dallas in 2002, and politicians and Communion.

Cardinal McCarrick reports that he had consulted Cardinal Ratzinger on the subject and that the latter had written to him privately to advise him. Cardinal McCarrick summarized the letter, but did not provide copies for his brothers. Based on an interim report issued by the task force, the bishops issue a statement saying that abortion is inherently evil and that Catholic politicians should oppose it. They also state that pastoral situations should be dealt with by individual bishops as circumstances warrant.

July 2 Sandro Magister, the dean of Italian Vatican journalists, gets a leaked copy of Cardinal Ratzinger's letter to Cardinal McCarrick and publishes it in *L'Espresso*. The text of the letter shows to some that Cardinal McCarrick was not completely forthcoming when he told the bishops at the June meeting, "I would emphasize that Cardinal Ratzinger clearly leaves to us as teachers, pastors and leaders **WHETHER** to pursue this path [of denying Communion to pro-abortion politicians]. The Holy See has repeatedly expressed its confidence in our roles as bishops and pastors."

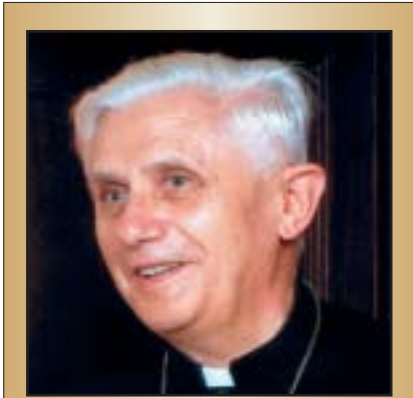
Cardinal Ratzinger adds an addendum at the end of his letter that will prove incendiary in the American political climate. It reads: "N.B. A Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in evil, and so unworthy to present himself for Holy Communion, if he were to deliberately vote for a candidate precisely because of the candidate's permissive stand on abortion and/or euthanasia. When a Catholic does not share a candidate's stand in favor of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons."

Summer More bishops make statements. Again, they are divided along the lines of either re-emphasizing Church teaching or saying they will not use the Eucharist as "a political weapon." Still, the majority are silent.

Father Andrew Greeley, the sociologist from the archdiocese of Chicago, picks up on a two-sentence *Nota Bene* at the end of Cardinal Ratzinger's letter and writes in the *New York Daily News* that the Vatican is allowing voters to vote for pro-abortion politicians as long as they do so for reasons other than their pro-abortion stand. While Greeley's reasoning is roundly criticized in orthodox Catholic circles, the N.B. remains hidden to the secular world.

Catholic Answers, an apologetics group in San Diego, comes out with a voter's guide for Catholics and advertises it

with a full-page ad in *USA Today*. Controversy erupts in the Midwest when some parishes ask their diocesan offices if it is OK to distribute them and the reply comes back that, according to the USCCB, it is not. The bishops' conference claims that the Catholic Answers guide is too partisan and runs afoul of IRS regulations.



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—CARDINAL RATZINGER**

August 4 In an attempt at a province-wide statement, three bishops of the Southeast issue a letter stating that politicians who obstinately persist in the manifest grave sin of voting for abortion are not to present themselves for Communion and they are to be denied if they do. Led by Archbishop John Donoghue of Atlanta, Bishops Robert Baker of Charleston, SC, and Peter Jugis of Charlotte, NC, join him in making the declaration. The bishop of Savannah, GA., is also supposed to sign on, but at the last minute, he refuses.

August 10 Retired Corpus Christi Bishop Rene Gracida criticizes a questionnaire sent to President Bush and Senator Kerry by the USCCB as being too broad and vague. "For instance, there is no moral equivalence between the issue of abortion-on-demand and farm subsidies," he wrote. "The Questionnaire should have been much shorter and should have been limited to questions on those issues on which there is a clear unequivocal teaching of the Church, e.g., abortion, cloning, assisted suicide, embryonic stem-cell research and marriage." The questionnaire was later withdrawn by the USCCB.

September The Detroit Free Press becomes the first secular paper to pick up on Cardinal Ratzinger's *Nota Bene*. The headline reads, "Catholics allowed pro-choice vote." The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* talks with Archbishop Burke on the subject and reports that he has "softened" his stand that people who vote for pro-abortion politicians commit a grave moral act and need to confess. However, sources tell ITV that the archbishop is irritated with how they mangled his words, and he refuses to speak to the press about the issue until he has published a pastoral letter on Oct. 1.

Archbishop John Myers of Newark writes a column for the *Wall Street Journal* saying that there is no issue today that can outweigh the millions of deaths caused by abortion and embryonic stem cell research in order to give a voter "proportionate reasons" to vote for a pro-abortion candidate. Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver writes a column blasting the Kennedy-Cuomo "personally opposed, but..." position.

Bishop John Yanta of Amarillo, Texas, tells his flock that if a pro-abortion politician does not change his or her stand after pastoral discussions, then that person should be denied Communion.