

Your Favorite Page

Heard on street corners in 1955:

'I'll tell you one thing, if things keep going the way they are, it's going to be impossible to buy a week's groceries for \$10.00.'

'Have you seen the new cars coming out next year? It won't be long before \$1, 000.00 will only buy a used one.'

'If cigarettes keep going up in price, I'm going to quit. 20 cents a pack is ridiculous.'

'Did you hear the post office is thinking about charging 7 cents just to mail a letter?'

'If they raise the minimum wage to \$1.00, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store.'

'When I first started driving, who would have thought gas would some-day cost 25 cents a gallon. Guess we'd be better off leaving the car in the garage.'

'I'm afraid to send my kids to the movies any more. Ever since they let Clark Gable get by with saying DAMN in GONE WITH THE WIND, it seems every new movie has either HELL or DAMN in it.'

'I read the other day where some scientist thinks it's possible to put a man on the moon by the end of the century. They even have some fellows they call astronauts preparing for it down in Texas.'

'Did you see where some baseball player just signed a contract for \$50,000 a year just to play ball? It wouldn't surprise me if someday they'll be making more than the President.'

'I never thought I'd see the day all our kitchen appliances would be electric. They are even making electric typewriters now.'

'It's too bad things are so tough nowadays. I see where a few married women are having to work to make ends meet.'

'It won't be long before young couples are going to have to hire someone to watch their kids so they can both work.'

'I'm afraid the Volkswagen car is going to open the door to a whole lot of foreign business.'

'Thank goodness I won't live to see the day when the Government takes half our income in taxes. I sometimes wonder if we are electing the best people to Government.'

'The drive-in restaurant is convenient in nice weather, but I seriously doubt they will ever catch on.'

'There is no sense going on short trips anymore for a weekend it costs nearly \$2.00 a night to stay in a hotel.'

'No one can afford to be sick anymore. At \$15.00 a day in the hospital, it's too rich for my blood.'

Great Human Questions.....

Can you cry under water?

How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?

Why do you have to 'put your two cents in'... but it's only a 'penny for your thoughts'? Where's that extra penny going to?

Why does a round pizza come in a square box?

What disease did cured ham actually have?

How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?

Why is it that people say they 'slept like a baby' when babies wake up like every two hours?

If a deaf person has to go to court, is it still called a hearing?

Why are you IN a movie, but you're ON TV?

Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?

Why do doctors leave the room while you change? They're going to see you naked anyway.

If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a stupid song about him?

Can a hearse carrying a corpse drive in the carpool lane?

If the professor on Gilligan's Island can make a radio out of a coconut, why can't he fix a hole in a boat?

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?

If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?

Do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune?

Why did you just try singing the two songs above?

Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?

Save the Earth... it's the only planet with chocolate!

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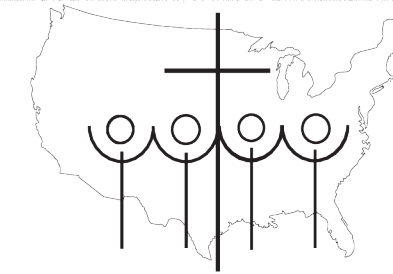
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October 8, 2010

Greetings, my friend!

So here's the burning question of the day as I write this: is Coach Kelly the right man for Notre Dame football?? I can't believe the boo-birds are already on his case....yee-zow, give us a break!!

Anyway, the lovely season of Fall is upon us. Some trees are starting to turn around campus, but predictions are for a late Fall because of the odd weather over the summer. I pray for all of you out West who are getting slammed by the heat, and those of you in the East and upper Midwest who are getting deluged with the rains. Seems like this has been a Summer and Fall of extremes.

The response to the last newsletter reflection (Priesthood of the Faithful) was amazing. I knew there was a lot of angst "out there", but it may be deeper than I thought judging from the e-mails and snail mail letters I received. Some folks wondered if I was bucking for a new job or early retirement...but so far, no repercussions from above!! Don't know why there would be: everything is right from "the book" and from our personal experience.

Many also liked the idea of some reflections on the pressing national issues, but there were some pleas for balance. I assure you that I will do my best on that. It helps to make the distinction between moral issues and policy...I reflect on that inside. As Catholics, we have certain moral values we profess as a Church. It's the policy issues that get folks unbalanced!

NOVEMBER APPEAL

The month of November has traditionally been a time for the Catholic Church to remember our loved ones who have been born into eternal life. It's a poignant month for all of us.

If you would like to have the priests, brothers, and seminarians of Holy Cross wrap their prayers around yours, jot the names of your beloved dead on the enclosed prayer list. It will be placed in the chapel of Moreau Seminary.

No offering is required. Should you desire to include one, it will be used for the needs of Holy Cross House and the Seminary.

Because this issue of *Links* will be in your hands before the November elections, I opted to reflect on our responsibility as voters. It's not the most exiting reading (my co-workers said "Booooring!"), but I hope it will trim down some of the knee-jerk reactions and judgments we're all prone to making.

One CSC has died since the last newsletter, and that is **Rev. Joseph W. Koma, CSC**. He died the evening of September 9th at the age of 83. Joe was a character. A cigar-chomping curmudgeon, he was a hard guy to live with, but underneath there was a loving pastor and gentle man.... the people he served just loved the guy. He spent his years of ministry in parish assignments, mostly in Indiana and Michigan.

Big doings on October 16th, 2010. On that day in Rome, **Bro. André Bessette CSC** will be canonized as Holy Cross's first saint. Check your ETWN listings...they will televise the proceedings. This is an exciting time for Holy Cross as a whole, but more so for the Brothers of Holy Cross. It's an affirmation that their way of life is truly a road to sanctity. Boy, I've known some great ones in my time in Holy Cross: Bros.

Protase, Ludger, Clarence, Roderic, James Edwin, Jim Lakofka, Ron Whelan, Ed Luther -- God bless them all.

Alrighty.....space is running out. As you look at the turning leaves of Fall, think of God as a mad artist, splashing color all over the earth's palette. God loves to gift us with the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of Autumn.

Pray faithfully, laugh often, love deeply!

RESPONSIBLE, THOUGHTFUL CITIZENSHIP

The up-coming election has the possibility of profoundly shaping our national policies for years to come, to say nothing of the effects on states and localities. There are clear and distinct differences between the two major political parties, and the conglomeration of groups known as the “Tea Party” adds an unusual third dimension into the mix.

In the last issue of *Cross Links*, I asked folks if they wanted to read anything the American bishops or the Vatican have said about pressing national issues. The response indicates that folks desire some really thoughtful discourse and reflection, instead of the simplistic sound bites, the negativity, and the appeals to emotion that characterize election years.

The thing that scares me most about political discourse in our country (and hence elections) is how we too often tend to favor reading material, media, and politicians who reinforce our own personal views. Because of original sin, we are by nature selfish people. We tend to focus on our needs and wants to the exclusion of others’ needs. “Not in my backyard” takes precedence over local, state, or national needs. There’s a tendency to not think things through; emotion takes the place of thoughtfulness. For example, when is the last time you saw a thoughtful political ad on TV?

In addition, I am sensing a pervasive problem in the political world, and in the Church as well. Namely, the powers-that-be are using 20th century methods to solve 21st century problems. The world of 2010 is vastly different than the world of 2000. Instead of trying new approaches to new realities, refuge is sought in the old ways and old theories. It’s like trying to fit a size 8 shoe onto a size 14 foot! I swear some of the political stuff I’ve seen on TV was used back in the 1990’s! Only the names have changed. And the hierarchy is still reluctant to give up the “pray, pay, and obey” model of governance as opposed to real leadership.

Where, oh where, is the needed thoughtfulness?! Sociological research –

plus my own experience and yours – suggests that Catholics who vote Republican have no special discomfort with those aspects of the Republican platform that are contrary to Catholic social teaching, and the same can be said for Catholic Democrats. I’m not saying this is right or wrong – it is what it is. But casting a vote solely because a candidate is Democrat or Republican or Tea Party is not responsible, thoughtful citizenship.

Here’s what the American bishops have to say about this: *The Church calls for a different kind of political engagement: one shaped by the moral convictions of well-formed consciences. The Catholic call to faithful citizenship affirms the importance of political participation and insists that public service is a worthy vocation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. When necessary, our participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths.* [emphasis mine]. *We are called to bring together our principles and our political choices, our values and our votes, to help build a better world.* (Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, #14 USCCB).

In *Living the Gospel of Life*, the bishops write that it is important for all citizens “to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest” (# 33).

Our bishops talk a lot about “principles.” What exactly do they mean? It has always been a very clear Church teaching that there is a distinct difference between moral principles and policy. In his encyclical **Pacem in Terris**, Pope John XXIII wrote: “[Each of us] has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, work, rest, medical care, and, finally, the necessary social services.” These human rights – these moral principles – have always been the basis of Catholic social teaching, dating to Jesus himself. Pope Benedict, in his encyclical, **Deus Caritas Est**, wrote that “charity

must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as ‘social charity.’”

As Catholics, we really don’t have much wiggle room on moral principles. They are foundational to our Faith. Just as the Eucharist has great importance in our life as a Church, so too do our efforts to work for the dignity of every human being from conception to death, the pursuit of the common good, and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable. We are sent forth from Mass to do the work of the Lord in our homes, neighborhoods, offices, schools, malls – wherever it is we gather. We are the salt of the earth, flavoring our environment by our lives and examples, not by fiat or condemnation of those who disagree with us.

Now where we DO have wiggle room – in most cases – is in the area of policy. Policy is how we debate and compromise in order to bring about the above rights so that the common good is served. Catholics can fit right into these arguments along with everyone else....we have a right and duty to do so. From the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**: “It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. . . . As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life” (nos. 1913-1915).

Take the recent health care debates, for example. Access to health care for all is a moral principle; popes and bishops have made that very clear. But the nature of that health care, and the nature of that access are debatable policies. There can be legitimate disagreement among citizens and political candidates alike as to whether this or that health care plan would most effectively accomplish the moral imperative of health care for all.

The same goes for other national problems. There is a long-standing Judeo-Christian moral principle of caring for immigrants. Not caring is not a choice. The choice lies in how to care. Widows and orphans find great favor in the Old and New Testaments. In modern times, Social

Security, Medicare, and Medicaid provide this care. Dropping the social safety net is not a choice. The only choice is how we can provide the needed care without bankrupting the system or deepening deficits. The right to work and to have a living wage is a moral principle that has been in place since Leo XIII. But how to best bring that about? Economics and the deficit give rise to an array of moral problems, mostly because any cuts in spending are usually made in social programs, education, and public safety – all areas acknowledged as basic human rights.

Right now, the important thing is November, and what it will bring for the future. We are mature, educated, responsible people. Ideally, everyone works together to formulate the best possible response. In reality, though, ideology and human selfishness and stubbornness get in the way. Outright falsities and statements taken out of context sow seeds of distrust and fear. Your responsibility and mine is to see through the fog of words and half-truths used by all three political parties.

If you have access to a computer, there are two really excellent non-partisan sources where you can investigate the truth or falsity of various statements and claims made by politicians and special interest groups. One is www.FactCheck.org. The other is www.Politifact.com. These folks really do their homework; PolitiFact especially is brutally honest in affirming or debunking various claims, regardless of political affiliation.

I close with a very interesting statement from the American Bishops...from what used to be their Committee on Social Reconstruction: “*But the only safeguard of peace is social justice and a contented people. The deep unrest so emphatically and so widely voiced throughout the world is the most serious menace to the future peace of every nation and of the entire world. Great problems face us. They cannot be put aside; they must be met and solved with justice to all.*”

The date of this statement: February 1919, right after World War I ended. So we’ve been there before!!!