



T E N N E S S E E REGISTER

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Catholics in politics faced, overcame prejudice



Courtesy of Vanderbilt University Special Collections and University Archives

President John F. Kennedy delivered the convocation address on May 18, 1963, at Dudley Field in celebration of Vanderbilt University's 90th anniversary. When Kennedy ran for president in 1960 he addressed anti-Catholic prejudice in a landmark address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. The speech was successful in debunking attacks that he would be subject to dictates from the Vatican as president and helped him win a narrow victory.

ANDY TELLI

For much of the United States' history, Catholics were treated as strangers and aliens in their own land.

Ignorance about the faith and suspicions that Catholics' real loyalty resided in Rome rather than Washington, barred Catholics from full acceptance in American society in general, and it's politics in particular, for nearly 200 years.

Catholics across the country, including the Diocese of Nashville, felt the sting of that discrimination most painfully in the presidential elections of 1928 and 1960, when candidates Al E. Smith and John F. Kennedy were attacked for their Catholic faith.

Although always present, anti-Catholicism started to rise in the second half of the 19th century as more Catholic immigrants began arriving in the United States, said Msgr. Owen Campion, a Nashville native and a former editor of the *Tennessee Register*. Msgr. Campion has a degree in American History and a long time interest in the history of the diocese.

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Changes in Mass begin with first Sunday of Advent

ANDY TELLI

After all the workshops, all the adult education classes, all the homilies, all the booklets, all the practice, Catholics across the Diocese of Nashville, as well as the country, will begin using the new English translation of the Mass on the weekend of Nov. 26-27, the First Sunday of Advent.

"I think we've done everything humanly possible to be ready to go," said Father Jerry Strange, the associate pastor at Our Lady of the Lake Church in Hendersonville. "I think people are looking forward to it."

The new translation of the Mass was launched in 2000 when Blessed John Paul II announced a revised version of the Roman Missal, which contains the prayers of the Mass, prayers for the observances of recently canonized saints, additional prefaces for the Eucharistic prayers, additional votive Masses and prayers for various needs and occasions.

The new translation will include changes in some of the well-known prayers, responses and acclamations by the people during the Mass, such as the Gloria, the Creed and the Lamb of God. The new translation will feature even

more changes for the prayers recited by the priest during Mass.

The changes are the result of a different approach to translating the Missal from the Latin to English than what was used following the Second Vatican Council, when the Mass was first translated into the vernacular.

The idea behind that translation was to translate idea for idea rather than word for word to help make the Mass as accessible as possible to people and to encourage more participation.

The tradeoff was losing some of the nuance of the Latin text.

This latest translation is an attempt to restore some of that nuance by using a more literal translation of the Latin text.

"The language will be different," said Father Steve Wolf, associate pastor of St. Henry Church in Nashville. Father Wolf has led several sessions and classes for parishioners to explain the changes and why they are being made. "I think people will take it in stride."

Some of the changes will match the translations in other major languages, such as when the priest addresses the congregation with "The Lord be with you"

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'Faithful Citizenship' helps voters weigh moral issues

Theresa Laurence
Catholic New Service

Ever since the U.S. bishops issued their statement on political responsibility, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," ahead of the contentious 2008 presidential election, it has been intensely debated by Catholics on both ends of the political spectrum.

Some conservative Catholic groups maintain that the bishops leave too many "loopholes" in the document, effectively granting permission to liberal Catholics to vote for pro-abortion candidates. In turn, left leaning Catholics feel that the issue of abortion continues to overshadow all the social justice issues to be considered.

The document can cause consternation for those looking for a clear voter's guide or mandate to cast their ballots for a certain political party.

Faithful Citizenship "is truly written to help people form their consciences," said Bishop Stephen Blaire of Stockton, Calif., chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. "It is a document that seeks to lift up church teaching."

Bishop Blaire was one of nine USCCB committee chairmen who signed a new introductory note to the document, which was re-issued last month.

The new introduction notes that Faithful Citizenship "has at times been misused to present an incomplete or distorted view of



the demands of faith in politics," but "remains a faithful and challenging call to discipleship in the world of politics."

"If you read the entire document, you would probably say, 'well, this political party is a little more in tune here, and a different party is more in tune here,'" Bishop Blaire said.

"Two people can come to different conclusions," after reading Faithful Citizenship, Bishop Blaire added.

"We're neither liberal nor conservative, but we're consistent," said Mike Murphy, policy director for the Tennessee Catholic Public Policy Commission, the public policy voice of the Catholic church in Tennessee.

The CPPC encourages Tennessee citizens to use the document to educate themselves on key moral issues, and contains a link to the Faithful Citizenship document on its website, www.tncppc.org.

"It comes out every four years before the presidential election, but Catholics can and should use it for any issue or campaign, not just presidential races," said CPPC executive director Jennifer Murphy.

The U.S. bishops have issued some form of a Faithful Citizenship document every four years since 1976. It began as a 3,400-word document called "Political Responsibility: Reflections on an Election Year," which addressed only eight specific issues, but grew by 2007 to more than 10,000 words mentioning dozens of issues.

It used the "Political Responsibility" title for more than two decades, with various



Tennessee Register file photo by Theresa Laurence

Catholic parishioner Flora Jones, left, consults with friend, Gladys Jackson, as she casts her vote at a polling place in Christ the King School, Nashville, in 2006.

subtitles, but in 1999 became "Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium."

As early as 1997, Bishop James T. McHugh, who then headed the Diocese of Camden, N.J., urged the bishops to bring the document to a vote of the full body of bishops, rather than leaving its approval to the 50-member Administrative Committee. The first vote by the full USCCB was in 2007.

Despite the bishops' attempts to publicize the Faithful Citizenship document, and despite vocal debate over it in some circles, the bishops do have their work cut out for them if they want to reach all Catholic voters.

A recent survey commissioned by the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture in New York and carried out by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University in Washington, revealed that challenges remain before

Faithful Citizenship is fully understood and implemented by U.S. Catholics.

Asked whether they had heard about Faithful Citizenship before the 2008 presidential elections, only 16 percent of adult Catholics said they had. More than half (54 percent) said they had not heard of the document and 30 percent were not sure.

Among those who were aware of Faithful Citizenship, 43 percent said they thought the bishops had "outlined the moral principles in a way that left little doubt about which party or candidates they thought Catholics should support," while 34 percent said the bishops "stuck to moral principles and left the final choice to moral voters." Nearly a quarter (23 percent) said they had no impression one way or the other.

"The bishops are concerned that the document has not been as widely circulated as it could be," Bishop Blaire said. ♦

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Tennessee Register file photo by Rick Musacchio

Students walk from the capitol to St. Mary of the Seven Sorrows for Mass. Bishops Choby, Steib, and Kurtz visited a number of legislators with Mike and Jennifer Murphy as part of the 10th Catholic Day on the Hill.

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"It was from that visibility that some of the prejudice began to develop," Msgr. Campion said.

Also, Nashville became a center of fundamental Protestantism and that included some anti-Catholic feeling, he said.

The bulwark against anti-Catholic feeling in Nashville and the rest of Tennessee was not so much individual Catholics, but the church's institutions such as schools, orphanages and hospitals, Msgr. Campion explained.

Saint Thomas Hospital in Nashville "became a very prominent figure on the scene of medical care," Msgr. Campion said. "Its services were highly respected."

Although there were doubts expressed about American Catholics' patriotism, Catholics believed their actions in World War I would answer that, Msgr. Campion said. "Certainly, Catholics rallied to the war," Msgr. Campion said, and the first Tennessee soldier killed in action was a parishioner of the Cathedral of the Incarnation. "His death in action merely confirmed Catholics' loyalty and patriotism."

Though Catholics were certainly present and active in the community, they were aware that they were a small minority, Msgr. Campion said. "They would have been somewhat quiet in a way," he said. "The attitude was we won't rock your boat, you don't rock ours."

But by 1915, an anti-immigrant fervor blended with an anti-Catholic sentiment and gave rise to a "very militant fundamentalist Protestant ascendancy in the whole country," which ultimately led to the adoption of the 18th amendment and prohibition, Msgr. Campion said. "That was the great triumph of fundamentalist Protestantism."

At the same time, the country saw a revival of the Ku Klux Klan, not only in the South but across the country. "It virtually controlled Indiana. Priests could not go on the streets in a Roman collar. It was strong in Michigan, strong in Pennsylvania," Msgr. Campion said. "It was a very frightening thing."

"That all was a prelude that came up to '28," Msgr. Campion.

'Someone from far away'

Al E. Smith, a successful three-term governor of New York won the Democratic nomination for president in 1928. Despite his successes in office, Smith wasn't the kind of candidate most Southerners would recognize.

He was the son of Irish immigrants of modest means, he grew up in New York City and as a youth worked in the famous Fulton Street Fish Market. He had limited formal education and was the product of a big city political machine. He opposed prohibition and he was first Catholic ever to receive the presidential nomination of a major party.

"His very voice was a turnoff in the South," Msgr. Campion said. "When he spoke, they knew it was someone from far away."

At the time, Tennessee was still solidly Democratic and all the leading political figures were Democrats, including Gov. Henry Horton, a Baptist from Lewisburg, and U.S. Sen. Kenneth McKellar, a Presbyterian from Memphis. They crisscrossed the state campaigning for Smith and denouncing the anti-Catholic attacks leveled at Smith. They were joined in



CNS file photo
Gov. Alfred E. Smith, nearing the close of his campaign for president in 1928, speaks to a packed house in the Academy of Music in Brooklyn, N.Y. He was the first Catholic ever to be nominated for president of the United States.

supporting Smith by the state's other to Democratic politicians.

But they couldn't overcome the attacks on Smith that came from the pulpits of Protestant ministers across the state.

Smith was trounced by Republican Herbert Hoover. Nationally, he received only 40.2 percent of the popular vote. He was the first Democrat to lose Tennessee since the Civil War, and he also lost Virginia, North Carolina, Florida and Texas as the Republicans were able to crack the "Solid South."

It would be more than three decades before another Catholic would make a run at the White House.

Anti-Catholicism resurfaces

In the years between Smith's candidacy in 1928 and Kennedy's in 1960, there were important shifts in the country, Msgr. Campion said.

World War II helped break down some of the barriers that separated the American people, including those around religion, he said.

"A sharecropper's son from Mississippi would find himself in the same unit as the son of a Cuban from Miami and a Pole from Buffalo," Msgr. Campion said. "They heard all these things about Catholics and then in their unit would be an Irish Catholic from Chicago who didn't have horns."

But some of the old prejudices still persisted.

"The level of anti Catholicism in Tennessee would probably astound people today," Msgr. Campion said. "You couldn't escape it."

ing the country, and it was a matter of concern for the campaign," said John Seigenthaler, a Catholic and Nashville native who served as assistant to Robert Kennedy, the Kennedy campaign director. "Some of the stuff went back to Mary Surratt and the Catholic conspiracy to kill Abraham Lincoln," he said referring to the Catholic woman from Maryland who was convicted of participating in the plot to assassinate Lincoln and was hanged.

"A lot of the Al Smith mythology was resurrected," said Seigenthaler, who later served as editor, publisher and chief executive officer of *The Tennessean* and founding editorial director for *U.S.A. Today*. "Almost every old saw you ever heard about was repeated. We got a dose of Galileo, we got a heavy dose of the inquisition."

But most of the attacks argued that Kennedy, as a Catholic, would take instructions on how to run the country from the pope, Seigenthaler said.

The attacks stemmed from ignorance about Catholics' relationship with Rome, Seigenthaler said. "Everybody doesn't get up in the morning thinking about the Vatican or worrying about the curia. Now suddenly there is some Protestant minister saying Jack Kennedy's listening to the curia. A lot of Protestants don't know what the curia is but it's got to be bad if the Protestant minister is giving it hell."

At first, Kennedy campaign staffers didn't think the question of his religion would be "an insurmountable obstacle to winning the presidency," Seigenthaler said. "If you looked at Smith and then looked at John Kennedy it was easy to lead yourself to believe that this is not going to be an Al Smith problem for us." Where Smith came from modest means, the dashing and eloquent Kennedy was part of a wealthy and well-known family and had been educated at some of the best schools in the country.

But as more of the anti-Catholic literature began to circulate, Seigenthaler said, "you realized this was not just a Southern phenomenon."

James Wine, an ordained Protestant minister from West Virginia, joined the Kennedy campaign and argued that Ken-

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CNS photo by Cecil Stoughton courtesy of John F. Kennedy Library in Boston
President John F. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, play with their children, Caroline and John Jr., at the Kennedy family compound in Hyannisport, Mass., in a 1963 file photo. In 1961 he became the 35th U.S. president and the first Catholic to hold the office.

Church encourages involvement in public affairs

ANDY TELLI

From the arrival of the first Catholic settlers in Tennessee, Catholics have always been a minority. But despite their numbers they've always been active in the community, including its politics.

"Considering the population, we've had a lot of Catholics involved in local races and local offices," said Mike Murphy, who grew up in St. Ann Parish in Nashville and is the public policy director of the Tennessee Catholic Public Policy Commission, which represents the church's interests before the State Legislature.

Catholics' involvement in politics can be seen each year in the Catholic Day on the Hill organized by the CPPC.

"When 500 Catholics walk on Capitol Hill, (legislators) pay attention, because you don't have another day with 500 people showing up," said Jennifer Murphy, executive director of the CPPC. "We're only 7 percent of the population, but we're voting."

"We feel an obligation to vote and to participate," Jennifer Murphy added.

"I think having three bishops on the Hill is impressive," Mike Murphy said of the participation in Catholic Day on the Hill by the bishops of Nashville, Knoxville and Memphis. "It makes it clear we're bringing a perspective and a commitment on the part of the church."

The prominence of Catholic institutions in communities across Tennessee, such as schools, hospitals and social services drives Catholics' profile higher than their numbers, Mike Murphy said. "People recognize that's part of our mission," he said.

"They see we live our faith and have for centuries," added Jennifer Murphy.

The message of the importance of political involvement from Catholic Day on the Hill isn't limited only to adults. The local church tries to instill the same message to the youth through its student version of Catholic Day on the Hill each year, when students from Catholic schools visit Capitol Hill and participate



Photo by Andy Telli

Murfreesboro Mayor Tommy Bragg, above, is a parishioner at St. Rose of Lima Church, where he is a former chairman of the parish finance committee. Nashville Mayor Karl Dean, left, is a parishioner at the Cathedral of the Incarnation.



Tennessee Register file photo by Rick Musacchio

in a mock legislative session.

"With Student Day on the Hill you're teaching young people this is something you do the rest of your life," Jennifer Murphy said. "You can shape your city

days before marrying his wife, Jeanne, a cradle Catholic who was raised in Knoxville.

"In my upbringing there was a separation expressed" between religion and politics, Bragg said. "We didn't dwell on the religious aspects of politics."

But over the years, he has seen a growing interest in politics by churches of a variety of denominations. "Their membership is seeking answers" when considering issues of public policy, Bragg said. "They want it in a biblical way that matches their faith. They look for their churches for guidance."

Mike Murphy, who served as a state representative for 16 years, sees a similar interest among Catholics. "They're always interested in the Church's teaching" and how it might apply to public policy issues.

"I think there is a moral component to all life decisions, a moral component to all policy decisions," said Dean, who earlier this year was re-elected to his second four-year term as Nashville's mayor. That moral component is reflected in how an office holder allocates government resources, he said.

But when governing at the local level, most of an official's time and energy is directed to providing efficient services such as police and fire protection, repairing streets and roads, garbage pickup, rather than weighing the moral implications of policy decisions, Dean said.

"Those are things you can get hard results, hard outputs and outcomes," said Bragg. "That's a role I've really enjoyed as mayor. It's a lot like running a business."

Churches can enrich community

Catholics in politics today don't face the same challenges and prejudice candidates like Al Smith and John Kennedy did in the 1928 and 1960 presidential elections, respectively.

"I think people do care that someone has certain values ... but they're less interested in their religious practices or where they attend church," said Dean,

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nedy had to address the religion issue head-on, Seigenthaler said.

Wine suggested the candidate address an audience of Protestant clergy and that led to Kennedy's speech on Sept. 12, 1960, before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association.

"It was a high moment in the campaign" and key to Kennedy's eventual narrow victory over Richard Nixon, said Seigenthaler, who was present for the speech. "It was one hell of an evening, I'll tell you."

Establishing his independence

The goal of the speech was to establish Kennedy's independence. "The whole question was is a Catholic president bound by his faith to follow the directives of Rome," Seigenthaler said.

Kennedy's answer was the same as those of Cardinal James Gibbons and

Smith in earlier decades, essentially the Church doesn't speak for public office holders who are Catholic, and they do not speak for the Church, Msgr. Campion said.

Early in the speech, Kennedy set the theme. "So it is apparently necessary for me to state once again – not what kind of church I believe in, for that should be important only to me – but what kind of America I believe in."

"That theme sort of trumped the hostility that existed in the room," Seigenthaler remembered.

Kennedy stated his belief in an absolute separation of church and state, denounced religious intolerance and reminded his audience that there was no religious test in the Constitution, the same Constitution he had sworn to uphold as a member of Congress.

He reminded listeners of the sacrifices Catholics, including himself and members of his family, had made in fighting

for their country during World War II. "This is the kind of America I believe in – and this is the kind of America I fought for in the South Pacific, and the kind my brother died for in Europe. No one suggested then that we might have a divided loyalty, that we did not believe in liberty, or that we belonged to a disloyal group that threatened – I quote – 'the freedoms for which our forefathers died.'"

That was a sentiment that resonated with Catholics across the country, said Msgr. Campion. "They felt the sting of prejudice, but they felt it was very unfair because they felt they gave as much as anybody else to the country. And they gave it cheerfully."

'Houston settled a lot of that'

While Kennedy was establishing his independence from Church authority on one hand, he also was asserting himself as a Catholic, Msgr. Campion said.

In the speech, "he very carefully identi-

fies himself as a Catholic," Msgr. Campion said, and at one point said, "But if the time should ever come – and I do not concede any conflict to be remotely possible – when my office would require me to either violate my conscience or violate the national interest, then I would resign the office; and I hope any conscientious public servant would do likewise."

He added: "I do not intend to apologize for these views to my critics of either Catholic or Protestant faith; nor do I intend to disavow either my views or my church in order to win this election."

The speech helped deflate the issue of Kennedy's religion, Seigenthaler said. "I don't mean for a minute that it all evaporated. Indeed some of the response to it was more frenzied," he said. But "generally if you had an open mind or you had questions that could be reasonably and rationally dealt with, then I think that moment in Houston settled a lot of that."

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Church teaching balances quest for peace with acknowledging evil

ANDY TELLI

The Catholic Church's teaching on the principle of just war balances humanity's search for peace and the recognition that it might still be beyond our reach.

"We believe the destiny of all humanity is the kingdom of God," said J. Patout Burns, former Edward Malloy Professor of Catholic Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, one of two speakers at the first of Pope John Paul II High School's new colloquium series, held on Nov. 16. "We know we are not there yet."

Burns, who has published several works about religion and warfare, was joined as a featured speaker for the colloquium by Deacon James Toner, an expert on morality and military ethics and an instructor at the U.S. Air Force Academy and the Air War College.

The topic of the colloquium was "A Time for War or a Time for Peace? Counterterrorism and the Catholic Response."

There have always been Christians who have renounced the use of coercive violence, and the Church has always accepted that is an important decision for some Christians to make, Burns said. There also always have been Christians who have served in the military as a way to ensure peace, and the Church always has accepted that is an important decision for some Christians to make, he added.

"Christians are called to the law of love, but never to forget the existence of evil," said Deacon Toner. "The reality of the matter is there are bad guys in the world," and it's a mistake not to protect ourselves from them, he added.



Photo by Andy Telli

J. Patout Burns, former Edward Malloy Professor of Catholic Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, left, makes a point during the discussion of Catholic teaching and counterterrorism held Nov. 16 as part of the colloquium series sponsored by Pope John Paul II High School. Deacon James Toner, right, the other presenter for the event, listens.

Church teaching calls on Catholics to forgive other people, but also to ensure that justice is served, Deacon Toner said. He pointed to the example of Blessed Pope John Paul II visiting the man who tried to assassinate him in prison. At the end of the visit, during which the pope forgave his assailant, John Paul II walked out of the prison while Mehmet Ali Aca, the man who tried to kill him, remained to serve out his sentence.

"We've dealt with all kinds of warfare in the history of the people of God," Burns said. In 1983, the U.S. bishops

issued a statement on the use of nuclear weapons. It was in response to the military doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction, and the bishops wrote that the use of nuclear weapons would never be moral.

Today, the threat of nuclear weapons doesn't stem from the conflict between the world's superpowers but from the proliferation of nuclear weapons among smaller nations, Burns said.

Another change since the bishop's document was released has been the rise of terrorism, he added. "In a terror-

ist war, there's no such thing as a non-combatant. Everyone is a target."

Every time an American rides an airplane, they participate in the war on terror by agreeing to go through the airport security checks, Burns said. When Americans decide to protect one another they participate in the war on terror, he added.

In a democracy, the citizens ultimately are responsible for whether their nation goes to war, Burns said. He noted that of all the money countries around the world spend on the military, the U.S. spends 42 percent. The next largest spender is China with 6 percent of the total. Those two countries spend nearly as much on the military as the rest of the world's countries combined, Burns said.

There are consequences to all that spending on the military, Burns said, noting that because of the military budget there are other things the U.S. can't pay for.

"Proportionality says there should be a balance between the damage suffered and the good achieved," Burns said. That question should be considered not only in waging war but in preparing for war, he added.

We must always re-evaluate our positions about what is moral in war because the conditions of warfare are always changing, Burns said.

We live in "a time of great moral darkness and moral evil," Deacon Toner said. "In times of darkness we grasp at any light available."

Christians are always on the horns of a dilemma trying to do the right thing for Caesar and the right thing for God, Deacon Toner said. "The need is always for virtue." ♣

Catholics faced prejudice

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'One nation under God'

Although Kennedy lost Tennessee 52.92 percent of the vote to 45.77 percent, he won one the election by one of the narrowest margins in history. Catholics helped him secure the win. Kennedy received 78 percent of the Catholic vote, the largest turnout of Catholics for a national candidate ever. "He knew that as bad as the anti-Catholic sentiment was he was a member of a Catholic Church that supported him by and large," Seigenthaler said. "He knew the anti-Catholic sentiment helped galvanize the votes of those who were Catholic."

Kennedy's election was seen as an accomplishment for all Catholics, Msgr. Campion said. "They felt they had arrived."

Catholics heaped all sorts of honors on Kennedy and appreciated gestures such as the president's decision to send Vice President Lyndon Johnson to Pope John XXIII's funeral, the first time in the country's history it had sent a representative to a pope's funeral, Msgr. Campion said.

"It was a love affair that is largely forgotten," Msgr. Campion said of Catholics' affection for Kennedy. "In years since, that has been tarnished by revelations of his private life and the fact his brother, Ted, was pro choice."

Over the years, Catholic politicians have used Kennedy's argument in the Houston speech to justify support for policies at

odds with church teaching, particularly on abortion rights. "But I don't think the historical context (of the speech) is realized at all," Msgr. Campion said. "There are moral issues that weren't present at the time of Kennedy," such as abortion and embryonic stem cell research, he added. "He had none of that at the time."

Kennedy's election and the response to his Houston speech helped removed the specter of the religion question from the candidacies of future Catholic politicians, Seigenthaler said. When Kennedy's brother Robert ran for president just eight years later, his Catholic religion was never mentioned, he said. And since then Catholics have been the nominee for president, and the current vice president, Joseph Biden, is a Catholic.

"I don't think any Catholic will have to run again and face the sort of questions that Al Smith and Jack had to face," Seigenthaler said.

But religion still is a strong force in American politics, Seigenthaler said. In the Republican race for the 2012 presidential nomination, candidates Mitt Romney and John Huntsman have had to answer questions about their Mormon faith, he noted.

"Anytime we have a candidate of a religion we don't know much about, we'll have issues to address," Seigenthaler said. "If you get it out in the course of the campaign, there's a better chance to come to grips with it and reach that reality that we're all one nation under God." ♣



Tennessee Register file photo by Rick Musacchio

Mike Murphy, public policy director for the Tennessee Catholic Public Policy Commission, served in the state House of Representatives for 16 years.

Church urges involvement

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who converted to Catholicism after marrying his wife, Anne, who was raised a Catholic.

Although there are no churches in the cities the size of Murfreesboro or Nashville that can deliver an election for a candidate by themselves, they do play an important role for public officials and candidates.

"It's a good way to meet people who are involved," Dean said of visiting churches throughout the city. "You can get a feedback on what's going on the city."

"Any large group that you're a member

of helps create a network" that candidates can use in their campaigns, Mike Murphy said. Involvement with your church "helps you learn how to work with a large group of people," he added.

And the biggest benefit of being involved in a church or similar group, Mike Murphy said, is "it teaches you about the community."

"Certainly the city is enriched by churches and people's faith," Dean said. "Almost every church has the same doctrine of looking out for the other person. ... It's a wonderful way to approach the world and it's a good thing for our city." ♣