

A Saint in The White House



Arthur Hoppe

A GOOD MANY politicians are suddenly finding religion. And a good many clerics are still finding politics.

On its side, Congress has Father Robert F. Drinan, S.J., (Dem-Mass.), who wishes to impeach Mr. Nixon. On his side, Mr. Nixon has Father John McLaughlin, S.J., who is going around the country making impassioned speeches in the President's defense.

Interviewed on the CBS program "60 Minutes" the other night, Father McLaughlin, who is known as "The President's Priest," conceded that Mr. Nixon wasn't a saint. But after all, he added with a worldly smile, who wants "a saint in The White House?"

Who indeed? There is much to be said for the good Father's pragmatic position on this clear-cut issue.

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WASHINGTON — The Administration of St. Richard the Good came to an end today.

His surprising landslide election six months ago was attributed by the experts to public frustration with crooked politicians.

Actually, as a young man, St. Richard himself had run for both the House and the Senate in California. But as he steadfastly refused to say anything but good about his opponents, he was roundly trounced.

Entering a Trappist monastery, his eloquent silence won him a nationwide reputation for goodness and saintliness. Tapped as a write-in candidate for the Presidency, he yielded with a sigh and ran on a platform of "Love, Brotherhood, Truth and Faith."

When vilified by his opponents as a fraud and a charlatan, he simply smiled. And, oh, how people's hearts leaped up when on Inauguration Day he walked down Pennsylvania avenue barefoot in

sackcloth and ashes, carrying a bound volume of The National Budget on his shoulders.

His initial act of selling off the Presidential fleet of limousines, aircraft and yachts and converting The White House into a Home for Unwed Mothers was roundly applauded.

But when he red-penciled the \$80 billion defense budget, saying, "Love thine enemies," he offended the military-industrial complex. And when he proposed a graduated income tithe without loopholes, saying, "Render unto Caesar," he outraged the well-to-do. While he distributed the \$100 billion budget surplus in alms to the poor; the poor, after all, had very little influence in Washington.

So Washington was eager to give credence to a rumor that he had accepted a ballpoint pen from a little old lady from Dubuque in return for his autograph. It was then that The Miracle of the Tapes occurred.

The miracle was that Saint Richard promptly turned over to Congress every tape and document in his files—and not a single second of any tape was missing!

After listening to hours upon hours of St. Richard's private goodness, the congressmen were appalled. "Is this the kind of tough, pragmatic, Machiavellian President we need to run this great country?" they said.

So they impeached him for "obvious unwillingness to commit even petty crimes and teensy misdemeanors." The vote in the Senate was 67 for conviction and 33 for crucifixion.

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SO THE GOOD Father McLaughlin is unarguably right. Christianity certainly has its place in our modern society. And let's keep it in the churches where it belongs.