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# Letters to The Times

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## Kennedy Support Upheld

### Opportunity Seen to Prove Fitness of Catholic for Presidency

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES: The Times in its May 18 editorial headed "Mr. Kennedy's Victory" says that the West Virginia primary proves that a Catholic Presidential candidate is not automatically doomed in Protestant areas because he is a Catholic. This is true, to the great credit of the voters of West Virginia.

It appears, though, a little unreasonable to follow this statement with the opinion that "it would be a source of equal satisfaction if it could also be proved that a Catholic Presidential candidate would not automatically gain in Catholic areas because he is a Catholic." This seems to call for an almost saintly check-turning by Catholics. It also ignores a just Catholic grievance.

In my opinion the average American Catholic has no real concern as to the religious affiliation of the President. Catholics have voted over the past 175 years for members of every important Protestant sect—Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Quakers and probably many other denominations. Had a qualified Jew been nominated he would, I am certain, have received his proportion of Catholic votes.

But Catholics definitely and strongly resist being classified as untrustworthy to fill the highest office. We feel that this stigma must be removed and the only way it can be removed is to elect an able Catholic to the Presidency. This and only then will it be shown that the fears often voiced by otherwise fair-minded and reasonable Protestants are groundless and the scurrilities of the anti-Catholic bigots will be shown up for what they are—mere bugaboos.

I think, therefore, it is unreasonable not to expect Catholics to come and support the cause of an outstanding, appealing figure such as Senator Kennedy.

There is a sharp difference, in my opinion, between prejudice against a candidate's religion and prejudice for a candidate who, besides being qualified in every other way, also affords Catholics an opportunity to nail once and for all the base and baseless slander that a Catholic President would somehow be disloyal to the best interests of the United States and the American people.

Possibly this is bigotry. But American Catholics have been persecuted for a long, long time. We think the time has come to claim our class citizenship.

JOHN D. DONOHUE

New York, May 18, 1960

### Use of Foreign Bases

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES: Your editorial "Parasite Operations" (May 17) confuses us in a most unhappy fashion the term "bleeding hearts" that Senator McCarthy applied to those who do not go along with his particular brand of anti-communism.

The editorial ignores—as most of the public discussion of the plane incident ignores—the wider implications of the use of foreign bases for activities that may cause war.

Whatever the rights or wrongs of our own espionage activities, surely we have no right to involve our associates in activities for which they have no responsibility.

Have Americans forgotten that when Britain permitted, Confederates to outfit rams in her naval yards our Minister to Britain stated flatly that "this means war?"

And quite aside from the morality of thus using the facilities of other countries for our espionage activities, what shall we say of a policy which may forfeit our bases abroad, and which may even endanger the very existence of the NATO alliance?

HENRY STEELE COMMAGER

Amherst, Mass., May 15, 1960.

[In an editorial of May 11 entitled "The Impasse of Mistrust," Russia's threat to our allies because we used their bases for reconnaissance purposes was recognized as opening up "a delicate political issue . . . of which the opposition in each country will, of course, take full advantage." There is no question that the U-2 incident is embarrassing for this and many other reasons, but the mere fact that we send reconnaissance planes across the Soviet border should not be one of them. Editor, The Times.]

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