FROM: Phyllis Schlafly

68 FAIRMOUNT, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002 / (618) 462-5415

RELEASE: JUNE 5, 1986

PREACHERS AND POLITICS, CHURCH AND STATE

It's a pity that the Reverend Jerry Falwell couldn't have been in the audience on Sunday, May 25, when Georgetown University held its 187th annual Commencement. Falwell might have acquired some allies to help him in his running battle with Norman Lear's People for the American Way who are so uptight about clergymen sticking their noses into politics.

The Commencement speaker and recipient of an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters was his Eminence Jaime L. Cardinal Sin of the Philippines. Sin's remarks did not impart any advice or inspiration to the 1,400 Georgetown students who "commenced" that day; Sin made a political speech on "Church and State" which attempted to justify his leadership role in the revolution that overthrew Ferdinand Marcos and replaced him with Cory Aquino.

It was clear that Sin's message fell on friendly ears. The University's president, Father Timothy S. Healy, S.J., beamed approval, and several faculty members on the platform wore red sashes calling for "divestiture" of South African assets.

The citation honoring Sin, as also printed in the Commencement program, proclaimed that "politics can be priestly." Apparently, Georgetown hasn't heard about Pope John Paul II's admonition to priests to get out of politics.

Sin gave several examples of how he exhorted the Philippine people to go out into the streets and confront the Marcos government's armed troops and tanks with men and women carrying flowers. This was supposed to prove that "they stopped hatred with love" or, as it said in the citation accompanying Sin's honorary degree, that "marigolds might be mightier than the sword."

Of course, this story doesn't prove anything of the sort. It proves only that the Marcos regime respected human life too much to kill unarmed civilians. The 20th century has had hundreds of instances of a Communist regime ordering tanks and machine guns to mow down unarmed civilians, and flowers certainly couldn't save them.

Sin told how he led the Catholic Bishops in the Philippines to issue a formal

statement charging that the February election was "fraudulent" and that the Marcos regime had "no moral basis." At that point, Sin got rhetorical, asking "Was that interfering in politics? If so, we are all guilty." But then he quickly returned to his thesis and said, "I don't call that interfering with politics."

Sin proudly said that he advised the people, "If anyone offers you a bribe for a vote, take the bribe and then vote your conscience." To the snickering of students, Sin justified this on the ground that "the money was stolen from the people in the first place, and the baby needs milk."

Sin talked about election frauds as though they were unique to the Philippines. He hadn't been briefed on our notorious vote frauds in Chicago, Philadelphia, etc. Funny thing, there is no record of the Archbishops in those cities calling for a government to be overthrown because of the widespread election frauds.

Sin told how the Catholic clergy defended the rights of people whose land was being taken away by others who had "documents." He told how priests threw themselves in front of the bulldozers to protect the "rights of the poor." I wonder what would happen if the clergy tried that tactic in Iowa when the banks which have "documents" foreclose on the small farmers who are "poor."

Sin asserted again and again that the church never interfered in politics in the Philippines; the church just defended the rights of the people. That's why he connived to get a radio transmitter and then exhorted other bishops and priests to speak out. # So, that's the line, Jerry Falwell, to protect yourself against the slings and arrows of outrageous advertisements placed by People for the American Way. Every time you make a speech, simply preface it by saying, "I'm not interfering in politics; I'm just defending the rights of the people."

This column is not a criticism of Archbishop Sin or preachers dabbling in politics because preachers should have the same political rights as nonpreachers. Nor is it a defense of Marcos. It's just a commentary on the sanctimonious spokesmen (including People for the American Way) who shed crocodile tears about a perceived threat from fundamentalist preachers in America, but give honorary degrees and other establishment accolades to political preachers who carry out liberal goals.